

THE PHOTOGRAPH IS RE-CALLED AS THE DANCER'S BODY RE-TURNS: THE
PERFORMATIVE MEMORY OF VASLAV NIJINSKY IN *L'APRÈS-MIDI D'UN FAUNE*

by

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(Under the Direction of David Zucker Saltz)

ABSTRACT

Vaslav Nijinsky (1890?-1950) made his fame in Paris as the premiere danseur of the Ballets Russes from 1909 to 1912. It is largely upon these four seasons that Nijinsky came to be considered the greatest dancer who has ever lived. In 1912, Nijinsky choreographed his first ballet, *L'Après-midi d'un Faune (Faune)*. Approximately ten-and-a-half minutes in length, *Faune* is considered one of the most significant works in dance history, and a pivotal work of twentieth century theatrical modernism. In this study, *Faune* is identified as an extraordinary example of praxis, with Nijinsky as choreographer, performer, creator of an original dance notation system to record his ballet, and notator of its score. For nearly three-quarters of a century, Nijinsky's score of *Faune* was considered an indecipherable oddity. Thus, with no film footage existing of Nijinsky dancing, the only material evidence of his performance in and choreography of *Faune* were photographs, including those from the famous Adolph De Meyer session in London in June of 1912. In 1989, however, Ann Hutchinson Guest and Claudia Jeschke "broke" the code of Nijinsky's notation system, and in December of that year an historic performance of *Faune* took place at New York City's Juilliard School, with then-student dancer

Yoav Kaddar performing Nijinsky's role of the Faun for the first time in seventy-five years exactly as described by Nijinsky in his original notation system.

As primary researcher, the focus of my study is the description of a phenomenological "event," my 2006 viewing of the 1989 videotaped Juilliard production of *Faune*. Within my viewing of Kaddar's performance in the Nijinsky role of the Faun, I recalled my memories of the De Meyer photographs of Nijinsky and, through this "recollection," imbricated within the "present" performance of the dancer Kaddar, I discovered what I believed to be an experientially "new viewing" and subsequent "new performance memory" of Vaslav Nijinsky.

Under an umbrella methodology of phenomenology (embodied consciousness), I engaged in research on nonarchivalism and photographic realism (as they pertain to performance documentation), and performative knowledge within dance notation systems, to strengthen my experiential "belief," and to enrich the description, as opposed to providing evidentiary "proof," of my phenomenological event.

INDEX WORDS: Vaslav Nijinsky, *L'Après-midi d'un Faune (Afternoon of a Faun)*, Phenomenology, Performance Preservation, Embodied Consciousness, Nonarchivalism, Dance Notation Systems, Photographic Realism

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DEDICATION

In 1919 Vaslav Nijinsky wrote in his diary, “I am feeling in the flesh and not intellect in the flesh. I am the flesh. I am feeling. I am God in the flesh and in feeling. I am man and not God. I am simple. People must not think me. They must feel me and understand me through feeling. Scholars will ponder over me, and they will rack their brains needlessly, because thinking will produce no results for them. They are stupid.” Acknowledging his sentiments, I nonetheless dedicate this work and the desire beneath its completion to the art and person that is and was Vaslav Nijinsky.

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In my ability to pursue research of an individual I have long admired as the embodiment of artistic transcendence, I must acknowledge with gratitude the aid and support of a number of extraordinary individuals. They include Dr. Ann Hutchinson Guest, who shared her tremendous knowledge of Nijinsky's dance notation system and score of *Faune*, Dr. Claudia Jeschke who patiently answered by "dense" questioning of the performativity available within Nijinsky's score, Professor Yunyu Wang who brought her passion for Nijinsky and expertise in the reconstruction of *Faune* to my research, Yoav Kaddar who allowed me access to his intimate experience of learning and performing the Faun, Dr. Sunil Kothari who shared his passion for dance, Dr. John Kundert-Gibbs for his hours of help to create a photographically-modified recording of the 1989 Juilliard Dance Ensemble's *Faune*, Dr. Charles Eidsvik who first encouraged me to explore my phenomenological connection to Nijinsky's performance, Dr. Farley Richmond who strengthened my resolve to complete this study, and finally, Dr. David Saltz, whose unrelenting enthusiasm and belief in my original research consistently and constantly strengthened my own "belief" that what seemed at times an insurmountably complicated study was within my reach. I wish also to thank my colleagues within the department, Drs. Katharine Carey and Lauren Sexton, with whom I began my doctoral studies, Beth Turner for her friendship and support, Joyce Heard for her help "beyond the call of duty," and Thomas Stewart, for his invaluable technical support. Finally, I wish to thank my niece, Sharon Strom, and my boyfriend Jeff McCandless, for their love and support during this final stretch of the completion of the study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Historical and Research Background

Vaslav Nijinsky (1890?-1950)¹ remains one of the most influential male dancers in history, whose technical brilliance combined with an unprecedented, individualized intensity of characterization. Nijinsky made his fame in Paris as the premiere danseur of the Ballets Russes from 1909 to 1912.² Based largely but not solely upon these four seasons, Nijinsky came to be considered perhaps the greatest dancer who has ever lived, dancing roles in works created by Ballets Russes' choreographer and Ballet Master Michel Fokine (1880-1942): *Les Sylphides*, *Carnaval*, *Spectre de la Rose*, *Petruschka*, and *Schéhérazade*.

The dancer's first real negative publicity came in 1912 from a ten-minute ballet in which he both choreographed and starred: *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* (*Afternoon of a Faun*) (*Faune*). Applauded by some and dismissed by many, *Faune* with its animalistic eroticism and posed, apparently un-musical choreography, encouraged public and private appraisal of Nijinsky as an

¹ There continues to be confusion as to Nijinsky's year of birth. According to John Fraser, Nijinsky stated that he was born in 1890, his sister Bronislava Nijinska, that he was born in February 1889, biographer Richard Buckle, that he was born in February 1888, and his wife, Romola, that he was born in February 1890. See John Fraser, "The Diaghilev Ballet in Europe: Footnotes to Nijinsky, Part Two," *Dance Chronicle* 5, no. 2 (1982): 165.

² These four seasons constitute the most concentrated and consistent period of Nijinsky's performances with the Ballets Russes. In May 1913, Nijinsky choreographed and starred in *Jeux*, in June he choreographed *Le Sacre du Printemps*, and in September 1913 he married Romola De Pulsky. He was then fired from the Ballets Russes by Serge Diaghilev, had a brief, commercially and artistically frustrating season in London, found himself under virtual house arrest in Hungary after World War I began, but was rehired by the Ballets Russes in 1916, and performed throughout the United States, including choreographing and starring in *Till Eulenspiegel*. His last public performances were with the Ballets Russes in South America in 1917. On January 19, 1919, he performed brilliantly but erratically in front of a private, invited audience in a hotel salon in St. Moritz. He would never perform again.

“idiot of genius,”¹ full of intuitive fire, but incapable of sophisticated, analytic thinking, or in the words of the ballet’s composer, Claude Debussy, a “young savage.”² A month later in London Nijinsky commissioned photographer Adolph De Meyer to photograph members of the cast in his studio as they performed the ballet.³ The famous De Meyer session represents an unprecedented attempt by a performer/choreographer to preserve the detail of his work.

Even before his creation of *Faune*, Nijinsky had been experimenting with a dance notation system, based upon, but far more anatomically detailed than the Stepanov system he had learned at the Imperial Ballet School in St. Petersburg. In 1915, while under house arrest in Hungary, Nijinsky would complete one version of his system and successfully record the “movement score” of his ballet.

Both Nijinsky’s performance and choreographic careers were cut short in 1919 by his accelerating mental illness. When a score of *Faune* was discovered that Nijinsky had written in pencil in an original dance notation system he claimed to have created, the volume was indecipherable and dismissed by some as an oddity, a product of the insane Nijinsky’s obsession with geometric figures. After Nijinsky’s death in 1950 at the age of sixty, his widow Romola donated his score of *Faune* to the British Museum. In 1989 Ann Hutchinson Guest and Claudia Jeschke broke the code of Nijinsky’s notation system, and in December of that year, an historic performance of *Faune* took place at New York City’s Juilliard School, with dancers learning the choreography solely from Nijinsky’s written score. Student dancer Yoav Kaddar performed the role of the Faun for the first time in seventy-five years exactly as described by Nijinsky, its

¹ Vere Mikhaïlovna Krasovskaya, *Nijinsky* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1979), 116. Krasovskaya quotes Misia Edwards Sert, a friend of Diaghilev’s, who Nijinsky considered “a marvelous person and a beautiful woman. . . . [W]e are great friends.” See Bronislava Nijinska, Irina Nijinska, Jean Rawlinson, and Anna Kisselgoff, *Bronislava Nijinska--Early Memoirs*. 1st ed. (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1981), 273.

² Qtd. in Richard Buckle, *Nijinsky* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971), 290. Debussy’s music had been composed ten years earlier, and he had been persuaded by Serge Diaghilev to allow its use in Nijinsky’s ballet.

³ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 508.

choreographer/performer. Thus *Faune* constitutes an extraordinary example of praxis by Vaslav Nijinsky, who during his life was understood solely through performance.

Significantly for this study, there is no film of Nijinsky dancing. The Nijinsky performance photographs remain the sole material evidence of the performances that past witnesses tried constantly to describe in writing. For this study, I define “performance photograph” or “performance shot” as a photograph of Nijinsky that, while almost never taken during actual performance, and infrequently when Nijinsky was caught moving freely, reveal Nijinsky embodying a character in a specific role. I am including head or chest shots of Nijinsky in my definition of “performance photographs” if Nijinsky was wearing the full costume and makeup of a specific role in the photograph.⁴

Personal Narrative as Background to Project

The very first time I saw the Nijinsky performance photographs I was a young dancer in the 1960s, full of visions not of sugarplums but of the Russian Ballet. I recall being baffled when I saw Nijinsky’s photographs for the first time in an Encyclopaedia Britannica—Volume B for “ballet.” How could I love something so much, and yet have missed it? In his book *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes comments on the photograph of his much beloved, dead mother, remarking that in its viewing, the photograph “accomplishes the unheard-of identification of reality (‘that has been’) with truth (‘there she is!’).”⁵ The exclamation “there she is!” speaks directly to the point, or in Barthes’ words, the “punctum,” of the photograph that affects or

⁴ When I use employ the term “photograph” alone for conciseness in writing, I am also referring to my defined term of “performance photograph.” Photographs other than “performance photographs” will be labeled as such, i.e. “off stage photograph,” or “portrait photograph.” I analyze in detail of Barthes’ concept of the nature of photography in chapter two, “Theory: The Nature of Photography.”

⁵ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. 1st American ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 113. I discuss Barthes’ concept of the punctum of the photograph in detail in chapter two, “Theory: The Nature of Photography.”

“wounds” the viewer.⁶ Thus when I saw Nijinsky’s photograph for the first time—a full-length pose from *Le Spectre de la Rose*—I too thought, “There he is!” Again, as I later viewed a photograph of him in *Giselle*, I thought again, “There he is!” And when I later viewed a photograph of him in *Schéhérazade*, I again thought, “There he is!” And when I later viewed a photograph of him in *Faune*, I thought, yet again, as though for the first time, “There he is!”

While visiting, my cousin E.K. Waller, a professional photographer, spied a photograph of Nijinsky costumed and posed as the puppet Petruschka on my living room wall. She exclaimed, “Oh, you have to love this performer!” Never having seen a photograph of Nijinsky nor with knowledge of his career or life, my cousin seemed to recognize enough of Nijinsky the Performer in Nijinsky’s photographic image to name him such. When I view a performance photograph of Nijinsky through imbricating layers of costume and makeup, can I then say that I recognize Nijinsky as he existed in “performance”?

My cousin E.K. and I are not the only individuals who have been so “wounded” by the Nijinsky photographs. Dance scholars and historians including Lincoln Kirstein, Joan Acocella, Daniel Gesmer, and Arthur Pryor Dodge, have all written of their photographic encounters with Nijinsky, but none more famously than critic Edwin Denby (1903-1983), whose 1943 article, “Notes on Nijinsky Photographs,” was written seven years before Nijinsky’s actual death, but when Nijinsky, indisputably, would never be seen dancing again. Denby wrote: “In their stillness, Nijinsky’s pictures have more vitality than the dances they remind us of as we now see them on the stage.”⁷ As I explore more fully in chapter three, “New Photographic Evidence: Nijinsky’s Performance,” for Denby and for myself, the experience of Nijinsky in performance was replaced by an experience of the photographs of Nijinsky. Thus scholars, dancers, and

⁶ Ibid., 21.

⁷ Edwin Denby, “Notes on Nijinsky Photographs,” in *Nijinsky*, edited by Paul Magriel (New York: Henry Holt, 1946): 21.

historians remain addicted to a performance by Nijinsky that exists permanently *en absentia*. In Kevin Kopelson's words, we continue to be "haunted by a figure we have never seen in motion."⁸

Like Kopelson, implicit within my childhood compulsion to encounter the Nijinsky photographs, and experience the phenomenological surprise of "There he is!" lies my desire to see Nijinsky dance, to see his body in motion. While in 1916 Carl Van Vechten wrote, "Future generations must take our word for his [Nijinsky's] greatness,"⁹ my unwillingness to take Van Vechten's—or anyone else's word—for Nijinsky's greatness has provided the instigation for this study. I began my research with only one surety: my desire for my own encounter with Nijinsky's presence, and the desire for its result, my own memory of Nijinsky's performance, so that I too might remember as Carl Van Vechten remembered.

At the beginning of my research, I, like Edwin Denby, thought that the Nijinsky photographs presented themselves to me as the only option to experience something of Nijinsky's performativity. I discovered another option, however, by accident, through my own phenomenological encounter with *Faune*, Nijinsky's first and most famous ballet. My phenomenological encounter, which I also define as a phenomenological "event," was an April 6, 2006 viewing of the videotaped 1989 Juilliard Dance Ensemble's performance of *Faune*, and specifically the viewing of then Juilliard student Yoav Kaddar's performance as the Faun. My encounter took place in a viewing cubicle of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, on the first of three days of research in New York City. This encounter has led me to believe I have experienced performative traces of Nijinsky's moving body within the performance of the Faun by dancer Yoav Kaddar. From this

⁸ Kevin Kopelson, *The Queer Afterlife of Vaslav Nijinsky* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), 3.

⁹ Carl Van Vechten, "The Russian Ballet and Nijinsky," in *Nijinsky: An Illustrated Monograph*, edited by Paul Magriel (New York: Henry Holt, 1946): 14.

phenomenological encounter/event, the memory of the Nijinsky photographs, specifically my memory of the Nijinsky photographs of *Faune*, would become not merely the fuel for my pursuit of his absent performance, but integral to my belief that I had encountered performative traces of Nijinsky's moving body within the performance of Yoav Kaddar. Hence the phenomenological encounter/event that involved me as I sat in the viewing cubicle of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division did not merely change the focus of my dissertation, but became itself the focus of my dissertation. I had planned, previous to my viewing, to use a New Historical approach to make connections between written accounts of Nijinsky's performance and Javanese and Indian performance modes. Instead, I would write of my experience: I look around at the others engaged in their research, and I wonder what it is I've just seen. Is it what I think it is? Is it what I have experienced that it is? Is it *something* of Nijinsky?

Within the admission of my desire to see Nijinsky dance, I move within the binary opposition of the rational and the emotional and, within that opposition, I initially feel free to acknowledge at once the necessity and futility of my goal. In this marriage of oppositions, however, my emotional desire is edged with sufficient westernized, rationalized shame that my desire to see Nijinsky dance softens into the desire *to believe* that I am seeing Nijinsky dance, or more specifically, *to believe* that I am seeing something or someone that brings me closer to seeing Nijinsky dance. Peggy Phelan encompasses the parameters of my desire, and its complex phenomenological goal—*to believe* that I am in some limited way seeing Nijinsky dance—when she describes three states of mind whose goal also is to produce a “believable image”: memory, sight, and love. She defines the path to achieve their shared goal of belief in an authentic

experience as “negotiation with an unverifiable real.”¹⁰ In the case of Nijinsky, however, I am negotiating with a verifiable un-real.

My desire to see Nijinsky dance, however, is not a desire to travel back in time to Paris in the years between 1909 and 1913 when the Ballets Russes performed and to sit as a member of the audience in the Théâtre du Châtelet, thereby experiencing as myself *now* Nijinsky’s performance *then*. I acknowledge that Nijinsky’s performances are ascertainable only within the miasma of contemporary cultural contexts, and the unpacking of Nijinsky’s legend by scholars such as Hannah Järvinen proves valuable within a culturally historical directive. As Järvinen states, the perception of Nijinsky by his audience “speaks not of Nijinsky but of what he was to his audiences.”¹¹ My desire is not to know the meaning of Nijinsky’s *Faune* as it existed in the moment the first performance was viewed. Neither does my desire to see Nijinsky dance incorporate the belief that it is possible to view any contemporary reconstruction of Nijinsky’s performance, even of his performance in *Faune* that is the crux of this study, as the recovery of some essential, “original” performance.

The Argument

My phenomenological encounter with the Yoav Kaddar performance of the Faun triggered my memories of performance photographs of Nijinsky as the Faun and, through this recalling of the Nijinsky photographs, resulted in my belief that I experienced a new viewing, and subsequent new performative memory of Vaslav Nijinsky.¹²

¹⁰ Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: New York: Routledge, 1993), 1.

¹¹ Hannah Järvinen, “Performance and Historiography: The Problem of History in Dance Studies,” Paper presented at the Conference on Historical Representation (University of Turku, Finland, September 26-28, 2002), 142.

¹² Note that within the context of what I am describing as my “new viewing” of Vaslav Nijinsky in performance I acknowledge my viewing new choreographic movements in the performance of *Faune* not as the basis of my viewing, but as a means of *experiencing* it.

My goal here is not to use historical or theoretical research to validate my encounter. Rather I have used the multiple elements of Nijinsky's praxis in *Faune*, elements illuminated through historical and theoretical research, to explain and reinforce my *belief* that I experienced performative traces of Nijinsky's performance within the viewing of the Kaddar performance. Following my overview of the methodology that informs my thesis, argument and its theoretical precedents, I will provide a brief summary of Nijinsky's career and critical reception.

Methodology

This study adopts phenomenology as its primary methodology. The focus of that approach, as I will be employing it here, is on the relationship between the individual observer and the "other," a term that incorporates other living things, inanimate objects, as well as a theatrical performer and/or the performance enacted. Within this phenomenological relationship, the *encounter*, the initial moment of explosive interaction between the individual and the performer/performance, provides the individual with all perceptual knowledge of that performance event. For the purposes of this study, "performance event" is then understood as the combination of the performer's body and the act of performance carried out by that body, and the knowledge of the performance event derives from the observer's perception rather than the event's original cultural or historical contexts.

Thus specifically within this study, I explore the encounter between my embodied consciousness and (1) the Yoav Kaddar performance event, and (2) the Nijinsky performance photographs from *Faune*. In chapter three, "New Photographic Evidence: Nijinsky's Performance," I argue that these photographs may be read not merely as the remaining material evidence of Nijinsky in makeup and costume within a spectrum of dance roles, but as evidence

of Nijinsky in the act of experiencing his own performance, evidence that I phenomenologically “encountered.”

Moreover, phenomenology also embraces the contemplation, the observations, as well as the research that may take place *after* the individual’s encounter with the performance event. All such intellectual reflection, however, is propelled from, and returns to, the memory of the experiential moment of encounter between the observer and the performance event. Thus phenomenology within my study encompasses the individual as embodied consciousness, the encounter between the individual and the performance event, and also the reflection that takes place after the encounter is over.

Theoretical and Scholarly Precedents

Phenomenological Encounter

The work of French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1907-1961) provides the theoretical parameters of my encounters with both Yoav Kaddar’s videotaped performance as the Faun and the Nijinsky performance photographs. Merleau-Ponty writes:

The object which presents itself to the gaze or the touch arouses a certain motor intention which aims not at the movements of one’s own body, but at the thing itself from which they are, as it were, suspended. And in so far as my hand knows hardness and softness, and my gaze knows the moon’s light, it is as a certain way of linking up with the phenomenon and communicating with it.¹³

Hence the phenomenological encounter creates in the viewer the palpable, sensuous desire to reach out to the object or movement encountered, rather than to separate from it. The encounter then becomes potentially an ongoing union between object and subject.

¹³Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Colin Smith, *Phenomenology of Perception*. Rev. ed. (London Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Routledge & K. Paul: Humanities Press, 1981), 317.

Within my definition of “phenomenological encounter” I must also address the question of how encountering a *performance* differs from encountering other kinds of events. Stanton B. Garner, Jr. confronts the bias that argues against the authenticity of my encounter with the Kaddar performance, citing that performance traditionally has been signified as artificial and representational:

Though the play of elsewhere and otherness guarantees that theater can never be spoken of in terms of uncomplicated presentness, actuality continually pressures representation/fiction/illusion with the phenomenal claims of an experiential moment. So powerful is this persistence of the actual and its modes of presence that one witnesses its phenomenal effects, curiously, even when the referent is materially absent.¹⁴

Thus the “persuasion toward reality” that powers the theatrical experience also powers its result, the authentic, phenomenological knowledge of a moment.

Merleau-Ponty’s view of human consciousness as “intersensory,” contained not “in” but “of” the human body—a view opposed by Cartesian mind-body duality¹⁵—is integral to my definition of “phenomenological encounter” as it relates to my relationship to the Yoav Kaddar performance of Nijinsky’s role as the Faun. Continuing in his discussion of the human being and how she approaches and understands the world and all objects in it, Merleau-Ponty writes:

The theory of the body image is, implicitly, a theory of perception. We have relearned to feel our body; we have found underneath the objective and detached knowledge of the body that other knowledge which we have of it in virtue of its always being with us and of the fact that we are our body. In the same way we

¹⁴ Stanton B. Garner, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), 41.

