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Discourses on Woman/Body and the Politics of Movement in Ballet, Dance and Hip-Hop

Abstract: The aim of this study is to point out the relationship of ballet, modern dance and hip-hop towards the female body. The main question that the text deals with is whether ballet, modern dance and hip-hop and their politics of movement have only maintained or have also significantly influenced the discourses on the body and women. To what extent have these practices utilized the mechanism of splitting in generating a monolithic matrix of the female body, and how much has such a matrix been a basis for controlling and disciplining the female performer? What means have individual authors used when stepping away from existing models of body-incorporation, namely the submission of the body to the dominant systems of power within these practices? These questions will be treated through examples of work by Maguy Marin, Yvonne Rainer and Major Lazer.

Key words: discourse on woman, body, politics of movement, ballet, modern dance, hip-hop, splitting

Introduction

At first glance, it may appear that hip-hop, white ballet and modern dance have completely different approaches to the female body, namely, that ballet emphasizes its grace,¹ modern dance allows it freedom,² and that hip-hop (especially *gangsta rap*) is misogynous.³ The que-

¹ Akim Volynsky, *Ballet's Magic Kingdom: Selected Writings on Dance in Russia, 1911–1925*, New Haven–London, Yale University Press, 2008, 134.

² John Martin, *The Modern Dance*, New York, Dance Horizons, 1972, 6.

³ Murali Balaji, "Redefining black womanhood in hip-hop music video", *Journal of Black Studies*, 2008, Vol. 41, 5–20.

stion is whether these practices differ significantly in their relationship to the female body. I place this question within the framework of the theory of object relations. Melanie Klein, as well as authors who continued and further developed her postulates (Susan Isaacs, Betty Joseph, Hanna Segal, Wilfred Bion, Donald Meltzer, etc.) hold that the developing subject attempts to keep love and aggression separate in order to freely expel them. Splitting as a defense mechanism should prevent the realization that those for whom we feel love and devotion are also the very ones we feel anger and hatred towards. The consequences of massive splitting is the inability to integrate the self, as well as to integrate the object (the matrix of the other), and therefore the inability to establish an empathetic relationship with the object. The scheme of the other is kept split and the basic mode of that fracture is into a good and bad object, which is characteristic of a schizo-paranoid position. In addition to the basic configurations of splitting into the good and bad object, there is also splitting that separates functions, as well as splitting that forms a powerful (strong) and worthless (devalued, weak) object. Object relations theory postulates that separate entities grow closer later in development and become part of a new whole. It brings about a depressive position, one that enables grieving and creates the conditions for empathy, but also enables diversifying. The stability of that configuration is never definite. There is the possibility of it partially separating again in crisis situations. Also, certain systems and practices maintain the state of split objects⁴. Discursive practices can also be viewed as those that are based more on the mechanism of splitting or as those that are based more on the fusion and integration of objects. The question, therefore, is whether the practices I write about in this text are closer to one or the other pole of the splitting-integration dimension, regarding their relationship to the female body.

Prior to these considerations, I will briefly list how the key terms will be used in this text.

The *body* will primarily be discussed as a concept, a receptive surface that various tools – social, disciplinarian and epistemological – define in a specific way and in regard to which there are various fantasies, expectations, wishes and actions of limitation. I will also occasionally use the phrase *female body*, relying on the notion of Judith Butler that the body is only recognized through its gender performativity.⁵

I center the syntagm *politics of movement* around Jacques Rancière's understanding of politics as the distribution of the sensible on the public field of society. He also states that politics refers to that which can be seen and heard on the public field, but also to that which remains unseen and unheard.⁶ The politics of movement will therefore relate to systems of organization of movement and their transformations, the total physicality in the performance field ('the one that can be seen and heard, as well as the one that remains unseen and unheard'), and which is in relation with the organization of social power.

⁴ Melanie Klein, "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms", in: Juliet Mitchell (ed.) *The Selected Melanie Klein*, New York, The Hogarth Press–The Institute of Psycho-Analysis–Melanie Klein Trust, 1986, 175–200.

