

STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY

Department of Theatre Studies

**MIME AS A MANNERISM BETWEEN
POPULAR CULTURE AND THE AVANT-GARDE
- A LOOK AT 19TH-CENTURY PARIS**

Translated from Swedish and French by Deepl translator 20251024

Stockholm University of the Arts

Master's
thesis
Autumn 2000
by Torun Boucher
Supervisor: Sven Åke Heed

ABSTRACT

MIME AS A MANNERISM BETWEEN POPULAR CULTURE AND AVANT-GARDE - a dropdown into nineteenth century Paris

The purpose of this study is to examine and analyse the pantomime that took place at Boulevard du Temple in Paris 1815 – 1862, with its very famous hero Jean-Gaspard Debureau. This pantomime is for the mime what the dying Swan is for the dance and the monologue of Hamlet is for the theatre. It represents at the same time a canon and a burden for the art. This pantomime is also representative of the mime's position between popular culture and avant-garde. From being pure workers' entertainment, never referred to by critics or considered by intellectuals, all of a sudden the Romantic movement became involved with it, and pantomime became the must of the avant-garde.

My hypothesis is that mime and pantomime are typical popular art forms, but are sometimes used by different avant-gardes to revolt against old canons. My purpose is to clarify mime's role in theatre and to question the habit of overlooking the role of popular culture in theatre history.

The theories about modern disciplinary power developed by Michel Foucault have formed the theoretical framework for this study. I have also been influenced by Arnold Hauser's theories about mannerism in a discussion about definitions of mime.

In the early nineteenth century, pantomime was a subculture; working-class culture was forced into silence, but escaped into the language of pantomime. As freedom of speech gained ground on working-class stages, a normative discipline for theatre-going was imposed instead.

To define mime as a mannerism is to recognise the way technical bravura is part of mime, and the way mime exists as an undercurrent that surfaces when high culture needs new impulses, but is never able to secure its place in a high culture signified by good taste.

Today's good taste in theatre is not only the way dramatic texts are interpreted on stage, but also is defined by the way we visit the theatre. We go to the theatre the same way as we go to the library. We sit down in silence considering the text performed, we do not relate to the persons around us. This is a fairly new way of being at the theatre, and could be seen as the very result of the disciplining movement towards the theatre in the nineteenth century. The audience is silenced and the physical bodies in both the audience and on stage are very discreet. To put it briefly, the body is discredited in the theatre world.

Author: Boucher, Torun
School: University of Stockholm, Sweden
Date: 2000
Adviser: Heed, Sven Åke
Pages: 45
Subject: Theatre

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
<i>Definitions</i>	2
<i>Hypothesis, purpose and questions</i>	3
<i>Research overview</i>	3
<i>Theory and method</i>	6
2 THE CONCEPTS OF MIME AND PANTOMIME..... ?	
<i>Mannerism</i>	12
3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF PANTOMIME	
IN THE SMALL THEATRES OF PARIS 1800–1862.....	14
<i>1800–1815</i>	15
<i>1815–1830</i>	16
<i>Loopholes in censorship</i>	19
<i>Funambules and Deburau</i>	21
<i>1830–1848</i>	23
<i>Romanticism and Pantomime</i>	25
<i>The Integration of Small Theatres into the Paris Theatre World</i>	27
<i>1848</i>	29
4 PANTOMIME AND THE DISCIPLINING OF	
THEATRE.....	32
<i>Michel Foucault</i>	32
<i>A sorted pantomime</i>	36
<i>Loopholes in the net</i>	37
<i>The discipline of theatre</i>	39
<i>A subjective and authoritarian theatre</i>	41
<i>The role of the Romantics</i>	43
5 CONCLUSION	46
6 BIBLIOGRAPHY	49

INTRO

One evening in 1840, when Deburau was not playing, a man dressed entirely in black appeared solemnly at Dr. Ricord's house. The great physician was struck by his luminous physiognomy, though covered with a veil of melancholy: his forehead thought, his eyes spoke, his lips expressed all the malice of a sceptic.

'Are you ill, sir?' asked Ricord.

- 'Yes, Doctor, I am suffering from a fatal illness.

- What illness?

- Sadness, boredom, melancholy, horror of myself and others.

- I saw that, murmured Ricord with a smile; but it's not a fatal illness, one can recover from worse.

- What should I do?

Ricord looked at this imaginary patient, who reminded him of

Molière. 'What should I do?' said the matador again.

Ricord, who had seen Deburau the day before, replied, 'Go see Deburau.

- I am Deburau, Doctor.

Isn't that a scene from Shakespeare?'¹

Jean-Gaspard Deburau was a mythical figure, a romantic cult icon, but also a very real actor who was immensely popular among 'les plus basses classes', i.e. the 'lower classes' of Paris.

Deburau performed pantomime at the Funambules theatre between 1815 and 1846, and the type of pantomime performed there is the subject of this essay.

There were also other forms of pantomime during the same period, both in Paris and elsewhere. Classical ballet, for example, made use of pantomime, and in bourgeois theatre there was something called 'pantomime dialoguee'. It is worth noting that pantomime was never entertainment solely for the 'lower classes', but it is their pantomime that is the focus here.

I have chosen Deburau's version of 19th-century pantomime for two reasons. Firstly, Deburau is to mime what The Dying Swan is to dance and Hamlet's soliloquy is to theatre – he represents both a canon and a caricature. Secondly, the pantomime at Funambules provides a clear picture of the oscillation between avant-garde and popular culture. From being purely a working-class affair, never written about or reviewed, it was suddenly elevated to a model for the newly formed romantic avant-garde.

¹ Arsene Hossaye, preface to Jules Janin, *Deburau, histoire du Theatre à Quatre sous, pour faire suite à l'histoire du Theatre-Fran9ais* (Paris: Librairie des bibliophiles, 1881) pp. V–VI. (All quotation marks and apostrophes are in the original, including the title of the book, *Theatre*.)

Definitions

Throughout history, the word mime has come to represent a wide variety of meanings, ranging from the ancient equivalent of live shows featuring naked women to Etienne Decroux's modernist études in the 20th century. In between, we can mention Pylades and Bathyllus, Indian dance, a style within classical ballet, an element of Commedia dell'arte, 'pantomime blanche', a technique within 'street dance', minor stars on TV. The list could go on and on.

Pantomime also has many meanings, but can at the same time be seen as part of mime. While mime often includes speech, pantomime has often been silent, but not always.

From this confusion, one can try to distil an essence, a phenomenology of mime, or instead separate the different traditions that claim the concept of mime and consider them from their different contexts. Both things have been done, not least to better distinguish one's own tradition and be able to reject others as illegitimate. The essay begins with a discussion of contemporary definitions of the concepts of mime and pantomime and the reckoning with 19th-century pantomime that characterised the 20th century.

My own position in this discussion is controversial (at least in many mime circles) and is based on the idea that Decroux's mime and ancient mime are both expressions of the mime genre. Instead of delimiting the genre and claiming that certain expressions that have historically been called mime can no longer be counted as such because the word has changed meaning throughout history, my hypothesis is that mime encompasses all expressions that have ever claimed the designation.

Based on this generous offer, I believe I can discern phenomena that I might otherwise have missed if the attack had excluded certain more controversial forms, such as ancient mime, from the outset.

When I define mime as a mannerism between popular culture and the avant-garde, this is an attempt to pin down the shifting meaning of mime as a criterion for mime. Mannerism is actually an art historical term that was originally used pejoratively to describe art that was considered to be a departure from the formal purity of the Renaissance. Mannerism has been regarded as an art in crisis, an art that borrows and mixes, perhaps not unlike postmodernism in architecture. Arnold Hauser's definition of Mannerism as a virtuoso ambiguity in the break between eras has served as inspiration.

Popular culture, high culture and avant-garde are terms that I use in their conventional sense. Popular culture thus refers to culture that lies outside the mainstream cultural canon, has commercial viability and is widely disseminated outside the 'salons' of culture. High culture represents the canon and culture with high status at the top of the social hierarchy. Avant-garde stands for experimental, innovative art based on the canon.

Hypothesis, purpose, and questions

My hypothesis is that mime and pantomime have functioned as a popular link between different stages in the history of theatre and dance, as a transitional phase, as a mannerism. This has occurred in the break between antiquity and the Middle Ages, between Commedia dell'arte and Boulevard theatre, as a passage in the Romantic avant-garde, as a weapon against naturalism, via popular culture into postmodernism. I believe that mime is fundamentally a form of popular culture, which has been used repeatedly throughout history by various avant-garde movements to rebel against ossified canons, but which itself has not achieved any lasting affiliation with high culture.

The fundamental question can be described as where and why pantomime arises – where did it come from, where did it go, what were its conditions. Why and when does pantomime become interesting, why and when does it cease to be interesting?

My aim is to clarify the phenomenon of mime in theatre and to question the view of history that overlooks the role of popular culture in theatre history. This is not only for ideological reasons, of course, but also stems from a lack of documentation. Here, too, the popular cultural variant of 19th-century pantomime is a good example, as it has not been preserved in the form of written plays or reports. Its traces must be sought in the records of censorship authorities, payrolls and police reports on the nature of public life.

Research Overview

"The art of making and playing pantomimes is very like blowing soap bubbles. You succeed a moment, then nothing remains."² How does one write about soap bubbles? This quote aptly describes the feeling that arises after reading historical accounts of pantomime. It seems to be an elusive art form, as much an illusion in itself as the illusion it creates on stage.

It is certainly a problem that I have been limited to secondary literature, as there is an obvious need for basic research in this field. There has not been a great deal of research into mime in general or 19th-century pantomime. The literature that is available consists mainly of various works of popular science and overviews of theatre history, and even there, not much has been written. By far the most widely written about is the story of Debureau at the Funambules theatre. Thanks to his fame, pantomime has gained a certain amount of space even in broader overviews of French theatre at this time. But even Debureau was perhaps just an illusion. The literature I

² Raoul de Najac, "Souvenirs of a Mime" in *Mimes on Miming*, ed. Rolf, Bari (Los Angeles: Panjandrum), p. 68.

have had access to do not agree on the simplest things. There are as many versions of Deburau's life as there are books.

My main source regarding pantomime on the Boulevard du Temple in general, and at the Funambules in particular, is *The Politics of Pantomime: Working-class Theatre in Paris, 1800-1862*, a doctoral thesis in history by Carolyn Jane Johnston from 1998.³ Johnston has done some serious research, reading police reports and censorship decisions, which helped her dig up a bunch of stuff about the otherwise pretty unknown history of the more famous romantic pantomime. Almost everything else that has been written about pantomime in Paris in the first half of the 19th century is based on texts written in the second half of the 19th century, which are mostly nostalgic memoirs by the Romantics who were involved in 'discovering' pantomime around 1830. Johnston is very critical of the image they gave of pantomime, which has lived on into our own time. However, they are interesting for that very reason, and because they show how it

The romantic avant-garde adopted pantomime. The most important of these is the book *Deburau, histoire du Theatre à Quatre sous, pour faire suite à l'histoire du Theatre-Français* by Jules Janin,⁴ who was a wealthy literary critic with a pronounced faiblesse for the lives and theatre of 'simpler' people. Arsene Hossaye writes in the preface that Deburau had Jules

Janin for his fame.⁵ This is true with some qualification, as Deburau was famous among the 'lower classes' long before Janin wrote about him, but Janin made the contemporary cultural elite discover Deburau. His story has also formed the basis for most of what has been written about Deburau and Funambules since then.

Others who wrote about Deburau during his lifetime or shortly afterwards, and also wrote plays for Deburau, include Théophile Gautier, Charles Nodier, Jules Champfleury, Théodore de Banville and Georges Sand. These texts are a mixture of anecdotes, romantic and sometimes nostalgic reflections on the people, and propaganda for their own plays at the Funambules.

Contemporary historiography has reproduced the Romantics' texts to a surprising degree and can be divided into two categories. One category focuses on pantomime itself and can generally be said to have been written by mimes with an interest in

³ Carolyn Jane Johnston, "The Politics of Pantomime: Working-class Theatre in Paris, 1800-1862", unpublished dissertation, University of California, 1998, microfilm (DAI 50/08, July 1998, 283-A).

⁴ Jules Janin, *Deburau, histoire du Theatre à Four Sous, to follow à l'histoire du Theatre-Français* (Paris: Librairie des bibliophiles, 1881). (Theatre in original.)

⁵ Hossaye, p. XXI.

reassess an art form that has often been regarded as inferior in theatre history. Few of them deal with 19th-century pantomime in any great detail or in any new way, but the texts are widely read in mime circles and thus form part of the self-image of mime artists. The second category consists of more general histories of theatre in 19th-century Paris, where pantomime is mostly treated rather summarily, but in its own way also contributes to the image of mime.

⁽⁷⁾ Other perspectives in broader histories can also provide a complementary picture of pantomime. Ingvar Holm, for example, describes in detail how bourgeois theatre used working-class characters in melodramas to achieve a clearer artistic polarisation in relation to the nobility,⁽⁸⁾ which provides an angle on the Romantics' interest in pantomime as popular entertainment.

One book that falls outside the two categories mentioned above is Robert Storey's study of 19th-century pantomime from a psychoanalytical perspective. Storey has also done some basic research and, like Johnstone, has read preserved censored copies of manuscripts, among other things. He, too, is highly critical of the prevailing historiography and provides many examples of how the Romantics misunderstood much about pantomime, such as the belief that Deburau always played the same character when in fact there was great variation in the roles, even though they were all called Pierrot.¹⁰ However, Storey's aim is not to revise the history of pantomime, but to show its function as a psychological substitute, primarily for Romantic writers. He also analyses these writers' relationship to pantomime from a literary perspective.