¹⁵ See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 43-45, 49-50, 369-372, 400-402.

shall need to reawaken our experience of the world as it appears to us in so far as we are in the world through our body, and in so far as we perceive the world with our body. But by thus remaking contact with the body and with the world, we shall also discover ourselves, since, perceiving as we do with our body, the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception.¹⁶

Within my phenomenological encounter, the performance of Yoav Kaddar presented itself to me, a “me” whose consciousness is *of* my body, as opposed to a “me” who somehow claims an interaction with the world from the *inside* of my abstracted body.¹⁷

My perceptual knowledge of experiencing Nijinsky’s performance within my encounter with the Kaddar performance of Faun incorporates Merleau-Ponty’s challenge to the claim of “objective truth” in the face of the indisputability of perception within my embodied consciousness:

Our perception ends in objects, and the object once constituted, appears as the reason for all the experiences of it which we have had or could have. I see the next-door house from a certain angle, but it would be seen differently from the right bank of the Seine, or from the inside, or again from an aeroplane: the house *itself* is none of these appearances: it is, as Leibnitz said, the geometrized projection of these perspectives and of all possible perspectives, that is, the perspectiveless position from which all can be derived, the house seen from nowhere. But what do these words mean? Is not to see always from somewhere?

To say that the house itself is seen from nowhere is surely to say it is invisible!

Yet when I say that I see the house with my own eyes, I am saying something that

¹⁶ Ibid., 206.

¹⁷ Merleau-Ponty objected to what he considered Edmund Husserl’s argument that the individual ego encounters the world abstractly, consciously, and intellectually. See *Phenomenology*, 295, 426.

cannot be challenged. . . . I am trying to express in this way a certain manner of approaching the object, the “gaze” in short, which is as indubitable as my own thought, as directly known by me.¹⁸

Inherent also within my definition of “phenomenological encounter” lies the assumption that what is known by me of Kaddar’s performance of Nijinsky’s Faun is known by me without consideration of the context of the performance, or even the context of my viewing. All consideration is given to the description of what I perceive in the pre-reflective moment before analysis or the need for analysis. Merleau-Ponty alludes to this state of presuppositionless-ness:

Since the enigma of the brute world is finally left intact by science and by reflection, we are invited to interrogate the world without presupposing anything. It is henceforth understood that in order to describe it we may not resort to any of those established “truths” which we count on each day. . . . It is the inverse route we have to follow; it is starting from perception and its variants, described as they present themselves, that we shall try to understand how the universe of knowledge could be constructed.¹⁹

Hence what is known by me of Nijinsky’s performativity within Kaddar’s performance of the Faun may be assumed within Merleau-Ponty’s notion of “describing without suppositions.”

Phenomenological Event

I employ French scholar Françoise Dastur’s definition of the “phenomenological event,” which, based on and expanded from Merleau-Ponty’s works, she describes as “something which takes possession of us in an unforeseen manner, without warning, and which brings us towards an unanticipated future. . . . It [the event] does not happen in a world—it is, on the contrary, as if

¹⁸ Ibid., 67.

¹⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Claude Lefort, *The Visible and the Invisible; Followed by Working Notes* (Evanston Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 156-157.

a new world opens up through its happening.”²⁰ Thus my use of the term “phenomenological event” does not carry an overt connotation of theatrical performance.²¹

The parameters of theatrical performance, however, obviously impacts my role as viewer of the Kaddar performance. The liminality of performance and the performance space, in Garner’s words, “is oriented in terms of an experiential actuality that transgresses (while never fully erasing) the boundaries between ‘is’ and ‘as if.’”²² Thus within my definition of “phenomenological encounter” I assume the liminal venue of performance, and its ability to manifest as at once “artificial” and “actual.”

Phenomenological Approach to Videotaped/Filmed Performance

My encounter with the performance of Yoav Kaddar was an encounter with a videotaped performance event as opposed to a performance event in which the moving body of Yoav Kaddar danced in front of me. I approach my encounter with the videotaped performance event within a definition of the viewing of filmed or videotaped images that incorporates my understanding or belief that “motion pictures represent objects.”²³ Within that understanding, my encounter with these represented objects, that is the moving body of Yoav Kaddar, “succeeds in guiding [my] perception” in the same way the moving body of Kaddar performing in front of me would guide my perception.²⁴ Thus the videotaped performance of Yoav Kaddar becomes “a locus for the depositing of images and sounds in the experience” of the viewer, myself.²⁵

²⁰ Françoise Dastur, “Phenomenology of the Event: Waiting and Surprise,” *Hypatia* 15, no. 4 (2000): 182.

²¹ The term “performance event,” however, previously defined on page 3 of this chapter, does refer specifically to an act of theatrical performance.

²² Garner, Jr., *Bodied Spaces*, 42.

²³ Allan Casebier, *Film and Phenomenology: Toward a Realist Theory of Cinematic Representation*, Cambridge Studies in Film (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 21.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 21. An added factor is active within my approach to my encounter with the “videotaped” performance of Yoav Kaddar: it is the “movement” within the performance of Yoav Kaddar, whether videotaped or enacted in front of me, that was crucial to my belief that I experienced performative traces of Nijinsky as the Faun. The question of whether experiencing the live performance of Yoav Kaddar as the Faun would have changed my experience is a fascinating one. I provide the following anecdotal example: in January 2008, while co-presenting on Nijinsky and

Phenomenological Approach to Viewings of Nijinsky *Faune* Photographs

Motivated by the viewings of photographs of his deceased mother, Roland Barthes (1915-1980) in *Camera Lucida* (1981) provides me with a strikingly specific method of reading the performance photographs of Nijinsky as the Faun.²⁶ In the following statement, Barthes provides me with a description of the phenomenological “pull” the Nijinsky photographs exerted upon me as a child. In acknowledging the power of particular photographs, Barthes writes, “The attraction certain photos exerted upon me was advenience or even *adventure*. This picture advenes, that one doesn’t.”²⁷ Of the experience of viewing a specific photograph, such as my first viewing of a photograph of Nijinsky as the Faun, Barthes writes, “It [the photograph] animates me, and I animate it.”²⁸ Barthes, in addition to acknowledging the active, integrated relationship between photograph and viewer, underscores my desire to see Nijinsky when he states that a photograph that the viewer is drawn to look at is “chosen by desire.”²⁹ Barthes also references my embodied consciousness that encountered the Nijinsky photographs when he speaks to encountering or “recognizing” a photograph “with my whole body.”³⁰ As to the nature of the photographs of Nijinsky as the Faun, Barthes describes the photograph generally as being autonomous, and unto itself, that is “indifferent to all intermediaries; it does not invent; it is authentication itself,” and then speaks to my phenomenological autonomy as viewer when he advocates for the “absolute subjectivity . . . in silence” of the view of the photograph: “I dismiss

Faune with Yoav Kaddar at the International Humanities Conference, Mr. Kaddar demonstrated a choreographic movement from the ballet and, in doing so, turned his head directly toward me, seated only a few yards away. The impact of the Faun’s “stare” on me was extremely intense, again presenting me with the sense of Nijinsky’s performativity. Thus I would estimate that my initial, experiential sense of Nijinsky while viewing the videotaped Kaddar performance would have been even more intense within a “live” performance.

²⁵ Ibid., 47.

²⁶ Please see chapter two, “Theory: The Nature of Photography,” for my extensive analysis of Barthes’ theories on the nature of photography, which I offer in a severely encapsulated form in this section on Methodology.

²⁷ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 19.

²⁸ Ibid., 20.

²⁹ Ibid., 40.

³⁰ Ibid., 45.

all knowledge, all culture, I refuse to inherit anything from another eye than my own.”³¹ Barthes refers to a phenomenological encounter such as I had with the Nijinsky *Faune* photographs when he describes the experiential frustration and satisfaction of viewing of a photograph that has “attracted” him: “I cannot penetrate, cannot reach into the Photograph. I can only sweep it with my glance, like a smooth surface,” and yet “it accomplishes the unheard-of identification of reality (‘that has been’) with truth (‘there she is!’); it becomes at once evidential and exclamation.”³²

Barthes describes what I received from my encounter with the Nijinsky *Faune* photographs as the “punctum” or point of phenomenological contact or attraction.³³ In contrast to the “punctum” that is the authentically originating “detail” of the photograph, Barthes uses the term “studium” (from the Latin) to describe the cultural context of the photograph, a context that is “ultimately always coded, [while] the punctum is not.”³⁴ Thus the culturally originating details of the Nijinsky *Faune* photographs, their “studium,” will be the details that do not “prick” me, and that do not result in the phenomenological encounter between myself and the Nijinsky *Faune* photograph. While photographs, as ascertained through the studium, “do not emerge, do not leave; they are anesthetized and fastened down, like butterflies,” within my experience of the punctum within the Nijinsky *Faune* photographs, a “blind field” in Barthes’ words is brought out into the open.³⁵

Recall

My “phenomenological encounter” extends to, and is imbricated upon, my memories or “recall” of viewing the Nijinsky *Faune* photographs. I return to Merleau-Ponty’s exploration of

³¹ Ibid., 87, 55, 51.

³² Ibid., 106, 113.

³³ Ibid., 21.

³⁴ Ibid., 26, 47, 51.

³⁵ Ibid., 56.

the “analysis of the thing as an inter-sensory entity,”³⁶ within which he provides a generalized definition of memory within the phenomenological encounter:

Hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, moonlight and sunlight, present themselves in our recollection, not pre-eminently as sensory contents, but as certain kinds of symbiosis, certain ways the outside has of invading us and certain ways we have of meeting this invasion, and memory here merely frees the framework of the perception from the place where it originates.³⁷

I also find, however, a more specific description by Merleau-Ponty that both explicates and defines my experience of recalling the Nijinsky *Faune* photographs at the same time as I viewed the Yoav Kaddar Faun performance:

In order to fill out perception, memories need to have been made possible by the physiognomic character of the data. Before any contribution by memory, what is seen must at the present moment so organize itself as to present a picture to me in which I can recognize my former experiences. . . . But past experience can appear only afterwards as the cause of the illusion, and the present experience has, in the first place, to assume form and meaning in order to recall precisely this memory and not others.³⁸

Thus when I describe my sense of *recognizing* Nijinsky in his photographs, achieved through my experiencing the now-open phenomenological field, I am acknowledging what

³⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 317.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 317.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 19, 20. Thus “recalling” is defined as occurring to me within the connection between the Nijinsky photographs as the Faun, and the moving body of Yoav Kaddar as the Faun. I also reference Merleau-Ponty’s description of the “cause and effect” of memory and perception when exploring Jose Gil’s and Philip Zarrilli’s theories of the “space of the dancer’s body” and the “inner body mind,” respectively, in chapter two: “Theory: The Nature of Photography.”

Barthes describes as “a sentiment as certain as remembrance.”³⁹ The effect of the recognition of Nijinsky that I received from the encounter with his photographs is my belief, not only that Nijinsky once existed,⁴⁰ but, in the same way that Barthes speaks of the photograph of his mother, that the Nijinsky photographs “manifested the feeling” Nijinsky “must have experienced each time” he allowed himself to be photographed.⁴¹

Analysis of the Phenomenological Event

I conclude the Methodological section of this chapter with a brief theoretical and scholarly overview of the nature of reflection, research and analysis within my phenomenological methodology.

Phenomenological Approach: Reflection

The pre-reflexive nature of the phenomenology of the event seems incompatible with the very idea of a phenomenological reflection about, much less analysis of, that event. Merleau-Ponty, however, found no insurmountable wall between the pre-reflexive and reflexive within the phenomenological encounter. In fact, he posits that it is only through embodied consciousness that true reflection is possible: “Reflection is truly reflection only if it is not carried outside itself, only if it knows itself as reflection-on-an-unreflective-experience, and consequently as a change in structure of our existence.”⁴² I refer to my first written reflections on my encounter with the Yoav Kaddar performance of the Faun:

Now I remember the photographs of Nijinsky and his sister [as Faun and Nymph] and the “running” quality of their poses, as though I could sense their hearts

³⁹ Barthes, *Camera*, 70. In the “Introduction of Thesis as Personal Narrative” section of this chapter, I reference this sense of “recognition” of Nijinsky within the Nijinsky performance photographs. I incorporate this “recognition” and sense of “recall” of Nijinsky’s performativity in chapter four, “New Evidence: Nijinsky’s Score of *Faune*,” with the description and analysis of my phenomenological encounter with the Yoav Kaddar performance of Faun.

⁴⁰ Barthes states that, “In Photography I can never deny that the thing has been there.” See *Camera Lucida*, 76.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 67. In chapter three, “New Photographic Evidence: Nijinsky’s Performance,” I claim, through historical research, that Nijinsky experienced being photographed while in makeup and costume as a performative act.

⁴² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 62.

beating, lungs filling, eyes widening, focusing on the other, from the photographs. I feel that now in what I'm seeing—hearts beating, lungs filling, eyes widening, focusing.⁴³

Hence the recording of my initial reflection upon my phenomenological encounter with the Yoav Kaddar performance of Faun, in Sheets-Johnstone's words, "reflects backwards toward an elucidation of the structures of consciousness . . . by elucidating the immediate world of lived experience, the world as it is immediately and directly known through a pre-reflective consciousness. This initial and direct knowledge constitutes the foundation upon which all future knowledge is built."⁴⁴

Phenomenological Approach to Research and Analysis

My phenomenological encounter with the Kaddar performance event then acknowledges itself as the source of all "initial and direct knowledge" of my experience, and, as I acknowledge the knowledge of that experience, I am, in Michel Dufrenne's terms, "committed in my reflection."⁴⁵ As I reflect upon the experiential nature of my encounter with the Kaddar performance, it is in fact my own phenomenological experience that motivates and grounds my research and subsequent analysis as a means to strengthen or to return to my belief in that experience.⁴⁶ Thus I engage in research and analysis as a continuing resonance of my experience, implying that, in Dastur's words, "the 'object' of consciousness is never given once and for all. It can always be explicated in a more complete manner in regard to the context in

⁴³ See chapter five, "New Evidence: Performative Traces of Nijinsky in *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*," 231.

⁴⁴ Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Phenomenology of Dance* (New York: Books for Libraries, 1980), 13.

⁴⁵ Mikel Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy (Evanston Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 375. Dufrenne continues, "And I commit myself as soon as I open myself up—by participating rather than standing aloof [from the aesthetic experience]."

⁴⁶ Merleau-Ponty in discussing belief within the phenomenological directive writes, "It is true that we carry with us, in the shape of our body, an ever-present principle of absent-mindedness and bewilderment. But our body has not the power to make us see what is not there; it can only make us believe that we see it." See *Phenomenology*, 27.

which it appears. . . . Phenomenological explanation deals not only with given data, but with potentialities.”⁴⁷

Purpose of Analysis Within Phenomenological Methodology

As stated in my thesis, I have not sought validation of my encounter by employing historical and theoretical research as an evidentiary defense, but rather I have sought out historical and theoretical research as a means of reinforcing my belief that I experienced performative traces of Nijinsky’s performance as the Faun within the viewing of the Kaddar performance. Merleau-Ponty provides both a counterargument to and theoretical precedent for this project.

Merleau-Ponty explores the proposition that analysis can, in fact, provide evidence towards a timeless, universal judgment that validates an experience or situation: “Ordinary experience draws a clear distinction between sense experience and judgment. It sees judgment as the taking of a stand, as an effort to know something which shall be valid for myself every moment of my life, and equally for other actual or potential minds.” He continues with a description of perceptual or “sense” experience, and its challenge within a westernized, hegemonic privileging of the intellectual: “Sense experience, on the contrary, is taking appearance at its face value, without trying to possess it and learn its truth. This distinction disappears in intellectualism, because judgment is everywhere where pure sensation is not—that is, absolutely everywhere. The evidence of phenomena will therefore everywhere be challenged.”⁴⁸

While fully acknowledging the westernized, hegemonic bias of the intellectual over the perceptual, Merleau-Ponty also provides the theoretical precedent for the goal of my analysis—

⁴⁷ Dastur, “Phenomenology of the Event,” 184.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

to return to my belief that I was experiencing *something* of Nijinsky's performance of the Faun—when he comments on the analysis of the performance of a musical sonata: “The musical meaning of a sonata is inseparable from the sounds which are its vehicle: before we have it no analysis enables us to anticipate it; once the performance is over, we shall, in our intellectual analyses of the music, be unable to do anything but carry ourselves back to the moment of experiencing it.”⁴⁹ Even within intellectual analysis of a performance event, scholarship often focuses upon an intellectual analysis of the *experience* itself.⁵⁰

Vaslav Nijinsky: Career and Critical Reception

Vaslav Nijinsky was brought to Paris in 1909 as part of Serge Diaghilev's (1872-1929) brilliant company of dancers, artists and composers soon to be known to the French and the rest of the world simply as “the Russian Ballet,” or the Ballets Russes. Nijinsky was nineteen years old, a star graduate of the Russian Imperial School of Ballet in St. Petersburg, who was already dancing leading roles at the Mariinsky Theatre. Nijinsky, born in Kiev to traveling Polish dancers, found immediate and lasting celebrity within the highest artistic and social circles of Paris. Of all the Russian artists who participated in the artistic revolution that characterized the Ballets Russes' seasons in Paris (1909-1926), including composer Igor Stravinsky, designers Alexandre Benois and Leon Bakst, ballerina Tamara Karsavina, and choreographer Michel Fokine, Vaslav Nijinsky became the company's greatest cause celebre.

Overnight, Nijinsky became a star. Ballerina Tamara Karsavina (1885-1978), his most famous partner, was on the stage of the Théâtre du Châtelet on May 18, 1909, the night Nijinsky first performed in Paris. When Nijinsky made his exit, Karsavina remembered, “On that night he

⁴⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 182.

⁵⁰ In the Review of Literature in this chapter, I acknowledge the historical and cultural contexts of Nijinsky's performance when referencing Hannah Järvinen's 2003 dissertation, *The Myth of Genius in Movement: Historical Deconstruction of the Nijinsky Legend*.

chose to leap off. . . . No one of the audience had seen him land; to all eyes he floated up and vanished. A storm of applause broke; the orchestra had to stop.”⁵¹

On the transformational quality of his performance, Nijinsky was silent. Those who witnessed his performances, however, were not. Critics gave forth with an avalanche of penned astonishment at the plastic body that seemed to undergo cellular alteration from role to role—the Rose in *Le Spectre de la Rose* (1911), the puppet in *Petruschka* (1911), The Golden Slave in *Schéhérazade* (1910), Harlequin in *Carnaval* (1910), the Faun in his own ballet, *L’Après-midi d’un Faune* (1912).

Over the years, written accounts and interviews with individuals who saw Nijinsky dance have become iconic testimonies to the brilliance of his performance. American critic Carl Van Vechten wrote in 1916, “His dancing has the unbroken quality of music, the balance of great painting, the meaning of fine literature, and the emotion inherent in all these arts. There is something of transmutation in his performance; he becomes an alembic, transforming movement into a finely wrought and beautiful work of art.”⁵² Igor Stravinsky (1881—1971), composer of the ballets *Petruschka* and *Le Sacre du Printemps*, in which Nijinsky was star and choreographer respectively, stated that in the former, “Behind the tragic clown’s face, the ordinary features of Nijinsky the man completely disappeared. Instead there was a completely believable puppet, struggling to express his soul.”⁵³

The poet and filmmaker Jean Cocteau (1889-1963), a young avant-garde Parisian artist at the time of the Ballets Russes’ first season, socialized with Diaghilev and his company of artists,

⁵¹ Tamara Karsavina, *Theatre Street: Tthe Reminiscences of Tamara Karsavina*. New ed. (London: W. Heinemann, Ltd., 1936), 197.

⁵² Van Vechten, “The Russian Ballet and Nijinsky,” 7.

⁵³ Qtd.in Joe Venza, Emile Ardolino, Judy Kinberg, Dale Harris, Rudolf Nureyev, Robert Joffrey, WNET (Television station: New York N.Y.), Public Broadcasting Service (U.S.), and Joffrey Ballet. *Nureyev and the Joffrey Ballet in Tribute to Nijinsky*, 1980. Videorecording.

including Nijinsky. In 1909, witnessing Nijinsky's performance as Harlequin in *Carnaval*, Cocteau would write that Nijinsky's moving body was alternately "an acrobatic cat stuffed full of candid lechery and crafty indifference, a schoolboy, wheedling, thieving, swift-footed, utterly freed of the chains of gravity, a creature of perfect mathematical grace."⁵⁴

The transformative power of Nijinsky's performance motivated others to try constantly to explain it. In 1909 designer Alexandre Benois (1870-1960) observed Nijinsky before making his entrance in Benois' ballet *Le Pavillon d'Armide*:

He gradually began to change into another being, the one he saw in the mirror. He became reincarnated and actually *entered into* his new existence as an exceptionally attractive and poetic personality. The fact that Nijinsky's metamorphosis was predominantly subconscious is in my opinion the very proof of his genius. Only a genius, that is to say, a phenomenon that has no adequate natural explanation—could incarnate the choreographic essence of the rococo period.⁵⁵

Critics waxed hyperbolic in their writings as they attempted to describe what they had seen occur when Nijinsky performed on stage: British dance critic Cyril Beaumont effused that when performing the dancer seemed to be "surrounded by some invisible, yet susceptible halo," and followed with his own means of explaining Nijinsky's charisma, "Had Oberon touched him lightly with his magic wand at birth?"⁵⁶ In describing Nijinsky's death scene in *Petruschka*, Diaghilev's secretary Grace Lovat Frazer exemplifies the combined awe and bewilderment expressed in the written accounts of his performance: "And when he [Nijinsky] died, you didn't

⁵⁴ Qtd. in Derek Parker, *Nijinsky: God of the Dance* (Wellingborough: Thomas Publishing Group, 1988), 104.

⁵⁵ Qtd. in Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 81.

⁵⁶ Cyril W. Beaumont, *Vaslav Nijinsky* (London: C. W. Beaumont, 1932), 25.

feel that there was anybody inside his clothes—it was just a heap of broken bits of wood. How he did it, I do not know.”⁵⁷

The photographs of Nijinsky, however, remain the most persuasive physical evidence that continues the legend of the physical and psychological plasticity of Nijinsky’s moving body in performance. An extraordinary number of photographs of Nijinsky remain, both posed and in motion, in studio settings, outdoors, and a handful on stage in actual performance. A brilliant entrepreneur, Diaghilev was highly motivated to have photographs taken of all the Ballets Russes stars, but was perhaps especially motivated to use photography as a way of both publicizing and continuing the charismatic aura around Nijinsky’s performances.