⁵ Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory", *Theater Journal*, 1977, 523.

⁶ Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of The Sensible*, London–New York, Continuum, 2004, 13.

White Ballet

White ballet can be determined as the art of normalized stage behavior that is related to the text of a libretto and music.⁷ Akim Volynsky wrote that in ballet one refers to Greek sculpture as being representative of the universal human body.⁸ Thus, ballet is sculpture in motion. Volynsky also states that ballet is a practice that can clearly emphasize woman's *nature*:

A woman's torso, like a flower's stalk, is constantly bending and unbending. Her waist is dutifully sensitive to all winds. And all the other parts of her body participate in these tender, plantlike demonstrations. Woman is everywhere a plant – pliant, soft, trembling with excitement, and unable to be torn away from the ground.⁹

It appears that in ballet the female body is a construct, a projection of men's fantasies.¹⁰ The body of a female dancer is narcissistically invested, brought (in fact, reduced) to the level of an ideal object. The ideal object is always twofold – it absorbs narcissistic investments, but also carries its own persecutory potential, and can therefore move from an idealization into a persecutory mode.¹¹ In the ballet context, the persecutory quality of woman as an object can be projected into evil fairies and witches, as in the case of the fairy Karabos in *Sleeping Beauty*. The blessed image of harmony that condenses around Aurora's cradle is disrupted by Karabos, an old, ugly, evil, hunchbacked fairy. She breaks up the bodily codes of the courtiers, her movements are abrupt, linear, cramped and grotesque.¹² Karabos has all the *wrong* proportions, primarily gigantic hands. She is a monster, a categorical error created by jeopardizing the gender boundary, combining the male and female aspect (whereby she is created as the persecutor), and as such could not (must not) have been assigned to a female performer (the fairy Karabos was always played by a man). In contrast, the fairies honor Aurora: "with stretched legs and torsos, straight backs, and gracefully rounded arms that open out to frame the face and body like flower petals."¹³

The splitting of woman as an object led to the creation of graceful fairies (Aurora's protectors) and the ungainly Karabos (monster, persecutor). The matrix of woman must be split so the idealizing mode can be realized, the one that is identified as feminine, and must be kept almost paralyzed. The female body appears active, but the matrix of the body is trapped.

Control of the female dance body in white ballet is also implemented through the relationships of dancers on the stage. Movement is presented as the tendency for the female body, with the help of a male performer, to be animated into briefly floating in mid-air, that is, to be in an impossible position in the eyes of the audience. The body incorporation that would make the performance virtuous demands control of the female ballet dancer by her male partner. It

⁷ Bojana Cvejić (at al.), "Fragmentarne istorije plesa u XX i početkom XXI veka: diskursi, poze i transgresije plesa", *TkH. Časopis za teoriju izvođačkih umetnosti*, Beograd, 2002, Vol. 4, 7–29.

⁸ Akim Volynsky, op. cit., 134–136.

⁹ *Ibid*, 152.

¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1983, 275.

¹¹ Object relations theory postulates that through the process of splitting an object, or maintaining split images of objects, new extremes are realized – the idealized and persecutory forms. Thus, one person (object) can easily move from one mode to the other, depending on which feelings it arouses in us. The need to control the object, that is, its persecutory aspect, leads to the aspiration to also control the idealizing one. Melanie Klein, "Notes on Some...", op. cit., 175–200.

¹² Sally Banes, *Dancing Women: Female Bodies on Stage*, London–New York, Routledge, 1998, 54.

¹³ *Ibid*, 54.

also requires control of the dancer over her own body. And the body is offered for viewing to another. The male ballet dancer thus participates in an unspoken conspiracy, is in the service of the one who exposes that body to the view of another man.¹⁴ Although the setup of male observation is seen as a cliché in feminist discourse, it does not decrease the experience that in Western society viewing (namely, who is viewing and who is subject to viewing) is gender-determined.¹⁵ The impossibility of integrating these objects (good and bad) is also reflected in the narrative of white ballet that usually leads to a tragic outcome, one in which the bad object triumphs. In such a placement of the positions of the bad and good female objects, the female ballet dancer could also not be integrated. Any idea of possible female authorship is torn away (ballet ensembles were led by men), thus maintaining the splitting of author-dancer, the splitting of thought-dance.