Existing historical accounts of 19th-century pantomime are, as mentioned, confusing. The only thing all sources seem to agree on is the year of Deburau's birth, which in itself seems suspicious. Otherwise, the information varies considerably – for example, there are roughly as many dates for when Funambules opened and when Deburau started at Funambules as there are sources. Even Johnston and Storey have partially contradictory data, which is probably due to the fact that Johnstone has more sources from the period before 1830, while

⁶ They will be cited and discussed later, but I am referring primarily to Thomas Leabhart, Mira Felner and Bari Rolf, who are widely read and often cited. I will also refer to two doctoral theses by David Alberts and Kathryn Wylie, which follow the same pattern but are not as well known.

⁷ These will also be discussed further; those cited in this essay are Marvin Carlsson, F.W.J. Hemmings, Ingvar Holm and Frederick Brown.

⁸ Ingvar Holm, *The Stage of Industrialism: From the Theatre History of Revolutions and Commodities* (Stockholm: AWE / Gebers, 1979) p. 51.

⁹ Robert Storey, *Pierrots on the Stage of Desire: Nineteenth-Century French Literary Artists and the Comic Pantomime* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985).

¹⁰ Storey, p.10f.

Storey mainly studied the period after that. Johnston is the one who placed Deburau's debut earliest, and it seems likely that she is correct. She has studied payrolls and cast lists where Deburau appears in the role of Pierrot several years earlier than is usually stated. But even Johnston's basic research is limited. One example is the information about how and when Madame Saqui's establishment began and ended. Madame Saqui was a neighbour of Funambules and had a similar repertoire. Putting together the various pieces of information available, Madame Saqui began running a café with entertainment shortly after the revolution in 1789, which is considerably earlier than stated by Johnston, who was probably not interested in café movements. On the other hand, according to Johnston, Madame Saqui's business continued until 1862, when the building that housed it was demolished. Other sources indicate 1830 as the year when the business ceased, but according to Johnston, Madame Saqui changed the name and part of the repertoire of her theatre at that time. Whether Madame Saqui herself actually performed for almost seventy years is not clear. Madame Saqui was mainly famous as a tightrope walker.

Theory and method

The theatre as a practice of power, the role of pantomime in this practice of power, and the significance of the loopholes in power for the development of pantomime have been the theoretical perspective in reading the historical overviews. I have primarily based my work on Michel Foucault's theories of power and the modern disciplining of humans.¹¹ These are the subject of a separate chapter and form the basis for the concluding analysis. Inspired by Arnold Hauser's art-historical theories on Mannerism, I have also questioned contemporary attempts to make mime more 'respectable' in the introductory discussion of the concepts of mime and pantomime in this essay.

During the 19th century, pantomime evolved from expressing a republican idealistic self-image among the working class to representing a romantic bourgeoisie prone to violence and rebellion. At the same time, the theatrical entertainment of the working class was subject to increasing regulation.

Pantomime was originally the result of external coercion. Regulations prohibiting certain scenes from using speech and song created a subculture consisting of pantomime. As the coercion gradually ceased, the subculture broke up, but instead a normalising regulation of the theatre event itself took its place. The freer the theatre was to choose its genre, the more regulated its activities became. In the end, the theatre was abandoned by the working class, which instead shifted its interest to 'café concerts', a kind of music café. It was a movement

¹¹ The most influential books are *Discipline and Punish* (1998) by Michel Foucault and *Foucault's Power Analysis* (1996) by Mikael Hömqvist.

which took place both geographically (between theatres and neighbourhoods in Paris) and ideologically. Pantomime can be seen here as part of the process Foucault describes as a modern disciplining of humans, beginning in the 19th century.

The power struggle that Foucault describes is never centralised and uniform, but rather fragmented and contradictory. Power and resistance intertwine and redefine the field in sometimes unexpected ways. What interests me are precisely these unexpected results, the missing link in the organisation of power. I have called this the loophole of power. My theory is that pantomime operated in these loopholes, and that this is precisely why it was interesting both in popular culture and in the avant-garde.

The method is to collect various statements about mime in the 19th century and read them against each other in order to try to pinpoint what makes pantomime attractive, why and when this happens, and why this attraction then ceases. Furthermore, these statements are analysed based on Foucault's and Hauser's theories of power, discipline and mannerism in an attempt to access the deeper meaning that mime may carry. The essay begins with a discussion of definitions of mime and pantomime, in which mannerism is also proposed as a possible definition. This is followed by a section that traces the history of pantomime in Paris from 1800 to 1862. Based on this history, the place of pantomime is then analysed, including in relation to the place of theatre, in the development that Michel Foucault called the modern disciplining of man. Romanticism can be seen as a moment in this development that has come to obscure the earlier function of pantomime and has partly given pantomime new meanings.

THE CONCEPTS OF MIME AND PANTOMIME

To talk of mime, to give it a definition, is almost impossible. To say, as the dictionary does, that it is the action of imitating is somewhat limited; to say that it is theatre without words is to reduce it to the state of pre-literate child; to say that it is the art of picking flowers without flowers, of climbing stairs without steps, is to confine it to a game of riddles. To say – they say so many things about mime. ⁽¹²⁾

The above quote describes a relatively common point of view, which appears in endless variations in almost all literature on mime. Most people who have written about mime have nevertheless attempted to define the word in some way — etymologically, historically, ideologically. To account for all the different meanings to which the words mime and pantomime refer could be the subject of an essay in itself. The words have existed in various forms for a very long time and have had a wide range of meanings.

¹² Dominique Bourquin, "Curtain-raiser", *Mimes an Miming*, ed. Bari Rolf (Los Angeles: Panjandrum Books (year missing)), p. 3.

different meanings. Larousse¹³ provides a very brief but illuminating explanation that in ancient times, *mime* referred to burlesque comedies, but today it refers more to a genre in which actions and emotions are expressed through gestures. It should be added that Roman mime comedies included spoken dialogue, which is actually often the case today as well. According to Larousse, *pantomime* also means actions and emotions expressed through gestures, but with the difference that pantomime has usually, but not always, been silent.

The definitions I discuss below are contemporary Western ones; I leave aside concepts from other cultures, as well as historical definitions. Common to contemporary definitions of mime is that 19th-century pantomime often constitutes a wall against which they struggle. It is this field of tension that interests me.

From the outset, modern mime distanced itself from 19th-century pantomime. "Decroux, reacting strongly against the white-faced pantomime he had seen at *café-concerts* as a child, envisioned a modern mime which would be as clear and beautiful a record of essence as are the paintings of Mondrian and the sculpture of Brancusi, two of Decroux's contemporaries."¹⁴ Etienne Decroux is usually considered the doyen of modern mime and had a major influence on the interpretation of mime as an art form during the second half of the 20th century. A famous statement by Decroux reads:

If I have been impressed by all the arts, even if not equally impressed by all of them, there is one that frankly displeased me. And that is pantomime. Pantomime: that play of face and hands which seemed to try to explain things but lacked the needed words. I detested this form. But that's rather strange because pantomime was always supposed to amuse people. Art should be serious first of all. Painting is, first of all, serious. [...] An art is first of all serious and adds the comic aspect later. And this pantomime seemed to me to be systematically comic, even before one knew what the subject was. (¹⁵)

Thomas Leabhart believes that Decroux was a modernist, that his mime is modern in the same way as, for example, modern art. Mime today is different from what it was a hundred years ago. "While much of nineteenth-century art was concerned with prettiness, sentimentality, rhapsodic emotions, and romantically glorified appearances, twentieth-century art has tried instead to reveal essence."¹⁶

These statements contain more than a modernist manifesto; they also constitute a defensive defence against any confusion of mime with the superficial pantomime of the 19th century.

¹³ *Dictionnaire de la langue Française: lexis* (Paris: Larousse, 1986).

¹⁴ Thomas Leabhart, *Modern and Post-modern Mime* (London: Macmillan Education, 1989), p. 12.

¹⁵ Decroux, Etienne, "The Origin of Corporeal Mime", *Mime Journal: Etienne Decroux Eightieth Birthday Issue*, ed. Thomas Leabhart (1978: 7-8), p. 9.

¹⁶ Thomas Leabhart, "Corporeal Theatre", *New Mime in North America*, ed. Thomas Leabhart (Claremont: Mime Journal, 1982), p. 46.

and an offensive attack on all those who, despite everything, continue to practise this 'outdated' pantomime. If mime is often accused of being superficial, it is because we have failed to understand that it has evolved since the 19th century. "Modern mime, then, is not about *Love and Despair* or *Pierrot in Africa* but quite simply about movement" ⁽¹⁷⁾

One person who has taken this argument to its logical conclusion is David Alberts, who in a thesis puts forward the theory that modern mime is essentially something completely new, with no connection to the past. ⁽¹⁸⁾ According to Alberts' the difference between historical mime and modern mime is most evident when compared to 19th-century pantomime, which he believes was merely a response to the ban on spoken drama. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Pantomime was not a self-chosen artistic expression, but a product of external coercion. On the other hand, one might naturally ask how much art in history has not been shaped by external constraints?

Alberts makes a general comparison between historical mime and modern mime. According to Alberts, historical mime is primarily narrative and anecdotal, drawing scenes from everyday life, situation-based, often comical and silent only when the law prohibits it from speaking. It is realistic and representative in theme and decor, but indirect due to its coded body language, and it is only one part of other scenic languages. Modern mime, on the other hand, is evocative, based on universal themes, often serious and silent by artistic choice. It is abstract and symbolic in theme and decor but direct in its physical language and, above all, an independent theatrical language.²⁰ In many respects, this is a weak analysis that is easy to criticise, but it is relevant because it recurs in many descriptions, either in various forms, as a whole or in individual parts. In principle, it can be said that Alberts has simply summarised in an exemplary and clear manner the most common arguments of all those who attempt to define and, above all, delimit modern mime, primarily in relation to 19th-century pantomime. I will not argue against all of its parts here, but point out that Albert's definition of modern mime is essentially limited to the Decroux tradition.

One of the definitions is nevertheless of particular interest from a status perspective. If attempts to delimit the art form reflect a struggle for higher status, a power struggle in the arena of high culture, which I believe to be the case, the term 'universality' carries particular weight.

¹⁷Leabhart, 1982, p. 47.

¹⁸ David Alberts, "A critical analysis of the historical and theoretical issues of modern mime", unpublished dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 1989, microfilm (DAI 50/08, February 1990, 2305 - A).

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 105.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 108f.

"The modern mime performer does not represent the 'scenes of daily life', but interprets the common knowledge of existence, the universal aspects of life inherent in these 'scenes'." ²¹
 To emphasise art as universal and essential is, I would argue, characteristic of art that seeks to achieve high cultural status.

Kathryn Wylie also uses the word universality as a keyword, but rather makes a distinction in form than in time. She has written a thesis that argues that the ontological being of mime can be described using the concept of attitude. "The initial hypothesis is that the widely used but little understood concept of attitude not only provides an important key to understanding Mime but contributes valuable insight into what distinguishes Mime from other performance genres." ⁽²²⁾ While Alberts mainly follows the history of mime in popular culture to conclude that modern mime differs from historical mime, Wylie follows the historical functions of mime in high culture and refers to pantomime in classical ballet and the importance of body language for great actors such as Garrick. She then develops her ideas in four areas: ritual mime (primarily in shamanism), Roman pantomime, Japanese Noh theatre, and Etienne Decroux's *mime corporel*. Personally, I perceive Wylie as seeking a universal, historical, and ontological meaning for mime by referring to genres she perceives as prestigious. When Alberts defines modern mime as a higher art form than its more rustic predecessors, Wylie argues that mime has always been a higher art form, but only in certain contexts. As mentioned, universality is also a key word here. "Therefore, while lesser mimes may have merely enacted the obvious traits of phenomena for the purpose of arousing laughter or making obscene comments upon their subjects, the more serious mimes must have attempted to penetrate the surface of nature's activity to reveal underlying universal truths." ²³
 This serious search for universal truths is what unites shamanism, Roman pantomime, Noh theatre and Decroux's mime. In these four genres, mime, or physical imitation, is a common component consisting of certain typical formal and dynamic processes. "This process involved a form of 'abstraction' in which the performer sought to render the 'universal' trait of a phenomenon rather than its particular 'individualising' traits". ⁽²⁴⁾

²¹ Alberts, p. 119.

²² Kathryn Wylie, "An Analysis of the Concept of 'Attitude' as a Basis for Mime", unpublished dissertation, City University of New York, 1984, microfilm (DAI 45/11, May 1985, 3240 - A), p. 3.

²³ Ibid., p. 47.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 46.

Mira Felner also believes that mime is art in some contexts, but not in others. She emphasises the dependence of mime on the performer in an illuminating way. "The relationship between the form and the performer is the key to understanding the cyclical nature of mime. With the death of the great mime of each era, the form has died as well. It lives in the shadows of other arts, waiting for some new genius and resuscitation."⁽²⁵⁾ This interpretation is consistent with the 19th-century Romantic view of the mime artist Deburau. Art is genius, and Felner believes that this is particularly true of the art form of mime. At the same time, she describes how mime has always been a component and element of intermezzos, circuses and street performances, as well as how mimes have been engaged as entertainers in private homes and at public events. "Mime was clearly spectacle in each of these cases, but was mime art?"⁽²⁶⁾ The contradiction that is made clear here in the definition of mime seems to be a recurring theme throughout the 20th century. The problem can be summarised as 'what is mime?' and 'when is mime art?'