The astonishment of those who saw Nijinsky perform was multiplied by the contrast between his charisma on stage and his reclusive nature off stage. Diaghilev wished both to educate and control the actions of Nijinsky, his young lover; Nijinsky was introduced to and surrounded by such French luminaries as Proust, Jean Cocteau, and August Rodin. However, Nijinsky, from either a lack of education, social training, language skills, cultural sophistication, or his intense artistic focus, was considered nearly retarded by some of Diaghilev’s friends and associates. Van Vechten, whose descriptions of Nijinsky’s character transformation constitute some of the only written accounts of the dancer’s backstage process, wrote that, when not performing, Nijinsky was “so timid that he seemed rather to fade into the background.”⁵⁸ Even physically, Nijinsky was considered dull and awkward-looking when off stage, described by Cocteau as a “little monkey with sparse hair.”⁵⁹ Thus in person he was effectively ostracized by the society that embraced him in performance.

⁵⁷ Qtd. in Parker, *Nijinsky*, 106.

⁵⁸ Qtd. in Parker, *Nijinsky*, 104.

⁵⁹ Qtd. in Peter F. Ostwald, *Vaslav Nijinsky: A Leap into Madness* (New York, NY: Carol Pub. Group, 1991), 48.

While Diaghilev sought to carefully control his social contacts, Nijinsky nonetheless collaborated with artists of the Ballets Russes in works that would effect revolutionary change within the world of ballet, art, and theatrical performance, some scholars arguing that Nijinsky the choreographer may be read as a precursor to modernity in dance, if not within the entirety of western theatrical performance. In the 1912 Paris season, Nijinsky both choreographed and performed in *Faune*, with a score composed by Claude Debussy nearly twenty years earlier. This ballet not only exemplified the evocative and anti-realist Symbolist movement, but exploded classical ballet technique, causing at least some public and critical consternation. His second ballet, *Jeux*, choreographed to an original score by Debussy, was produced the summer of 1912. In 1913, however, actual riots took place on the opening night of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, with a score by Stravinsky, and choreography by Nijinsky that was considered even more primitive and grotesque than that in *Faune*. His last produced choreographic work was *Till Eulenspiegel*, which he performed in the United States in 1916 with a score by Strauss and set and costume design by American designer Robert Edmund Jones.

By the fall of 1914, Vaslav Nijinsky had turned his own world inside out. In the summer of 1913, traveling by ship for the Ballets Russes' first South American tour, freed from the control of impresario Serge Diaghilev, Nijinsky's older lover, Nijinsky had suddenly married a young Hungarian noblewoman Romola de Pulszky who had bought her way into the corps de ballet solely in order to court the dancer. Upon hearing of Nijinsky's marriage, Diaghilev summarily fired him. By 1915 Nijinsky was under house arrest in war-torn Hungary, forced to take barre on his mother-in-law's balcony,⁶⁰ at the height of his physical and artistic powers—and unable to dance. In September and October of 1915 Nijinsky recorded, meticulously in pencil, his score of *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*.

⁶⁰ Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 348.

In 1916, Nijinsky rejoined the Ballets Russes in New York City. In Diaghilev's absence, he now had complete charge of the company. As the company toured throughout the United States, the dual responsibilities of Ballet Master and premiere danseur, combined with his new responsibility as husband and father, exerted unbearable pressures on the already mentally fragile artist. In Buenos Aires, on September 26, 1917, during the company's second South American tour Nijinsky danced *Le Spectre de la Rose*, one of his signature performances, which would be his last appearance with the Ballets Russes. Soon after, in Montevideo, Nijinsky performed a program of new dances that he had choreographed. On stage he made three tremendous leaps, and at the end of the third, disappeared into the wings. It was his last public performance.

Nijinsky was seen in performance for a period that spanned only nine years. While Nijinsky lived the last half of his life in and out of mental institutions, rumors continued intermittently both in and out of the press that Nijinsky was recovered, and would perform again. He never did, although a 1939 *Life* magazine article captured dancer Serge Lifar's visit to Nijinsky at the Kreuzlingen Sanatorium in Switzerland, during which Nijinsky was famously photographed in a spontaneous leap.⁶¹ During World War II, Romola, trapped in Europe with Nijinsky as she attempted to care for him without any financial support, had been forced to put her husband into a mental hospital in Vienna. Fearing that the Nazis would exterminate Nijinsky upon their arrival, a hospital technician returned him to Romola. Russian soldiers, upon liberating Vienna, came upon Romola and Nijinsky, and Nijinsky spoke to them in Russian, the

⁶¹Nijinsky, who since 1920 had lived off and on in a semi-catatonic state, had arguably exhibited some improvement from experimental insulin injections, although it is now assumed that the insulin injections in fact probably exacerbated his condition. Romola Nijinsky had installed a ballet barre in his room at Kreuzlingen. Serge Lifar, Diaghilev's protégé, came to visit Nijinsky, and began to dance while playing Weber's *Invitation to the Dance* (the score of *Le Spectre de la Rose*) on a phonograph. Nijinsky began to at first pay attention to, and then dance with, Lifar. See Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 423. See "The Great Nijinsky Dances Again In A Swiss Insane Asylum," *Life*, July 3, 1939, 22-23.

first time he had spoken for years.⁶² A United Newsreel photographer captured ten seconds of the middle-aged, frail, yet still dancer-like Nijinsky emerging from a shadowy doorway and walking down the street, the only footage existing of Nijinsky's moving body.⁶³ Nijinsky and Romola, who consequently traveled to London, were photographed occasionally; Nijinsky seemed to derive some sort of pleasure from ballet performances he was taken to. On April 2, 1950, Nijinsky fell ill. Doctors diagnosed complete kidney failure, and one week later, on April 9, Vaslav Nijinsky died. At his funeral in London, the pallbearers included Serge Lifar, Diaghilev's last protégé, Anton Dolin, a young dancer with the Sadler Wells Ballet Company,⁶⁴ and British dancer/choreographer Frederick Ashton. Of the pallbearers, only Cyril Beaumont had ever seen him dance. Richard Buckle, who attended the funeral, reported that a solitary figure stood vigil over the grave after the funeral party left: the famous Hindu dancer, Ram Gopal (1912-2003).⁶⁵ On June 16, 1953, Nijinsky's body was disinterred, and reburied in Paris, the site of his legendary triumphs, in the Montmartre Cemetery, near the great eighteenth century French dancer, Auguste Vestris.⁶⁶ Joseph Roach could have had such a performer as Vaslav Nijinsky in mind when he wrote:

Celebrities, then, like kings, have two bodies, the body natural which decays and dies, and the body cinematic, which does neither. But the immortal body of their image, even though it is preserved on celluloid, on digitalized files, or in the memory of the theatergoing public as an afterimage, always bears the nagging reminder of the former.⁶⁷

⁶² Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 432-433.

⁶³ "Allied Powers Occupy Vienna," Records of the Office of War Information - 208UN173, 1945, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

⁶⁴ Sadler Wells Ballet became the Royal Ballet in 1956.

⁶⁵ Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 442.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 443.

⁶⁷ Joseph R. Roach, *It*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 36.

Thus the phenomenological impact of Vaslav Nijinsky's career, experienced as an infusion of romantic anticipation and elegiac dread by those of us who have never nor ever will see him dance, manifests what Roach describes as the "combination of contradictory attributes expressed through outward signs of their imperishable and mortal bodies."⁶⁸

Review of Literature

Within the body of research and scholarship on the performance career of Vaslav Nijinsky, there exists extensive, primary evidence of the phenomenological impact of that performance, as well as material evidence consisting of hundreds of Nijinsky performance photographs still extant. In addition, a number of phenomenological descriptions of the Nijinsky performance photographs have been published. Within this broad compilation of scholarly and material evidence of his performance, I have found considerable specific information on (1) Nijinsky's creation and performance of *Faune*, (2) the phenomenological impact of both Nijinsky's performance and the *Faune* photographs, and (3) the evolution of scholarly attempts to reconstruct Nijinsky's original choreography from his own notation system. I have found no scholarship, however, that applies these elements within a primary, contemporary, viewing of Nijinsky's ballet such as I experienced and which makes up my thesis. Thus the review of literature is divided into six main sections, (1) Nijinsky's praxis within the production, performance and photographic record of *Faune*, (2) performance reconstruction of *Faune*, (3) non-literary material, 4) original research, (5) the phenomenology of Nijinsky's performance and performance photographs of *Faune*, and (6) the phenomenology of the viewer. Sub-sections may be found within these six main sections.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 36.

Nijinsky's Praxis in *Faune*

Nijinsky Biographies

Relatively few written works focus exclusively on Nijinsky's combined roles of choreographer, performer, and notator of *Faune*. My research goal within all Nijinsky biographical material is the compilation of primary source material regarding all aspects of Nijinsky's praxis as it focuses on his ballet *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*. Of the fairly numerous biographical texts written on Vaslav Nijinsky, those I have also found to be valuable as a primary source of information on Nijinsky's praxis in *Faune* are *Nijinsky: God of the Dance* (1988) by Derek Parker, the first Russian biography, *Nijinsky* (1979), by dance critic and scholar Vera Krasovskaya, Richard Buckle's *Nijinsky* (1971), and *Nijinsky* (1957) by Françoise Reiss. The aforementioned books all contain documentation of both written and verbal eyewitness accounts of Nijinsky's initial creation of *Faune*, rehearsals, premiere performances, critical and audience response, and later performances that distorted his original choreography. These biographies often reference out-of-print books, articles, and interviews with individuals now deceased.

Providing the most valuable historical evidence of Nijinsky's praxis in *Faune* is the autobiography, *Bronislava Nijinska: Early Memoirs* (1981), written by Nijinsky's sister, Bronislava Nijinska (1891-1972) who was a soloist in the Ballets Russes during the peak time of Nijinsky's career, and, by the 1920s and beyond, would herself achieve international acclaim as the choreographer of such works as *Les Noches*, and *Les Biches*. A majority of the autobiography deals with Nijinska's observations of and involvement in her brother's career. Of tremendous significance for this study is her record of Nijinsky's conversations with her during his creation

of *Faune*, including detailed records of Nijinsky's private rehearsals with his sister, during which the seminal poses and aesthetic direction of the ballet were created.

Several other autobiographies have provided rare primary source material regarding Nijinsky's creation of *Faune: Quicksilver* (1972), written by Marie Rambert (1888-1982) who worked closely with him on *Le Sacre du Printemps (Rite of Spring)*, and observed rehearsals of *Faune*, and *Dancing for Diaghilev* (1960), by English dancer Lydia Sokolova, who in a brief sequence describes working with Nijinsky and Marie Rambert when being brought into the cast of *Faune*.

I found that dancer Serge Lifar's biography, *Serge Diaghilev: His Life, His Work, His Legend* (1976), contained highly implausible renderings of the creative process that produced the ballet *Faune*, including a ludicrous account of how Diaghilev, who was quite overweight and neither a performer nor a dancer, in fact demonstrated the seminal positions of *Faune* to Nijinsky, and was present at all rehearsals, instructing Nijinsky during each step of the choreographic process. Not only has this account never been repeated in the written accounts by Nijinska, Sokolova, or Rambert of the choreographic process of *Faune*, Lifar may be said to be an unreliable narrator because (1) the accounts are secondary, undoubtedly obtained from Diaghilev himself, who had been his benefactor and lover and had been rejected by Nijinsky in marrying Romola de Pulsky, and (2) Lifar's assumption that Nijinsky lacked the analytical facility to choreograph *Faune*, flies in the face of Nijinska, Sokolova, and Rambert's primary accounts of private and public rehearsals, much less the irrefutable fact of Nijinsky notating the score of *Faune* when he was alone, under house arrest, in Hungary. I have thus rejected Lifar's accounts of Diaghilev's choreographing the ballet *Faune*.

Prima ballerina Tamara Karsavina's famous autobiography, *Theatre Street* (1936), provides primary resource material of Nijinsky's performance, including essential corroboration of Nijinska's account of Nijinsky's spontaneous leaps during the premiere performance of *L'Pavillon d'Armide*.

In her autobiography, however, Karsavina also speaks of Nijinsky's lack of intellectual ability. The extraordinary example of praxis of Nijinsky's *Faune* was suppressed for decades by the assumption that Nijinsky the intuitive, genius dancer was incapable of intellectual or analytic thought. Nijinsky's lack of analytic ability was challenged by Lincoln Kirstein (co-founder of New York City Ballet) in his photographic study, *Nijinsky Dancing* (1975), and further challenged by Ann Hutchinson Guest and Claudia Jeschke in their decoding of Nijinsky's dance notation system.⁶⁹

Works Specifically Addressing Nijinsky's Praxis in *Faune*

The following small number of works which focus specifically upon the multiple layers of Nijinsky's praxis in *Faune* strengthen what I might call my "infrastructure of belief" within my encounter with Yoav Kaddar's performance of the Faun, and indirectly, with traces of Nijinsky's performativity in that role. My compilation of research into Nijinsky's praxis in *Faune* makes up a secondary part of this study, and I believe explodes the assumption of Nijinsky's lack of intellect perpetrated by members of the society surrounding the Ballets Russes, and perhaps most specifically by Diaghilev himself. Thus this research and scholarship additionally makes available an increased awareness or recovery of Nijinsky's praxis in *Faune* and the unique place it deserves within dance and performance studies.

⁶⁹ In my interview with Ann Hutchinson Guest on April 2, 2007 in London, she stated that one of her greatest satisfactions from decoding Nijinsky's notation system was to challenge the still-held belief that Nijinsky lacked intellectual and analytical abilities.

Afternoon of a Faun: Mallarmé, Debussy, Nijinsky (1987) is a collection of primary and secondary writings that follow the evolution of the ballet from its inspiration within Mallarmé's poem, through Nijinsky's creation process and the controversies over its production, as well as scholarly selections from Claudia Jeschke who, with Ann Hutchinson Guest, broke the code of Nijinsky's system. This book has been most valuable to me in its containing of the "De Meyer album," a reprinting of thirty "phototypes" originally published in Paris in 1914, which represent all extant photographs of the famous 1912 De Meyer session with Nijinsky and the cast of *Faune*.⁷⁰

Nijinsky's Faune Restored: A Study of Vaslav Nijinsky's 1915 Dance Score L'Après-midi d'un Faune and His Dance Notation System (1991) by Ann Hutchinson Guest and Claudia Jeschke documents the historic decoding of Nijinsky's score, and its initial reconstruction, and includes primary source material in the way of newspaper reviews and quotations from Nijinsky regarding the distortions in the ballet he found upon returning to the Ballet Russes in 1916. This work provided me with an overview of Nijinsky's praxis in the ballet.

Clement Crisp's article "Marie Rambert and Nijinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*" (2001) has also provided primary information about Nijinsky's method of choreographing and staging *Faune* in transcribed conversations between Ms. Rambert and the author. The dissertation, *The Choreographic Innovations of Vaslav Nijinsky: Towards a Dance-Theatre* by Susan Lee Hargrave (1980), provides background and some primary source material regarding Nijinsky's praxis in *Faune*, the great majority of which I encountered in other scholarship.

⁷⁰ The original 1914 edition of the photographs, published by Paul Uribe, and entitled *Adolph De Meyer: Prelude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune*, is no longer in print, and I have so far been unable to locate a copy.

Performance Reconstruction of *Faune*

Performance and dance reconstruction separates loosely into two schools of theory and practice: memory-based reconstructions of performance and dance works, and reconstructions based on written dance “scores,” often notated in labanotation, the most universally accepted system for dance notation, created by Rudolf Laban in the mid-1920s. My research on performance reconstruction, specifically dance reconstruction from dance scores, connects directly to Nijinsky’s praxis in *Faune*, exemplifying as it does the availability of his original score for reconstruction in the present. As previously stated, the reconstruction of *Faune* from this original score pertains to my encounter with the Kaddar performance, the movements of which were learned directly from Nijinsky’s score.

Scholarship on the reconstruction of Nijinsky’s *Faune* reflects both theoretical and practical issues. *Nijinsky’s Faune Restored* (1991) by Ann Hutchinson Guest, and Claudia Jeschke, mentioned in the previous sub-section “Works Specifically Addressing Nijinsky’s Praxis in *Faune*” focuses largely on the extraordinarily meticulous, practical account of the score, and ballet’s, reconstruction. Questions of the authenticity of the score are mentioned, however, with Guest commenting that while the question remains open as to whether or not the score reflects Nijinsky’s performance with the Ballet Russes in 1912, it is definitive insofar as it reflects the movements of the ballet as Nijinsky wanted them to be described in 1915 when he notated the score.⁷¹

A special issue of *Choreography and Dance* (1991) was devoted to the revival of Nijinsky’s original *L’Après-midi d’un Faune* as performed by the Juilliard Dance Ensemble at New York City’s Juilliard School in December of 1989. This issue includes articles by Guest and

⁷¹ I make what I believe is a logical assumption, that if the score of *Faune* reflects the movements of the ballet as Nijinsky wanted them to be described in 1915, the score also reflects the ballet’s movements as Nijinsky would have performed them himself, or wanted them performed by another dancer.

Jeschke, as well as Jill Beck, a dance instructor from Juilliard who staged the production, under the directorship of Guest, Sally Sommer, a dance scholar, Thomas Augustine the costume designer who recreated the Leon Bakst designs, and Rebecca Stenn, the dancer who performed the role of the Head Nymph. Sally Sommer's article, "Reflections on an Afternoon," specifically discusses the 1981 memory-based Joffrey production of *Faune* starring Rudolph Nureyev, its choreographic and style distortions, and the impact of those distortions on dance practice and scholarship.

"Notation Systems as Texts of Performative Knowledge" (1999), an article by Claudia Jeschke, puts forward the notion that dance notation systems contain traces of performativity, as well as explicit movement. It is from the reading of this article that I began my research into Nijinsky's score of *Faune*. Jeschke's scholarship is crucial to the strengthening of my "infrastructure of belief" as to performative traces of Nijinsky's Faun being available within the Kaddar Faun performance from Nijinsky's score.

Non-Literary Material

In 1937, thirteen years prior to Nijinsky's death, former Metropolitan Opera Ballet dancer Roger Pryor Dodge bequeathed his entire lifetime collection of original Nijinsky photographs to what was then called the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library, Lincoln Center,⁷² later renamed the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The Roger Pryor Dodge Collection is made up of over five hundred photographs, drawings, and sketches of Vaslav Nijinsky, and constitutes the largest collection of Nijinsky photographs and renderings in the world. In addition, the Jerome Robbins Dance Division possesses a large number of Nijinsky photographs found within the Lincoln Kirstein Dance Collection, as well as smaller donated collections, including a dozen or more "informal"

⁷² Lincoln Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing* (New York: Knopf, 1975), 13.

photographs of Nijinsky as the Faune taken by dance critic and photographer Carl Van Vechten, and four photographs of Nijinsky in *Till Eulenspiegel* donated from the personal collection of Douglas Blair Turnbaugh. A small number of Nijinsky photographs are owned by the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, as well as the National Endowment for the Arts Millennium Project. The St. Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music owns an unspecified number of photographs taken of Nijinsky in Russia before he joined Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in 1909. Eight photographs by Karl Struss of Nijinsky in *Faune* were rediscovered in 1976; four are owned by Susan and John Harvith, four by the Amon Carter Museum. John Neumeier, Artistic Director of the Hamburg Ballet, currently owns one of the largest private collections of Nijinsky photographs and memorabilia.

The famous De Meyer photographs of *Faune* taken in London in the summer of 1912 are owned by the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, a gift from Michel de Bry in 1988.

In April 2006, I engaged in research at the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York City Library for the Performing Arts. Over a two-day period, I viewed and wrote observations of approximately four hundred Nijinsky photographs.

Filmed performances of *Faune* include the 1981 memory-based Joffrey Ballet production starring Rudolph Nureyev, the 1989 Juilliard Dance Ensemble production from Nijinsky's score, starring Yoav Kaddar, the 1992 memory-based Paris Opera Ballet production, and the 2005 Taipei National University of the Arts production from Nijinsky's score. A film about Nijinsky's praxis in *Faune* and the reconstruction of his score is entitled *Revoir Nijinsky Danser* (2005).

Original Research

As my research continued, I conducted a variety of interviews with individuals directly connected with the reconstruction of Nijinsky's *Faune*, the historic Juilliard performance as well

as later performances. This research include a personal interview with Guest in London in January 2007, telephone, and personal interviews with Yoav Kaddar in April 2006, and January 2008, respectively, a personal interview with Yunyu Wang in June 2006, a dance reconstructeur and former student of Dr. Guest, who mounted the first Asian production of *Faune* at Taipei National University of the Arts in December 2005, and two e-mail question-and-answer communications with Claudia Jeschke in May, June, and July of 2007. Within these interviews I pursued a line of questioning and research surrounding the theoretical question of performative traces of Nijinsky as the Faun embodied within Nijinsky's score of *Faune*.

My interviews with Yoav Kaddar centered on his phenomenological experience during the rehearsal and performance of the role of the Faun. Kaddar's description of his own phenomenological "encounter" with Nijinsky's performativity was highly valuable primary source material that motivated me further in my exploration of the relationship between Yoav Kaddar the dancer, Vaslav Nijinsky the dancer/choreographer/notator, and Cheryldee Huddleston the viewer.

Additionally, I have incorporated images of the thirty De Meyer photographs within a "split screen" version of the Juilliard/Yoav Kaddar performance, so that the photographic images "fade in" exactly as the corresponding movement is enacted.⁷³ This version of the Juilliard videotape is used for pedagogical and academic purposes only.

⁷³ I credit graduate student Kim Rasmussen and Dr. John Kundert-Gibbs within the Department of Theatre and Film Studies of the University of Georgia with this technical achievement. I was present during the computerized "blending" of photographs and videotaped performance and supervised the sequencing and timing of the insertions.