Modern dance

Andre Lepecki, like John Martin, notes that with modern dance, namely the work of Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Mary Wigman and Rudolph Laban, came the discovery of “movement as the essence of dance” (no longer the process of body animation and combining positions), whereby dance became an independent art.¹⁶ Isadora Duncan freed the body of tight and uncomfortable footwear and clothing, pre-defined figures, and structure that is repeated or simply a new combination of the same elements.¹⁷ Ferguson believes that the only unchanging element of modernity is the propensity for movement.¹⁸ Slotterijk would add that the modernist project is continuously striving for progress, and is therefore in essence kinesthetic.¹⁹ Progress does not mean just transition from position A to position B. A step can only be called progressive if it leads to an increased “ability to make a step”. Therefore progress is the same as a movement that leads to movement, or a movement that leads to increased mobility. Lepecki writes that choreography (as a kinesthetic regime) may in fact have been the discovery of an early modernism. To him, it is not the language of movement, but the recording of movement (writing that either precedes or is created after movement). He states that choreography is the careful and conscientious implementation of a previously determined set of instructions, a technology that creates a body that is disciplined to move in accordance with the commands of the letter.

Establishing choreography was a way to avoid the ephemerality of dance, by relying on techniques that are also determined as the style of a particular choreographer (Graham Technique, Cunningham Technique etc.). This practice generates a system of recognition (the audience recognizes the handwriting of the choreographer), but also reproduction (a choreography

¹⁴ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, London, Penguin, 1990, 46–48.

¹⁵ Ann Daly, “To dance is ‘female’”, *TDR*, 1989, Vol. 34, 23–27.

¹⁶ André Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance: Performance and Politics of Movement*, Routledge, London, 2006, 4.

¹⁷ Duncan writes in her autobiography: “It has taken me years of struggle, hard work, and research to learn to make one simple gesture [...]”. Isadora Duncan, *My Life*, New York–London, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013, xxxi.

¹⁸ Harvie Ferguson, *Modernity and Subjectivity Body, Soul, Spirit*, London, University Press of Virginia, 2000, 11.

¹⁹ Peter Slotterdijk, “Mobilization of the planet from the spirit of self-intensification”, in: André Lepecki and Jenn Joy (eds.), *Planes of Composition: Dance, Theatre and The Global*, London–New York, Seagull Books, 2009, 4–5.

can be included as part of a fixed repertoire, and be handed down through a series of generations of dancers). Therefore, one of the aims of choreography is the formalization and control of movement, as well as placement of dance into the system of economy. Submission of dance to choreography in the modernist age was a new way to establish the demands placed on the dance body, and to conceptualize that body. This practice (in this segment) did not vary significantly, regardless of whether the choreographers were men or women. Despite the general opinion that women-authors liberated the (female) body with modern dance and that modern dance was a revolution of sorts in the relationship between body and movement, this relationship was still imprisoned by new forms of control and splitting, which I will briefly demonstrate with the example of Mary Wigman.

