

Les Choses espagnoles

Research into the Hispanomania of 19th Century Dance

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Claudia Jeschke, Gabi Vettermann, Nicole Haitzinger

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Introduction

Les Choses espagnoles. Performances and Contexts

The monumental exhibition *Manet – Velázquez. La manière espagnole au XIX^e Siècle*, shown in Paris in 2002 and in New York in 2003, made the influence of Spanish painting on French painting – transcending historical as well as geographical borders – visible in a fascinating way. Numerous famous and little-known paintings by Édouard Manet, Diego de Velázquez, Bartolomé Estéban Murillo, Francisco de Goya, Jusepe de Ribera, Théodule Ribot, Gustave Courbet, Eugène Delacroix and Jean-François Millet were thus put into a new context. Among the works shown, there were surprisingly many pictures by Manet about dance and other physical practices such as bullfighting.

The relevance and fascination of these images for our research dealing with the staging of Otherness in 19th century dance theatre are obvious. Through the medium of painting, they exhibit a way of dealing with things Spanish strikingly similar to the Hispanomania in dance. Especially Manet's *Mademoiselle V... en costume d'Espada* presents a thematically as well as stylistically appropriate framework for illustrating the wealth of material regarding the Spanish in dance theatre.

Mademoiselle V... en costume d'Espada (1862)¹ was painted in the atelier in Rue Guyot – before Manet traveled to Spain. Emile Zola portrays Manet's atelier as filled with *Les Choses espagnoles*, with shoes, shawls, guitars and with costumes sold by a Spanish tailor in Rue Saint-Marc (now

1 The *Espada* picture is displayed at e.g. www.metmuseum.org. The painting was shown under this title in the Salon des Refusés in May 1863. At the World Fair in 1867 it appeared as *Mademoiselle V... en costume d'Espada*. It was printed in the album *Huit Gravures à l'eau forte par Manet* published by Cadart in October 1862 under the title "L'Espada". Also cf.: *Manet. Velázquez. La manière espagnole au XIX^e siècle*. Ed. by Marie-Dominique de Teneuille, Paris, Musée d'Orsay (September 16, 2002 – January 5, 2003), New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (February 24 – June 8, 2003), Paris 2002, esp. Juliet Wilson-Bareau: Manet et l'Espagne, pp. 171-216; *Manet. Velázquez. La manière espagnole au XIX^e siècle*. Beaux arts magazine, numéro spécial, Paris 2002, esp. the contribution by Francis Marmande: Dans l'œil du toro, pp. 52-55; Bois, Mario: Manet. *Tauromachies et autres thèmes espagnols*, Paris, Ed. Plume, 1994; for Zola's critique of manet e.g. cf. www.cahiers-naturalistes.com/pages/manet2.html.

Passage Jouffroy) as well as by the hawkers on the boulevards. Les Choses espagnoles made the rounds in Paris without the consumers – sellers and buyers alike – ever having seen Spanish culture on location. Spain was fashionable in the 19th century, and no artist and in fact no one who took part in social life could escape it.²

Mademoiselle V... is described as one of the strangest pictures Manet ever painted. The ‘sophisticated’ portraitists used to reduce the names of their models to a single initial: “Portrait de Monsieur X...”, “Portrait de Madame Y****”; Manet followed this convention and made it clear that *Mademoiselle V* was a real person – Victorine Meurent, whose identity he discreetly kept veiled.³ X-ray analyses of the painting show that Victorine Meurent was not the only model who posed for the torera.⁴ In addition, the presentation of the young woman as a female torero seems to have been inspired by a ‘carte de visite’: the photograph shows Henriette Schlosser, a dancer of the opera ballet, ‘en travestie’ as Banderillo in *Graziosa*, a ballet pantomime in one act which was performed on March 15th, 1861.⁵

Mlle Victorine is dressed as a matador or torera (an ‘espada’ in contemporary usage), standing in an arena, ready to kill a bull. The scene constructs a strange fiction. Apart from the tie, shoes, stockings and tassels on the tight-fitting trousers, the costume is an invention; even the colour of the trimmings does not conform to the contemporary clothing of the torero. This was a ‘torera de salon’, as could be seen especially in the 1840s in the theatre, at balls, but also in the streets of Hispanomaniac Paris. Manet knew the costume and head-dress codified in the 1830s by the matador Francisco Montès from engravings by the brothers Rouarge or paintings by Louis Eugène Ginains. The picador in the background of the picture – in the group of bull, horse and man, modelled after the fifth engraving of Goya’s *Tauromachy*⁶ – is dressed in contemporary fashion. Goya had placed this

2 Although many references to the relation of France and Spain can be found before and after the 1870s, they remain largely undiscussed. Cf. Teneuille, *Manet. Velázquez*, p. 79.