The question that then arises for me is whether it is really the definition of mime that is problematic, or whether it is rather how theatre is defined that is the big problem for all mimes. What do we include in the concept of theatre, what do we exclude? Thomas Postlewait writes about theatre history research that a historian always starts from certain preconceived assumptions. These assumptions express complex theoretical ideas that may be worth paying attention to. How theatre is defined sets limits on when mime is perceived as worthy of our attention at all. Felner writes mainly about 20th-century mimes, but provides a historical overview in the introduction. She describes the theatre that existed under Napoleon as a theatre for the elite, while 'ordinary people' were referred to the entertainment offered in marketplaces.⁽²⁸⁾ Market entertainment is not theatre, and the market is not a place for the arts, but mime is often part of market entertainment. Mime is then, in some forms, an art form, and in other forms it is something else. As something else, it exists all the time; as an art form, it exists according to Felner only with genius. However, distinguishing between theatre and entertainment (just like Napoleon) expresses a prevalent but nonetheless complex theoretical idea.

²⁵ Mira Felner, *Apostles of Silence: The Modern French Mimes* (London & Toronto: Fairleigh Dickinson, 1985), p. 16.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 17.

²⁷ Thomas Postlewait, "Historiography and the Theatrical Event: A Primer with Twelve Cruxes" *Theatre Journal* 43 (The John Hopkins University Press, 1991) p. 158.

²⁸ Felner, p. 29.

I have made a subjective selection of positions and definitions, although I believe it is also a relevant selection. However, not everyone in the 20th century attempted to distance themselves from 19th-century pantomime. On the contrary, the century's most famous mime artist, Marcel Marceau, built on the romantic pantomime tradition. From this, we can nevertheless conclude that the range of opinions is quite broad. "Almost the only aspect of the subject on which everyone agrees is that the forms involve movement! So there we are."

(²⁹)Below I will give my own definition, which should perhaps be seen primarily as a hypothesis or a suggestion: if mime is a mannerism, then...

Mannerism

It is often this piquancy — a playful or compulsive deviation from the normal, an affected frisky quality, or a tormented grimace — that first betrays the mannerist nature of a work. The virtuosity that is always displayed contributes greatly to that piquancy. A mannerist work of art is always a piece of bravura, a triumphant conjuring trick, a firework display with flying sparks and colours. The effect depends on the defiance of the instinctual, the naively natural and rational, and the emphasis laid on the obscure, the problematic, and the ambiguous, the incomplete nature of the manifest which points to its opposite, the latent, the missing link in the chain.

Beauty too beautiful becomes unreal, strength too strong becomes acrobatics, too much content loses all meaning, form independent of content becomes an empty shell.

Mannerism represents an art movement during the 16th century, between the Renaissance and the Baroque. Although the term was initially used pejoratively to describe art that sought to impress, it is now an established period designation in art history.

Arnold Hauser, who wrote the above quote, was interested in Mannerism as a period but also as an artistic approach. However, he emphasises the context-dependence of all art styles. "The repetition, or even the straightforward, undeviating continuation, of a style would assume the presence of a completely static historical environment."⁽³¹⁾ Mannerism as a period style is no exception, but according to Hauser, it has nevertheless survived as an undercurrent. Mannerist trends have reappeared in new guises and under new premises throughout art history. According to Hauser, Mannerism tends to appear in times characterised by rebellion against prevailing stylistic conventions, such as in the transition from Classicism to Romanticism or from Naturalism to

²⁹ Bari Rolf, "Meem, Mime, and Pantomime," in *Mimes on Miming*, ed. Bari Rolf (Los Angeles: Panjandrum Books) p. 8.

³⁰ Arnold Hauser, *Mannerism: the crisis of the Renaissance and the origin of modern art*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986), trans. with author by Eric Mosbacher, original title *Der Mannerismus* (original edition London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 13.

³¹ Ibid., p. 355.

Post-Impressionism. According to Hauser, Romanticism can also be seen as a revolt against the anti-mannerist tyranny of Classicism³²

Mannerism may seem to have very little to do with mime; mime is not, for example, an established period designation in theatre studies. On the other hand, mime could be seen as an undercurrent: mime trends have reappeared in new guises and under new premises throughout theatre history, often as a means of renewing the canon, in periods of break with rigid conventions.

Mannerism is also used negatively to mean art with mannerisms. It is good to be natural and bad to be artificial, and in this way, mannerism can be seen as the dark side of our own era's theatre conventions. Theatre strives to be natural, fears being artificial, and shuns mannerism. What is at stake is having a genuine appeal on stage.

Mime has a bad reputation, and it is against this bad reputation that many mimes struggle when they try to define and define their art form. My own position is that anything that claims

If mime is also that, it threatens to undermine the status of mime, if and when it manages to conquer such a status. If I also define mime as a mannerism, I am in a difficult position, and that is how this definition should be understood: as a provocation. A definition inspired by Hauser's definitions of mannerism would read as follows: Mime is an art form based on technical brilliance that sometimes threatens to turn into acrobatics and that balances on a thin line between being overly obvious or devoid of content. Furthermore, mime is an art form that seems to constantly reappear when high culture is in crisis, an art form that always exists as an undercurrent and sometimes rises to the surface as a trend or as a means for the avant-garde to renew the canon. Finally, mime is an art form whose reputation seems to be only temporary and never really establishes itself in the culture that advocates good taste.

If mime is a mannerism, it perhaps has a special role to play in the power struggle that is constantly taking place in the cultural arena. Below is an account of a fragment of theatre history that has been both praised and despised: pantomime on the Boulevard du Temple 1800-1862.

³² Hauser, p. 355f.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PANTOMIME IN SMALL THEATRES IN PARIS 1800-1862

The following history of pantomime is based mainly on a thesis by Carolyn Jane Johnston. Her somewhat different history of pantomime than the usual one provides a counterbalance to the other sources that will mainly be referred to under the heading "Pantomime and the disciplining of theatre". It should be emphasised that there is still a great lack of research in this area, and even Johnston's material and the history below are far from definitive. What makes it so interesting, however, is that it shows how new basic research can contribute to new perspectives and new interpretations, not only for pantomime but also for theatre in general.

The heyday of pantomime on the Boulevard du Temple in Paris actually lasted only 15 years, from 1815 to 1830, and during that time pantomime was primarily a means for a certain category of stage performers in Paris to also be able to perform some form of theatre. Censorship prohibited this category from speaking or singing on stage, but allowed them to perform silent pantomimes. Before 1815, they were not even allowed to perform pantomimes, but after 1830, censorship gave them room to broaden their repertoire. Before 1815, the conditions for pantomime were tightened, but after 1830, pantomime gained cult status in the Romantic myth of the worker. This Romantic myth is significant because its image of pantomime still prevails in later historiography. The period after the 1848 revolution is also interesting from a perspective that is somewhat outside the scope of pantomime, but which nevertheless describes the framework within which pantomime also existed. At that time, the very foundation of the theatre, which until then had mainly attracted a working-class audience, changed, as the audience gradually abandoned the theatre and instead began to attend 'café concerts'. The history below ends in 1862, which is the year when the Théâtre des Funambules, by far the most famous pantomime theatre, was demolished.

This chapter follows a conventional chronological order with a division of time based on the changes of power and revolutions that took place in France during the 19th century. In the following analysis, however, this history will be treated more thematically.

1800–1815

Under Napoleon's regime, a bureaucratic and centralised administration emerged. This organisation also encompassed the theatre. The procedures for theatre licences, censorship and genre classification of the theatre that were introduced under Napoleon remained in place in their basic structure for most of the 19th century.

"Beyond a doubt, theatre was the most important entertainment for all classes of people in nineteenth-century Paris." ³³Johnston has examined the working class's view of itself by studying entertainment in Paris during the first half of the 19th century. If theatre was the most important entertainment at this time, pantomime theatre was the genre that entertained the working class. Johnston focuses primarily on three theatres in Paris during the period 1815–1862: the Théâtre des Funambules, the Théâtre de Madame Saqui and the Théâtre du Petit Lazary. These theatres were neighbours on the Boulevard du Temple. Below, I will refer to them as 'small theatres', a designation that they would eventually acquire officially. From the beginning, however, they belonged to a genre known as 'spectacles de curiosités' and were not considered theatres at all. 'Spectacles de curiosité' was an umbrella term for all kinds of attractions such as rebel kings, acrobats, tightrope walkers, trained animals. However, the three theatres mentioned above were eventually granted permission to perform pantomime, thereby becoming the three venues in Paris where actors performed dramatised stories at an affordable ticket price, i.e. theatres that were also accessible to a working-class audience.

Napoleon only allowed eight theatres in total, and many theatres were forced to close. Furthermore, censorship was institutionalised and given its own department. Censorship was preventive, i.e. the censorship authority scrutinised the script before the play was given permission to be staged. Theatres were also divided into two categories, with four in each: 'théâtres subventionnés', which were state-subsidised theatres, and 'théâtres secondaires', which were simply the rest. ⁽³⁴⁾Theatres had a licence from the Ministry of the Interior for their activities, and this licence defined which dramatic genre could be performed at each theatre. The subsidised theatre was the theatre that Napoleon considered important and valuable to the identity of the French nation, and they were to perform classics. This system remained in place until 1864.

³³ Johnston, p. 6.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 10.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 19.

Theatres that were not granted permission to continue as theatres could instead switch to stage activities that were not classified as theatre. They then moved into the category of 'spectacles de curiosite'. These all had in common that they were not allowed to perform speech or text, in monologue or dialogue, in dramatic action or in song. "The *spectacles de curiosites* <luring the Napoleonic era can thus be categorised as relying mostly on the body, science and animals."(³⁶) Curiosity entertainment could also include balls or even itinerant sellers of food and drink. Theatres were places where drama was performed; the rest was simply entertainment. The curiosity scenes that eventually came to feature pantomimes were therefore not considered theatres, which is still evident in most works on theatre history, where only the first two categories are mentioned: the curiosity category is not mentioned.⁽³⁷⁾ Paradoxically, this view meant that the third category escaped censorship more easily than the other two, a situation that would continue after Napoleon, both when the three small theatres performed pantomimes with dramatic plots and later when they switched to vaudeville.

1815–1830

After Napoleon came the period known as the Restoration, i.e. the re-establishment of the monarchy, but the centralisation and administration implemented by Napoleon remained in place. The division of theatres into two categories plus a 'non-dramatic' curiosity category continued during the Restoration, as did preventive censorship. However, it became easier to obtain a licence to open secondary theatres. Melodrama was the most important theatre genre in secondary theatres during this period, and it is also melodrama that historians most often refer to when they talk about boulevard theatre and popular culture theatre.

³⁶ Johnston, p. 36.

³⁷ "Napoleon restricted their number, assigned specific genres to each theatre, and divided them clearly into major 'literary' theatres and minor 'popular' ones, a division which remained essentially in effect for the first half of the century." Marvin Carlson, *The French Stage in the Nineteenth Century* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1972), p. 2. Carlson thus completely overlooks the third genre of curiosities. A little later, however, he describes how several venues for 'light entertainment' opened during the Restoration, "and although they produced not a single important artist or lasting play, they contributed distinctly to the theatrical life of the capital". (p. 51) As examples, he mentions Funambules and the other two small theatres. However, these already existed under Napoleon, but only now began to perform pantomimes. They then approached fictional storytelling and thus perhaps became more visible to Carlson. This is yet another example of the difficulties that arise when defining theatre: what is included and what is excluded.

The discourse surrounding melodrama posited it as a 'popular' genre, and Pixerecourt himself said that he was writing his plays for those who could not read. Modern historians have taken up this definition uncritically, and are often quick to say that melodrama was a popular form of working-class entertainment.

However, these theatres had relatively high ticket prices and were mainly visited by the wealthy middle class. Melodrama, on the other hand, can be seen as an anti-classical drama, i.e. it was not an aristocratic theatre but rather constituted an opposition to the aristocracy. Ingvar Holm has written about theatre as an expression of the emerging bourgeoisie in his book *Industrialismens scen (The Stage of Industrialism)*. "The factory, the growing global cities, empire building, science being put to use in manufacturing, and the social upheavals that followed – all of this is clarified or masked in melodramas, pantomimes, operas and other entertainment." ⁽³⁹⁾ In this way, the struggle between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie was expressed in the classical drama of the subsidised theatres and the melodrama of the secondary theatres, a struggle between genres. Johnston argues, however, that this was a struggle in which the working class and the curiosity theatres did not participate.

The Boulevard Theatre in Paris takes its name from a particular street – Boulevard du Temple. This street was an important entertainment centre and, in addition to the three small theatres, many of the secondary theatres were located here. Boulevard du Temple was already a centre for popular market entertainment in the 17th century, and when the street was finally paved in 1778, a more refined audience also came to the boulevard. A mixed audience could walk up and down the street, watch outdoor attractions and possibly pay an entrance fee and go inside. Under Napoleon's very restrictive theatre policy, with only one official theatre, the boulevard became particularly attractive as street entertainment was not classified as theatre. When the restrictions were eased and new secondary theatres opened, these street performances survived, as did the parades and attractions intended to entice people to pay admission to indoor performances. "The Boulevard itself became a veritable fair ground with crowds of people invading to watch the many parades, street acrobats, jugglers and marionettes." ^{(11) (40)} The boulevard was livelier than ever.

However, the fact that the curiosity shows attracted the lower classes due to their low ticket prices was a topic of discussion. The Minister of the Interior was concerned about this concentration of crowds in a few neighbourhoods in Paris, while the police prefect considered it safer to allow the theatres to continue their entertainment and thus keep people occupied and

³⁸ Johnston, p. 41 f.

³⁹ Holm, p. 8

⁴⁰ Johnston, p. 46.

away from the streets. A special inspector for curiosity scenes was nevertheless appointed with the task of visiting performances and reporting on the behaviour, safety and order of the audience. He was to ensure that they remained within their genre, but also to observe the effect the performances had on the various audience groups.