Sally Banes contends that the piece by Mary Wigman *Haxentanz (Witch Dance)* is an example of her work on the exploration of spirituality, the battle against evil and the acceptance of death.²⁰ The dance begins in a seated position, which gives it the appearance of a “hideous and cramped figure”, and proceeds with irregular striking rhythms, angular movements reminiscent of the movements of ghosts and Japanese Noh drama.²¹ Wigman herself described this dance as a dance of rhythmic intoxication.²² There are numerous resonances because the piece not only evokes the occult, forbidden and pagan, but also ties these themes to the female. Margaret Lloyd wrote that in Wigman’s dance the body is like a great ecstasy of darkness, and that Wigman apparently wanted to exorcise the secret evil forces from human nature.²³ Thus, the body looks considerably more liberated than in some other, previous practices, but that liberation is only partial. In the discourse on the heterosexual white male the woman was controlled, made a passive part of public space, whereas in Wigman’s work she was possessed by the spiritual, super/natural, which in fact corresponds to the social structure of power. It appears that Mary Wigman performed what Foucault²⁴ would later describe as “the hysterization of the female body”, its possession, the saturation of power in regard to the female body. Consequently, the body in modern dance became subject to colonization.²⁵ Thus woman is not integrated into a whole, one that both thinks and feels, that has various aspects that, when brought together, create a new structure. As splitting is a mechanism that also brings about separation of functions, it seems that it has been implemented in modern dance as the split between mind and body, or intellect and emotions. The woman is conceived as the place of connection with the otherworldly, whereby Wigman continued, by using other means, the tradition of conceptualizing the female as the sensual, but not as the thinking. She thus becomes only the conductor, not the subject as well.

²⁰ Sally Banes, op. cit., 126–137.

²¹ Ibid, 127.

²² Mary Wigman, *The Language of Dance*, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 1966.

²³ Sally Banes, op. cit., 127.

²⁴ Cf. Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1994.

²⁵ Helen Thomas, *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*, Hampshire–New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2003, 165.

Hip-hop

Tattoos and body alterations are part of hip-hop culture, and a hyper-masculine position is a dominant nominal factor.²⁶ Lingis writes²⁷ that the practice of tattooing offends the *Western sensibility*, because it is an act of expressing subjectivity on the surface of the body (something that the Western white man would like to hide). In addition, inscribing the body's surface serves to expand the erogenous sensitivity of the body. The inscriptions do not create a map of the body, but create the body as a map. Tattoos and scars mark the body as a public, social category, and form a map of social needs, demands and trespasses. They make real the subject's social, gender, marital and economic position or identity within the social hierarchy. Bodybuilding is also a procedure of creating a certain trespass by inscribing a body plan, inscribing muscles, which creates an ideal, modified muscular (male) body of a rap artist, especially in gangsta rap. As such, it is split from all other aspects (empathetic, sublimating, etc.). Therefore the *black* performer is presented as stereotypical, reduced. In the film *Bamboozled* (2000) Spike Lee criticized gangsta rap as a practice that, just like minstrels, intentionally portrays the stereotypical face of African Americans to trivialize communication and entertain audiences. The female body is also identified and reduced to a stereotypical matrix in hip-hop, by means of hyper-sexualization. Make up, heels, bras, and lingerie mark out female bodies, regardless of whether they are *black* or *white*. Through models of body-incorporation, bodies are made subject to the dominant needs of power.²⁸

It is not uncommon to find rap artists surrounded by cars and money in a number of hip-hop videos, as well as by female bodies that are dancing and are themselves partialized²⁹ (Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, 50 Cent, etc.). In the video for the song *P.I.M.P.*, 50 Cent looks directly into the camera as he raps, while a female performer leans on him, facing him (with her back to the camera). Although low-angle shots are usually used to denote power and authority, in this case power and authority can only be attributed to the male, and not the female performer. This is enhanced by the fact that the low-angle shot almost reveals her behind and suggests that women in hip-hop videos "cater to a male consumer's sexual wishes, acquiescing to the idea of being owned by a man"³⁰ Melanie Klein states that splitting at the level of the good (idealized) and bad (persecutory) object is concurrent with splitting at the level of urges. Their function is to prevent the achievement of wholeness that would introduce new (persecutory) feelings such as guilt and regret.³¹ Interpreted from that discourse, gangsta rap would be a practice in which the images of the women are kept apart, the positive one is neglected and this negative part is devalued. Unlike ballet, in which the negative image of the woman becomes a persecutory object, in hip-hop she is devalued, made passive and dependent on the strength and power of the man. The pole of male strength projection can only exist if there is a pole of

²⁶ Thomas DeFrantz, "The Black Beat Made Visible: Hip Hop Dance and Body Power", in: André Lepecki (ed.), *Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on Dance and Performance Theory*, Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press Middletown, 2004, 65–80.