3 Of course Manet was aware that she was known to every contemporary as his new model.

4 J. p. B., 78. Mlle V... en costume d’espada. 1862, in: Teneuille, *Manet. Velázquez*, p. 379.

5 McCauley, Elizabeth Anne: *A. A. E. Disdéri and the Carte De Visite Portrait Photograph*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Pr., 1985, pp. 183f.

6 The image is published e.g. on the homepage of the Bullfighting Museum in Valencia, www.museotaurinovalencia.es/.

scene in Moorish Spain in terms of costume and movement. Manet takes over Goya's movement of the engraving which does not follow contemporary style but comes from the culture of Moorish Spain. Furthermore: Victorine holds the sword as if a bull is charging at her, but her gaze doesn't hold the animal but the viewer. The heavy sword is medieval and the fine muslin cloth doesn't contain a 'muleta' with which she could guide the bull.

Mademoiselle V's movements appear frozen, as do those of the human-horse-bull group and the toreros in the background. If at all, only the toreros seem to want to move. The young woman certainly stands safely on the floor of the atelier; as mentioned before, Manet experimented with various poses. Moreover, the painter draped the Spanish costume and context over a Raffaelite source: the copperplate engravings by Marcantonio Raimondi after a series of virtues (*Vertus*); the poses and gestures of *Mlle V...* can be interpreted as an allegorical amalgamate of Temperance and Justice. It is impossible to determine a clear timeline for the picture concerning structure as well as content. Rather, the figures and groups write their own independent time, their own history which is partly simple, partly complex – they tell their own story. Alongside this opening-up of the temporal dimension, space is 'in motion'. The painting's space seems peculiar, dislocated; it doesn't answer to the order of central perspective. The technique of 'taches', as first described by Zola for Manet's painting style, points out the self-containment of the scenes in the fore- and background, lets them disappear in the space or, rather, makes the borders of the space become fluid through the effects of light and shadow. 'Je peins ce que je vois' – Manet's motto also states: I invent visibility and spectacularity.

The fight is fictional, consciously springs from fantasy, is a pastiche nourished by numerous sources;⁷ and dance and theatre of the 19th century, too, can be interpreted as a pastiche. The pastiche in dance finds its sources – as far as we can see – especially in overlays, combinations, syntheses of various images of Otherness. Otherness, or more concretely Hispanomania, can thus be seen as theme and form of appearance as well as structure and technique. Hispanomania is a temporary fashion and functions as a metaphor; it reflects numerous sources which are arranged in a fantastic way.

7 Cf. Reed, Arden: Spanish France – Manet / Velazquez: the French Taste for Spanish Painting. Critical Essay; Art, in: *America*, May 2003, www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1248.

Re-Visions in the Historiographies of Dance and Culture

The following texts are part of a larger study on 19th century dance called 'Interaction and Rhythm' ('Interaktion und Rhythmus'). This study was a sub-project of the extensive research of an interdisciplinary group of historians on 'Cultural Construction of Otherness in the 19th Century' subsidised by the German Research Foundation.⁸

*The interdisciplinary research project strives to examine different forms of cultural representation of Otherness in the 'long' 19th century. It focuses particularly on researching perception and presentation patterns manifesting themselves in the representation of Otherness; in museums, at world fairs, in theatre, dance and art. Otherness is understood in three ways: as the Other outside of Europe – visited, observed, scrutinised and classified; as the Other in one's own country – presented as an exotic curiosity, an import of non-European Otherness, or manifesting itself as a part of the population which is felt to be alien (the most explosive reaction of this kind might be anti-Semitism); and as the Other in our European surroundings as well as the outside perspective onto central-European countries as the Other. Following the anthropologically founded re-discursification of cultural Otherness at the end of the 18th century, the reflection of this Europe-wide shift of perception and its various forms of expression shall be investigated.*⁹

Within the interdisciplinary orientation of the research group, the main issue of the study at hand has been the extensive identification and quasi-archaeological review of sources concerning movement-oriented questions with regard to the determination of Otherness. The historiographic study of sources has thus formed the basis for the formation of dance theory.¹⁰ From

8 This research is documented in various publications. The selection of the respective texts refers to their presentation in: Oberzaucher-Schüller, Gunhild (Ed.): *Souvenirs de Taglioni*. Vol. 2: *Bühnentanz in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*. München: Kieser, 2007, pp. 137-193; Jeschke, Claudia; Vettermann, Gabi; Haitzinger, Nicole: *Interaktion und Rhythmus*. München: epodium, 2009, passim.