As a consequence of the assassination of the Duke of Beny in 1820, all forms of entertainment on the street were banned, as they were now considered too politically dangerous. The market atmosphere that had characterised the Boulevard du Temple for over two centuries disappeared.⁴¹ From then on, all performances had to be staged indoors. This meant that the entire curiosity category was forced to adapt to a level in line with the 'real' theatres, even though they still had to remain within their category. Theatres that were already indoors were forced to renovate to meet the requirements for theatre premises. Another consequence was that advertising for the various performances disappeared, which mainly affected the curiosity stages, which had poorer finances and an audience that was largely illiterate and unable to read the posters put up outside the theatre. Now the small theatres had to rely on word of mouth instead.

The entire curiosity category was thus cleared out and restricted in several ways. Spectacle de Funambules, Spectacle de Mme Saqui and Spectacle du Petit Lazary survived this change because they were already indoors and had a structure similar to that of secondary theatres. They actually benefited from not having to compete with street performances.

As a result of these changes, class boundaries within the theatre became even more pronounced.

Until then, everyone had been able to see fragments of performances on the street, but secondary theatres were too expensive for the lower classes, and the more affluent shied away from going to small theatres. This created an economic division among the audience. The three categories came to reflect three different social classes: subsidised theatre performed classics for an aristocratic audience, boulevard theatres performed melodrama for a growing middle class, and the three small theatres mainly performed pantomime for the working class. The poorest, of course, could not afford to go anywhere at all and were now completely without entertainment. In this way, pantomime became a typical working-class culture, and a rather isolated one at that. Not much attention was paid to these theatres outside their own circles. No reviewers wrote about the performances, for example.

⁴¹ Johnston, p. 57.

On the other hand, small theatres constantly played to full houses. Lazary gave two performances a day and three on Sundays. The theatre was full of workers who drank, ate, talked and sang during the performance.

Loopholes in censorship

The government imposed the genre of pantomime on these theatres to ensure that the plays performed would not be political. Censors believed that silence was the means to this end. Instead, the silence imposed on these theatres was transformed to allow for the expression of ideas and meaning that stood outside the understanding of the censors.

The theatres submitted the scripts for the pantomimes to be performed to the censorship authority. The scripts of the small theatres were more like action scenarios than plays, and for the most part without a named author. The small theatres were subject to preventive censorship, but this was rarely particularly active as long as the theatres stuck to their genre. There was also a gap between these action scenarios and the 'text' that was actually performed in the physical, 'pantomimic' language, which was open to interpretation.

The action scenarios did not describe how the pantomime was performed. The pantomime technique,

i.e. body language and physical actions were not written down in the scripts and were therefore impossible to censor in advance. It was unusual for the censors to intervene after the fact.⁴⁴

The censors' own method was based solely on the written word, i.e. they censored scripts that the theatre wrote down specifically for the censorship authority at their request. The censor could delete phrases or change someone's name in the script, he could have opinions about costumes, how the actors were dressed, but he overlooked the staging of the physical performance. Body language was a blind spot, a loophole. "The pantomime flourished outside the attention of the censors, mostly because the censors were unable to understand the political meaning that the pantomime was able to create."⁽⁴⁵⁾

The Minister of the Interior, on the other hand, expressed concern in a proposal about the placards with text that were used during the performances to clarify the plot. "Il me semble pas d'ailleurs necessaires que les personnages comiques soient specialement charges d'expliquer au public les divers tableaux." ⁽¹¹⁴⁶⁾

⁴² Johnston, p. 64f.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 15.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 83.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 68.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 89.

For a long time, the censors were mainly writers. They may not have had much knowledge of how a plot scenario is managed in a pantomime, but simply deleted words from the script and replaced them with other words, even though these were never intended to be spoken on stage. In the pantomime *Les deux genies ou amour et vengeance, Pantomime en trois actes* from 1821 at Funambules, for example, there are evil priests. The censor changed the costumes so that they would look less like priests; their costumes could not be white but had to be a different colour. In the text itself, the word priest was changed to bohemian. Johnston points out that: "[T]his seems useless and silly, as this was a pantomime and it made no difference what the characters were called".⁽⁴⁷⁾

At that time, there was still no routine for monitoring the performances themselves. The large theatres had to hire police officers to keep order among the audience, but this was not the case with the small ones. For small theatres and curiosity stages, there was only one inspector. He supervised the dress rehearsals, but hardly had time to attend the performances themselves.

Another advantage over censorship was the fact that small theatres were not monitored by the press at all. What actually took place in these theatres simply did not come to the attention of the general public. As long as the performances were silent, there was no cause for concern. However, given the low ticket prices and the fact that the audience therefore consisted of 'the lower classes', the Home Secretary repeatedly emphasised the importance of ensuring that the entertainment for these classes consisted of silent pantomime. This was considered the least harmful form of entertainment, as pantomime was not perceived as a language through which messages could be conveyed.

What also escaped the censors was the theatrical event itself, the social aspect. at the theatre. Johnston argues that the absence of authors for the plays emphasises the role of the performance as a collective event, created by a collective for a specific audience at a specific time. The audience actively, not to say vociferously, participated in what was happening on stage. The audience's interventions thus created another loophole in the political desire to silence the voice of the theatre. "The silent genres of the small theatres stood in stark opposition to the tradition of audience intervention."⁽⁴⁸⁾ Even if it was possible to censor the performance, the audience's interaction could give the content of the performance other meanings.

Small theatres had unnumbered seats, and the government's attempts to force them to number their seats had no real effect until the 1850s. Instead, they paid

⁴⁷ Johnston, p. 120.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 84f.

one entered a section inside the theatre; for the stalls, for the boxes or for one of the rows. Tickets were not sold in advance either; if you wanted to go to the theatre, you had to queue up. The rich could send servants to queue, but poor Parisians had to queue themselves, sometimes for hours before the performance began.

The audience often brought food with them, which they ate either while queuing or inside the theatre during the performance. A contemporary actor at Lazary named Marquet described how women would bring large baskets of food with them as if they were going on a picnic, and how young workers would sometimes throw their food on stage rather than eat it. "[I]l y avait du spectacle partout, surtout dans la salle. Bruyant <leja pendant qu'on jouait, le public devenait d'une turbulence delirante durant entracte (sic); tout le monde criait, chantait, s'appelait : Face au parterre ! Et ta sreur ?" ⁽⁴⁹⁾

Despite the ineffectiveness of genre censorship, the ban on all speech on curiosity stages remained in place.

and small theatres throughout the restoration. The category 'spectacle de curiosite' originally meant entertainment and 'harmless' amusement such as tightrope walking, juggling and other circus arts or lustifications, but, partly as a result of all entertainment being forced into theatre venues, this genre had also gradually changed. Small theatres staged pantomimes with dramatic plots.

Going to the theatre was not only, or even primarily, a theatrical experience, but also, to a large extent, a social event, perhaps comparable to going to a football match today. The interaction between the stage and the auditorium, and within the auditorium itself, was part of the theatrical experience.

Funambules and Deburau

The most famous of the small theatres is probably Théâtre des Funambules. It was at this theatre that the pantomime artist Jean-Gaspard Deburau became famous, first among the Funambules' own audience, then among the Romantics, and once again after the Second World War through Marcel Carne's film *Les Enfants du Paradis*, with Jean-Louis Barrault in the role of Deburau. 'Funambules' means tightrope walkers, and the establishment was first called Le Spectacle des Funambules. On 8 December 1813, it was granted a licence by the police prefecture to offer entertainment such as tightrope walking, acrobatics, etc., on condition that neither theatre stages nor costumes were included, in accordance with its genre affiliation as a curiosity stage.

⁴⁹Johnston, p. 79. Several of the French quotations reproduced in Johnstone's text contain spelling and/or grammatical errors. Where Johnstone himself has written '(sic)', I have reproduced them. However, there are more spelling errors than there are '(sic)'s. The originals probably contain many errors; sometimes the texts may have been difficult for Johnstone to decipher, and some errors may also have been made by Johnstone.

The licence was granted for the premises on Boulevard du Temple, which could accommodate 600 spectators. Two years later the licence was extended to include pantomimes and harlequinades without spoken dialogue. Funambules was the first to present pantomimes as a curiosity, which proved to be a great success.

According to established historical accounts, Jean-Gaspard Deburau was born in Bohemia in 1796.

However, there are no reliable verifiable sources, and since Deburau has been extensively written about by Romantics, who perhaps sometimes had a tendency to embellish reality and also had a pronounced fondness for a mythologised Bohemia, the information is not entirely reliable.⁵¹ His father was probably French. In 1814, the Deburau family was engaged at Funambules to perform tightrope walking and acrobatics.⁵² The following year, when Funambules was granted a licence to perform pantomime, the Deburau family's engagement ended, but Jean-Gaspard remained. The first preserved pantomime script found by Johnston that mentions Deburau in the role of Pierrot, the character he would make his own, is from 1817.

However, many historians date Deburau's arrival on the scene later. This may have to do with the fact that Deburau's Pierrot played such an important role in Romanticism. Deburau was 'discovered' by the Romantics only in the late 1820s. Until then, he was certainly Funambule's greatest actor, but completely unknown outside the world of small theatres. No writers or journalists took any notice of Deburau. In this sense, Deburau did not 'exist', but he was nevertheless active and Funambule's main attraction for over a decade.

Deburau created his own version of Pierrot. Instead of a silly and clumsy character, he turned him into a much more heroic figure. Pierrot is a servant role,⁵³ but in Deburau's interpretation, he appears in many different roles, such as stable boy, bricklayer, miller, valet, etc. Instead of being universal, Pierrot embodied different professions that corresponded to those that made up the Funambules audience. Between 1817 and 1830, Deburau appeared in virtually every performance at the Funambules, which meant three times a day during the week and four times on Sundays. He was also responsible for making the props.

⁵⁰ Johnston, p. 49f.

⁵¹ The French word 'bohème' has a double meaning; originally Bohemian, i.e. someone who comes from Bohemia, which was then believed to be the homeland of the Gypsies. With the advent of Romanticism and its contribution to the mythologisation of the Gypsies, the word has also come to refer to Bohemians as we understand the term: free, unattached artists and intellectuals with irregular habits, a kind of anti-bourgeois existence.

⁵² Johnston, p. 95.

⁵³ Pierrot is a Frenchified relative of Pedrolino, from the Commedia dell'arte. Pedrolino was a servant and Harlequin was his superior. In Deburau's work, however, the relationship was reversed!

In his study, Johnston analysed seven different plays performed at Funambules, all of which were pantomimes without any dialogue on stage, but with placards displaying text. They date from 1816 to 1828 and are only preserved in the form of manuscripts intended for the censors. It is therefore not certain that they correspond to what was actually performed on stage.

Johnston believes that several recurring elements can be found in them. The plot usually revolves around arranged marriages that are disliked by the daughter but satisfy the father's social ambitions. They all have a happy ending (for the daughter), often of a magical nature, unlike many of the contemporary bourgeois melodramas that were performed in secondary theatres. The pantomimes are often comedies of mistaken identity revolving around class affiliation.

Pierrot and Harlequin fight against the power of the father or the state with intelligence and humour, but also with the help of good fairies. On the one hand, the working class is powerless and needs magical help, but on the other hand, it is wise and quick-witted. The comic element is an important aspect. Pierrot is certainly a hero, but a comic hero. Another recurring detail in the plays is descriptions of food.

The rather grotesque adventures find Pierrot in a situation to mock the practices of church or state, all the time undermining the authority of such institutions and class structure. The humour of the grotesque, the anger of the incomprehensiveness of life, the absurdity of class structure, the focus on food, on marriage and on family relationships all tie back to issues in the lives of the workers, and are part of the energy that allows these plays to promote a certain understanding of community and everyday life.

According to Johnstone, the comedies of mistaken identity, the humour and the magical endings are also a legacy of older forms of Commedia dell'arte and boulevard farce.

1830-1848

In 1830, the people revolted against the reigning king for three days in July. A new king was placed on the throne. The three days of July were primarily a victory for the bourgeoisie, and censorship was one of their main issues. Preventive censorship disappeared and theatres began to perform the genre they themselves desired. Small theatres would choose differently in this new genre freedom than secondary theatres.

Although the new law was primarily aimed at published texts, theatres were quick to apply the law as they saw fit. The secondary theatres' fight against censorship and for freedom of expression was also a fight for the freedom to mix genres. The Romantics were very involved in this mainly bourgeois rebellion against the aristocracy. The small theatres, on the other hand, participated

⁵⁴Johnston, p. 128.

not at all in the fray, bourgeois theatre was viewed with contempt and often mocked in the plays performed at small theatres. "Having had no period of classicism as defined by 'high' theatre themselves, the small theatres were not willing to engage on the same terms as the bourgeois theatres. Instead, their classicism was a period of the power of pantomime [...]"

(⁵⁵)The audience's prior knowledge was based on pantomime, acrobatics and market theatre rather than on the classicist theatre to which melodrama and romanticism were a response. The small theatres avoided melodrama and focused on vaudeville, a genre in which spoken theatre was mixed with songs to well-known melodies. But vaudeville was not introduced without resistance. Pantomime was deeply rooted in the audience, which was suspicious of the new arrangements. This is evident not least in a 1831 performance at Funambules entitled *La Pantomime et le vaudeville*.

Jerome: The vaudeville, I don't understand anything...

Gavotte: ...I read Deburau's name on the poster Benoit:

Deburaux, Deburaux (sic) ...does he speak?

Jerome: Never, he doesn't need it to make himself understood. Benoit:

Does he sing?

Jerome: He doesn't need to in order to please. ⁵⁶

For the next five years or so, pantomimes with elements of vaudeville were performed. But despite the immense popularity of Deburau and pantomime, pantomime would never again be what it had been and increasingly gave way to vaudeville. Vaudeville was, however, also a form linked to a popular performing arts tradition.