²⁷ Alphonso Lingis, *Excesses: Eros and Culture*, New York, State University of New York, 1984, 34–38.

²⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, op. cit.

²⁹ The word *partialization* is used here in the sense of separating the different aspects of object/subject, in order to emphasize one and avoid all other aspects.

³⁰ Murali Balaji, op. cit., 5–20.

³¹ Melanie Klein, "Mourning and its relation of manic-depressive states", in: Juliet Mitchell (ed.), op. cit., 146–174.

female weakness. One pole cannot do without the other. Splitting separates elements whose connectedness would cause tension (such as guilt), but it connects other elements, often those that are thus brought together in symbiosis. Hence, in the devaluation of the woman, male rap artists are united, they become part of a brotherhood. To that effect, Gerald Armstrong states that hip-hop and rap artists use misogynous elements in lyrics and visual presentation as a way of affirming their masculinity and presenting their authenticity as rap artists.³²

Hip-hop dance practice often uses the *booty bounce* as a dance element. It is a move in which, with legs apart and knees bent, the pelvis moves back and forth. This might not be so glaring (dancers have swung their pelvis in the past), but this move is meant exclusively for women. The *twerk* is a similar move, except that the knees are more bent and the persons sometimes leans their hands on their thighs. This way, there is often an entire group of women dancing around the rapper, which occasionally develops into collective booty bouncing and twerking. This forms the image of a man surrounded by partial objects, and psychoanalysis teaches us that partial objects serve to relieve urges, i.e. they indicate that there has been no fusion of libido and aggression, nor the integration of the object, which would allow one to accept the completeness of the other.³³

Female hip-hop artists have attempted to provide their answer, but have often used the same traditional means, only relating them to men. In the video for *Super Bass* (2010) Nicki Minaj is in a swimming pool surrounded by men and only occasionally interacts with them by pouring a pink liquid on them. *Booty bouncing* remains a predominant dance element. Minaj did not attempt to apply a new dance concept that would in turn redefine the relationship of positions. These altered gender roles are realized in the same cultural key, and not as a departure in the deconstruction of the female position in hip-hop culture.

Deconstruction of the body and altered politics of movement

The previous part of the text points out that in white ballet, modern dance and hip-hop, the politics of movement influenced the domain in which the splitting-objectified female body matrix would be realized. Shklovsky (Шкловски)³⁴ writes that automatization makes events schematic, so we accept things without thinking, without awareness, mechanically. Actualization means disrupting that scheme. The artistic process is in fact just such. It is a process that creates a distance from what is expected, what is meant, one that emphasizes difficulties. In the context of this study, the artistic process might (among other things) indicate the points of splitting. This certainly holds for the work of Yvonne Rainer, Maguy Marin and Major Lazer, who have succeeded in deconstructing the matrix of the female body, in part through interventions in the domain of politics of movement.

After the emergence of female authors in dance during modernism who tied the female body to nature, the otherworldly and the sensual (Isadora Duncan, Mary Wigman, Martha Graham), Yvonne Rainer was possibly the first to deconstruct the matrix of the female body by offering intellectual complexity in her works. Her piece *Trio A* (1966), also known as *The Mind Is a Muscle*, has several versions. In some there are three female performers, in others three

³² Gerald Armstrong, "Gangsta misogyny: A content analysis of the portrayals of violence against women in rap music", *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 2001, Vol. 8, 96–126.

³³ Melanie Klein, "Mourning and it's...", op. cit.