Phenomenology of Nijinsky's Performance and *Faune* Photographs

Nijinsky's Performance in *Faune*

All primary accounts of Nijinsky's performance are by their very nature phenomenological. All aforementioned texts in the section "Nijinsky's Praxis in *Faune*" contain primary accounts of his performance; in *Dancing for Diaghilev*, for example, Lydia Sokolova gives a brief but compelling phenomenological description of moments of Nijinsky's performance as the Faun. French sculptor Auguste Rodin's famous description and defense of Nijinsky's performance of the Faun is recorded in the biographies of Buckle, Parker, Reiss, and Krasovskaya .

The following works, however, focus almost exclusively on phenomenological descriptions of Nijinsky's performance. The short biography *Vaslav Nijinsky* (1932) by Cyril Beaumont is one such example of a critic writing directly of his experience of Nijinsky dancing. Of particular interest is *The Art of Nijinsky* by Geoffrey Whitworth, originally published in 1913, only a year after the premiere of *Faune*. Other such eyewitness accounts of Nijinsky's performance include Carl Van Vechten's article, "The Russian Ballet and Nijinsky," and designer Robert Edmond Jones' "Nijinsky and *Til Eulenspiegel*."⁷⁴

Counterargument: Socio-Cultural Methodology of Performance in Dissertation of Hannah Järvinen

Though socio-cultural analyses sometimes broadly characterize phenomenological description as "naïve,"⁷⁵ I have found little scholarship that argues specifically against the phenomenological approach to performance employed in this study.

⁷⁴ These two articles were published in *Nijinsky: An Illustrated Monograph*, edited by Paul Magriel.

⁷⁵ Dorothea E. Olkowski's article, "The End of Phenomenology: Bergson's Interval on Irigaray" speaks of the "sexist tendencies" that feminist scholars such as Judith Butler find within phenomenology, and argues that Luce Irigaray actually speaks to phenomenology's "limitations" within her advocacy for a feminist phenomenology. This article exemplifies that scholarly point of view. See Dorothea E. Olkowski, Dorothea E. "The End of Phenomenology: Bergson's Interval on Irigaray," *Hypatia* 15, no. 3 (2001). Within my subjective view as a female I argue that my phenomenological description as it is used in this study circumvents feminists' generalized, and

Hannah Järvinen's dissertation, published in 2003, entitled *The Myth of Genius in Movement: Historical Deconstruction of the Nijinsky Legend*,⁷⁶ implicitly contradicts the phenomenological methodology used in this study. Järvinen analyzes Nijinsky's performance from an overtly socio-cultural, as well as deconstructionist, perspective. Her methodology privileges the cultural context of Nijinsky's performance, and disregards the possibility of ephemeral traces of Nijinsky's performativity available in the present, either in photographs or within the reconstruction of *Faune* from his own original score.

An article subsequently published by Järvinen in 2005, "Performance and Historiography: The Problem of History in Dance Studies," is of interest to me for two reasons: (1) the author devalues the dancer's body, and in particular the moving body, in favor of an exclusive emphasis on historic and cultural context, and most significantly, (2) the author devalues the definitive, detailed recording of Nijinsky's score of *Faune*, including it within her references to all "reconstructions" of Nijinsky's ballets, including memory-based reconstructions of *Jeux* and *Le Sacre du Printemps*. The present study counters both of these assumptions, first by emphasizing the significance of my encounter with the moving body of Yoav Kaddar performing *Faun*, and second by arguing that the score that Nijinsky created in his own dance notation system, in his own hand, of his movements in the role of the *Faun* make

Butler's and Olkowski's specific attacks on formal and personal comments Merleau-Ponty made concerning female sexuality. I posit that phenomenology in its "nature" circumvents the attributes or privileges bestowed upon a generalized "subject" or "object" by any one individual proponent, even if that proponent is Merleau-Ponty. See Judith Butler, "Sexual Ideology and Phenomenological Description: A Feminist Critique of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*." In *The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy*, ed. Jeffner Allen and Iris Marion Young. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

⁷⁶ Ann Hutchinson Guest has confirmed a number of inaccuracies and misassumptions in Ms. Järvinen's, dissertation, the most obvious being her assertion that Nijinsky broke with current theatrical precedent when he indicated stage directions from the point of view of the performer, rather than the audience. It is a long-standing tradition, in practice before Nijinsky created his notation system, that stage directions are indicated from the point of view of the performer, not the audience. Nijinsky did not break with established tradition in his indication of stage directions.

available a reconstruction of his ballet drastically different than memory-based re-creations of other dance works, including his own.

Performance Photographs of Nijinsky

Many people who never saw Nijinsky dance have used photographs as material evidence of his performance, effectively adopting a phenomenological approach. Books include *Nijinsky Dances* (1975) by Lincoln Kirstein, which contains extensive phenomenological descriptions of Nijinsky photographs, and *The Queer Afterlife of Vaslav Nijinsky* by Kevin Kopelson (1997). Articles include “Notes on Nijinsky Photographs” by Edwin Denby, first published in 1943, in addition to Denby’s book, *Edwin Denby: Dance Writings*, published in 1986. The pivotal Denby articles, written while Nijinsky was still alive but no longer performing, represent a crucial shift of focus from an encounter with Nijinsky’s body in motion, and the memory of that body, to an encounter with the photographs—an encounter that merged both the archival emphasis on evidentiary remains and the phenomenological approach. The merging of these foci in Denby’s articles, which at times focus specifically on photographs of Nijinsky as the Faun, instigated my argument against the theory of archivalism.

Nijinsky Performance Photographs as Performative Act

Nijinska’s autobiography, *Early Memoirs*, relays Nijinsky’s actions and behavior when Nijinsky was first photographed in costume in Paris, and his spontaneous leaps on stage the following night at the premiere performance of *L’Pavillon d’Armide*. Her primary account provided me with historical evidence to posit that Nijinsky experienced being photographed in makeup and costume as a performative act. Her autobiography is a significant filling in of a gap between photography and performance that strengthens my belief in the availability of performative traces within Nijinsky photographs. Nijinska’s book, together with a second

autobiography, *Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet* (1941) by Ballet Russes artist and designer Alexandre Benois, provide the only first-hand accounts of Nijinsky's backstage preparation for performance; these two sources confirm that Nijinsky experienced donning the makeup and costume of a character as entering into a state of performance, whether he was preparing to enter the stage or to be photographed.

The 1985 article "Nijinsky Photographs and Photographers" by Canadian writer John Fraser has been my major secondary source for detailed information on the chronology of performance photographs of Nijinsky, and detailed information on the photographers who have been so connected to Nijinsky's career. The article and the photographs in it have provided me with crucial information on the first photographs taken of Nijinsky when he arrived in Paris in 1909 (Nijinsky in the role of The Slave in *L' Pavillon d' Armide*). Other articles employed within my research include "Photo Call with Nijinsky: The Circle and the Center," by Joan Acocella (1987), which focuses specifically on photographs of *Faune* that had been recently discovered taken by Karl Struss in 1916, and "Revisioning Vaslav," by Daniel Gesmer (2000). All of these articles help to substantiate my claim that Nijinsky experienced the act of being photographed as a performative act, which in turn strengthens my belief that, in my encounter with the Nijinsky *Faune* photographs, I experienced residual traces of Nijinsky's performativity.

Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance (2006) by Matthew Reason is a prescriptive exploration of performance documentation and criticism, including that of performance art, video and screen performance, and documentation for publicity purposes. Within this exploration Reason questions the philosophy of the archive and its impact on viewing performance photography as completely separate from the performance itself. I became aware of Reason's book late into my research on nonarchivalism, which I began

in the spring-summer of 2005. While Reason's scholarship regarding the archive follows my argument that archival documentation of performance is based on the assumption of "performance as disappearance," and within that assumption, acts as a kind of fetish of an assumed "dead" performance, his discussion of performance photography focuses on the intention of the photographer as opposed to that of the photographic subject. While Reason briefly references Merleau-Ponty and the phenomenology of the body, his arguments remain solidly socio-cultural.⁷⁷ Significantly, while Reason discusses dance criticism, and in particular Edwin Denby's criticism, he mentions only Denby's discussions of dance performances that he witnessed first-hand, not his famous descriptions of Nijinsky photographs.⁷⁸ In addition, Reason clearly states that he sees performance documentation's value as a part of the "reflection" and "witnessing" that occurs after viewing performance, and as a way of experiencing what the original audience experienced,⁷⁹ in contrast to my argument that Nijinsky's performance documentation provides, in and of itself, the opportunity to experience Nijinsky's performativity in the moment of viewing the photograph.

⁷⁷ See Matthew Reason, *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance*. (Basingstoke England: New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 117-123. 234, 236-7.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 219-220. It is possible that Reason omitted Denby's writings on the Nijinsky photographs because they did not fall into his apparent research category of representations of performance, that is the Nijinsky photographs written about by Denby were posed and not taken "during performance." This also separates my research from Reason's, as it is my assertion that Nijinsky experienced being photographed in costume and makeup as "performance."

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 61, 126, 143-4, 236-8. Reason writes, "Representations [of performance] are a form of audiencing, a form of watching, seeing, experiencing, and making sense of performance." While this statement seems to include my argument that looking at a performance photograph of Nijinsky is experiencing his performance [although Reason does not distinguish between a photograph of a 'live' performance and one that is 'posed'], a previous statement places Reason's understanding of that experience as being "distanced" from an initial, phenomenological encounter: "Instead, with all representations, the methods, medium, and interests of the presentation also begin to constitute a distinct identity of their subject. They all begin to speak of the performance that produced or inspired them." Thus Reason ultimately focuses on the "speaking of" or "reflection" of the performance that the documentation/representation produces, and that within its socio-cultural context, as opposed to the total subjectivity of the phenomenological encounter. See *Documentation*, 234.

Performance and the Viewer

My extensive review of the literature suggests that both the description and the analysis of my encounters with Nijinsky's performances—that is, both the form and content of this study—are unique within performance scholarship generally and Nijinsky scholarship specifically. Two scholars have provided me with theoretical descriptions that parallel my reflections on my specific experience of the 1989 performance of Yoav Kaddar as the Faun.

José Gil, in *Metamorphoses of the Body* (1998) and “Paradoxical Body” (2006), describes the space of the dancer's body as an autonomous field created by the dancer's movements, a field that prolongs the “body's limits beyond its visible contours.”⁸⁰ Hence the space of Yoav's dancer's body may include the very stage floor from which his feet push off into the “goat's leap” of the Faun, but most particularly and significantly, the extension of his body in that leap. Gil writes: “The [dancer's] body gives itself new extensions in space, and in such ways it forms a new body — a virtual one, but ready to become actual and ready to allow gestures to become actualized in it.”⁸¹

In his article, “Toward a Phenomenological Model of The Actor's Embodied Modes of Experience” (2004), scholar/practitioner Phillip Zarrilli also explores the notion that the movement of performance (or dance) creates an imbricated virtual and actualized body, or as Gil describes it “the inside of the body invested with energy, and the outside where gestures of the dance unfold.”⁸² This imbrication, or mirroring/doubling relationship, exists between what Gil calls the “space of the body” and Zarrilli the “inner body mind”⁸³ on the one hand, and the gestures or score of the dance on the other. In language extremely similar to Gil's, Zarrilli writes

⁸⁰ José Gil, “Paradoxical Body,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 50, no. 4 (2006): 23.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 23.

⁸³ Phillip B. Zarrilli, “Toward a Phenomenological Model of the Actor's Embodied Modes of Experience,” *Theatre Journal* 56, no. 4 (2004): 655.

of “an aesthetic ‘inner’ bodymind discovered and shaped through long-term, extra-daily modes of practice, and an aesthetic ‘outer’ body constituted by the actions/tasks of a performance score,” and then includes the viewer, myself, as part of that relationship, by finishing that this “mode of embodiment . . . is “offered for the abstractive gaze of the spectator.”⁸⁴

Hence in the performance of the Faun, Yoav Kaddar provides the “inner body mind,” the energized space of the dancer’s body, and Vaslav Nijinsky provides the externalized gesture, a gesture Jeschke promotes as containing traces of Nijinsky’s “performative knowledge.”⁸⁵ The audience is included within this experiential dynamic, so that Yoav Kaddar feels Nijinsky in the nuanced details of the choreography, just as I, the viewer, feel both Kaddar and Nijinsky within the performance. Each of us—dancer and viewer—experience a layered, interwoven, real and virtual, encounter, what Zarrilli, expanding from Merleau-Ponty, describes as the “braiding, intertwining, or criss-crossing,” that “characterizes the body’s fundamental relationship to the world.”⁸⁶

Original Nature of Thesis and Research

This study of the performance memory of Vaslav Nijinsky in his ballet *L’Après-midi d’un Faune* consists of an original combination of phenomenological methodologies with applications of nonarchivalism to the Nijinsky performance photographs, and an embodied, ahistorical approach to the reconstruction of Nijinsky’s score.

The ever-resonating impact of the Nijinsky legend speaks to the desire for the transformative power of performance and its ability to move, to influence, to inspire, to astonish. I believe that this study makes a significant contribution to Nijinsky scholarship, offering new

⁸⁴ Ibid., 655.

⁸⁵ Claudia Jeschke, "Notation Systems as Texts of Performative Knowledge." *Dance Research Journal* 31, no. 1 (1999): 4.

⁸⁶ Zarrilli, “Actor’s Embodied Mode of Experience,” 665.

ways of “seeing” his performance. Moreover, this study of Nijinsky constitutes a case study in performance memory with profound implications for all dance practitioners, scholars, theatre historians and performance theorists who grapple with the practical and theoretical implications of preserving, manifesting, and remembering the moving body in performance.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORY: THE NATURE OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Introduction

I can recall vividly the first time I ever viewed a photograph of Vaslav Nijinsky. In 1961, my family purchased a set of Encyclopaedia Britannica. Having just begun studying classical ballet, I poured over the “B” volume. I believe I may have been sitting cross-legged on the rug in front of the bookcase. The volume was bound in dark red; it was heavy, large, and cumbersome. When I found “ballet” in the volume, I turned to four or five pages of glossy photographs, six or seven photographs to a page. There amidst photographs described as “Prominent Ballet Dancers of the Twentieth Century,” I saw a performance photograph of Vaslav Nijinsky in *Spectre de la Rose*. There was also a photograph of Anna Pavlova on the same page; she was posed in front of a huge wicker trunk with the words “Anna Pavlova” block printed in black. I remember thinking that she reminded me of my ballet teacher, Dolores Gilbert. However, I can also recall a definite sense of being stopped within my perusal of all the other photographs on the page, including that of Pavlova, when I saw the photograph of Nijinsky as Spectre. I recall believing that I had never seen anything like the figure in the photograph before; I didn’t know what it was I was looking at, but I can recall the sense that whatever it was, it was something extraordinary. Perhaps I felt so because of the way Nijinsky looked out at me from the photograph, with a small, painted smile that seemed both loving and dangerous. Perhaps I felt so because the androgynous nature of the figure made it unclear to me whether or not it was a man or a woman, or neither. I believe I recall feeling it was neither. After first seeing the photograph, however, I had checked below to

see whose name it was, and then realized both that it was a photograph of a man, and that it was the legendary Vaslav Nijinsky.

While the memory of first seeing a photograph of Nijinsky is unforgettable, I cannot recall the first time I saw a performance photograph of Nijinsky as the Faun. My sense, besides the first vivid memory of seeing the photograph of Nijinsky as Spectre, is that I had seen photographs of Nijinsky as Petruschka and as the Favorite Slave in *Schéhérazade* before I saw photographs of him as the Faun.¹

As a ballet student, I can recall checking out numerous books about classical ballet, particularly its history and its most famous practitioners; besides the photograph from *Spectre de la Rose* in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the photographs I viewed in these books were the first performance photographs of Nijinsky that I would have seen. Thus when I was eight-to-ten years of age, my belief system included that Anna Pavlova was the greatest female ballet dancer who had ever lived, and that Vaslav Nijinsky was the greatest male ballet dancer who had ever lived. From a combination of books read and rumors and snippets of history exchanged between other students and my first ballet instructor Dolores Gilbert,² I believed that Nijinsky could jump higher, and execute an entrechat with more beats³ than any other dancer, past or present, and that, generally, he could do things that no other dancer could do, and that no other dancer would ever be able to do. I now also believe, however, that the legendary qualities of Nijinsky passed

¹ The sole photograph of Nijinsky in the “B” volume of the 1961 Encyclopaedia Britannica was in *Spectre de la Rose*.

² My teacher Dolores Gilbert’s ballet instructor was Fredric Franklin, a British dancer who had joined the Ballets Russes in the 1920s after Nijinsky had ceased performing. He famously partnered Alexandra Danilova, the last prima ballerina assoluta, and in the 1950s formed the National Ballet Theatre in Washington, D.C. Franklin, in his 90s, still lectures, performs pantomime roles with a spectrum of ballet companies, and is featured prominently in the documentary, *Ballets Russes* (2005).

³ An *entrechat* is a jump that includes at least one “beat,” in which the back foot crosses the front foot at the height of the jump, and returns to the original position. Nijinsky was witnessed performing an *entrechat-douze*, in which he executed five beats while in the air, and an *entrechat-dix* (six beats), both in performance and in class/rehearsal. See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 143.

onto me through age-appropriate books, and the oral traditions that the ballet world is famous for, did not affect my first phenomenological encounter with the photograph of Nijinsky as Spectre, for the reason that I distinctly remember seeing the photograph, and experiencing the feelings about the photograph, before seeing his name connected to that photograph.⁴

I believe that whenever the first instance of seeing a photograph of Nijinsky as Faun occurred, I would have thought he looked strange, and not like a ballet dancer. My dance training at that time was strictly that of classical ballet, and I was devoted to classical ballet as the ideal form of dance expression. I have memories of seeing photographs of Isadora Duncan and feeling that she was not a real dancer because she did not perform classical ballet. Upon first seeing photographs of Nijinsky as the Faun, I believe I might have pushed aside the viewing and my memory as not fitting within my understanding of him as the greatest male classical ballet dancer who ever lived. It is, however, also possible that I thought that *because* it was Nijinsky, somehow his poses in *Faune* were still appropriately “balletic.”

My viewing of Nijinsky performance photographs, specifically photographs of the Faun, were probably few and intermittent until the mid-to-late 1970s, when I remember purchasing the paperback reprint of *Nijinsky, Pavlova, Duncan* edited by Paul Magriel. In the Magriel book, there are three photographs from *Faune* printed, all three from the De Meyer session.⁵ At that

⁴ Within the phenomenological bracketing of my encounter with the Nijinsky performance photographs, what remains crucial is my current belief and “memory” that I experienced the phenomenological impact of Nijinsky’s photograph in *Spectre* before seeing the name “Nijinsky” in the caption. The fact that my “long term” memory of first viewing the *Spectre* photograph may differ from what I “now” recall of the “recollection” itself also speaks to the “creative” nature of the recalling of memory. See Eric R. Kandel, *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of the Mind* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), 281.

⁵ See Paul David Magriel, *Nijinsky, Pavlova, Duncan: Three Lives in Dance* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977). Magriel, however, inaccurately lists the photographs of *Faune* having been taken in Paris in 1911. The De Meyer session in fact took place in London the summer following the May 1912 premiere of *Faune* in Paris. It is not Magriel’s only inaccuracy in terms of the photographs. Two of the photographs on page 41, listed as being Nijinsky, are not of Nijinsky. See John Fraser, “Nijinsky Photographs and Photographers,” *Dance Chronicle* 7, no. 4 (1985): 465.

same time, I purchased *The World of Serge Diaghilev*.⁶ This book contained numerous photographs of Nijinsky; I cut out two of those photographs, one of Nijinsky as Petruschka, and one as the Faun, framed them, and carried them with me always from that time forward. As previously stated, upon beginning my doctoral research on Nijinsky in 2004, I had also been viewing numerous performance photographs of Nijinsky from *Faune* in Guest and Jeschke's *Nijinsky's Faune Restored* (1991) as well as Lincoln Kirstein's *Nijinsky Dancing* (1977), and *Afternoon of a Faun: Mallarmé, Debussy, Nijinsky* (1987), which contains all thirty known photographs from the De Meyer session. Hence within two years of first viewing the Juilliard videotaped performance of Nijinsky's score of *Faune*, I had been viewing the entire Adolf De Meyer session of photographs, commissioned by Nijinsky the summer after the 1912 Paris premiere of *Faune*, many of which were found by Guest and Jeschke to correspond exactly to the poses delineated by Nijinsky's score.⁷ In addition, I had, while reading *Nijinsky Dancing*, and *Nijinsky's Faune Restored*, also viewed photographs of *Faune* by Karl Struss, Stanislaus Waléry and Auguste Bert.⁸

On April 6, 2006, I had not yet ordered nor viewed any of over five hundred Nijinsky performance photographs in the Arthur Pryor Dodge Collection of Nijinsky photographs. Over the next two days, April 7-9, I viewed over four hundred of these photographs.

⁶ Charles Spencer, *The World of Serge Diaghilev*: Penguin Books, 1974.

⁷ Philippe Nâeagu, Jean Michel Nectoux, and Musâee d'Orsay. *Afternoon of a Faun: Mallarmé, Debussy, Nijinsky*. New York: Vendome Press: Distributed in the U.S. by Rizzoli, 1989, n. 63. In his article, "Nijinsky and De Meyer," Philippe Nâeagu references *L'Après-midi d'un Faune, Vaslav Nijinsky, 1912* as providing the correct sequence of the De Meyer plates in reference to Nijinsky's choreography. See Richard Buckle, Jennifer Dunning, Ann Hutchinson Guest, *L'Après-midi d'un Faune, Vaslav Nijinsky, 1912* (London: Dance Books, 1983). When Dr. John Kundert-Gibbs and I incorporated the De Meyer photographs into the videotape of the Juilliard performance of *Faune* one photo was, in my opinion, rendered out of sequence (plate no. 9) indicating that Nijinsky (the Faun) is kneeling down in order to pick up the scarf is, in my opinion, showing Nijinsky rising after he has already picked up the scarf. In addition, two photographs (plates no. 7 and 10) needed to be "flipped" in order to render the dancer heading in the "correct" direction in relationship to the score as performed by the Juilliard Dance Ensemble.