9 Cf. the website of the German Research Foundation, last access May 10, 2009.

10 In general, research into the 19th century is a marginalised field of study within dance research. The critical classification of sources has generally increased since the 1990s, a shift away from the kind of historiography focusing on work and back-

a movement-oriented point of view, we have followed physical performances and dance stagings of Otherness in the 19th century. From the scrutiny of dance theories, librettos, reviews, stage directions and iconographic materials, Otherness ('other' dances, 'other' dancers) could emerge as a performative potential and spectacular dimension of dance culture between everyday and theatrical movement.

Around 100 dance theories from Germany, France, England and Spain, as well as around 100 dance librettos from France, Germany, England, Italy and Portugal have been collected and analysed closely. The iconographic source material mainly consisted of illustrations of national and non-European dances popular in their historical context.¹¹ Moreover, a volume of medical theories has been compiled from a body and dance theoretical perspective – as well as an extensive collection of the reception of performances relevant for this study.¹²

ground which had mainly been practised up to that point. However, the trend towards theory was less marked by an intensive and extensive search for and treatment of sources than by re-interpreting known facts (mostly on a post-structuralist basis). A first exception was Joellen A. Meglin's essay, which, however, is geographically limited to the presentation of 'Native Americans' in the French ballet: *Sauvages, Sex Roles, and Semiotics: Representation of Native Americans in the French Ballet 1736–1837, Part One: The Eighteenth Century*. In: *Dance Chronicle*, 23/2, 2000, pp. 87–132, and *Part Two: The Nineteenth Century*. In: *Dance Chronicle*, 23/3, 2000, pp. 275–320.

- 11 In the beginning, we focused on research in libraries and archives in German-speaking regions as well as in the British Library, the Theatre Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum (London) and in the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library; later we widened our source material by doing research in the libraries of the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Institute of France, the Archives Nationales in Paris and the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris. In none of these institutions with the purpose of guarding literary knowledge can dance be found in a single place, making access extremely difficult and increasing the expenditure of time for the research. In this archival storage, the multi- or intermediality of dance is reflected as much as its genuinely non-literary mediation and organisation of knowledge.
- 12 Gathering evidence of critiques has been successful due to pertinent preliminary work which had already been done in the cataloguing of relevant libraries (esp. Bibliothèque-Musée de l'Opéra, Paris). This corpus offers a representative profile in view of the immense circulation of dance critiques in the press, as the comparison with most recent French research shows. Cf. Vaillant, Alain; Thérenty, Marie-Ève: 1836. *L'an 1 de l'ère médiatique*. Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2001, and esp. Berthier, Patrick: *La Presse littéraire et dramatique au début de la monarchie de juillet*. 4 vols. Paris: Septentrion, 1997.

The case studies of ‘Interaction and Rhythm’ were selected after reviewing the repertoire of those works most frequently mentioned in literature and exploring dance scenes whose topic is Otherness. This corpus of sources has made it possible to present the variety of (dance-) theatrical stereotypes; moreover, they form a representative body of examples for the period covered in the study. The usual approach to historiographic continuity has been important for the compilation of these sequences, not only does it allow to present the current state of research, but also to investigate it critically. We have selected central dance scenes from *Paul et Virginie*, *Le Diable boiteux*, *La Péri* and *La Esmeralda* – scenes which do not only show commonly depicted mentalities and races (savages, black people like in *Paul et Virginie*) through dance, but which also show the Other by idiosyncratic figures from various countries or in various states of mind (for example, Spaniards like in *Le Diable boiteux* or an ‘opium eater’ as in *La Péri*) or social rejects who express themselves in movement (like the monster Quasimodo in *La Esmeralda*).

The choreographic manuscripts of the French choreographer Henri Justamant¹³ have presented an important finding for the project. These are ‘stage directions’, sometimes for complete ballet productions, partially with the relevant librettos and musical scores, in print and with handwritten notes, partially of single dances or stage direction excerpts. Until today, Justamant has more or less remained a ‘dark horse’ in dance historiography. His illustrative and descriptive, specifically choreographic notes on the usage of body, movement and space complete the librettos and theories as independent text and image sources, and due to their completeness and attention to detail, provide a wealth of materials and close insights into dance theatre practice of the time between storyline ballet, revue and ballroom dance.

13 The Theatersammlung Köln accommodates 51 Justamant manuscripts from the middle of the century (cf. Ludwig, Paul: *Henri Justamant (1815–1890). Kommentiertes Bestandsverzeichnis seiner Ballett-Notationen in der Theaterwissenschaftlichen Sammlung Schloß Wahn*. Köln: Universität zu Köln, Theaterwissenschaftliche Sammlung Schloß Wahn, 2005); 22 books of stage directions / choreography of later dates until about 1880 can be found in the Dance Collection, New York. And 39 manuscripts from the 1840s up to the 1880s, complete books and collections of excerpts of stage directions / choreographies, librettos and collections of dances, especially of south and east European origin, are available at the Bibliothèque-Musée de l’Opéra, Paris.