Between 1830 and 1835, small theatres still enjoyed a period of freedom from censorship, unlike secondary and subsidised theatres, which at the same time were engaged in fierce battles over censorship. Censorship was now repressive and only intervened after the premiere, which could have devastating financial consequences.

The freedom enjoyed by small theatres was based in part on a legal distinction. The government controlled censorship in theatres, but curiosity shows were subject to the local police prefecture, and thus also small theatres, and at that time the police interpreted the censorship laws differently than the government. This meant that the government had to turn to the police if it wanted to intervene in the activities of small theatres. The government repeatedly tried to close the stages or at least ban them from performing spoken genres, but the police preferred to leave them alone. The aim was the same for both parties –to avoid riots and unrest –but they could not agree on the methods to achieve this.

⁵⁵Johnston, p. 142.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 147. (Jerome and Benoit, and the second line without a full stop in the original.)

this purpose. The police argued that forcing theatres back to their old genre would spell certain ruin for several of them, with all that this entailed in terms of new unemployment and reduced commerce in the surrounding area, and that closed theatres could provoke unrest. In addition, the police believed that morals could be improved if the public had access to 'good drama'. "L'empietement <les genres a tourne au profit de la morale publique dans plusieurs petits theatres ou l'on ne jouait il y a deux ans que des parades peu decentes et ou l'on joue maintenant les bons ouvrages dramatiques."⁵⁷ The police may possibly be suspected of exaggerating the moral content of vaudeville, but rebellion was in any case worse than vaudeville. The genre was left alone, and the performances themselves also seem to have been exempt from censorship. Johnston says he has not found any reported cases of performances being shut down or any indications of censorship in the manuscripts, nor any police reports or comments on the content of the performances.

The fact that small theatres were left alone in this way may also have been due to their class affiliation and the target of any social criticism in their plays. While bourgeois theatre criticised the government and the social elite in various ways in its plays, small theatres tended to parody petty bourgeois life. This was a form of social criticism that may not have seemed as subversive to those in power, but which would help to arouse the Romantics' interest in pantomime.

Romanticism and pantomime

From 1835 onwards, intellectual advocates of Romanticism began to take an interest in pantomime. They saw pantomime primarily as a weapon against the bourgeoisie. But there was also an idea (contrary to that of the police!) that pantomime would be better entertainment for the workers. The people had been corrupted by outside influences, colonised by a degenerate culture, when they replaced pantomime with vaudeville.

Between 1836 and 1846 was the heyday of romantic pantomime, at the same time as Funambules more or less ceased to perform pantomimes. But now established authors began to write pantomime dramas that were performed at Funambules and reviewed in the press. "It became a small circle of pantomime that was widely discussed and written about."⁽⁵⁸⁾ Nevertheless, by this time less than ten per cent of the repertoire at Funambules consisted of pantomimes.

⁵⁷ Johnston, p. 168.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 184.

It all began in 1828. Charles Nodier went to Funambules with his daughter and saw Deburau. On 19 July 1828, he wrote an article in the newspaper *Pandore* praising Deburau. For three months, Nodier frequented Funambules. However, this did not have any immediate effect. It would be several more years before pantomime, Deburau and Funambules became popular, but this was the first time anything had been published about Deburau, even though he had already been the greatest in his genre for more than a decade. In 1832, Jules Janin published his book *Deburau, Histoire du theatre a quatre sous pour faire suite al 'histoire du theatre fran9ais*. It was a polemic against high culture, and Janin writes:

Unable to find excitement at the Théâtre-Français, we will find excitement where we can, for example at the Théâtre des Boulevards. It is in one of these unknown theatres, the smallest and most foul of them all, by the light of four miserable candles and in a rancid atmosphere, next to a menagerie that howls while the actors sing, that we discovered, admired and applauded to excess the Great Comedian and, what is more, the great Paillasse Deburau.⁵⁹

Deburau embodied the romantic ideal of the artist, the outsider, the misunderstood but divinely gifted creator. Janin created the story that has since been reproduced so many times, not least in the film *Les Enfants du Paradis*, about the poor boy in the impoverished artist family, shunned and misunderstood, but actually the only real talent. When he was asked to step in as a replacement one day, he was an instant success. A romantic hero was born. Alfred de Musset wrote: "M. Jules Janin peut bien dire cette fois mon Deburau (sic), sans que personne lui conteste le pronom possessif. C'est M. Jules Janin qui a fait ce grand homme. Ce grand homme lui appartient. (⁶⁰)

||

Champfleury wrote many plays for Deburau, plays that changed Deburau's interpretation of Pierrot in several respects. Pierrot in the world of the Romantics was a character without a profession, without a job and without money. The joking about the petty bourgeoisie disappeared, as did the previously common comedies of mistaken identity based on class affiliations. Instead, Pierrot became a person without morals, a thief and a deceiver, a murderer, a drunkard and a greedy type, in short, a horror story to scare women and children with. If you will, a universal incarnation of alienation. "The images found in the plays of Champfleury are very similar to those used in bourgeois theatre at the time; the most famous character used on the bourgeois stage was Robert Macaire. He was the quintessential evil working-class character."⁽⁶¹⁾It was the actor Frederick Lemaltre

⁵⁹ Janin, p. 15.

⁶⁰ Johnston, p. 192.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 211, bourgeois in the original.

who played the role of Macaire, and Lemaitre, interestingly enough, also had a background as a mime artist and actor at Funambules and had probably developed his role from the typical characters of pantomime. He was extremely popular in melodramatic theatre at around the same time. These were roles that, beyond expectations, fulfilled a horror version of the working class, but at the same time corresponded to a romantic rebellion against bourgeois conventions.

From the period 1835–1848, 322 play manuscripts from Funambules have been preserved.

Of these, 45 are pantomimes. Only 23 of these are completely silent and use traditional pantomime characters.⁶² The silent pantomimes starring Pierrot almost all date from 1842–1846, when they were most popular among romantics. The others are more like vaudeville shows with a silent Pierrot character. A kind of transitional phenomenon, then, much like Chaplin's films after the advent of sound film. The other two small theatres abandoned pantomime altogether, while Funambules continued thanks to Deburau's fame and the involvement of the Romantics. Deburau died in 1846.

The integration of small theatres into the Paris theatre world.

In July 1835, an assassination attempt was made on the king and his sons, which became the pretext for a new law that reintroduced preventive censorship. A special theatre agency was created to handle all theatre matters and permits. The people now responsible for the theatres were no longer writers and authors themselves, but bureaucrats and administrators. Plays had to be submitted two weeks in advance, and a special inspector was invited to the dress rehearsal. The inspector would compare the script with the rehearsal. He would also look at the staging and costumes. In addition, he was required to attend as many performances as possible, especially at theatres that were considered problematic. But the system was cumbersome; for example, there was no predetermined system of fines that could be automatically imposed for certain types of offences, and everything had to be brought before the courts. Overall, censorship was still largely ineffective.

The fact that small theatres performed vaudeville with singing and dialogue continued to worry the authorities. Silent pantomime, part of a curious genre, a kind of non-theatre, was synonymous with apolitical entertainment and harmless amusement for the people. Performances with speech and song, on the other hand, were suspected of stirring up dangerous emotions. However, for several reasons, they were allowed to continue as before. The arguments continued to be that there was a risk of riots if they were closed, and that there were good economic reasons to

⁶² Johnston, p. 244.

allow them to continue, as they attracted a relatively large working-class audience that also generated other commercial activities on the street. Instead, the authorities attempted to establish working-class theatres in the suburbs by granting more generous permits for such theatres. These were intended to draw audiences away from the Boulevard du Temple, appealing to the working class and staging plays of a higher moral standard. Several such theatres did indeed start up and became very popular, but with a more bourgeois audience. The working-class audience remained on the boulevard. "The urban context of the theatres was an integral part of the theatre experience."⁽⁶³⁾

In 1846, the head of the theatre office at the Ministry of the Interior wrote a report in which he pointed out that these small theatres had initially only been permitted to perform pure circus acts or puppet theatre, but had gradually been granted permission to perform pantomime. However, they had never been given official permission to perform vaudeville and should be prohibited from doing so.

The reason was now moral.

This usurpation (of genre) has given rise to serious inconveniences. The literature performed in these small shows is of the lowest order, and supervision is powerless to curb its excesses...Their choice falls on the most vulgar plays and those written in the worst spirit, and yet it is important that these theatres, open to the lowest classes, should not be left to this disorder.⁶⁴

A commission was appointed to evaluate the situation and future of small theatres. The commission looked at the financial situation of the theatres, fire safety and the number of employees. It concluded that fire safety was good and that the theatres should be allowed to continue performing vaudeville, mainly for financial reasons. Otherwise, there was a risk that audiences would abandon small theatres and go to cabarets instead, with all that this entailed in terms of immoral behaviour. The commission also concluded that, although it was possible to demand higher quality performances, this would risk increased ticket prices with the same result as above. The conclusion was that small theatres should be allowed to continue as before.

However, control over small theatres grew. Unrest among workers across the country and a sharp increase in migration to Paris as a result of economic depression may have contributed to small theatres attracting growing interest. Above all, the role of the inspector was expanded, whose task now became to control moral standards as well, since, according to the police prefect, the theatre also had an educational responsibility. "[S]es lieux qui sont devenus comme la seule école ou la classe inférieure (sic) de la société va prendre des

⁶³ Johnston, p. 78.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 223, all parentheses in the quotation are Johnston's.

lei;ons." ⁶⁵ Eventually, another inspector was added to keep up with the workload, and there were now two of them. Interest focused increasingly on the audience, and most police interventions were due to disturbances and noise in the auditorium. The proportion of small theatres involved in these police interventions increased steadily during these years. ^{This} may have been due to an increasingly lively audience, but also to a higher degree of surveillance and focus on the part of the authorities. In 1846, the three small theatres accounted for fifty per cent of all police interventions, even though the total number of theatres exceeded thirty.

Writers also began to take an interest in the morals of the working class, and newspapers aimed specifically at the working class gave advice on which performances were morally uplifting. The theatre began to be seen as an educational tool. In 1842, the newspaper *L'Artisan* wrote: "Il faut apporter une sérieuse attention à lui choisir des amusements moraux" (One must pay serious attention to choosing moral entertainment).

Despite everything, the small theatres were allowed to continue performing the vaudevilles they had never actually been granted permission for, mainly for financial reasons. In 1842, there were 33 curiosity shows in Paris in addition to the three small theatres. Most had permits, but not all. They featured jugglers, acrobats, puppets, shadow theatre, mechanical dolls, panorama and 'science' shows, trained animals, etc. These curiosity shows were hit by a series of new regulations in 1842, which banned all forms of verbal explanations, dialogue, all forms of pantomime, games and, in general, any changes to their performances without special permission. However, the three small theatres that had been performing vaudeville without permission were exempted from these new regulations. In 1846, they were instead given the official title of 'petits théâtres'. As a result, they now fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior, instead of the police prefect. ⁶⁸ For the first time, they were now also regarded as theatres by the authorities. However, this step up in the hierarchy would also have negative consequences.

1848–1862

The economic crises resulted in a new revolution that finally abolished the monarchy. Instead, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte was elected president. The working class emerged from the 1848 revolution with a sense of victory. They had always been republicans, often Bonapartists, and the revolution had come about thanks to them. Working-class theatre was more openly anti-bourgeois and concerned with its own identity than ever before.

⁶⁵ Johnston, p. 227.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 228f.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 232, sentence 1 on page 232.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 235f.

Just a few weeks after the revolution, Funambules premiered *Pierrot Ministre*, a pantomime by Théophile Gautier. Pierrot was played by Deburau's son Charles Deburau. In the play, Harlequin embodies the good people, while Pierrot is a minister to the former king. Harlequin has a girlfriend, 'La République', dressed in the tricolour. Pierrot steals Harlequin's food, and when Harlequin wants to become a journalist, Pierrot crosses out everything he writes down. They meet at the end in a battle on the street, where Harlequin and the Republic win. It was the first time Pierrot had such a negative character at Funambules. In the play Harlequin's opponents are mainly aristocrats, the king and his minister. It is a story about the people against the aristocracy. Almost all the other plays performed at Funambules described the people against the bourgeoisie.

Champfleury also wrote several pantomimes during this period. However, they were generally completely apolitical. Instead, they offered a certain kind of romantic escapism. Champfleury's and Gautier's plays are well known, both by historians and by their contemporaries, but they were exceptions, and only Funambules performed them. Otherwise, the plays at the three small theatres were still anonymous manuscripts. These dealt largely with the revolution and described the working class as good republicans and good citizens. Aristocrats were certainly enemies, but on a more abstract level; there were no aristocratic characters, instead the antagonists were bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie were cowardly types who did not want to fight for the revolution but believed they could get everything, even women, with money.

The bourgeoisie were cowards who had not fought with Napoleon and were not now on the barricades, even though they often pretended to be.

During this first period after the revolution, censorship was once again abolished. In addition, the authorities helped the theatres to remain open at all costs during the unrest so that people would have somewhere to go instead of rioting in the streets. Despite this, audience numbers fell significantly.

Two commissions were appointed to investigate theatre censorship issues. In 1849, one of them published a report proposing that preventive censorship be reintroduced. The other commission concluded that anyone who wanted to should be allowed to open a theatre in any genre they wanted, as long as they stuck to that genre. It was also more negative towards censorship.

On 30 July 1850, a new repressive censorship law was nevertheless passed, which would become the strictest of the entire century. With the new censorship came a new interest in the organisational structure of the theatre. Seats inside the theatre were to be

⁶⁹Johnston, p. 261.