³⁴ Aldo Milohnić, *Teorije savremenog teatra i performansa*, Beograd, Orion Art, 2013, 93–94.

male dancers; the solo performance version was used for a video-dance (directed by Robert Alexander).³⁵ The dance takes place in silence, without music, the only sound created in the relationship between the body and the floor. For the first six minutes we observe a dance made up of moves that represent an entirely new vocabulary, so the movement does not reveal any of the known techniques (at that time). In part, this is not surprising, considering that there had been various revolutions in dance by then. Modern dance had released the body from form (technique and costumes), and Merce Cunningham had separated dance from music. Rainer was (like others gathered around the Judson Church project) under the influence of John Cage. In *Trio A* she attempts to prevent any repetition. The body is perpetually in new movement, but there is no imperative of continuity. The breaks in movement are not conceived, they follow the logic of the body. The movement is one that is possible, not one that is designed to produce a sensual effect. Jill Sigman states that Rainer found new and revolutionary forms of movement on stage.³⁶ She rejects dance tradition for simple, bared, honest and non-expressive movement. She was interested in people who walk, run, and jump from heights, who carry mattresses and other objects. The aim was to perform movements that are *natural* – their performing and not their presenting. The dancer performs a movement so that it seems ordinary, not virtuous. This politics of movement resulted in a new concept of the dancing body, and how weight and time are determined, as well as how performative the execution is. By challenging old paradigms in the domain of politics of movement, she inevitably challenged the matrix of woman and the female body, which was dominant in classical ballet and partly in modern dance. The body became a thinking body. Mind/body and thinker/dancer splitting was abolished. She did this by focusing the body's intellect. Dance became a production created by the work of a body in movement. Dance became a thing of the task, or rather, of the decisions made in the realization of the task.

This video-dance follows the dancer frontally for the first six minutes. There is no editing, no different angles and no extra cameras. After that first phase, a section titled “details” appears. The camera is no longer static and the material is not created from a single frame. It is as though the authors wished to add several footnotes that elucidate certain parts of the video material. If we were to follow that logic, then the entire first part of the video material is a text, an essay. If these ‘details’ are footnotes, then they can be edited, repeated, magnified and so on. In that way, the image of the thinking (and not the affecting) female body is almost microscopically focused on, and that focused material is multiplied with repetition. Rainer completely corrodes the previously loaded matrix of the woman down to a thought substrate, and then multiplies that very substrate. Through dance hyperbole (created in the details), she increases the distance from the sensual and emotional. In fact, with this distance, and with intention, she creates a new splitting – one that no longer serves for defense, but for increasing awareness and articulating discourse. The mechanism appears fundamentally simple. It moves in opposite directions, but is the same in its logic as the one used by Maguy Marin in the ballet *Groosland*.

Martha Bremser states that Maguy Marin changed the principles of her work over the years, but that she often combined ballet and contemporary techniques.³⁷ Maguy Marin created *Groosland* (1990) for *Het National Ballet*, set to the music of Bach's *Brandenburg Concerto*, nos. 2 and 3. There have been earlier practices, appearing in the transition from ballet to modern

³⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZwj1NMEE-8>, ac. 18. 09. 2014 at 18.10 PM.

³⁶ Jill Sigman, “Uobičajeni pokret: Trio A i kako ples označava”, *TkH. Časopis za teoriju izvođačkih umetnosti*, 2002, Vol. 4, 80–84.

³⁷ Martha Bremser (ed.), *Fifty Contemporary Choreographers*, London–New York, Routledge, 1999, 197.

dance, that have altered the position of the female body in relation to the male body. However, *Groosland* may be one of the first examples where deconstruction of the body matrix was done from within ballet itself.

Parts of the female performers' costumes are blue skirts and blouses, shoes and head scarves. The male performers wear blue tank-tops, blue workers' trousers (somewhat shortened), shoes and pork-pie hats (several sizes smaller than is usual). The performers seem to signify the stereotype of the working class.³⁸ Maguy Marin added another costume under this one for the dancers, one in the shape of an obese human body (stuffed with felt and sponge), based on the rounded figural portrayals of Fernando Botero. This second skin almost completely covers the body of the performer, with only the face and ears showing. The face is also altered with make up, so that all the performers have identical expressions. As the ballet progresses, clothing is removed from the (costume) bodies. The nudity is twofold. It is a naked body that, being obese, is always hidden from the public eye. It is additionally nude because it appears within a dance institution, within the ballet tradition. Such a body matrix eliminated the possibility of the female body being offered for viewing to the man in the audience. The audience is offered an obese, altered ballet body that no longer satisfies the demand that ballet be a Greek figure in motion. Perhaps that is why John Rockwell holds that the nudity (enacted by Maguy Marin) is, in fact, politically incorrect and that it provokes disgust, which Marin successfully ties to enjoyment.³⁹