Apart from this unexpected wealth of materials, we have also been able to make use of increasing possibilities of relevant combination and interpretation with regard to (dance-)theatre and cultural studies. From the perspective of moving corporeality, the interconnection of individual investigations resulted partly in a dance-specific, partly in a more general classification of the complex material. This has not only allowed for an extensive processing of the sources, but also (and especially) has made it possible to understand notation, (choreographic) scoring and depiction as cultural staging (and vice versa). It became increasingly clear that the various materials on dance or systems of dancing form separate entities which do not explain one another. Rather, they approach Otherness in different manners, be it receptively or productively, pragmatically or theoretically. The multi-layered modes are valid in the dramaturgical models of Otherness as well as in its choreographical ones. The result – namely, the fact that traces of performances can be found in concepts of ‘mise en scène’ and can also be reconstructed through analyses of motion, choreography as well as mime-sis, literature (libretto and reception)¹⁴ – presents a significant enhancement, a shift of accent and re-evaluation of historiography in dance up to now, and especially in the historiography of dance theatre.

Just like the documentation of individual investigations, the reconstructions of selected dance theatre scenes concerning Otherness show mobile structures which appear in the study as thematic and action fields named ‘Pre-scriptions’, ‘Pre-Scriptions?’ and ‘Post-Scriptions’. Each of these structures has specific correlations which remain tangible and comparable in spite of their specificity because of common operators. Hence, there is potential for

14 On the relation of documentation and re-construction, see Jeschke; Vettermann: “‘Dance research’ defines itself through dance as much as through materials about dance. Body movement itself becomes material; in equal measure, its translation into other media serves as material concerning the examination of dance [...]. According to this, research always regards two aspects – that of movement / dance, and that of the material it is translated into. If there are no body movements any more, they can be read from the materials they were transferred to and in which they are documented. Thus, documentation also means re-construction of dance. [...] Documentation and reconstruction [...] present products of knowledge as much as they produce knowledge; [...]” Jeschke, Claudia; Vettermann, Gabi: *Tanzforschung. Geschichte – Methoden*, In: Fink, Monika; Gstrein, Rainer (Eds.): *Gesellschafts- und Volkstanz in Österreich*. Wien: Österr. Ges. für Musikwiss., 2002, pp. 9-36, here: pp. 9f.

interaction and rhythm¹⁵ between them as they render fusions of different concepts and practices of Otherness describable. These are created by the spatial-kinetic dynamics of physical concepts as mediated by dance theories and records, and by the temporal-narrative dynamics typical for most librettos. Thus, by setting up the parameters of interaction and rhythm, we were able to take into account corporeal, motor and emotive actions of the Other as well as isolate figures of thought about Otherness. One of the prominent results of the investigation strategy pursued in this study is the questionable nature of fixed assignments of Otherness as they have been handed down in dance history with the stereotypes hitherto brought into connection with the Other, like ‘couleur locale’, ‘fabrique exotique’, folklore, national dance, character dance. On the other hand, as already mentioned, the abstinence of Otherness in dance theatre of the 19th century with regard to systematics became clear; dealing with alterity has thus turned out to be an effective strategy for insight into the identification and treatment of dance-theatre practices which in secondary literature have been neglected up to now.

I Modeling of Alterity between Movement Quotation and Dance Reform

Under the heading ‘Prescriptions’, the dance theories mediate written conceptions and concepts of how one’s own body should execute alterity. In individually specific weighting, the treatises explored for the period of investigation from 1800–1860¹⁶ deal with dance in its social environment as well as on stage; they treat corporeality from anthropological, ethnological, social, dance-technical, anatomical, medical, aesthetic or artistic viewpoints.

The obvious continuation or rewriting of a legendary alterity in dance theories hints at the dispositive dimension of bodies and dances of the Other in the 19th century. The Other in body, movement and dance oscillates between implication and explication. Implicitly, it exists as an encoded and unuttered alternative draft to nearly all regulations of the socially and culturally accepted bodies and their dances; only in few cases is it

15 In recent research, rhythm especially has frequently turned out to be a fitting interface of disciplinary interests. Cf. e.g. Primavesi, Patrick; Mahrenholz, Simone (Eds.): *Geteilte Zeit*. Schliengen: Ed. Argus, 2005; or: Naumann, Barbara (Ed.): *Rhythmus*. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005.

16 This restriction was chosen in alignment with the time frame of the case studies, i.e., *Paul et Virginie*, *Le Diable boiteux*, *La Péri* and *La Esmeralda* (also named *Quasimodo* or *La Bohémienne*).