Numbered tickets could be purchased in advance, queues outside the theatre were eliminated, and play scripts were censored more strictly than ever before. For the first time, censorship had a real impact on plays, even in small theatres. Anything that could be suspected of inciting the audience was banned. It was noted, for example, that audiences at small theatres were accustomed to loudly demanding encores, whistling if they did not get their way and applauding when they did. Therefore, this type of encore was banned. In practice, all forms of audience interaction were banned.

All slang and unrefined language was removed from the scripts. The romantic pantomimes that were written also became increasingly hollow. The last mimes at Funambules abandoned the theatre, and Charles Debureau even paid a fine to be able to terminate his contract with the theatre early. Worse still, Funambules also lost its audience.

The government also began to interfere in the appointment of new theatre directors at small theatres. ^{This} was something that Napoleon had always done for all other theatres, but not for small theatres. In 1856, Funambules got a new director, who explained in a letter to the authorities that from now on, the theatre's plays would mainly focus on making poor people feel disgust for the excesses of the revolution.

At the same time, more permits than before were granted to open 'café-concerts', cafés with singing entertainment. In 1851, there were 20 legal and an unknown number of illegal 'café concerts' in Paris. By 1885, there were 360. However, the lyrics were also subject to censorship.

The final blow for Funambules came with the decision to demolish Boulevard du Temple to make way for a new boulevard. On 15 July 1862, demolition of the boulevard began, and Lazary was the first theatre to be demolished. The last performance at Funambules was given on 17 May 1862 and was called *Les Memoires de Pierrot*. Funambules then moved to Boulevard des Amandiers, where Champfleury was granted permission to open the theatre and take over its management. However, as Champfleury had never made a name for himself with his pantomimes among Funambules' old audience, and the bourgeois audience had grown tired of them by then, the audience never followed. Funambules closed for good in 1863.⁷²

A year later, on 6 January 1864, Napoleon III issued a decree stating that anyone could start a theatre without government approval. The old system, whereby one had to apply for a licence to open a theatre, and whereby this licence entailed a genre restriction, was abolished. However, censorship did not yet cease. But here it takes

⁷⁰ Johnston, p. 296.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 298ff.

⁷² Ibid., p. 303f.

The end of history writing. Funambules had closed down, just like the other two small theatres. They had now fallen silent for good. Instead, the authorities would have a new problem on their hands, namely the music cafés' combination of alcohol and singing.

PANTOMIME AND THE DISCIPLINING OF THEATRE

What is usually described as a golden age for pantomime in Paris during the 19th century coincides with the period that Michel Foucault describes as the time when modern discipline was implemented. "Once the upheaval is complete, there are no more significant changes; after the configuration of power has been established during the course of the 19th century, it is characterised by a stability and continuity that has lasted into the present day."⁽⁷³⁾

Did this modern disciplining also have an impact on the theatre, and what role did pantomime play in this change? Can we see a change in theatre as a phenomenon and function in society during the 19th century, a function that has since stabilised and still dominates theatre today? Below, I outline the parts of Foucault's work that seem most relevant to the following argument.

Michel Foucault

Foucault's main interest has been focused on studying the emergence and history of science. He sees science as a way of organising the world. These scientific orders become institutionalised, have material consequences and become part of the organisation of power. This organisation in turn influences science. Foucault argues that the history of ideas and science is, to a greater extent, an expression of, for example, changing power structures rather than, for example, the research results of scientists themselves. If we apply Foucault's analysis to himself, his own texts are part of larger events in society where there is a constant struggle between different interpretations of different realities. Foucault is therefore not primarily the result of a philosophical development that can be traced back in time, but rather an agent in a network of ideas to which he responds and which respond to him. In a similar way, theatre should not reflect an artistic development led by various major figures in history. Instead, Brecht and Artaud express and participate in, contribute to and respond to an ongoing larger discourse, in which theatre is only one sub-argument.

⁷³Magnus Hömqvist, *Foucault's Analysis of Power* (Carlsson: Stockholm, 1996), p. 86.

Foucault refers to the 17th and 18th centuries as 'the classical period', a period devoted to sorting and creating order: Linnaeus's flora is one example. In the 19th century, modern society broke through and became more interested in dynamic development than static order. Disciplining humans, i.e. working for their development in moral, medical and social terms, is a contributing factor to several emerging sciences.

In his book *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* ⁽⁷⁴⁾, Foucault describes how views on madness changed in response to both material and ideological changes. The category of insane people could, for example, be expanded in times of unemployment and subsequent vagrancy. 'Superfluous' people were locked up. The treatment of those confined also changed in response to other shifts in interests. In Foucault's world, occupational therapy is not the result of developments in healthcare with the patient's best interests at heart, but rather the result of changing structures and attitudes towards work, the body and power.

It is not insignificant that the insane had been confined within the great condemnation of idleness. From the outset, they occupy their places alongside the poor, good or bad, the idle, whether by choice or not. Like them, the insane must submit to the rules of compulsory labour [...].⁽⁷⁵⁾

Madness became the subject of the emergence of new sciences, which classify, categorise, limit and investigate madness, and at the same time create it.

The essential point is that the work has not progressed from observations to the construction of explanatory images or representations; on the contrary, it is the images that have initiated a synthesis, their organising power enabling a perceptible structure in which the symptoms can finally acquire their meaning-laden values and arrange themselves as a real, perceptible, existing entity.⁷⁶

In the 19th century, a change took place; whereas madness had long been associated with organic movements in the body, which had therefore been explored, it was now associated with the person's sensitivity. Madness moved into the moral realm, becoming a moral punishment for various forms of immoral behaviour. According to Foucault, this is when scientific psychiatry began. Gradually, confinement also changed from being a place separated from the world to being a place of cure and reform.

⁷⁴ Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), trans. C.G. Liungman, *Vansinnets historia under den klassiska epoken* (Lund: Arkiv förlag, 1992).

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 151.

In his book *Discipline and Punish*,⁷⁷ Foucault describes the view of punishment from the 17th century until the end of the 19th century. This view follows a similar development. During the classical period, punishment was mainly directed at the body, and moreover publicly. In the 19th century, punishment instead focused on the soul.

Foucault describes how violent corporal punishment was carried out in front of an audience as a deterrent and as proof of the monarch's absolute power. These punishments were imposed as capriciously, as dependent on the mercy and displeasure of an absolute monarch, as God's ways are inscrutable. But at the same time, public punishments offered a place for rebellion and resistance. The criminal who was going to die anyway and was now being tormented had nothing to lose by cursing the authorities. "From one point of view, the executions, which were intended solely to demonstrate the prince's terrifying power, are a carnival where the roles are reversed, where the authorities are reviled and the criminals are transformed into heroes. The disgrace strikes back; the courage of the criminals, as well as their tears or screams, only cast suspicion on the law"⁷⁸

When the penalties changed, it happened in several directions at once. Among other things, a certain crime should be followed by a certain penalty and no longer depend on the whim of an autocratic monarch, nor take place in public. But above all, the penalties focused on a completely new strategy to reform the criminal. In other words, punishment was no longer focused solely on the body for deterrent purposes, but also on the soul for preventive and educational purposes.

In his book *Foucault's Power Analysis*, Magnus Hörnqvist describes what the transition to industrialism might have looked like. People resisted monotonous industrial work even when it was the only way to earn a living. Attracted by higher earnings, many quit as soon as they had earned enough, regardless of the prescribed working hours. "The ingrained patterns of behaviour, popular customs and centuries-old notions of right and wrong lived on among the new proletariat and repeatedly set limits on the capitalists' hunger for profit."⁷⁹ It took more than economic coercion to get people to industry. "Even if the various aspects of the 'real' subordination of the workforce are added to economic coercion, one does not obtain a comprehensive picture; it is also necessary to examine disciplinary techniques of power and biopolitical ones."⁸⁰

Biopolitical and disciplinary techniques of power refer to increasingly detailed regulations, laws and ordinances concerning everything from health to morality.

⁷⁷ Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), trans. C.G. Bjurström, *Övervakning och straff* (Lund: Arkiv förlag, 1998).

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 74.

⁷⁹ Hörnqvist, p. 96

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 97.

In response to the working class, sections of the bourgeoisie launched major campaigns for the 'moralisation of the poor classes', which recurred regularly from 1830 onwards. These campaigns spread alongside the 'medicalisation of the family', encompassing the generalisation of originally bourgeois ideas about order and behaviour, and culminating in, among other things, the prohibition of child labour and the introduction of compulsory education. ⁽⁸¹⁾

Ultimately, the oppressor and the oppressed emerge in one and the same person. The body becomes a prisoner of the soul. Power structures are maintained by those who are subjected to power. Foucault calls this the productive side of the exercise of power. But it is not primarily a question of internalisation in the subject's consciousness, but rather of participation in a moral discourse. Positive norms rather than negative coercion establish us in a configuration of power.

"The analysis of resistance is a necessary corrective to the analysis of power,"⁸² writes Hörnqvist, addressing the frequent criticism of Foucault that his theories seem so hopeless. But Foucault's exercise of power always includes resistance; power is constantly involved in a process, it is never static, it does not 'exist'. In the same way, resistance does not 'exist', but rather a field of resistance, which in turn constantly redefines power and shifts its positions. Nor is it possible to describe power and resistance in terms of good and evil. Power and resistance are constantly intertwined. "The difference is fundamentally marked only by the position from which the activity originates; resistance is striking from a position of inferiority, the exercise of power is directing the blow downwards."⁽⁸³⁾

Foucault's description of the modern disciplining of humans during the 19th century and the upheavals that created the society we still live in today seem to be relevant to theatre as well. Theatre underwent certain changes during the 19th century that still hold true today, in terms of the drama that is performed and the form of order we observe when we go to the theatre. What role did pantomime play in this change? Can pantomime be seen as part of a power practice? Can pantomime be seen as a form of resistance? Or can pantomime be defined as an expression of loopholes in power, loopholes that arise in the interplay between different interests? What significance did these loopholes have for the rise and decline of pantomime? Whether and how pantomime became the subject of classification, sorting, discipline, education and resistance during the 19th century are some of the things I examine below.

⁸¹ Hörnqvist, p. 107.

⁸² Ibid., p. 231.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 235.

A sorted pantomime

Foucault argues that modern discipline of humans during the 19th century replaced a classical period of sorted order during the 17th and 18th centuries. In France, the stylistic period known as classicism was particularly strong and long-lived in theatre, with major authors such as Corneille and Racine. This artistic direction can be described precisely as an order, including in written drama. An example of a sorted order is the division into comedy and tragedy; the lower classes are best suited to comedy, while the upper classes can only find their rightful expression in tragedy. It was this classical order that Victor Hugo's play *Hernani* broke with, as a final death blow to classicism and a starting signal for the definitive, albeit belated, breakthrough of Romanticism in France.

Marvin Carlsson argues that Napoleon turned the classical idea into policy. "The Neoclassicism, which swept most of Europe at the end of the 18th century was given extra support in France by Napoleon's desire to model his Empire after Rome."⁸⁴ It was a desire that permeated everything, from the organisation of society to the appearance of clothing and furniture. Naturally, Napoleon favoured classical theatre over other forms of theatre, but according to Carlsson, even during Napoleon's reign there was already a counterpoint to this in the form of melodrama.

Another expression of Napoleon's sorting order was that each individual theatre was assigned a specific repertoire. A tightrope theatre would perform tightrope walking, a puppet theatre puppets, and so on. A tightrope walker would not sing. In this way, classical plays came to be performed at the subsidised theatre for an aristocratic audience, secondary theatres performed melodrama for a bourgeois audience, and for the lower classes, what was at least thought to be light entertainment was performed. This was a division of the French people and their entertainment that closely followed the golden rules of classical drama for the language use of the different social classes in drama.

This gave rise to an underclass culture that did not really constitute a group in itself, but rather a non-group that had been excluded from the theatre. The censorship that affected this group was entirely negative; the artists were not allowed to speak or sing. How they then performed their various acts was not yet a matter of concern to the authorities. Outdoor entertainment was also not subject to any noticeable organisation, as long as it was not theatre.

⁸⁴ Marvin Carlson, *The French Stage in the Nineteenth Century* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1972), p. 3.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

Napoleon's classicism established a structure that organised theatre into categories and genres. At the same time, however, the censorship authorities were given a more centralised and uniform structure. Censorship was no longer as arbitrary and capricious, no longer an expression of an omnipotent divine power, but followed certain given rules. When Napoleon established a classicist order within the theatre, he also paved the way for a new form of organisation. Whereas before the revolution, theatre had been more dependent on the whims of an autocratic monarch, it was now incorporated into a more universal structure. The framework of this structure remained in place for most of the century, but its content changed.

Pantomime is an example of a change in content. In a category excluded from the theatre, wordless theatre was permitted during the Restoration. It can be seen as a compromise that emerged from a daily dispute, albeit on a small scale, about what the curiosity category could include. Small theatres pushed to be allowed to perform silent pantomime and argued for this broader interpretation. The Ministry of the Interior and the police prefecture gave in. Pantomime was the first victory out of exclusion, but at the same time it was created by it.

Loopholes in the network

"The *actions* that power relations give rise to are intentional, while *the results* of those actions are neither entirely predictable nor controllable." ⁽⁸⁶⁾ Power relations consist of power and its resistance, but neither power nor resistance are uniform and well-thought-out entities. Instead, they form, often together with pure misconceptions, a network of actions. As I see it, there are holes in the network. Loopholes.

"How, after all, did one go about silencing a mute?"⁸⁷ The first loophole, as Frederick Brown points out, was silence itself. When small theatres managed to obtain licences to perform pantomime, it was on condition that it was silent. It could then still be categorised as non-theatre, non-drama. The intention of the silence was to prevent subversive language, but the result was pantomime, and pantomime developed into a subcultural language. It is actually a classic example of how mime is used in regimes where speech is not free, and can be compared to, for example, South African theatre during the apartheid era. Scripts approved by the censors could have a very controversial message because of the actors' physical expressions. In the book *African Popular Theatre*, David Kerr describes how Gibson Kente's play *Too Late* got around the censors. "The play's impact in performance was much less that of the literary text than

⁸⁶ Hörnqvist, p. 63. (Emphasis in original.)