⁸ See chapter three: "New Photographic Evidence: Nijinsky's Performance" for details on these photographs and photographers.

In this chapter, I detail my claim that the ontology of both the photograph and the photographic process itself reinforces the notion of Nijinsky's performative presence being available to experience in the viewing of his photographs. My theoretical template incorporates my exploration of (1) the nature of photography, incorporating the literal photographic process, as well as photographic realism as it relates to the phenomenological experience of viewing the photograph, and (2) how the relationship between photographic realism and phenomenology is supported by a nonarchival view of performance ephemera.

The Nature of Photography

My memory of Nijinsky's photographs as the Faun, transformed through my viewing of Kaddar's performance, and my retroactive belief in the performative presence of Nijinsky within these photographs, is predicated on an underlying, realistic theory of photography, specifically of performance photographs. Hence I will sketch a realist approach to photography drawing primarily on Kendall Walton's philosophical analysis of photography, Roland Barthes' subjective experience of the photograph, and Patrick Maynard's exploration of photography-as-technology. Finally, after considering a spectrum of scholarship that explodes the archive's assumption of performance as absence and photographs as fetishized copies of performance, I will embrace a nonarchival reading of performance ephemera as both transient and substantial, and available within the present.

Kendall Walton and Photographic Realism

In his seminal 1984 article, "Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism," Kendall Walton is a rigorous advocate for photographic realism. Walton details arguments against photographic realism to clarify his own position:

Dissenters [against photographic realism] note how unlike reality a photograph is and how unlikely we are to confuse the one with the other. They point to “distortions” engendered by the photographic process and to the control which the photographer exercises over the finished product, the opportunities he enjoys for interpretation and falsification. Many emphasize the expressive nature of the medium, observing that photographs are inevitably colored by the photographer’s personal interests, attitudes, and prejudices.⁹

He then brilliantly counters those who do object by challenging their reductive definitions of the terminologies used to describe—and limit—photography:

Whether any of these various considerations really does collide with photography’s claim of extraordinary realism depends, of course, on how that claim is to be understood. . . . But the kind of realism most distinctive of photography is not an ordinary one. It has little to do either with the post-Renaissance quest for realism in painting or with standard theoretical accounts of realism. . . . Painting and drawing are techniques for producing pictures. So is photography. But the special nature of photography will remain obscure unless we think of it in another way as well—as a contribution to the enterprise of seeing. The invention of the camera gave us not just a new method of making pictures and not just pictures of a new kind: it gave us a new way of seeing.¹⁰

Thus Walton begins to unpack the understanding and practice of “seeing” an object.

Bazin’s arguments that “[o]riginality in photography as distinct from originality in painting lies in the essentially objective character of photography,” and that, “between the

⁹ Kendall Walton, “Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism,” *Critical Inquiry* 11, no. 2 (1984): 247.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 247, 251.

originating object and its reproductions there intervenes only the instrumentality of a nonliving agent,”¹¹ have been countered by arguments that a photograph may be distorted or altered by the photographer and his or her photographic process, and therefore may not be “authentic.” Walton wins his point by accepting the basic premise of the counter-argument, but challenging the conclusion:

But why should this [argument] matter? We can be deceived when we see things directly. If cameras can lie, so can our eyes. To see something through a distorting mirror is still to see it, even if we are misled about it. We also see through fog, through tinted windshields, and through out-of-focus microscopes. The “distortions” or “inaccuracies” of photographs are no reason to deny that we see through them.¹²

Walton begins to advocate indirectly for at least a partially phenomenological method of viewing photographs when he declares that being misled by what one sees in a photograph does not deny the experience of “seeing” what is in the photograph.

And what is in the photograph of Nijinsky, or anyone else, according to Walton? In answering this question, Walton invokes the notion of a photograph’s “transparency.” He continues his analysis of the experience of “seeing”:

Mirrors are aids to vision, allowing us to see things in circumstances in which we would not otherwise be able to; with their help we can see around corners.

Telescopes and microscopes extend our visual powers in other ways, enabling us to see things that are too far away or too small to be seen with the naked eye.¹³

Rather than what is seen “in” the photograph, Walton focuses on what is seen “through” it:

¹¹ André Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” *Film Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1950): 7.

¹² Walton, “Transparent Photographs,” 258.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 251.

Photography is an aid to vision also, and an especially versatile one. With the assistance of the camera, we can see not only around corners and what is distant or small; we can also see into the past. We see long deceased ancestors when we look at dusty snapshots of them. . . . Photographs are *transparent*.¹⁴ We see the world *through* them. . . . I must warn against watering down this suggestion, against taking it to be a colorful, or exaggerated, or not quite literal way of making a relatively mundane point. . . . My claim is that we *see*, quite literally, our dead relatives themselves when we look at photographs of them.¹⁵

Earlier in the article, Walton cites André Bazin's claim that "the photographic image is identical with the object photographed," initially labels it as a "wild allegation,"¹⁶ but then asks a rhetorical question that subverts the argument against photographic realism in what will become a defense of his, and my, position that we "see" the dead, and the past, when we view a photograph: "Is Bazin describing what seems to the viewer to be the case rather than what actually is the case?"¹⁷

This offering of what "seems to the viewer" as opposed to what "actually is," as a means of navigating through the "wildness" of Bazin's claim, resonates later in the article through Walton's own claim that we see the literal object of the photograph when we see the photograph. Thus the author makes an extremely significant, albeit indirect, gesture toward a reading of photography that is both realistic and implicitly phenomenological:

¹⁴ Allan Casebier gives the following succinct definition of the "transparency" theory of photographic realism: "As spectators, in relating to the real via photography, we are positioned before a window through which we look at the things themselves." See Casebier, *Film and Phenomenology: Toward a Realist Theory of Cinematic Representation*, 62.

¹⁵ Walton, "Transparent Photographs," 251, 252.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 249.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 249.

Our theory needs, in any case, a term which applies to both my “seeing” my great-grandfather when I look at his snapshot and to my seeing my father when he is in front of me. What is important is that we recognize a fundamental commonality between the two cases, a single natural kind of which both belong. We could see that I *perceive* my great-grandfather, but do not *see* him, recognizing a mode of perception (“seeing-through-photographs”) distinct from vision—if the idea that I do perceive my great-grandfather is taken seriously.¹⁸

Walton evidently is not at all certain that “seeing-through-photographs” through a “mode of perception” will be taken seriously. He concludes by writing, “Or one might make the point in some other way. I prefer the bold formulation: the viewer of a photograph sees, literally, the scene that was photographed.”¹⁹

I therefore discover within Walton’s work the conflict between the statement, “I see my grandfather in the photograph because I believe that I am seeing him,” and the simple statement, “I see my grandfather,” a conflict that seems at least partially to stem from Walton’s statement that “[n]ot all theories of perception postulate a strong link between perceiving and believing. We needn’t assume such a link.”²⁰ However, the link between perception and belief is essential to the theory of photography I adopt in this study. The statement, “As I believe that I am seeing my grandfather in the photograph, so I am seeing my grandfather in the photograph,” is one that I require to describe my experience in viewing the photographs of Nijinsky as the Faun. While Walton provides the definition of photographic realism I require, and the initial, general concepts

¹⁸ Ibid., 252.

¹⁹ Ibid., 252.

²⁰ Ibid., 264. See also Fred I. Dretske, *Seeing and Knowing* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1969), chap. 2.

of “seeing-through-photography,” he largely avoids analyzing photography from the point of view of the viewer.²¹

Roland Barthes and the Phenomenology of the Photographic Experience

Roland Barthes’ 1980 book *Camera Lucida*—which passionately advocates not simply for photographic realism but for an imbrication of the particular content of a photograph with a radically subjective, sensual experience of that content—was inspired by his terrible and unrelenting grief for his dead mother:

For what I have lost is not a Figure (the Mother), but a being; and not a being, but a *quality* (a soul): not the indispensable, but the irreplaceable. I could live without the Mother (as we all do, sooner or later); but what life remained would be absolutely and entirely *unqualifiable* (without quality).²²

The photograph of his dead mother that Barthes was searching for, which contained “the truth of the face I had loved,” was, for Barthes, unlike any other photograph of his mother that he had seen; moreover, the experience of this particular photograph, taken when she was a young girl, was Barthes’ alone. He writes, “It [the photograph] exists only for me.”²³ The subtext of this matter-of-fact statement is that the *experience* of the photograph of his mother exists only for Barthes. From this exclusivity, or particularity of experience, will come Barthes’ phenomenological cry for “absolute subjectivity” within photographic analysis, and his militant statement that “I dismiss all knowledge, all culture, I refuse to inherit anything from another eye than my own,” both avowals pointing to the essential function of the photograph as operating

²¹ Walton ends his article with a rather hesitant offering upon the phenomenological altar: “A certain conception of the nature of perception is beginning to emerge: to perceive things is to be in *contact* with them in a certain way.” See Walton, “Transparent Photographs,” 269.

²² Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 75.

²³ *Ibid.*, 67, 73.

within the *seeing* of the photograph by the autonomous *see-er*.²⁴ Indeed, Barthes sees the photograph as maintaining its own autonomy, “indifferent to intermediaries.”²⁵

After experiencing this particular photograph of his mother, Barthes will reject, or more precisely, elaborate upon what he calls “classical phenomenology,” which, according to Barthes, seems to “agree to distort or to evade its principles according to the whim of my analysis.”²⁶

Barthes seemed to be referring to his initial research, embracing a scientific empiricism in regards to photography, before discovering his scholarly path within the imperative of his own sentimental reasons: “I wanted to explore it [the nature of photography] not as a question (a theme) but as a wound: I see, I feel, hence I notice, I observe, and I think.”²⁷ I will elaborate upon the “wound” that Barthes explores in the photograph later in this discussion.

Significantly for this study, Barthes also criticizes the phenomenological philosophy of his day for ignoring the issues of “desire or of mourning,” which he discovered to be crucial to his understanding of photography; he states that there has not been “any other [phenomenological philosophy] since” his adolescence that addressed such contexts within which the phenomenological encounter existed. Barthes died in a car accident in 1980; presumably he had read and was familiar with Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*, published in France in 1945, and translated for the first time in English in 1962.

Merleau-Ponty did not directly connect the phenomenological encounter with the human motivations of desire. However, José Gil, in his 2006 article “Paradoxical Body,” does, elaborating upon Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological writings to incorporate desire—not the

²⁴ Ibid., 55, 51. Walton hints at the phenomenological encounter with the photograph when he introduces the concept that “to perceive things is to be in *contact* with them in a certain way.” See Walton, “Transparent Photographs,” 269.

²⁵ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 87.

²⁶ Ibid., 20, 21.

²⁷ Ibid., 21.

desire to view a photograph, but rather the desire to dance and to view dance—within his concept of the perceptual, virtual “space of the body.”²⁸ Gil asks the question, “But, finally, why should we want to dance?”²⁹ in much the same way as Barthes questions the reason he seeks out photographs. Equating the very question to the essence of desire, “desire” employed as a verb in expressing the multiplicity of the virtual, moving body, Gil’s statement, “For desire, everything must become desire,”³⁰ then mirrors Barthes’ theory of photography that encircles his desire to see his dead mother in the photograph. Thus Gil’s multiplicity of dancing bodies may be expressed as Barthes’ desire to view again and again “the truth of the face I had loved.”³¹

The Punctum and the Studium: Photograph-as-Presence

From Barthes’ desire to see his mother comes his view of the nature of photography generally, and, again significantly for this study, the nature of a particular photograph, “chosen by desire,” and communicating to the viewer the “details of love.”³² It is the “detail of love” found in a particular photograph that constitutes the “wound,” or “punctum,” that Barthes seeks—though a photograph may “wound” one viewer and leave another untouched. Among all the photographs of his dead mother, it was the photograph in which Barthes found the “kindness which had formed her being immediately and forever, without her having inherited it from anyone,” that wounded him, allowing him to receive “this extreme and particular circumstance [of kindness], so abstract in relation to an image,” but which was “nonetheless present in the face

²⁸ See Gil, “Paradoxical Body,” (*TDR*: 50:4) 2006. To read more of Gil’s elaboration of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological writings, see also chapter four of this study, “New Evidence: Nijinsky’s Score of *Faune*, fn. 88, 180-185.

²⁹ Gil, “Paradoxical,” 29.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

³¹ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 67. Bazin also writes of the photographic process as enabling the photograph to present itself the viewer as a beloved presents her or his self to a lover: “Only the impassive lens, stripping in its object of all those ways of seeing it, those piled-up preconceptions, that spiritual dust and grime with which my eyes have covered it, are able to present it in all its virginal purity to my attention and consequently to my love.” See Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” 8.

³² *Ibid.*, 40, 42.

revealed in the photograph.”³³ Within the viewing of such a particular photograph by a particular individual, “the divine body is offered with benevolence,” and the photograph is received by the viewer with love and yearning.³⁴ Hence I find in Barthes the theoretical validation of my own viewing of the photographic image of Nijinsky as the Faun—a viewing born from my love of and yearning to see Nijinsky in performance—that provides me with, in Barthes’ words, the “certification of presence,” a certification that exists “not by historical testimony but by a new, somehow experiential order of proof.”³⁵

For Barthes, the “proof” of the photograph-as-presence lies in the punctum, a detail of the photograph that transcends the historical and cultural context in which the photograph is wont to be understood and interpreted. Barthes designates this historical and cultural context as the “studium” of the photograph and describes the photographs in which the studium is predominant:

In these photographs I can, of course, take a kind of general interest, one that is even stirred sometimes, but in regard to them emotion requires the rational intermediary of an ethical and political culture. What I feel about these photographs derives from an *average* affect, almost from a certain training. I did not know a French word which might account for this kind of human interest, but I believe this word exists in Latin: it is *studium*, which doesn’t mean, at least not immediately, “study,” but application to . . . a kind of general, unenthusiastic commitment. . . . It is by *studium* that I am interested in so many photographs

³³ Ibid., 69.

³⁴ Ibid., 59.

³⁵ Ibid., 87, 79-80.

. . . for it is culturally (this connotation is present in *studium*) that I participate in the figures, the faces, the gestures, the settings, the actions.³⁶

While the punctum of a photograph is experienced as “astonishment,” as “a sudden awakening,” “lightning-like,” and is above all subjective, the studium of a photograph is surrounded by cultural and societal associations, and is viewed by the individual objectively.³⁷ The studium is in fact the product *of* culture, culture that according to Barthes “is a contract arrived at between creators and consumers,” that is, the assumptions of behavior and values that are made to seem organic rather than institutionalized.³⁸ For Barthes, then, the studium of the photograph is coded with the cultural intermediaries that render the viewer of the photograph somehow less susceptible to the “unexpected flash” that proves experientially that “every photograph is a certificate of presence.”³⁹ The photograph that wounds the viewer with its punctum is therefore “indifferent to all intermediaries,” either individual or societal.⁴⁰

The studium, besides defining the *study* of the photograph as opposed to the *experiencing* of it, also encourages its reading as a kind of monument to the dead whose focus is on the absence of the subject *now*, in the current moment. In fact the studium abolishes the possibility of presence. Thus within the studium a photograph of someone or something in the past—and the

³⁶ Ibid., 26.

³⁷ Ibid., 82, 109, 45. Barthes’ concept of the experience of the photograph’s punctum mirrors Dastur’s definition of the phenomenological event [referred to in chapter one] as “something which takes possession of us in an unforeseen manner, without warning, and which brings us towards an unanticipated future . . . It [the event] does not happen in a world – it is, on the contrary, as if a new world opens up through its happening.” See Dastur, “Phenomenology of the Event,” 182.

³⁸ Ibid., 28. While the punctum of a photograph is never coded, the studium of a photograph is always coded. See Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 51.

³⁹ Ibid., 87, 94. Barthes also speaks of a second category of punctum, having to do with the “intensity” of Time passing, that is the knowledge a viewer has that a subject in a photograph yellowing age has been dead for many years. See *Camera Lucida*, 96.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 87. As I stated in “Phenomenological Methods of Viewing Nijinsky *Faune* Photographs,” in the Methodology Section of chapter one, “While photographs, as ascertained through the studium, “do not emerge, do not leave; they are anesthetized and fastened down, like butterflies,” within my experience of the punctum within the Nijinsky *Faune* photographs, a “blind field” in Barthes’ words is brought out into the open . See Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 56. See also chapter one of this study, 15.

moment in time the photograph was taken—is not only presented as dead and gone, but removed from the realm of reality, abolished into myth: “Perhaps we have an invincible resistance to believing in the past, in History, except in the form of myth.”⁴¹ The studium does not recognize the punctum’s explosive positioning of the photograph as a validation of the subject’s existence, past or not, or as Barthes explains, “The Photograph does not necessarily say *what is no longer*, but only and for certain *what has been*.”⁴²

In Barthes’ subjective, experiential, desire-filled conception of the photograph, and in his statement that “in Photography, I can never deny that the thing has been there,” I find the purpose of my own viewing of Nijinsky photographs as the Faun⁴³: to seek, and find, evidence of the existence of someone I love. Within Barthes’ paradigm of photograph-as-presence, the fact that Nijinsky died two years before I was born lessens none of the yearning for that evidence; indeed, perhaps it intensifies it.

In speaking of the imbrication of the physical photograph with its referent (person photographed), Barthes begins to create a contingency between the subject that has been photographed *then*, and the photograph that is being viewed *now*:

It is as if the Photograph always carries its referent with itself. . . . In short, the referent adheres.⁴⁴

Through his phenomenological approach to photographic realism, Barthes approaches the photographic process itself as a connecting rod between the subject of the photograph and the photograph itself:

⁴¹ Ibid., 87.

⁴² Ibid., 85.

⁴³ Ibid., 76.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 5, 6.

[The] photographic referent” [is] not the *optionally* real thing to which an image or a sign refers but the necessarily *real thing* which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph.⁴⁵

As I continue to create my theoretical, photographic template through which to view the Nijinsky Faun photographs, Kendall Walton has given me the perceptual “sight” of photographic realism while Barthes has provided me with the “wound” that draws me into the viewing of the photographs integral to this study, as well as the admission of desire and love as motivations for my viewing. Now I arrive at the border of the nature of the photograph itself, that is the ontology of the photograph from which I need to believe that in viewing the Nijinsky Faun photographs, I am literally seeing traces of the subject/referent of that photograph: the body of Vaslav Nijinsky.

The Photograph as Index

Stanley Cavell expresses the theoretical confusion that comes from analyzing the photograph: “We might say that we don’t know how to think of the *connection* between a photograph and what it is a photograph of.”⁴⁶ While he speaks of and emphasizes *connection* in his statement, Cavell implies a kind of impenetrable distance between the two that speaks of the photograph and its subject as binary opposites. Although Bazin will state that “the photographic image is the image itself,” in an arguably contradictory statement, he also seems to observe the liminal area that the photograph and its subject share and reveal to the viewer: “Photography affects us like a phenomenon in nature, like a flower or a snowflake whose vegetable or earthly

⁴⁵ Ibid., 76. Walton also speaks of the subject as the causal agent of the photographic image: “Lincoln (together with other circumstances) caused his photograph and, thus, the visual experiences of those who view it.” See Walton, “Transparent Photographs,” 261.

⁴⁶ Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film*. Enl. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 19.

origins are an inseparable part of their beauty.”⁴⁷ Thus the subject, like the seed in the ground, remains a part of the plant from which it springs.

In 1973, Susan Sontag famously and poetically wrote of the photograph as retaining a substantial and direct connection to the its subject:

Such [photographic] images are indeed able to usurp reality because first of all a photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image), as interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask. . . . [A] photograph is never less than the registering of an emanation (light waves reflected by objects)—a material vestige of its subject.⁴⁸

In her novel *Moon Tiger*, British author Penelope Lively puts forward a fictional, but historically and technically accurate, anecdote that, through a kind of negative proof, contains its own acknowledgement of the tracing of the subject within the photograph:

I have a print . . . of a photograph of the village street of Thetford, taken in 1868, in which William Smith is not. The street is empty. There is a grocer’s cart and a great spreading tree, but not a single human figure. In fact William Smith—or someone, or several people, dogs too, geese, a man on a horse—passed beneath the tree, went into the grocer’s shop, lingered for a moment talking to a friend while the photograph was taken but he is invisible, all of them are invisible. The exposure of the photograph—sixty minutes—was so long that William Smith and everyone else passed through it and away leaving no trace. Not even so much of a

⁴⁷ Bazin, “Ontology,” 7.

⁴⁸ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1977), 154.

mark as those primordial worms through the Cambrian mud of northern Scotland and left the empty tube of their passage in the rock.⁴⁹

Thus in the absence of a figure who “passed through” the photographic process of “light waves reflected by objects,”⁵⁰ in this, albeit fictional, case, during a photographic process more primitive than that which Nijinsky encountered, I find an articulation of my belief that a human body does in fact, through the photographic process, leave behind an optical, substantive tracing of itself.

Bazin, like Sontag, describes the process of making the photograph as creating a shared relationship between originator and its resulting image:

No matter how fuzzy, distorted, or discolored, no matter how lacking, in documentary value the image may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it *is* the model.⁵¹

I would also like to embrace Bazin’s parameters of the area where subject and image exist in tandem. I wonder, however, if it possible to connect Bazin’s statement of the “sharing” between image and model with the idea of the photograph-as-index. I therefore go to Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) for the ultimate realization of my belief that the photographs of Nijinsky as the Faun contain something of Nijinsky’s performativity.

From his definition of what he termed an “index,” Peirce would compose the seminal definition of the photographic image as containing both a perceptual and ontological connection with the originating subject:

⁴⁹ Qtd. in Patrick Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization: Thinking through Photography* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), 153m fn. 13. Here Maynard is differentiating between the “optical image” of a photograph printed onto a paper surface, and the “photochemical image” fixed within the camera itself. I am employing this sequence from Lively’s novel to speak not of that differentiation but the fact that a subject has the potential to be “traced” onto a photographic image, what Maynard prefers more accurately to call, the “display,” a preference I discuss later in this chapter. See also Penelope Lively, *Moon Tiger* (London: André Deutsch, 1987), 13.