Groosland starts off with the stage workers rolling in the bodies of the performers in carts and setting them up in several formations. As the first bar of music starts they all begin moving. And the music is *classical*. Therefore, within the institution (ballet), the bodies are set up like puppets and move as the music orders them to. Movement is derived from ballet and social dances, as well as being partly based on contemporary dance techniques. The movement created by Maguy Marin is always brief, the knees are slightly bent and the dancers mostly shuffle around the stage (never taking full steps, never fully extending their bodies). The body concept also influenced the politics of movement, partly due to physical constraints (the obesity of the costume/skin), partly to emphasize such a body through the very character of the movement.

With *Groosland*, Maguy Marin revealed, highlighted, and confronted things that ballet takes to be axiomatic, or those it wishes to conceal, to omit – that the body cannot, in fact, float in mid-air; that the body that is created on stage (in ballet) is a body that does not really exist in offstage-reality; that bodies are gender-defined in ballet, socially designated, and that dancers are often not defined as workers (in culture). The abolishment of certain ballet conventions allowed the emergence of a different body, as well as a different constitution of movement. At the same time, Maguy Marin stayed within the ballet institutional framework, with movements lasting only as long as there was music and being in accordance with its character. In addition, she did not introduce persons with *really* different bodies on stage. It appears that she did not want to risk testing whether such a performance would be possible. The bodies in *Groosland* represent a certain reality, but their bodies do not produce because they themselves are not completely real on stage. Maguy Marin allowed the dancers' bodies to be possessed by a different body scheme. The documentary film that follows the recording of the performance⁴⁰ shows that the dancers were not happy about the possession. They seem confused in

³⁸ John Rockwell, "Stripped Down to Their Fat Suits, With Nary a Toe Shoe in Sight", *The New York Times*, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/09/arts/dance/09lyon.html?_r=0/, ac. 15. 07. 2014 at 19.38 PM.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Recording of performance and documentary film on the work process for *Groosland*, directed by Hugo Dekker, 1990. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9OQbU8qVT20/>, ac. 18. 07. 2014 at 18.10 PM

rehearsals. This second skin confronts them with the cultural inscription that these bodies are burdened with and that expels them (the performers) from their usual dancer's skin. Thus, splitting into the good and bad object is abandoned. It has become superfluous. The focus is on society's relation to the body. The body matrix is intentionally magnified in order to be abolished in the magnification. Major Lazer uses magnified body schemes in a similar way, but bases them on stereotypical matrixes of bodies within the institution of hip-hop.

Major Lazer is the group identity of three artists – Diplo, Jillionaire and Walshy Fire. *Bubble But* is a single that Major Lazer made with Bruno Mars and the singer Mystic. The video for the song (2013) was directed by Eric Wareheim. The video begins in a room where three *white* girls are lounging around, being bored. Parallel to that we see Buttzilla, a gigantic *black* woman, flying through the universe. She has hose-like tentacles that penetrate into the girls' room, finds their behinds and fills them with a liquid. The behinds grow to large proportions, and thus Lazer establishes, at the outset, the body matrix that he refers to. The single *Baby Got Back* by the American artist Sir Mix-a-Lot seems to tie into the video for *Bubble But*. The *Baby Got Back* song and video made visible the “brown girls/big booties vs. white girls/flat asses debate that has probably been discussed behind closed doors for as long as African and European people have been living side by side”.⁴¹ The issue of the size of behinds has become a national issue, ethnically sensitive and a basis for discussions about inter-ethnic relations. Lazer references *Baby Got Back* by exaggerating the stereotypical female ethnic signifiers.