⁸⁷ Frederick Brown, *Theatre and Revolution* (New York: the Viking Press, 1980), p. 119.

that of non-verbal skills - gesture, songs, mime, dance and ensemble movement. Through such techniques a sub-text was established which was far more militant than the dialogue.¹¹⁸⁸

It is also a good example of how mime in these particular contexts actually benefits from not being universal. Through coded, context-dependent and time-bound body language that is understandable to the group itself but meaningless to outsiders, space is created for resistance. While pantomime appeared to those in power as a curious form of entertainment, and small theatres were at the bottom of the theatre hierarchy, they enjoyed a freedom of expression that other theatres lacked. So a restriction imposed on them from outside, which was not their own artistic choice and was primarily intended to silence the small theatres, instead became an opportunity to express themselves with relative freedom. The relative isolation of the small theatres from the establishment also created a subculture where there was greater freedom than in other parts of society.

Neither the press, the police nor censors were present at the performances themselves. At least, no newspaper reports or reports by the inspector from the performances themselves have been preserved. This makes it difficult for us to know what actually took place at the performances, but there are some vivid descriptions of the crowds recorded afterwards by actors, among others. In F.W.J. Hemming's book *The Theatre Industry in Nineteenth-century France*, there is a passage describing what it was like at the Le Petit Lazary theatre:

A member of the audience, sitting in the pit or the upper gallery, would shout out some rude comment; the actors on stage would reply, using the vilest slang; this would be followed by reciprocal threats and a cross-fire of invective which delighted the assembly, who would often fill the same part as the chorus of antiquity [...].⁸⁹

So even though the performances were silent, it was not quiet during the performances. The prerequisite for this relative freedom was that the sorting mindset was still stronger than the idea of dynamic development and discipline. It was more important to know where something was than to develop what was there. In secondary theatres, for example, the texts, i.e. the content of the drama, were heavily censored. However, this cannot be interpreted as a productive action either, as the censorship was negative and only expressed

⁸⁸ David Kerr, *African Popular Theatre* (James Currey, London, 1995) p. 220.

⁸⁹ Arthur Meyer, *Ce que je peux dire* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1912), p. 16. Quoted in F.W.J. Hemmings, *The Theatre Industry in Nineteenth-century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 123.

prohibitions, not measures. Even there, audience interaction could constitute a loophole, with cheerleaders being a well-known phenomenon.

When the disciplining of the theatre was finally complete, only one loophole remained in the small theatres, but it was an impressive loophole nonetheless: the audience's escape from the theatre to the café-concert. From being simply excluded from the theatre, the lower classes instead became an elusive target group. Café concerts were a popular form of entertainment even before the 1789 revolution, but when Napoleon cleaned up the theatres, he also took the opportunity to ban all forms of musical and/or dramatic entertainment in cafés. The restrictive attitude towards café concerts continued until the Second Empire. The decree that came in 1864, giving every individual the freedom to start and run a theatre and putting an end to genre classification, also meant the restoration of the 'café concert'. These were then exempt from the sweeping regulations that had been implemented in theatres. There were no requirements for numbered seats or any interest in cafés as providers of moral education. The theatre no longer offered the space, or the loophole, that it had previously provided. Instead, cafés had now become the 'non-theatres', the missing link in the disciplining of working-class entertainment.

The disciplining of theatre

"Unlike repression, whose primary function is to harm individuals or prevent actions, the primary function of normalising power techniques is to educate individuals and produce actions."⁹¹

In 1820, all forms of outdoor entertainment were banned. Anything could have happened on the streets, any audience could have come and gone as they pleased. Now entertainment was forced indoors. The ban, which was introduced to prevent riots, was also linked in time and function to the increasing invisibility of power. When prisoners were publicly flogged to deter crime, it was also a display of the face of power. During the 19th century, power became more discreet and public flogging was replaced by prisons. Punishment now took place indoors. Foucault goes on to write about when chained prisoners walked through Paris for the last time in 1837.⁹² This still highly public transport of prisoners was a public success, perhaps partly due to the long absence of outdoor entertainment. As a result, prisoners were subsequently transported in a special train.

⁹⁰ F.W.J. Hemmings, *Theatre and State in France, 1760-1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 197.

⁹¹ Hömqvist, p. 201.

⁹² Foucault, 1998, p. 299.

constructed specifically for them and without transparency. Society as a whole moved in. The opportunities for staged confrontations with power became more limited.

When they moved in, the curiosity shows were forced to organise themselves more like theatres, even though they were not considered to be theatres. In addition to the negative rules, more and more productive rules were therefore added. This development was not entirely negative, at least not at first. In several stages, it would develop the small theatres into increasingly authentic theatres with greater prestige, which was what they were striving for. They had fought hard in the small world for an improved position, first through pantomime, then with vaudeville. With vaudeville, they lost the exclusivity and subculture that pantomime had brought with it, but they gained greater freedom to decide their own repertoire. After all, vaudeville was still a genre based on their own theatre convention.

The classification thus became more fluid and lost its primary repressive function. Instead, a more productive ambition to improve emerged. The authorities became more interested in the activities of the audience, while socialist-influenced intellectuals began to advocate for a more didactic and moral theatre. Both parties began to use theatres for the purpose of improving society. When the small theatres finally became official theatres in 1846, their exile ended and they entered the establishment. This establishment reached its peak in the 1850s and eventually sorted out the working class in a new way.

Numbered seats, good order and edifying drama were among the productive activities to which small theatres were subjected. Writers wrote edifying plays for small theatres and journalists gave advice in workers' newspapers about good performances. The censors took an interest in the behaviour of the audience and anything that encouraged the audience to participate in any way was censored. When dance performances were banned within the framework of a performance, it was to put a stop to the audience's (bad) habit of loudly demanding or applauding dance. The requirement to introduce numbered seats divided the audience, kept them in their seats and put an end to social interaction both in the queue and inside the theatre. At the same time, lighting technology changed and theatres gradually adopted the lighting we have today, with the auditorium lights turned off. All of this contributed to making the theatre experience more individualistic.

Negative provisions perhaps left more room for manoeuvre, while productive provisions became more normative. If the places are numbered, then so be it.

Foucault describes how cells were introduced into prisons, replacing the halls where prisoners used to mingle haphazardly. "The crowd, this compact mass where all kinds of exchanges take place, where individuals merge, the collective effect is abolished and replaced by

a collection of individuals."⁹³ This happened somewhat earlier in the 19th century, and Foucault has a disturbing line of thought about how prisons have contributed to shaping patterns in our society. "It is therefore not surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals; they all resemble prisons."⁹⁴ Does contemporary theatre resemble prisons?

The authorities, radical forces and small theatres themselves probably had very different views on goals and means, but what is interesting is not each party's motives, or even who was right or wrong. These seemingly separate tracks ended up converging and all contributed to theatre ceasing to be a working-class entertainment and instead becoming a more exclusive bourgeois pastime. The transition of the audience to 'café concerts' can hardly have been in anyone's interest. From a Foucauldian perspective, what is interesting is, on the contrary, the absence of a driving, unified subject. "Il ne faut pas renvoyer le discours à la lointaine presence de l'origine; il faut le traiter dans le jeu de son instance."⁹⁵ Instead it was several rather conflicting interests and a field of coincidences in the unpredictable contemporary world that drove the ongoing discourse to a somewhat unexpected result.

A subjective and authoritative theatre

And, while modern Western dramatists abandoned the public squares of Renaissance theatre for the living room, kitchen, bedroom, motel, and office, the emerging festival theatre repositioned itself in places where public life and social ritual have traditionally been acted out.⁹⁶

Richard Schechner comments on the return of performance theatre to former venues, but there is another possible conclusion to be drawn from the above quote. The theatre's entry into realism and the intimate salon could also be described as the theatre's exit from the public space, away from a more original (?) performative existence.

Has theatre become a private, more individualistic affair? There is probably no theatre practitioner today who would not be prepared to defend theatre as a social event, but the question is then how and to what extent one defines a social event.

The audience for small theatres began their interaction while waiting in line to get in. There they met friends and ate the food they had brought with them, then continued to eat and socialise inside the theatre. When reading the descriptions of the importance of food in

⁹³ Foucault, 1998, p. 235.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Michel Foucault, *L'Archeologie du Savoir* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1969), p. 37

⁹⁶ Richard Schechner, "Invasions Friendly and Unfriendly: The Dramaturgy of Direct Theatre," *Critical Theory and Performance*, eds. J.G. Reinelt & J. Roach (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. 89.

these small theatres, one suddenly realises where the rotten tomatoes come from. The audience did not bring 'rotten' tomatoes to throw at the actors, but food to eat. The food was, so to speak, what was at hand if the need to throw something suddenly arose.

In *På Stan*, reviewer Pia Huss writes a note about the inappropriate behaviour of allowing children to eat sweets during children's performances. "The conspiracy of sweet eaters has developed into terror."⁹⁷ She complains that this risks disturbing the most sensitive parts of the performance, and goes on to write: "Adults pay a lot for a theatre ticket and then sabotage both their own and others' experience with an orgy of Dumle crisps. It's not just incomprehensible, it's actually outrageous."⁽⁹⁸⁾ I understand her and have often heard the same argument from tormented colleagues in children's theatre – but perhaps we have missed an essential idea about theatre as social interaction. "In the various forms of discipline, one sees the power of the Norm emerge," Foucault writes ominously.⁹⁹ The rustling of sweets is perhaps the last remaining revolt against an individualistic, subjective, authoritarian form of theatre.

When did theatre cease to be a social affair and become a private one? During the second half of the 19th century, at the same time as realism, intimate theatre and the shift of drama into the living room? These efforts to renew theatre took place in parallel with the increasingly thorough disciplining of the working class's entertainment.

Towards the middle of the 19th century, widespread literacy also took off, and society increasingly became one where everyone could read and write. This development has meant that the better we can read and write, the better we fare. The theatre has also tried to adapt to this clear status marker in modern society. There is an ongoing discussion today about whether theatre should be seen solely as staged literature, or whether it is time to broaden the concept of theatre. However, as I see it, theatre has not only sought to stage literature, but has also recreated the very act of going to the theatre to mimic the act of reading a book. The theatre pretends to be a book, the audience pretends to be reading. The audience sits in armchairs, it is dark, a reading lamp illuminates the text. It is quiet, like in a library, which allows for reflection and contemplation of the text. Reading is something you do alone, sitting in the theatre and not disturbing your neighbour is an attempt to mimic this.

A failed attempt, since we are, after all, surrounded by and influenced by all the moods, giggles, irritations and suppressed yawns around us. But we pretend to behave as we would when reading a book in a library. The theatre event has become a book event.

⁹⁷ Pia Huss, "Från parkett" (From the stalls), *På Stan*, DN 6.10.2000, p. 33.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 215.

In this transformation of theatre into book, the body has become a problem. How much body? The more body, the less book, but too little body – no longer theatre. The body as a means of expression has been reduced, both on stage and in the auditorium, but for the most part it still remains, completely still. When the interaction between stage and auditorium has disappeared and we are assigned specific seats in the auditorium where we are expected to sit quietly, and are no longer allowed to bring food with us, then the theatre event has taken on a more exclusive character. When we are at the theatre, we are there solely for its own sake, to admire the work.

My conclusion is that in the 1850s, a paradigm shift can be observed, whereby popular theatre transitioned from being a performative, socially interactive, cultural staging to being an abandoned, subjective, authoritarian and privatised phenomenon. This, in turn, meant that the section of the population that did not belong to either an aristocratic or a bourgeois cultural sphere, but had other cultural references, abandoned theatre in favour of other, less regulated forms of performance. One of these was to become the 'café concert'. Pantomime also abandoned the theatre, and artists with roots in pantomime also moved over to the 'café concert'. It was in these cafés and similar events that the early avant-garde of the 20th century would discover pantomime.

The role of the Romantics

When Enlightenment literature praises the bourgeoisie, it always does so in a polemical tone directed at the higher classes. It is only Romanticism that sees the bourgeoisie as the obvious measure of all things. The consequence of this in the early 19th century was that the intelligentsia increasingly isolated itself from the rest of society. The concepts of *käliborgare* and *bracka* developed – bourgeois as opposed to citizen – and the peculiar situation arose where artists were filled with contempt for the class to which they owed their spiritual and material existence. ⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

Ingvar Holm describes Romanticism as a product of the post-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

According to Holm, melodrama often used working-class characters to symbolise a rebellious bourgeoisie, but in the 1840s, this working-class character changed to bohemian. A

Bohemians have no profession and belong to a special group of people who balance on the edge but do not fall over. ¹⁰¹ Bohemianism was thus born out of a context in which bourgeois culture was increasingly becoming the norm. The avant-garde found itself caught between two distinct but conflicting norms. On the one hand, there was the struggle against classical culture and thus against an aristocratic cultural heritage; on the other hand, an increasingly clear bourgeois norm was being established.

¹⁰⁰ Ingvar Holm, p. 25f.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 58.

Romanticism was originally a rebellion against classicism. However, ever since Napoleon, despite his ancient ideals and the subsequent restoration of the monarchy, an increasingly bourgeois society had begun to take shape. Power developed towards greater discretion and an increasingly sophisticated administration. If one views Romanticism as an avant-garde caught between an old aristocratic sorting of society and a new bourgeois moralisation, one can sense its emotional tension.