⁵⁰ Sontag, *On Photography*, 154.

⁵¹ Bazin, “Photographic Image,” 8.

This [an index] is a real thing or fact which is a sign of its object by virtue of being connected with it as a matter of fact and also by forcibly intruding upon the mind, quite regardless of it being interpreted as a sign. It may simply serve to identify its object and assure us of its existence and presence. But very often the nature of the factual connexion of the index with its object is such as to excite in consciousness an image of some features of the object, and in that way affords evidence from which positive assurance as to truth of fact may be drawn.⁵²

He then uses the photograph as an example of just such a representamen: “A photograph, for example, not only excites an image, has an appearance, but, owing to its optical connexion with the object, is evidence that the appearance corresponds to a reality.”⁵³

Peirce’s acknowledgement of the index’s power to “forcibly intrude upon the mind”⁵⁴ mirrors Françoise Dastur’s definition of the “phenomenological event” as “something which takes possession of us in an unforeseen manner, without warning.”⁵⁵ The connotation of force is connected particularly to a photograph imbued with Barthes’ “punctum,” and also parallels Barthes’ reference to the “stubbornness of the referent,”⁵⁶ again with its connotation of a kind of phenomenological power, certainly powerful enough to “forcibly intrude” upon the viewer’s consciousness.⁵⁷

It is useful to consider Bazin’s claim that the photographic image “shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction”⁵⁸ in

⁵² Charles S. Peirce, "The Writings of Charles S. Peirce." ed. Christian Kloesel et al. (University of Indiana Press, 1980-2000.) vol. 4, para. 447.

⁵³ Ibid., vol. 4, para. 447.

⁵⁴ Ibid., vol. 4, para. 447.

⁵⁵ Dastur, “The Phenomenological Event,” 181.

⁵⁶ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 6.

⁵⁷ I acknowledge that Peirce’s reference to the “mind” does not apply to Merleau-Ponty’s concept of the “phenomenological encounter,” whose source is the body, which I use in this study.

⁵⁸ Bazin, “Photographic Image,” 8.

juxtaposition with Peirce's claim that “[a]n index represents its object by a real correspondence with it—as a tally does quarts of milk, and a vane the wind.”⁵⁹ The verbs “to share” and “to correspond,” while not synonymous, are closely related. Just as *sharing* involves two subjects separated by either time, space, or membrane coming together to mutually experience or consume a thing, so does *corresponding* also involve two subjects, separated by either time, space, or membrane, coming together. Consider, for example, the way two letter-writers “correspond,” in particular during the period that one individual sits down to read what the second has written. I propose that the span of time during which both individuals remain separated and one individual reads what the second has written produces a sharing of experience, the absence of the letter-writer notwithstanding. Peirce’s “real correspondence” is not contingent upon the image and the object being in close, physical proximity to each other, and Bazin’s statement that the photographic image “shares” the “being of the model” may in fact be read as a description of the photograph-as-index, or photograph-as-correspondence-with-the-object.⁶⁰

Peirce himself provides me with an example of the indexical relationship that maintains its “correspondence,” and its “shared being” with an object that not only lies a distance from any model, but may be argued has slipped into the realm of myth:

A yard-stick might seem, at first sight, to be an icon of a yard; and so it would be, if it were merely intended to show a yard as near as it can be seen and estimated to be a yard. But the very purpose of a yard-stick is to show a yard nearer than it can be estimated by its appearance. This it does in consequence of an accurate mechanical comparison made with the bar in London called the yard. Thus is it a

⁵⁹ Peirce, *Writings*, vol. 4, para. 447.

⁶⁰ While I generally use the term “subject” to delineate the referent, or that whose photographic image is being produced, the debate between the use of the term “subject” over “object” is not relevant to this study. In this case I use the term “object” to remain consistent with Peirce’s language.

real connection which gives the yard-stick its value as a representamen; and thus it is an *index*, not a mere *icon*.⁶¹

I remember seeing the original yard in London in the chapel where the lord-mayor originally placed it in 1588,⁶² and feeling a sense of shock, or even phenomenological “astonishment” at viewing the original length of metal from which had come a global specification of this measurement known by me as a “yard.” That there was a physical object or “model” for this measurement, as opposed to the “yard” as existing as a cultural stipulation through the centuries, creates within my sight and use of every yard-stick I will ever possess a certain immediate, palpable, and substantial connection to the yard that lies in that London church. Should the original “yard” in London be melted down during a fire, my yard-stick’s connection to that original “yard” would not be negated; in fact, in the non-existence of the London “yard,” the “sharing” and “correspondence” between the model of the yard-stick that I hold in my hand becomes more firmly shared now that the original model is no longer substantial. Thus as Peirce's argument suggests, my sight of a photograph of Nijinsky as the Faun creates the selfsame immediate, palpable, and substantial connection to the body of Nijinsky; and the absence of the body of Nijinsky merely causes the photograph of Nijinsky to retain more firmly for me the traces of that body.

Patrick Maynard and Photography-as-Technology

Patrick Maynard’s comprehensive analysis of the spectrum of scholarly views on the nature of photography, and more specifically, his own focus on photography-as-technology,

⁶¹ Charles S. Peirce, and Justus Buchler, *The Philosophy of Peirce; Selected Writings*, International Library of Psychology, Philosophy, and Scientific Method (London: Routledge & K. Paul Ltd., 1956), 109.

⁶² The yard standard of Elizabeth I, made in 1588, is still in existence and may be seen in the Science Museum in London. It consists of an iron bar with a square cross section, about ½ inch on a side. The yard is the distance between the ends of the bar. Although it was broken and repaired sometime between 1760 and 1819, it is only about 0.01 inch shorter than today's yard. See <http://www.sizes.com/units/yard.htm>. When I visited London for the first time in 1989 the yard was not in the Science Museum but in a chapel whose name and location I cannot recall.

helps to create my theoretical template. His lack, generally, of investment in one theory over another allows his final declarations on the nature of photography to reassure me of my own. His focus on photography-as-technology is less a theoretical investment and more the filling of a scholarly need. Maynard reminds the reader, rather professorially, that photography is a technology, stating that, "I have throughout insisted on distinctions among three phenomena or uses" of "photo-optics":

[F]irst, the real *optical images* in cameras; second, the *photographic images*, chemical or electronic, that they produce; third, the *photographic depiction*, if any, that such photographic images are used to present.⁶³

Thus, while I choose to continue to use the term "photographic image" at times in this study, I acknowledge the accuracy of Maynard's term, "photographic depiction," to describe what I am viewing when I see Nijinsky as the Faun. Maynard's concept of photographic depiction becomes especially useful as he augments it with the concept of "display markings," and in so doing moves closer to my indexical, causal understanding of photography. "Display markings," Maynard writes, "are not accidental; they are 'designedly traced.'"⁶⁴ Initially Maynard, in focusing on the term "markings," considers it "more helpful to approach photography simply as one kind of marking technology rather than as a medium of communication," even though the term itself once again connotes the photograph-as-index, that is the photograph as containing marks that originate with the subject.⁶⁵

Yet Maynard, within the context of his meticulous, technology-based approach to photographic analysis, provides perhaps the greatest scholarly-based reassurance that I am seeing

⁶³ Maynard, *The Engine of Visualization*, 189, 155.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 27. The term "designedly traced" was coined by Lady Elizabeth Eastlake and is cited by Maynard. See Elizabeth Eastlake, "Photography," *Quarterly Review* 101 (1857): 442-68; rpt. in Newhall, *Photography: Essays & Images*, quotation, p. 84R.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

“something substantial” of Nijinsky when I see his photograph. He writes of the particular, perceived power or meaning of certain photographic depictions:

The association of photographs of things with allegedly miraculous objects—objects and relics that go back to ancient times—might not seem to assist the case for a distinct, significant dimension of photographic fidelity. Association with such phenomena and their related attitudes might seem, indeed, to make that idea all the more disreputable. But we should not conflate issues of the validity of a psychological principle with those concerning certain instances of them.⁶⁶

Thus Maynard seems to, on one hand, acknowledge the psychological motivation for viewing photographs as authentic to their subject, but, of great significance for this study, warns us not to discount the possibility that in some cases that authenticity is genuine.

In using the metaphor of the “possession dance,” Maynard inches closer and closer to an indexical, and even phenomenological, conception of the nature of photography:

The dancer knows how to possess the spirit, but in the ceremony that representation will take place only as part of the manifestation of the spirit—if that occurs. The dance of very different traditions, even social dance that is not particularly representational—should there be such—may manifest “spirit” of a different kind: the spirit of the social occasion itself. It is typical of such dances that they are part of wider social events, and that those who take part in them give themselves to the spirit of the occasion—that is, make their dancing exemplary parts of the occasion, thereby manifesting its spirit: “getting into (with it),” as one says. Similar cases could be made for the production of works of visual representation. In some of the most significant examples it is not the act of

⁶⁶ Ibid., 235.

making the picture but rather entities depicted by the picture that are manifested there: that is, manifest themselves through that image.⁶⁷

Finally, Maynard, within his book's determined focus on photography-as-technology, begins to elaborate upon the "entities" that "manifest themselves" through the image of the photograph.⁶⁸ For Maynard this manifestation of the entity of the subject itself often incorporates a "detective dimension" that extends "sense experiences to past times and distances."⁶⁹ Much as Barthes differentiates between photographs that "wound," and those that do not, Maynard makes the point that this manifestation of the entity of the subject triggers an important function of some, but not all, photographs, and in terms that are overt and quasi-metaphysical:

Yet testimonies about "nearness," "contact," "emanation," "vestige," "trace," "co-substantiality," and so on, register a sense that photographs of things can combine with these characteristics a strong *manifestation* function as well. It is important to emphasize that they *can*; not *must*; photographs need no more feature this dimension of fidelity than they need feature the perceptual dimensions; perspective and surface detail. Many of them clearly do not, though many do.⁷⁰

Thus Maynard follows with an acknowledgement of the bias of Western philosophy, a key acknowledgement that explains how I, a product of that same Western philosophy, require final reassurance of the indexical nature of photography from Maynard himself, a photographic scholar steeped in scientific theory:

⁶⁷ Ibid., 237.

⁶⁸ I use his term "image" here rather than "photographic depiction."

⁶⁹ Ibid., 247.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 247.

The Western tradition, then, pursuing its projects of vivid sensory imagining, stumbled upon a mechanism of manifestation or contact but, given its historic habits of thought, was not well able to recognize it for what it was.⁷¹

The Nature of Performance Photographs⁷²

Barthes' statement, "Always the photograph *astonishes* me, with an astonishment which endures and renews itself, inexhaustibly" reveals an implicit understanding that the experience of viewing a photograph is always in the present, and constitutes a completely new phenomenological experience.⁷³ What then may be communicated in the viewing of a so-called "performance photograph,"⁷⁴ that is a photograph that is either the recording of a live performance, or of a live performance in which the act of photography is a part of its performativity? Is the act of viewing such a performance photograph then an act of viewing *in the present* an act of performativity?

In "The Performativity of Performance Documentation," Philip Auslander introduces the notion of "performed photography," citing as examples instances of performances art "in which performances were staged solely to be photographed or filmed and had no meaningful prior existence as autonomous events presented to audiences."⁷⁵ I see Auslander's description of the photographic image that "records an event that never took place except in the photograph itself" as direct related to Nijinsky performance photographs, which were taken in the costume and makeup of Faun as well as in all other roles. These photographs of Nijinsky were taken by

⁷¹ Ibid., 247.

⁷² See chapter one, pages 39-40, for my comparative analysis of Matthew Reason's book, *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance*, and my reasons for finding his research not applicable to the needs and goals of this study.

⁷³ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 82.

⁷⁴ This definition of "performance photographs" differs from the one I adopt for this study. As previously stated, for this study, I define "performance photograph" or "performance shot" as photographs of Nijinsky that, while almost never shot of Nijinsky in actual performance, and infrequently of Nijinsky moving freely, are photographs of Nijinsky posed in full makeup and costume as a character in a specific role.

⁷⁵ Philip Auslander, "The Performativity of Performance Documentation," *PAJ*, no. 84 (2006): 2.

photographers for the ostensible purposes of publicizing the dancer's performance, helping a portrait artist to paint when Nijinsky himself was not available to model, or in the case of the De Meyer photographic session of *Faune*, recording the choreography of Nijinsky's own ballet. The performance act captured in the Nijinsky performance photographs, however, differs from the acts captured within overt, explicit acts of performance art.⁷⁶

Auslander counters the argument that a performative act requires a literal audience to view it by defining performance documentation, within which he includes the recorded performances of singers, as a separate and unique performative act:

I submit that the presence of that initial audience has no real importance to the performance as an entity whose continued life is through its documentation because our usual concern as consumers of such documentation is with recreating the artist's work, not the total interaction.⁷⁷

Then Auslander opens the door to the value and validity of the phenomenological connection between viewer and performance document:

Perhaps the authenticity of the performance document resides in its relationship to its beholder rather than to an ostensibly originary event; perhaps its authority is phenomenological rather than ontological.⁷⁸

Auslander then nods toward the indexical relationship between the performance document and viewer — "It may well be that our sense of the presence, power, and authenticity of these pieces derives not from treating the document as an indexical access point to a past

⁷⁶ Qtd. in Auslander, "Performativity," 5. See Richard Baumann, *A World of Others' Words: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Intertextuality* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 9. In chapter three, I will argue that the performative act within the Nijinsky performance photographs came from Nijinsky's personal, implicit experience of being photographed in costume and makeup as "in performance," producing the "metacommunicative message: 'I'm on.'"

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

event . . ."79—but goes a step further towards a more “radical possibility,” framing the performance document “itself *as a performance* that directly reflects an artist’s aesthetic project or sensibility and for which we are the present audience.”80 Thus I find validation of Barthes’ inexhaustible, *present* “astonishment” also within the viewing of performance documentation, constituted, within this study, by the performance photographs of Vaslav Nijinsky.

The Death of Nijinsky-as-Performer

I now sketch out the final element of my theoretical template on the nature of photography, ultimately building toward a nonarchival approach to photographic preservation. To do so, I will turn my focus to two photographic events that can be read as signifiers, albeit inconclusive ones, of the end of Nijinsky’s performance life. In the period of years between 1917 and Nijinsky’s death in 1950, the performance of Nijinsky existed in the same condition as did the living person: comatose, without vigor, yet without formal declaration of death.

By 1926, the world seemed to have acknowledged Vaslav Nijinsky’s insanity. His former lover, the impresario Serge Diaghilev, invited Nijinsky and his wife to a performance of *Petruschka* in London. Tamara Karsavina, Nijinsky’s famous, erstwhile partner, was once again dancing the role of the Ballerina; Diaghilev evidently had hopes that watching another dancer perform one of his greatest roles would catapult Nijinsky, then 36 years old, out of his extreme state of depression and withdrawal. Before the performance, Diaghilev escorted Nijinsky backstage to meet Karsavina and the company; several photographs were taken.⁸¹ In 1932, critic Cyril Beaumont who had seen Nijinsky dance numerous times, would write about the event and the photograph most frequently and famously published:

⁷⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁸¹ Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 418-419.

There exists a photograph taken on that evening, which shows Nijinsky surrounded by the principal members of the company. It is difficult to imagine that anyone could have been so heartless as to take it. Few things are more tragic to those who love the art of ballet than to see the greatest dancer of his age, nay, the greatest dancer since Auguste Vestris, smiling with lips that do not smile, staring with eyes that flash images to an unresponsive brain. This photograph has all the tragedy and horror of one of Goya's etchings in the series called *Los Caprichos*.⁸²

The purpose for the Nijinsky photograph in question was probably undefined, that is the photograph taken simply because Nijinsky was present, perhaps with the added, morbid impetus of his insanity, by 1926 authenticated by his hospitalizations, and more significantly, his continuing, lengthening absence from the stage. The particular significance of the aforementioned photograph, however, can also be seen in its documentation of the absence of Nijinsky's performance, viewed within the bizarrely appropriate frame of the backstage of a theatre, where the former greatest living dancer stood mute amidst members of the company of which he was once its greatest star, incapable of making another entrance onto the stage. Given our knowledge of the circumstances surrounding their creation, these photographs may be interpreted as a tragic verification of both Nijinsky's mental illness—the vacant smile and disengaged stare—and the termination of his career as a dancer—the fact that he wears street clothes before a performance of one of his most celebrated roles, next to the costumed ballerina with whom he partnered in the past.

The second photograph I will consider here was first published in *Paris Match* magazine, and then reprinted and viewed worldwide in the July 3, 1939, issue of *Life* magazine, with the

⁸² Beaumont, *Vaslav Nijinsky*, 24.

headline, “Vaslav Nijinsky dances ballet again in Swiss insane asylum, with Serge Lifar.”⁸³ By June 1939, at a stay in a second Swiss hospital, Nijinsky had become more mobile and responsive through experimental insulin shock treatments, exhibiting “adequate mimicry and body movements in response to music,” and “spontaneously, although shyly, made some dance movements.”⁸⁴ Romola had a ballet barre installed next to the room where Nijinsky received the treatments.⁸⁵ Dancer Serge Lifar, Diaghilev’s last protégée who had first met Nijinsky in Paris ten years before, admired Nijinsky and raised monies for his treatments.⁸⁶ Visiting him at the hospital, Lifar danced some steps from *Faune* to music playing on a gramophone; Nijinsky, its choreographer and star, corrected the younger dancer’s movements. Lifar would write about what then took place when he began to dance steps from and to the music of *Spectre de la Rose*:

Without any visible effort or preparation, without plié even, Nijinsky began to rise from the floor. His high-soaring jump was such that no one of those who witnessed that *Spectre de la Rose* will ever forget it. His wife and my brother Leonide paled and stood as if transfixed—Romola Nijinsky because of the miracle she saw again after twenty years, my brother because of a miracle he now saw for the first time in his life.⁸⁷

⁸³ *Life*, July 3, 1939, 22-23.

⁸⁴ Dr. Clare Haas, Qtd. in Ostwald, *Nijinsky*, 304.

⁸⁵ Ostwald, *Nijinsky*, 309.

⁸⁶ Serge Lifar, *Serge Diaghilev, His Life, His Work, His Legend: An Intimate Biography*. Reprint, 1976 (New York City: Da Capo Press, 1940), 347. When Nijinsky’s body itself was seen, it was able to give its own confirmation of both the dancer’s past and present performative circumstance. In December 1928, Serge Lifar, Diaghilev’s last protégée, met the then 38-year-old Nijinsky for the first time, and wrote of the appearance of Nijinsky’s body: “His legs were those of a great dancer, with immense globular muscles, though so flabby now that one wondered how they could possibly support his body.” A dancer himself, ironically taking on the role of Diaghilev’s young lover that Nijinsky had played fifteen years earlier, Lifar gives exceptional testimony to the past “presence,” and present “past” signified simultaneously within Nijinsky’s body. See Lifar, *Serge Diaghilev*, 347.

⁸⁷ Lifar, *Serge Diaghilev*, 377.

A photographer from *Paris Match* magazine, present for the encounter between Nijinsky and Lifar, snapped the photograph.⁸⁸ The photographic image that showed Nijinsky continuing to intermittently experience or at least recall the kinetic memories of his dancer's body, further blurred the dating, if not the actuality, of the death of his performance. The end of Vaslav Nijinsky's body in motion on the stage, however, possessed no specific marker, competing as it did with the unwithering desire on the part of the public and private individuals alike to see Nijinsky dance.

Unknowingly, dance critic Edwin Denby signed the death certificate of Nijinsky's performance career.⁸⁹ Denby's article, "Notes on Nijinsky Photographs," published in 1943, seven years before Nijinsky's death, seemed to circumvent the actual body of Nijinsky completely in its elegiac assumption of the dancer's performative death. Denby, through his circumvention of the living body and person of Nijinsky, force-fed the reader his own acceptance of the death of Nijinsky's performance, and consequently, the dissection of his own phenomenological encounter with the only objects that contained any part of that performance: the photographs. Within Denby's article the focus of encounter shifted from the body of Nijinsky

⁸⁸ Ostwald, *Nijinsky*, 310. According to Ostwald, Nijinsky's doctor was so angry with Romola for bringing a photographer to the hospital that he threatened to discharge the patient.

⁸⁹ Even after 1943, the year Edwin Denby published his essay "Notes on Nijinsky Photographs," rumors continued that Nijinsky would somehow miraculously dance again, or even had danced again, the definition of the act of Nijinsky "having danced" wildly and romantically distorted. A series of American newspaper articles published from 1921 through 1951, speak to the agonizingly slow mortification of Nijinsky's phenomenological body, followed by the decay of that performance into that which was "no longer experienced" by those who had seen him dance, or "never experienced" by those who had never seen him perform. The phenomenological force of Nijinsky's performance may be read as the only explanation for the *Times* article dated September 27, 1945: "Nijinsky in Ballet Here—Hurok Announces Famous Star Will Dance at Metropolitan." Even as the headline of the *Post* article spoke to the phenomenological demand to see him dance, the *Times* headline, and the irrational, heartbreaking perseverance of the article's last statement, "As a vehicle, Mr. Hurok suggested the title role of "Petrouchka" which Nijinsky created at its first performance in Paris in 1911," confessed a secret wish for Nijinsky's corporeal self to continue if only so that the desire for the encounter with his performance might continue. See *ProQuest Historical Newspapers, The New York Times*: 24. See "Nijinsky, Insane 20 Years, Is Reported Near Recovery," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers, The Washington Post*, Aug. 20, 1937: 3. See "Wife Thinks Nijinsky Will Regain Sanity," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers, The Washington Post*, Oct. 15, 1937: 8. See also "Mad Genius of Ballet, Nijinsky, Dances Again At Red Army Campfire," *ProQuest Historical Newspapers, The Washington Post*, Aug. 12, 1945: B6.

in motion, and from the memory of that body in motion, to an encounter with the photographs, an encounter that saw, literally and figuratively, the Nijinsky performance photographs as phenomenologically vital, creators of a present experience with its resulting memory.