The girls' room is transformed into a dance studio where various girls with large behinds twerk. The *white* girls from the beginning of the video also dance in line with hip-hop practice. It is as though those behinds have labeled them and given them the necessary prerogatives for a dance that was at first only rhetorically a part of their cultural space. Finally, it appears that Lazer no longer needed to tie twerking to the ethnic issue, because Buttzilla introduces white girls with smaller behinds into the dance space. They also begin dancing in the tradition of booty bouncing. The ethnic boundary is no longer the basis for segregating women in this newly-defined space and neither is the social environment, considering that women in the same place are variously designated by costumes. Women are defined as a common set by booty bouncing, and set apart clearly by gender.⁴² Lazer thus establishes a sisterhood, analogous to the brotherhood of rap artists. The atmosphere in the video takes on the character of a great celebration, with confetti and smoke, suggesting that the identity of such a gender grouping is produced by the entertainment system. It is interesting to note that there are no male performers in the video, which prevents establishing gender-defined positions of power from the outset. By hypertrophying the body matrix, the devalued matrix of the female hip-hop body is first hypertrophied and then abolished. For that reason, at the end of the video, Buttzilla will return to the cosmos she came from. She is the platform that opens up a space for absurdifying body matrixes by hypertrophying them.

⁴¹ Jesse Serwer for the web platform Larg Up, <http://www.largeup.com/2013/05/29/major-lazer-bubble-butt-video/> ac. 22. 07. 2014 at 19.20 PM

⁴² As with any dance practice, gender is also practiced through a series of acts that are repeated and consolidated over time, at least according to Judith Butler in “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory”, op. cit.

Conclusion

The practices of white ballet, modern dance and hip-hop have shown to be related in the discourse on women. They apply the same mechanism of splitting, but in different areas and with differing results. In white ballet it is the split into the idealized and the persecutory object, in modern dance it is the split between the body and the intellect, and in hip-hop it is the split between the powerful male subject and the devalued female object. If we follow this line of discussion, we can say that all three practices are part of the same cultural space in which the female position is still experienced according to culturally-established canons, norms and forms of representation that are not of recent date. In ballet, that means that it cannot be viewed as an independent cultural phenomenon and that “this superior art form”⁴³ has much more of the narcissistic and misogynous in it than would be assumed at first glance. Modern dance has liberated the female body, but it abused it anew just as much. This indicates that the misogynous elements of hip-hop are not specific to it, but only express that which has existed as an age-old cultural tradition. It appears that that tradition has also contributed to the underdevelopment of the science of dance, when compared to the science of other performing arts. The logocentrism of Western society considers the non-verbal (female, pre-verbal, pre-linguistic, bodily experience – according to Freud and Lacan) a deficiency. Theoreticians very rarely engage in dance, which brings about a marginalization of the body compared to the privileged way of language communication – which is proclaimed as masculine. Instead of the body, one discusses and writes about the figure in a non-interest-oriented aesthetic enjoyment.⁴⁴

Rainer’s politics of movement places the body in a non-gender and non-dance context (she abolished all previously-existing politics of movement and reduced it to everyday, possible movements), Maguy Marin distanced the body from the ballet body (and made movement “brief” and, as such, non-balletic), and Lazer hyperbolized the body, gender-wise and ethnicity-wise (in order to abolish the referent body matrix, to make it superfluous). Hence, Rainer’s process is similar but opposite to the action of Marin and Lazer. Rainer abolished so as to augment, whereas Lazer and Marin augment to the extreme so as to abolish. These authors created a new cultural space that inhabited the existing matrices of the body, but in that process created a distance from those matrices, a distance that emphasized difficulties.

⁴³ Akim Volynsky, *op. cit.*, 134–135.

⁴⁴ Bojana Cvejić (at al.), *op. cit.*, 7–29.