Pantomime had no roots in classicism, and its main target was the bourgeoisie. Johnston describes, for example, how 'les propriétaires' constituted a common role category, and a heavily satirised one at that. 'Les propriétaires' were homeowners and shopkeepers, i.e. those who tried to cheat honest people out of their money. Pantomime, with its non-affiliation to either classicism or melodrama, was therefore an attractive source of inspiration. However, the Romantics were not interested in its working-class affiliation; instead, it was its outsider status that appealed to them.

Romanticism transformed Pierrot from a worker to a bohemian, and the fact that the artist Deburau was considered to come from Bohemia, the homeland of all bohemians, probably facilitated this.

transformation. Romanticism further transformed Pierrot into a more 'universal' variant of the bohemian. Severin, himself a mime artist in Deburau's footsteps, describes this development in positive terms.

"Pierrot has developed from a clown into a symbol of all mankind, suffering the misfortunes of all men, enjoying life, and talking no thought of the morrow. He is an idealist, a glutton, a hero and a coward, an anchorite and a sensualist. He is universal." ¹⁰²

Romanticism was interested in the foreign and the exotic, but also in folk culture. When Janin writes about his escape from subsidised theatre and his descent into Funambules, it is in truth a journey to a more 'true' and 'authentic' people. ⁽¹⁰³⁾ Pantomime was often portrayed as a childish and innocent, naive genre. The fact that the stories were also mostly considered incomprehensible did not make matters any worse.

Although pantomime existed in theatrical exile, without much insight from either the authorities or the cultural elite, this did not mean that the audience or the actors at Funambules lacked insight into the society around them. Storey emphasises that the early pantomimes at Funambules were often adaptations of old plays, imitations of new plays, or pure burlesque versions of performances at the secondary theatres on Boulevard du

^{1 2} Severin, "The Last of the Pierrots", interview by Barrett H Clark 1923, *Mimes on Miming*, ed. Bari Rolf, p. 70.

¹⁰³ See quote from Janin above, p. 26

Temple.¹⁰⁴ In that case, they should have contained references to the past, comments on contemporary drama, and criticism of melodrama and bourgeois drama. They must have been based on a kind of local knowledge or contextual knowledge. Pantomime as an exotic but universal form of exclusion, fully recognisable to a bourgeois avant-gardist, had little to do with working-class pantomime, which was, on the contrary, integrated into a contemporary and local context.

From this, one can conclude that the significance of Romanticism for pantomime has been to misunderstand it, reinterpret it, and make this misunderstanding immortal. Romanticism's discovery of pantomime also coincided with pantomime having served its purpose as theatre for people excluded from the theatre. It was not a contemporary, living and vital pantomime that was recreated, but a revived, nostalgic pantomime.

According to Hauser, Romanticism was not a mannerism, but can be seen as a revolt against the anti-mannerism of Classicism. In that case, pantomime was a mannerist tool for Romanticism, something to shock good taste with.

Towards the end of the century, pantomime underwent yet another transformation, from the elusive bohemian of Romanticism to an innocent dreamer verging on kitsch. Balancing tearfully on a crescent moon, dressed in a large white shirt with large white buttons, this dreamer is hardly shocking – quite the contrary. According to Storey, this transformation took place with the help of the Symbolists, among others. Romantic pantomime thus underwent a process from universal rumbling to the increasingly bland dreamer who lives on in our consciousness to this day. Storey points out, however, that at the turn of the century, another form of pantomime still existed, a non-theatrical pantomime, at café concerts.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

Romanticism, with its interest in the foreign and the outsider, transformed pantomime. This transformation continued during the Belle Époque and ultimately resulted in a completely harmless dreamer, no longer a mouthpiece for the working class or a means for a rebellious romantic avant-garde. Pantomime underwent a development from a mannerist virtuoso revolt to a mannerist shell emptied of content. Throughout the 20th century, mimes denied any connection with this beautiful shell.

At the same time, another form of pantomime lived on in a non-theatrical world as an undercurrent awaiting new avant-gardes.

¹⁰⁴ Storey, p. 110f.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 302

CONCLUSION

My hypothesis was that mime is fundamentally a form of popular culture, which has been used repeatedly throughout history by various avant-garde movements to rebel against ossified canons, but which never achieves a place in 'high culture' itself. The discourse surrounding theatre and culture, power and language, reshapes mime. The status of mime in the theatre hierarchy is closely related to how theatre as such is defined. I have called mime a mannerism inspired by Hauser's definitions of mannerism. According to Hauser, mannerism contains elements of technical brilliance, balances on the border between clarity and incomprehensibility, and is expressed primarily in periods of artistic transition. Mannerism is also a negatively charged word, often associated with bad taste.

Mime is an art form that can be mastered, a genre that can be performed on the street or in the square, and whose tools are such that even the uninitiated can learn it. With its elements of technical brilliance, it also offers the opportunity to shine. Mime is primarily a commentary and narrative art form. It also often contains coded body language that can be banally obvious, but also completely incomprehensible to anyone who is not initiated. The vitality of mime as a subculture is based, among other things, on its capacity for physical expression, bodily mimetic storytelling, a bodily narrativity.

Pantomime on Boulevard du Temple in Paris was a protected arena because it was simply not understood by outsiders, as the codes of the performance, the references of physical language, were hidden from them. In these forms, mime is never universal, but local, which is also its strength.

This makes mime a potentially subversive art form. It also makes it attractive and interesting in periods of artistic upheaval. Mime can be seen as an art form that always exists in some form in popular culture, on the street or in the entertainment industry, but which sometimes emerges as a trend or a means for the avant-garde to renew the canon. However, its reputation seems to be temporary, despite, for example, Decroux's great efforts to give mime a place within modernism. Decroux's 'mime corporel' is undeniably a modernism that strives to be essential. However, not even this variant of mime has really succeeded in establishing itself in a high culture that advocates good taste.

Michel Foucault argues that during the 19th century, a modern form of discipline was imposed on humanity. This modern discipline, with its reorientation of society, still characterises it today. I have shown here how theatre also underwent certain changes that still remain, including the form of order we observe when we

go to the theatre, but also in the very definition of theatre. What does theatre include, what does it exclude, and how do these definitions shape, for example, the history of theatre that is being written today?

A study worthy of Foucault should really also have included an analysis of the emergence of theatre studies as a subject. How did theatre studies actually emerge, and on what coincidences, misconceptions, exclusions and preconceptions was this discipline founded? By studying a genre such as mime, with its uncertain affiliation – theatre, dance, entertainment, circus? – I hope to have at least problematised what we call theatre to some extent.

Napoleon's endeavour to make theatre an exclusive high-culture phenomenon, a representation of Napoleon's idea of a classicist state, created a popularly rooted variant of pantomime. When small theatres were recognised as theatres, it was on the premise that the social aspect of the theatre event, which was part of its popularity, would cease to exist. In addition, theatre became increasingly literary. Pantomime, with its elements of acrobatic and coded physical storytelling, its audience appeal and its entire subcultural identity, had served its purpose in theatre.

However, pantomime's main characteristic of being a subculture excluded from the theatre attracted the romantic avant-garde, which for a short period elevated pantomime to cult status, an elevation doomed to be short-lived as it was based on exclusion. Romanticism was a rebellion against classicism and can be seen as an expression of the bourgeoisie's rebellion against the aristocracy. Once the bourgeoisie's position was secured, realism became its primary cultural representation, and pantomime came to be regarded as an artificial, clichéd, and no longer adequate artistic expression. These conflicts over categories and status also defined theatre.

Mime's place in theatre today is as context-dependent as ever. Contemporary theatre has a highly ambivalent relationship with the body. This applies both to the actor on stage and the audience in the auditorium. The audience is expected to sit quietly and still in their seats, the actor to speak 'authentically'. If theatre behaves like a book, one might even dare to claim that dance behaves like a picture book. However, mime's elements of narratively coded body language and audience engagement find it difficult to find a relevant place where narration consists of discreet, quiet text.

I have also coined the term "loopholes of power", which should be understood as my interpretation of Foucault's analysis of power as a process, never uniform or complete, but rather resembling a network where power, the pursuit of power and resistance intersect. As I see it, there are holes in a network, loopholes. When theatre is transformed into a quiet event

with the lights dimmed, an expression of bourgeois literary culture, the part of the audience that had a different tradition creeps out through the holes.

The pantomime on Boulevard du Temple in Paris is a fragment of a much larger story. There is much that could not be included here. I have already mentioned that pantomime also existed in other places in Paris during this period. To give a broader perspective on the role of pantomime, pantomime in classical ballet and secondary theatre should also be studied. And even though pantomime disappeared completely from the theatre in the second half of the 19th century and became unfashionable in ballet, it did not disappear from popular culture. The pantomime that was alive on the Boulevard du Temple survived as an important element in the 'café-concert'. Although Decroux strongly distanced himself from this variant of pantomime, it was significant for the early avant-garde of the 20th century.

The significance of popular culture for the avant-garde could well be the subject of a separate essay. Lotta Lotass has reviewed several books about the Marx Brothers, including their significance for the avant-garde.

Behind the idiosyncratic humour that characterises the Marx brothers lies a root system of threads stretching back to ancient mime, through commedia dell'arte and vaudeville, and forward to the theatre of the absurd. Beckett and Ionesco, in particular, have reused routines from silent films and early talking film masterpieces. ^{Great} tragicomedians from the variety and music hall tradition, such as Grock and Dan Leno, represent powerful branches on a family tree *that has been insufficiently researched*.

The emphasis is mine, and I will conclude this essay.

¹⁰⁶ Lotta Lotass, "Surrealist Heroes," *DN*, 15 December 2000, p. B2.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alberts, David, "A critical analysis of the historical and theoretical issues of modern mime", unpublished dissertation, Bowling Green State University, 1989, microfilm (DAI 50/08, February 1990, 2305 - A)
- Bourquin, Dominique, "Curtain-raiser", *Mimes on Miming*, ed. Bari Rolf (Los Angeles: Panjandrum Books (year missing))
- Brown, Frederick, *Theatre and Revolution* (New York: the Viking Press, 1980) Carlson, Marvin *The French Stage in the Nineteenth Century* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1972)
- Felner, Mira, *Apostles of Silence: The Modern French Mimes* (London & Toronto: Fairleigh Dickinson, 1985)
- Foucault, Michel, *L'Archeologie du Savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969)
- Foucault, Michel, *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), trans. C.G Liungman, *Vansinnets historia under den klassiska epoken* (Lund: Arkiv förlag, 1992)
- Foucault, Michel, *Surveiller et punir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), trans. C.G. Bjurström, *Discipline and Punish* (London: Penguin Books, 1976)
- Hauser, Arnold, *Mannerism: the Crisis of the Renaissance and the Origin of Modern Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986), trans. with author by Eric Mosbacher, original title *Der Mannerismus* (original edition London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965)
- Hemmings, F.W.J., *Theatre and State in France, 1760-1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)
- Holm, Ingvar, *The Stage of Industrialism: From the Theatre History of Revolutions and Trade Fairs* (Stockholm: AWE / Gebers, 1979)
- Hossaye, Arsene, preface to Jules Janin, *Deburau, Histoire du Theatre a Quatre Sous, pour faire suite à l'Histoire du Theatre-Français* (Paris: Librairie des bibliophiles, 1881)
- Hörnqvist, Magnus, *Foucault's Analysis of Power* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1996)
- Janin, Jules, *Deburau, Histoire du Theatre à Quatre sous, pour faire suite à l'Histoire du Theatre-Français* (Paris: Librairie des bibliophiles, 1881)
- Johnston, Carolyn Jane, "The Politics of Pantomime: Working-class Theatre in Paris, 1800-1862", unpublished dissertation, University of California, 1998, microfilm (DAI 50/08, July 1998, 283-A)

- Kerr, David, *African Popular Theatre* (James Currey, London, 1995)
- Leabhart, Thomas, *Modern and Post-modern Mime* (London: Macmillan Education, 1989)
- Meyer, Arthur, *Ce que je peux dire* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1912), p. 16 cited in F.W.J. Hemmings, *The Theatre Industry in Nineteenth-century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)
- de Najac, Raoul, "Souvenirs of a Mime", *Mimes on Miming*, ed. Rolf, Bari (Los Angeles: Panjandrum (year missing))
- Rolf, Bari. "Meem, Mime, and Pantomime," in *Mimes on Miming*, ed. Rolf, Bari (Los Angeles: Panjandrum Books (year missing))
- Schechner, Richard, "Invasions Friendly and Unfriendly: The Dramaturgy of Direct Theatre", *Critical Theory and Performance*, eds. J.G. Reinelt & J. Roach (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992)
- Severin, "The Last of the Pierrots," interview by Barrett H Clark, 1923, *Mimes on Miming*, ed. Rolf, Bari
- Storey, Robert, *Pierrots on the Stage of Desire: Nineteenth-Century French Literary Artists and the Comic Pantomime* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985)
- Wylie, Mary Kathryn, "An Analysis of the Concept of 'Attitude' as a Basis for Mime", unpublished dissertation, City University of New York, 1984, microfilm (DAi 45/11, May 1985, 3240 - A)

Newspapers and magazines

- Decroux, Etienne, "The Origin of Corporeal Mime", *Mime Journal: Etienne Decroux Eightieth Birthday Issue*, ed. Thomas Leabhart (1978: 7-8), pp. 8-28
- Huss, Pia, "Från parkett" (From the Stalls), *På Stan*, DN 6.10. 2000
- Leabhart, Thomas, "Corporeal Theatre", *New Mime in North America*, ed. Thomas Leabhart (Claremont: Mime Journal, 1982)
- Lotta Lotass, "Surrealist Heroes," *DN*, 15 December 2000
- Postlewait, Thomas "Historiography and the Theatrical Event: A Primer with Twelve Cruxes" *Theatre Journal* 43 (The John Hopkins University Press, 1991) pp. 157-178