Denby began an unintentional attack upon the archive's autonomy over performance documentation. I consciously continue that challenge on archivalism's relegation of performance documentation to the dead, inaccessible remains of that performance. In embracing the theory that performance documentation, encountered outside of the petrification of the archive, makes obtainable the present experience of performativity in their viewing, I incorporate nonarchivalism within my theoretical understanding of the nature of photography, specifically performance documentation.

I now provide an overview of the archival paradigm within which performance as absence, and archival performance preservation as fetish, have combined.

Performance as Absence

Performance scholars including Richard Schechner in his pivotal book *Between Theatre and Anthropology* in 1985, and later, Herbert Blau, Peggy Phelan, and Marvin Carlson, have engaged in a discourse on the ontology of performance, specifically within a position of performance as absence. Within a spectrum of methodologies, including psychoanalysis, anthropology, and feminism, these theorists have all seen memory as the very basis of performance, this "memory base" predicated on the notion of the body moving on stage in a constant state of disappearance. That which has just taken place on the stage has also just vanished, so that performance is experienced by the viewer as "that which is gone." Thus its existence is conjoined with nonexistence, the emphasis again being placed always upon the "eminent death" of the performance.

In chapter four when I describe a positive, liminal, transience of the theatrical performance and the performer in Nijinsky's *Faune*, I argue for a conjoinment of appearance and disappearance with focus on the repetition of that appearance, hence "re-appearance." However, within the theory of performance viewed as a state of continual appearing and vanishing, the spectrum of referenced paradigms place emphasis on the "vanishing." Additionally, within this assumption, the witnessing of the "vanishing" theatrical performance has been seen to incorporate the quality of both dreams and spectral sightings. Herbert Blau writes of "the troubled spectator reimagining the play, whether or not on stage, still astonished in the gaze."⁹⁰ Thus the audience, after experiencing the performance on stage, is haunted by the memory of what they have experienced and encountered.

According to this philosophy of performance as a kind of preordained death, the audience is not alone in being haunted after the viewing of a single performance. Marvin Carlson construes the theatrical space as a "haunted house": "The physical theatre, as a site of the continuing reinforcement of memory by surrogation, is not surprisingly among the most haunted of human cultural structures."⁹¹ The stage itself is haunted within the concept of performance as the repetition of text, staging, and emotional affect: a looping stream of metaphorical corpses and their ghosts appear, and reappear, upon the stage.

This conception of performance as both that-which-is-gone and that-which-is-gone-time-and-time-again renders the memory of performance—what is remembered of the performance and the performer—analogous to the recollections a mourner has of a dear, departed loved one as she sorts through piles of clothes, recalling the time when they were worn and embodied by the departed loved one. The fact that it is ninety years since Nijinsky danced in public, and over fifty

⁹⁰ Herbert Blau, *The Audience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 92.

⁹¹ Marvin A. Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*, Theater--Theory/Text/Performance (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 2.

since his death, is thus rendered oddly irrelevant by this disappearing act of performance. The idea of absence presumed Nijinsky “dead in performance,” and capable of being mourned, the second he left the stage at Paris’s Théâtre Châtelet on May 19, 1909 after his first performance. Later in this section, within archivalism’s definition and preservation of ephemera, I subvert performance-as-absence’s grieving mourner to the mourner-in-the-archive who denies, rather than grieves, the death of the loved one. Within the archival paradox I find Nijinsky’s performance maintained not as funereal, but as fetish, in which the Nijinsky photographs are pressed too closely to be experienced, preserved meticulously but separated philosophically and practically from the moving dancer’s body. Paradoxically, Denby, in showing us “something of Nijinsky” in 1943, invoked the final death sentence upon Nijinsky’s moving, dancer’s body.

However, this concept of performance as absence need not include performance preservation as part of its belief system. Peggy Phelan discusses the political and feminist implications performance absence without implicit or explicit preference given to the archive.⁹² Nor have these scholars incorporated archivalism as a stated or even assumed form of performance preservation within this discourse. Richard Schechner states, “Performance originals disappear as fast as they are made,” and follows with the statement, “No notation, no reconstruction, no film or videotape recording can keep them.”⁹³ Schechner, in his subsequent documentation and categorization of how performance behavior is and can be “restored,” argues for both oral and bodily transmission of performance as means of preserving performance that is always ontologically “vanishing.”⁹⁴

⁹² Phelan, *Unmarked*, 5.

⁹³ Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 50.

⁹⁴ See chapter two, “Restoration of Behavior,” in Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology*.

Archivalism and Performance Preservation

Derrida launches a more direct attack on the preservation of both the past and its memory by the westernized archive in *Archive Fever*, where he points to Freudian psychoanalysis as largely responsible for western culture's continuing and problematic thrall with the archive.⁹⁵ As deconstructed by Derrida, the archive, that is the *arkheion*, began as "initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded. . . . [I]t is at their home, in that *place* which is their house . . . that official documents are filed."⁹⁶

In Derrida's unpacking of the word "archive" (*arkhē*)⁹⁷ from its ancient Greek etymological, social/cultural origins, the archive then presents an insular, "consigned"⁹⁸ mode of selecting and preserving the past that constructs its own "golden calf," conceived of, valuated, and consequently archived by and within the archive itself. Both the archive's acting to preserve material remains, and the specific designation of photographic remains of performance as inaccessible to the experiential or phenomenological, points to western civilization's historic suspicion of mimetic performance. Rebecca Schneider writes:

⁹⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 90-91.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 2. Rebecca Schneider, however, takes issue with Derrida's unified definition of the Greek root word for archive, 'arkheion': "While Derrida is correct about the root of the word and its meaning, the history of archives in the actual ancient world . . . is exceedingly more complicated than Derrida lets on." Schneider refers to *Public Records and Archives in Classical Athens*, U. of North Carolina Press (1999) by James P. Sickinger in her statement that, "though the modern world came to employ the word archive, a word certainly ghosted by the prerogatives of the *law* Derrida cites, in ancient Greece the word archive was not used to refer to the housing of documents." See Rebecca Schneider, "Performing Remains," *Performance Research* 6, no. 2 (2001): Endnote 7, 19.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 1.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 3. In relation to the archive's "consigned" mode of selecting and preserving the past as part of the state's control of history and collective memory, Derrida writes, "The archontic power, which also gathers the functions of unification, of identification, of classification, must be paired with what we call the power of *consignation*. By *consignation*, we do not only mean, in the ordinary sense of the word, the act of assigning residence or of entrusting so as to put into reserve (to consign, to deposit), in a place and on a substrate, but here the act of *consigning* through *gathering together signs*. . . . *Consignation* aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unit of an ideal configuration."

Should we not think of the ways in which the archive depends upon performance, indeed in which the archive *performs* [her emphasis] the equation of performance as disappearing, even as it *performs* the service of ‘saving’? It is in accord with archival logic that performance is given to disappear, and mimesis (always in a tangled and complicated relationship to the performative) is, in line with a long history of antitheatricalism, debased if not downright feared as destructive of the pristine ideality of all things marked ‘original.’⁹⁹

Despite Edwin Denby’s phenomenological writings on Nijinsky performance photographs and those of succeeding writers, including those of Lincoln Kirstein, Daniel Gesmer, Kevin Kopelson, and Joan Acocella, spanning the years from 1943 to 1997, the published writings of the aforementioned scholars on the Nijinsky performance photographs did not shift the status of the Nijinsky photographs from the archive to the experiential or phenomenological. Archivalism and its methodological assumption of performance as absent, rather than present or experiential, continues to exert a pervasive, arguably psychological¹⁰⁰ hold on western civilization’s notions of what remains after performance is gone. I am unaware that the writings by the aforementioned dance historians and scholars have ever been categorized as “phenomenological,” much less the point having been made that these writings challenge the notion that all traces of Nijinsky’s performativity are experientially lost. Together with the assumption of performance as absence, the concrete legitimacy of the archive has been maintained even in the face of poststructuralism, and a unanimous, scholarly repudiation of formalism. More recent archival practices have incorporated other reminders of lost performance

⁹⁹ Schneider, “Performing Remains,” 5.

¹⁰⁰ Certainly this is the very argument of Derrida’s *Archive Fever*, the Freudian psycho-analytic paradigm used as a kind of parallel deconstructing tool, although it is the far reaching political, social, and cultural ramifications of the western, Hellenic-based archive, as opposed to any specifics regarding performance, that Derrida’s brilliant rhetoric encompasses.

that seem outside of the westernized hegemony of what should be preserved, without acknowledging any serious criticism of the archival principle itself. Rebecca Schneider writes, “If the twentieth century is famous for, among other things, criticizing the concept of historical facticity, such criticism has not resulted in the end of our thrall to the archive. Rather, we have broadened our range of documents to include that which we might have overlooked; the stockpiling of recorded speech, image, gesture, the establishment of ‘oral archives,’ and the collection of ‘ethnotexts.’”¹⁰¹

In *Archive Fever* Derrida strives to undo the archive’s very foundation, that is its maintenance as the guardian of the past, of memory, and in the continued challenges of scholars such as Rebecca Schneider, of performance preservation. I present an additional challenge to the archive’s preservation of the photographic image in a the condition that, paradoxically, denies it any ephemeral residue of performance. As Schneider writes: “The paper, frame, and photo of the action all represent to the viewer that which the viewer missed—that which, standing before the document, you *witness yourself missing again*.”¹⁰² Thus what may be gleaned performatively from a phenomenological viewing of the photograph may be read not only as denying the archive’s definition of ephemera as sepulchral, that is the photograph as the amber in which Nijinsky’s image is perpetually suspended, but embracing the present, moving body as the first and final, sensual housing of performance preservation, specifically in this study, the preservation of the performativity of Nijinsky.

In seeing performance documentation under the metaphoric glass of the archive, do we ensure the death of what might be accessible and retrievable within these photographs? I claim that the phenomenological writings on Nijinsky photographs, and the outgrowth of these writings

¹⁰¹ Schneider, “Performing Remains,” 6.

¹⁰² Rebecca Schneider, “Solo Solo Solo,” in *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance* edited by Gavin Butt (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 42.

within my own research, are challenges both to the negation of ephemera's performative traces, as demanded by the archive's limited definition of ephemera, and, within that limited definition, the powerful, and equally limiting definition of performance as a succession of disappearances.

Here I need to "unpack" what appears to be the antithetical relationship between post-structuralism and the archive. Ironically, the death of the author's identity within post-structuralist discourse—e.g. Nijinsky's authorship of his performance—, may be covertly linked to the most westernized, patriarchal practice: that of the archive. Schneider writes:

I have suggested that the increasing domain of remains in the West, the increased technologies of archiving, may be why the late 20th century has been both so enamored of performance and so replete with deaths: death of author, death of science, death of history, death of literature, death of character, death of the avant-garde, death of modernism.¹⁰³

Again Schneider writes of the subtle, significant partnership between nonauthorship and the nonarchival: "[W]e must be careful to avoid the habit of approaching performative remains as a metaphysic of presence that privileges an original or singular authenticity."¹⁰⁴ The argument against an essential performance, an original authored by the performer that *was* but *is no more*, counters the archive's access to and preservation of a past copy, and consequently validates my own experience of performative residue. Thus I offer up an ironic definition of Nijinsky's performance that denies Nijinsky the authorship of that performance, but through that denial, makes available new ways of experiencing Nijinsky's performativity in the present.

¹⁰³ Schneider, "Performing Remains," 13.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 10. Schneider acknowledges the contribution of Herbert Blau and Peggy Phelan to her argument: "Indeed it has been the significant contributions of performance theorists such as Blau and Phelan that have enabled us to interrupt this habit." Interestingly, Freshwater writes, "After Roland Barthes and Foucault, all authors may be dead, but those who contributed to the archive are more dead than most," succinctly describing the nonauthor/archival connection which, along with Schneider, I argue against. See Helen Freshwater, "The Allure of the Archive," *Poetics Today* 24, no. 4 (2003): 738.

The Body, The Photograph and the Archive

The archive seeks to negate the validity and efficacy of memory in the body-to-body transmission of performances from the historical past.¹⁰⁵ Hence the body itself is held in suspicion within the archive as “given to be that which slips away. Flesh can house no memory of bone. Only bone speaks memory of flesh. Flesh is blindspot.”¹⁰⁶ As I previously discussed, for the archive, identity and singularity within performance—the one and the only Vaslav Nijinsky performance by the one and the only Vaslav Nijinsky—is conjoined with the idea of bodies as singular, *temporary* and *impermeable*. Schneider, in speaking to the disappearance of performance, also comments on the impermeability of its material remains: “Radically ‘in time,’ performance can not reside in its material traces and therefore it ‘disappears.’”¹⁰⁷ Thus the past, of which any performance is a part, may only be materially, archivally retrievable through ephemera such as photographs, photographs that may only operate as non-residual copies. In the case of the Nijinsky performance photographs, Schneider’s insistence that “[o]nly bone speaks memory of flesh” has prompted my definition of the Nijinsky performance photographs, seen within the archive, as the “dead bones” of that performance.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, an experiential, phenomenological encounter with the Nijinsky photographs, a viewing of these photographs not as “dead bones” but rather “present memories,” becomes a threat to the archive equal to that of the body.

Nijinsky performance photographs housed in archives such as the New York Public Library’s Jerome Robbins Division are preserved and valued as “original” photographs, that is

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 8. Schneider writes, “Performance practice has been, historically, disavowed as historical practice.”

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 6.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁸ While Schneider’s statement in which bones do “speak of memory” would seem to provide the viewer with some accessibility to the experience of that memory, and thus the performance, her statement, “performance can not reside in its material traces,” unequivocally banishes those traces from within the “bones” of performance. Thus I feel comfortable in advancing the term “dead bones” of performance as my interpretation of those statements in combination.

reproduced directly from the photographer's original negative. Hence these photographs and their preservation fall within both Schneider's statement of archivalism's imperative for "all things marked 'original,'"¹⁰⁹ and its predetermination of photographs (ephemera) as "copies" of that which occurred, in the past or in Nijinsky's case, that which moved in the past.

Of equal significance to the archive's (*archons*) self-appointment as the guardian and the sole means of preservation of history is the its authority over the composition and meaning of what is preserved. Diana Taylor argues against the assumption of archivalism's objectivity within the placement of the archival object within the archive: "There are several myths attending the archive. One is that it is unmediated, that objects located there might mean something outside the framing of the archival impetus itself. What makes an object archival is the process whereby it is selected, classified, and presented for analysis."¹¹⁰ And again Derrida writes: "They [the archive] do not only ensure the physical security of what is deposited and of the substrate. They are also accorded the hermeneutic right and competence. They have the power to interpret the archives."¹¹¹

Thus scholars including Jacques Derrida, Rebecca Schneider, José Muñoz, Kobena Mercer, Diana Taylor, and Barbara Kirschenblatt-Blimlett continue to challenge the hegemony of archivalism's domain over historical preservation, which includes performance preservation. With the exception of Derrida, these scholars have specifically focused on archivalism's claim of material remains as the sole means of retaining memory of performance, and significantly for us, through that focus have deconstructed archivalism's underlying assumption that performance is a continuous state of absence or dis-appearance.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 5.

¹¹⁰ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 19.

¹¹¹ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 2.

Performance as Absence / Performance Preservation in the Archive

Through my deconstruction of the terms “performance,” “original,” and “copy” as they apply to performance, I have shown that the assumption of an original performance that “disappears” leaves only motionless, photographic “copies” that the viewer witnesses, through the archival imperative, as material but impermeable. For the archive to maintain its status as preserver of historical performance, what is preserved of performance must be read as being resolutely archival, i.e. closed to present experience.

So I now pose the questions: what is the archive is preserving, how is it interpreting what it is preserving, and thus what does it allow to be seen in a photograph of Nijinsky in *Petruschka*? In the posing of these questions, I now continue to unpack the meaning of “ephemera” within archival philosophy.

The Ephemeral Object

The performance photographs of Nijinsky during his career acted as a current promise of what the viewer had the opportunity to witness sometime in the future. Nijinsky’s performative death, once that death became more and more irrefutable as years passed, instigated a new status for the photographs—within the archive. The photographs ostensibly became, not proof of Nijinsky’s living, moving body and its encounter with the viewer, but of a state of mourning for the dead, the stilled Nijinsky who would never again be encountered. Here I again offer the analogy of the archivally-contained Nijinsky performance photographs to the clothing of a dead, beloved relative, locked away and left hanging in the beloved’s closet. The mourning individual might unlock the closet in order to view the dead beloved’s clothing, but only within the painful

context of not seeing the body of the beloved wearing and moving in the clothing.¹¹²

Significantly, the archive provides the context for what is being viewed in the photograph, and effectively interprets the photograph for the viewer. As Schneider argues: “The paper, frame, and photo of the action all represent to the viewer that which the viewer missed – and which, standing before the document, you *witness yourself missing again* [author’s emphasis].”¹¹³

Sitting literally and metaphorically within the archive, when I view a photograph of Nijinsky as *Petruschka* it appears obvious what is missing from my experience: I am missing the experience of witnessing the past performance of Nijinsky as *Petruschka*, in which his body breathed and moved and existed in the present. I am simultaneously missing the past and any opportunity of experiencing the present. This negative notion of what Schneider calls the “missed event”¹¹⁴ dominating what I call the “photographic encounter” begs the question of what may *still remain* in the photograph of Nijinsky as *Petruschka*. As I sit in the viewing room of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the NYPL, if I view the meticulously matted and labeled photographs of Nijinsky through the assumption that I have missed the event, and am not seeing

¹¹² While there exists an overt difference between the mourner who views the clothing of their dead, beloved relative and the individual who views the Nijinsky performance photographs—the mourner possesses memory of when the dead beloved *wore* the clothing, and the individual who sees the Nijinsky photographs has no such memory of having seen Nijinsky dance—I posit that for the individual who sees the Nijinsky photographs with no memory of having seen him dance there exists an equal, or even *stronger* need to deny Nijinsky’s “performative death.” The salutary statement, “At least you/she/he/I have wonderful memories,” contrasts harshly to the state of having no memories at all. The following stanza from Alfred Lord Tennyson’s poem *In Memoriam* (1850): “I hold it true, whate’er befall/ I feel it, when I sorrow most/ ’Tis better to have loved and lost/ Than never to have loved at all,” points to the result of never having “loved at all,” that is, to have no memories of having loved, which is far less desirable than having loved, and having lost that love.

¹¹³ Schneider, “Solo Solo Solo,” 42. Schneider is referencing specifically a painting ‘enacted’ by composer Nam Jun Paik by using his head, hands, and his necktie, per the written instructions that comprised an entire musical score by La Monte Young. The performance of the painting cum musical score, titled, *Zen for Head*, took place in 1962, and the painting became a “preserved object in the museum in Wiesbaden.” While Schneider is making the point that *Zen for Head* reads as music, dance, and “preserved object,” her comment regarding the painting cum performance speaks directly to the Nijinsky photographs, in that the photographic image of Nijinsky in the aftermath of his performance-as-a-whole, and as preserved in the archive, also reads as “what the viewer missed.”

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

Nijinsky, I am then required to view the photograph of Nijinsky as Petrouschka only as representative, as fetish. Studying the social and cultural phenomenon of ephemera collection leads me further into an exploration of the archive's interpretation of the Nijinsky photographs as objects that are impermeable to present experience. From this exploration I am able to ask, and consequently begin to answer, the question of what the archive blocks me from seeing that is present and substantive in the Nijinsky performance photographs.

The website of The Ephemera Society of America, Inc. describes the mission of the society as being to:

cultivate and encourage interest in ephemera and the history identified with it; to further the understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of ephemera by people of all ages, backgrounds, and levels of interest; to promote the personal and institutional collection, preservation, exhibition, and research of ephemeral materials; [and] to serve as a link among collectors, dealers, institutions, and scholars.¹¹⁵

The confluence of performance-as-absence and photograph-as-dead-copy is provocatively reflected in the missing etymological foundation of ephemera assumed within this mission statement. “Ephemera,” from its Greek roots as that which is transient, fleeting, “lasting a day only,” is transformed into and read as the object—sustainable, concrete—that is “identified” with a certain time in history. The oxymoronic “ephemeral objects” of Nijinsky’s performance—photographs, programs, costumes—are collected, preserved, exhibited, researched, and coveted, as is the clothing of the dead, beloved relative. Thus the ephemeral performance object preserved in the archive “signifies an absent presence,”¹¹⁶ and not only an absent presence, but an absent

¹¹⁵ <http://www.ephemerasociety.org/about.html>. 1/6/2007

¹¹⁶ Michael Shanks, and Christopher Y. Tilley, *Re-Constructing Archaeology: Theory and Practice*, New Studies in

moving presence. Analyzed generally, as well as in reference to performance, this understanding of the archived, ephemeral object as both absent and present begins to make available a third way of viewing the archival directive, as opposed to either (1) a focus on the past's morbidity, in my words, its "dead bones," or (2) an attempt to "make the past live."¹¹⁷

Ephemeral Object as Fetish

This third way of conceiving the ephemeral object within the archive is as fetish. This analysis leads to the archival view of the Nijinsky performance photographs also as fetish, and consequently connects this view to an archival "denial of death," which Denby's 1943 essay, "Notes on Nijinsky Photographs," challenges.

Archeologist Michael Shanks, in advocating for an embodied, experiential approach to the past,¹¹⁸ names the "antiquarian's"¹¹⁹ passion for the ephemeral object as unequivocally fetishistic:

The antiquary collects the past, fixing on objects themselves, qualities and features, attractions and distinguishing marks. The figure of the antiquary is not a popular one in archaeology. Their concern is with objects stripped of their context, or at least those contexts which the archaeologist values—the object's place in the ground, its identity in situ. But there is also an unease about the

Archaeology (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 75.

¹¹⁷ Freshwater, "Allure," 737.

¹¹⁸ Michael Shanks, *Experiencing the Past: On the Character of Archaeology* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), 1.

¹¹⁹ Both the Webster dictionary's definition of the noun "antiquarian" and "antiquary" as "one who studies or collects antiquities," and the adjective "antiquarian" as, 1: "of or relating to antiquarians or antiquities," and 2: "dealing in old or rare books," provides a synonymous connection to the word "archivalism," with the exception, already discussed, that the definition of the word "archive" begins with the "place" where old and/or rare objects were housed.

antiquary's concern itself, that here is a passion a little too intimate with the past,
a fetishism.¹²⁰

The ephemeral object, read as having the power of fetish, is plasticized, put under wraps and glass, contained, framed, catalogued, that is made present, in that it is understood to be materially *there*. Although archivalism ostensibly bestows the highest type of value and regard upon the past, that is in the viewing and the possession of the ephemeral object, the only actual value of the past, particularly the ephemeral past, lies in that which can be contained—even though archivalism assumes that within performance no remains exist at all. Thus the ephemeral object is required to act within the archive as both fetish, and that which motivates the creation of fetish, the denial of the death of the object of real desire: “It [the archival object] becomes a substitute for a lost object: a temporary satiation of the quest for full identity and narcissistic unity.”¹²¹

As Shanks continues to deconstruct fetishism within the realm of the antiquarian and hence the archival, he introduces the relationship between the fetish and an institutional denial of death:

Fetishism: here is a desire to hold, look, touch; captivation by the consecrated object. The antiquary's vase is past frozen, a fixed moment. The wholeness of the past is lost in the melancholic holding of the vase; the past, longed for, is missing. The vase fills the gap. Touching, viewing what once was there, part of what is desired. But the fixation on the vase, the antiquary's contact, is the condition of

¹²⁰ Ibid., 99. While I am cognizant that Shanks' reference to archaeology's contextualized methodology is at odds with phenomenology's pre-reflexive encounter, I do pose a point of comparison between archaeology's (as defined by Shanks) acceptance of the “death of the past” in its pursuit of what “remains” in the present, and Denby's essay, “Notes on the Nijinsky Photographs,” in its acceptance of the “death” of Nijinsky's performance, in its pursuit of what remains of Nijinsky's performativity.

¹²¹ Freshwater, “Allure,” 738.

the past being absent. The vase commemorates the past which is missing, but denies this. The fetish object combines gratification and distress: being sometimes the presence, and sometimes the absence of that which is desired.¹²²

Archivalism's valuation of the ephemeral object thus denies the "past which is missing," even while seeming to "commemorate" it. Helen Freshwater admonishes, "When digging up the details of the past hidden in the archive, we must remember that we are dealing with the dead."¹²³ Freshwater's admonishment is directed toward the archive's inability to incorporate the original significance of the archival or ephemeral object within its preservation; she is emphasizing that the private documents once owned by persons now dead, private documents now under public scrutiny, make for extremely ambiguous interpretation. My interest in her admonishment, however, lies within its inadvertent reference to the archive's denial of death; within that context, the purpose of the archival/ephemeral object is to allow the archivist/mourner to insistently, ceaselessly deny that the past event or person is indeed past or dead, even while simultaneously clutching at the fetishized object, as Shanks writes, combining "gratification and distress: being sometimes the presence, and sometimes the absence of that which is desired."¹²⁴ Hence within the archive there can be no "remembering" that the past is dead, because its mortality has never been accepted. While the archive exerts control over what is archived and how the contents of the archive is interpreted, manifesting a "substantive role" in the "construction and realization of the state,"¹²⁵ this political/societal/cultural control results in a residual, psychologically salutary control—the control over death itself, control in the name of denial. The archivists and historians who seek to make the past alive within the "dusty,

¹²² Shanks, *Experiencing*, 99-100.

¹²³ Freshwater, "Allure," 738.

¹²⁴ Shanks, *Experiencing*, 100.

¹²⁵ Freshwater, "Allure," 733.

forbidding, textual corridors,”¹²⁶ out “making the past alive,” are merely denying its death. Thus the desire to research, obtain, possess, and preserve the ephemeral object in the archive “stands in” as fetish, for both the acceptance of the death of the past and the grieving for its loss.

The late dancer Arthur Pryor Dodge, whose collection of Nijinsky photographs, now housed in the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library, once comprised the largest private collection in the world, tirelessly visited “practically every newspaper office and photographer’s studio in Europe in order to acquire every available picture of the artist.”¹²⁷ Dodge’s ceaseless quest for the possession of Nijinsky photographs speaks directly to what Freshwater calls the “allure” of the archive, the quest for the “lost object.”¹²⁸ Within Derrida’s eponymous “archive fever,” however, and his deconstruction of archival allure through the methodology of Freudian analysis, I find covert reference to the archive’s obsession with death—the “archive fever”—that assumes, under camouflage of that obsession, a mournful, denial of death with its accompanying fetishization of the archival object:

It follows, certainly, that Freudian psychoanalysis proposes a new theory of the archive; it takes into account a topic and a death drive without which there would not in effect be any desire or any possibility for the archive. . . . There would be no archive desire without the radical finitude, without the possibility of a forgetfulness which does not limit itself to repression. . . . Listening to the French idiom, and in it the attribute *en mal de*, to be *en mal d’archive* can mean something else than to suffer from a sickness, from a trouble or from what the noun *mal* might name. It is to burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the

¹²⁶ Ibid., 734.

¹²⁷ Arthur Pryor Dodge, “On Nijinsky Photographs,” *The American Dancer* (1938): Editor’s Note, n.p.

¹²⁸ Freshwater, “Allure,” 745.

archive, even if there's too much of it, right where something in it anarchives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement.¹²⁹

In deconstructing the French word *mal*, or “illness,” to uncover the alternate definition of “fever,” Derrida links the archival obsession with death to the archival obsession with its denial. In fact, obsession with either death or its denial breeds the same activity: preoccupation with obtaining and possessing the ephemeral, archival, fetishized object, an object that “combines gratification and distress: being sometimes the presence, and sometimes the absence of that which is desired.”¹³⁰ For the mourner who is compelled to keep the dead beloved’s clothing folded away exactly as when the beloved were alive, the “folding away exactly” brings up the “sometimes presence” of the dead beloved just as the beloved’s “sometimes absence” threatens to overwhelm; hence both the mourner and the archivist “interminably” search for the archive or the dead beloved “right where it slips away.”¹³¹ Thus Arthur Pryor Dodge, in his interminable search for the Nijinsky he had never seen in motion, was compelled to search for, purchase, frame, and label, hundreds of Nijinsky photographs, in order to experience “sometimes the presence” before the “sometimes absence” of what he desired came upon him, and threatened Dodge’s acceptance that he would never see Nijinsky perform.

This refusal within the archive to accept death may be applied particularly to individual performances; archivalism’s assumption of performance as absence when applied to performance traditions, that is non-individualized performance, does not recognize body-to-body transmission as a form of preservation, and thereby dooms generational performance to dissipation outside of

¹²⁹ Derrida, *Archive*, 29, 19, 91.

¹³⁰ Shanks, *Experiencing*, 99-100.

¹³¹ Derrida, *Archive*, 91.

the archive's protective glass doors and the petrified ephemera contained within them. Without the context of archivalism, then, archival philosophy is wont to declare such performance traditions as constantly at death's door, dependent on the continuation of the performance tradition itself for its life, yet acknowledging no possibility of preservation within that performance itself.

If we regard the archive as Marvin Carlson does the theatrical space, as a “haunted house,”¹³² we might ask: “Who is haunting whom?” Arthur Pryor Dodge, as representative of the mournful, desiring archivist, appears to be the one who is haunting the empty, metaphorical stage upon which Nijinsky once danced, or rather haunting the liminal region that exists somewhere between the meticulous matting of the photograph of Nijinsky as Petruschka, and the photographic image itself, between the absence and the presence of Nijinsky. Yet is there another appearance of the photographic image of Nijinsky, an appearance that, in Schneider's words, is not “visible or ‘houseable’ within an archive,”¹³³ that is in fact held “captive”¹³⁴ by the archive, and through “occlusion and inclusion, scripts the disappearance of other modes of access”?¹³⁵ Does this new appearance of the photographic image of Nijinsky then require a sacrifice—the acceptance of Nijinsky's performative death—in order to see what remains vitally of his performance?

Under the “Photographs” sub-section of the Ephemera Society of America's website, the following is written: “We collect photographs for what they show, for the messages they convey, and for their artistry. . . . We prize their [celebrated photographers'] work alongside anonymous photographers who have all contributed to the evolution of this important form of

¹³² Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, 2.

¹³³ Schneider, “Performing Remains,” 8.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

communication.”¹³⁶ Yet what kind of “communication,” what manner of “message” is the ephemeral object, the photographic image, allowed to convey within its housing in the archive?

Within both the archival philosophy of performance-as-absence that in Schneider’s words “seems to refuse the archive its privileged ‘savable’ original,”¹³⁷ and a view of performance’s material remains as either un-traceable copy or non-indexical fetish, the “communication” and “message” of the performance photograph—within the archive—is one of negative experience, or as Schneider describes it, “the missed event.”¹³⁸ Thus I posit that the sight allowed of the Nijinsky performance photographs, within what Freshwater calls archive’s “interpretive violence,”¹³⁹ and Derrida describes poetically as “of everything that can happen to an ‘impression,’”¹⁴⁰ is severely constrained. Photographs as preserved in the archive are photographs that must be viewed non-phenomenologically, that is the photographs must be viewed through what Kobena Mercer terms an “ocular hegemony which assumes that the visual world can be rendered knowable before the omnipotent gaze of the eye and “I” of the Western cogito.”¹⁴¹ Thus the archive allows and values only a non-perceptual, non-experiential, non-present encounter with ephemera, within my study, the Nijinsky performance photographs.

A Nonarchival Theory of Ephemera

The distortion of the word “ephemera” thus extends to the distortion of performance documentation, those objects that, more than any other form of ephemera, threaten the archival imperative. José Muñoz argues for a definition of the “ephemeral” that embraces its transient, yet substantive nature, and within that argument, subverts the archive’s own subversion of the nature

¹³⁶ McKinstry, “Photographs.” <http://www.ephemerasociety.org/about.html>. 1/6/2007.

¹³⁷ Schneider, “Performing,” 9.

¹³⁸ Schneider, “Solo Solo Solo,” 42.

¹³⁹ Freshwater, “Allure,” 729.

¹⁴⁰ Derrida, *Archive*, 34.

¹⁴¹ Kobena Mercer, “To Bury the Disremembered Body,” in *New Histories*, edited by Lia Gangitano (Boston: The Institute of Contemporary Art, 1996), 165.

of the “ephemeral”: “Work that attempts to index the anecdotal, the performative, or what I am calling the ephemeral as proof is often undermined by the academy’s officiating structures.”¹⁴²

Muñoz provides a definition of “the ephemeral” that is consistent with an indexical conception of performance documentation or photography:

Ephemera . . . is linked to alternate modes of textuality and narrativity like memory and performance; it is all of those things that remain after a performance, a kind of evidence of what has transpired but certainly not the thing itself. It does not rest on epistemological foundations but is instead interested in following traces, glimmers, residue, and specks of things.¹⁴³

Contrast Muñoz's definition to Schneider’s assertion that “[a]ccording to the logic of the archive, performance is that which does not remain. Radically ‘in time,’ performance can not reside in the material traces and therefore it ‘disappears.’”¹⁴⁴ Schneider suggests that archivalism disavows the “material traces” of performance in photographs precisely because it construes photographs as being representational, not indexical.

Edwin Denby, in experientially encountering Nijinsky performance photographs, was required to accept the death of that performance in order to *see* what might remain and be retrieved of his performativity. Hence Denby’s discovery of Nijinsky’s *presence* in the photographs contradicts the underlying assumption of the very archive that preserved the photographs. Thus I look to the existence of Edwin Denby’s essay as a pivotal piece of writing regarding Nijinsky’s performance, both because it gleans tremendous detail and speculation of the performance from the author’s viewing of the performance photographs, but even more

¹⁴² José Muñoz, “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts,” *Women and Performance* 8, no. 2 (1996): 7.

¹⁴³ Schneider, “Performing Remains,” 10.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

significantly for my purposes, because of its status as a pivotal instance of phenomenological desire canceling out the archival directive.

Memories of Photographs: A Counter Argument

Before concluding this chapter, I will first briefly consider a topic that, although contributing greatly to research within the areas of performance and the reconstruction and documentation of performance, is tangential to the present project: a neurophysiological approach to the creation and re-creation of memory as it relates to my experience while viewing the Kaddar performance of the Faun.

The Neurophysiological/Neuropsychological Approach to Memory

The notion of new memory as a re-cycled and re-creation of old memory has been explored through both neurophysiological, as well as neuropsychological, disciplines. In his book *In Search of Memory*, Eric R. Kandel states that:

To be useful, a memory has to be recalled. Memory retrieval depends on the presence of appropriate cues that an animal can associate with its learning experience. The cues can be external, such as a sensory stimulus in habituation, sensitization, and classical conditioning, or internal, sparked by an idea or an urge. . . . The neurons that retrieve the memory of the stimulus are the same sensory and motor neurons that were activated in the first place.¹⁴⁵

The creation of new memories from the same neurons that stimulated an initial memory may thus be perceived by the individual as, in fact, a re-calling of a past memory. Researchers Buckner and Wheeler state: “Parietal and frontal regions might supply a signal that information

¹⁴⁵ Eric R. Kandel, *In Search of Memory: The Emergence of a New Science of the Mind* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), 215.

is old during the process of retrieval, allowing us to perceive that reconstructed representations are memories, rather than the products of new stimuli in the environment.”¹⁴⁶

Researchers Kandel, Buckner and Wheeler all describe a neurophysiological process in which the same neurons in the brain that had created—under the pressure of external and/or internal stimuli—a “memory” of something in the past create in the present moment what is in fact a new experience, but is nonetheless perceived by the individual as the recollection of the previously created memory. This neurophysiological description thus offers an explanation for how I was able to recall or identify traces of Nijinsky’s performativity when viewing the Yoav Kaddar performance of Nijinsky’s Faun, drawing on my previously created memory of viewing the Nijinsky performance photographs in the role of the Faun. Through a neurophysiological interpretation, then, though the experience of watching the Kaddar performance was new, I perceived the experience as a “recollection” of something I had experienced in the past.

Additionally, within the neurophysiological discipline, my experience may be explained as an act of literal, and continued, creation. As Kandel writes, “Recall of memory is a creative process. What the brain stores is thought to be only a core memory. Upon recall, this core memory is then elaborated upon and reconstructed, with subtractions, additions, elaborations, and distortions.”¹⁴⁷ These reconstructions, elaborations, and distortions of which my brain is capable also provides an explanation for my *belief* that I was recalling something of how Nijinsky moved, when in fact I had no memory of seeing Nijinsky dance.

Thus from a neurophysiological point of view, my experience in viewing the Kaddar performance in Nijinsky’s *Faune* may be explained quite neatly. The discrepancy between the

¹⁴⁶ Randy L. Buckner, and Mark E. Wheeler, "The Cognitive Neuroscience of Remembering." *MacMillan Magazines Ltd.* 2 (2001): 624.

¹⁴⁷ Kandel, *In Search of Memory*, 281.

above-mentioned theory and the thesis of this dissertation, however, lies within neurophysiology's very ability to *explain* my experience.

Explanation of my experience both assumes and requires a *distancing* from my experience, distancing that negates the pre-reflexive, phenomenological basis of my encounter with the Kaddar performance. Explanation of my experience, however, is not required for reflection upon my experience. Reflection is integral to my phenomenological methodology. Within the neurophysiological explanation of my experience lies a negation of the validity of my experience, a negation that is born within the necessity to explain why I believed I was experiencing traces of Nijinsky's performativity. Subsequently, the negation of my experience leads obviously to a rejection of the *knowledge* I obtained through that experience. The autonomy of subjective perception would be dismissed as naïve within a neurophysiological reading of my encounter with the Kaddar performance. Within a neurophysiological paradigm, perception and the belief that is its result are distortions produced by my brain's neurons. By contrast, a phenomenological analysis allows for an acknowledgement of the paradoxical reality of my *belief*, as experienced through the sensory modalities of my body. Merleau-Ponty writes of that paradox: "It is true that we carry with us, in the shape of our body, an ever-present principle of absent-mindedness and bewilderment. But our body has not the power to make us see what is not there; it can only make us believe that we see it."¹⁴⁸

Within these neurophysiological theories of memory, perception also assumes the binary opposition of the mind and the body, and even of logic and emotion. In fact, Kandel, in his discussion of the "creative process" of memory and recollection, completely ignores the body as

¹⁴⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 27.

well as the relationship between the viewer and the viewed—both of which are implicit within the embodied consciousness of the phenomenological encounter.¹⁴⁹

Conclusion

In this chapter I have created a theoretical template that will inform the analysis of photography throughout the remainder of this dissertation. The viewing of some photographs, specifically of some performance photographs, is a phenomenological encounter with the index of the originating subject. This indexical relationship between the photograph and its subject allows for a present, recurring experience of performative traces within an example of performance documentation. Moreover, the viewing is of a phenomenologically subjective nature, transcending the need for historical or cultural contexts. Additionally, ephemera is defined within this study as existing outside of archivalism's dual principles of performance-as-absence and performance documentation-as-fetish. Performance documentation, photographs and ephemera are understood within a nonarchivalistic paradigm as existing in a constant state of recurrence.

¹⁴⁹ In her article, "Re-Constructions: Figures of Thought and Figures of Dance," Jeschke references research regarding memory as it relates to movement, and kinaesthesia as it relates to the perception of one's movements as well as others' movements, conducted by Wolf Singer and Annette Hartmann, respectively. While both areas of research are of personal interest to me as they relate to my experience, as a dancer, in viewing the Kaddar performance, these neurophysiological approaches again prove counterproductive to the phenomenological methodology of my study, and its stated thesis. See Claudia Jeschke, "Re-Constructions: Figures of Thought and Figures of Dance," in *Knowledge in Motion*, edited by Pirkko Husemann Sabine Gehm, Katharina von Wilcke (New Brunswick: TanzScripte, 2007): 178-180. See also Wolf Singer, "Wolf Singer in Conversation with Dorothee Hannappel," *Theaterschrift* 8 (1994): 30. See also Annette Hartmann, "Mit dem Körper memorieren. Betrachtung des Körpergedächtnisses im Tanz aus neurowissenschaftlicher Sicht," in *Tanz im Kopf. Dance and Cognition*, edited by Johannes Birringer and Josephine Fenger (Munster: LIT, 2005): 197.

CHAPTER THREE

NEW PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE: NIJINSKY'S PERFORMANCE

Introduction

In May 1913, a French journalist named Emile Deflin arrived backstage at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées to interview Vaslav Nijinsky after a performance in his ballet, *Jeux*.¹ Allowed into Nijinsky's dressing room through his friendship with a man described by Deflin as the "most Parisian of Slavs," the journalist later wrote in an article for the satiric magazine *Gil Blas*:

In the dressing-room there is a faint smell of scent, but it is very simple without a hint of luxury. None of the innumerable photographs of the dancer are to be seen—only a few designs by Bakst and some sketches of Rodin. There are no flowers; the wreaths are all in the wardrobe. Sunk in an old divan whose springs have given way, Nijinsky is sponging himself. His white flannel shirt is open to the waist, his tennis belt, undone, is hanging loose. Huge drops of sweat outline the slanting ridges of his cheek-bones.²

In 1943, thirty years after Deflin wrote of his meeting with Nijinsky, Edwin Denby (1903-1983), one of the twentieth century's major American dance critics, penned his famous essay "Notes on Nijinsky Photographs" for initial publication in the magazine *Dance Index*. Never having seen Nijinsky dance, Denby began his essay thus:

¹ Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 289.

² Qtd. in Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 289-290. See also Deflin, Emile, "Nijinsky Au Repos," *Gil Blas*, 1913.

LOOKING at the photographs of Nijinsky, one is struck by his expressive neck. It is an unusually thick and long neck. But its expressivity lies in its clear lift from the trunk, like a powerful thrust. The shoulders are not square, but slope downward; and so they leave the neck easily free, and the eye follows their silhouette down the arms with the sense of a line extraordinarily extended into space, as in a picture by Cézanne or Raphael. The head therefore, at the other end of this unusual extension, poised up in the air, gains an astonishing distinctness, and the tilt of it, even with no muscular accentuation, becomes of unusual interest.³

It is possible to compare these two pieces of writing in a variety of ways, but I choose to focus on two points: (1) the way in which photographs of Nijinsky are employed by each writer and, (2) the presence or absence of the moving body of Nijinsky as the determinant within the use of the photographs.

Both Emile Deflin's description of Nijinsky's dressing-room, and his accompanying observation that "[n]one of the innumerable photographs of the dancer are to be seen," imply that photographs of Nijinsky are in fact "innumerable" and ubiquitous. While the references the photographs are negative, that is they refer to the photographs' absence, the journalist could certainly have gone on to address not only their quantity but their content. I now posit an ostensibly simplistic question, yet one whose answer has far-reaching repercussions within my analysis of the photographs of Nijinsky: why did Emile Deflin spend only two words commenting on the photographs of Nijinsky, "innumerable" and ubiquitous as they were? The obvious answer is that not only did Deflin have the "real thing" in front of him but prior to the

³ Rptd. from Magriel, *Nijinsky*, 15.

interview he had viewed the “real thing” in performance on stage.⁴ He had access to the living, moving body, presence, and person of Nijinsky, and so had no need of photographs, and hardly any need to mention them, except to provide his readers with what was intended to be an interesting bit of trivia—that it was significant to the great star’s lack of ego that Nijinsky did not indulge in displaying photographs of himself in his dressing-room, while many celebrated artists, Deflin inferred, did. Thus thoughts of Nijinsky’s photographs are brushed aside as both the journalist and reader move eagerly forward in anticipation of an encounter with Nijinsky himself, an encounter that was contingent upon the acknowledged phenomenological power of Nijinsky on stage.

In Deflin’s magazine article, Nijinsky’s bodily presence was given no more weight and no more words than a description of his dressing-room walls and the flowers presented to him after his performances, but this literary brevity was not due to a lack of awareness of the stature of the man who, seated on the “old divan,” quietly removed perspiration and makeup.⁵ Just as Deflin’s dismissal of the “innumerable” Nijinsky photographs was contingent upon of the living presence, and living performance, of Nijinsky, his spare description of the dancer—“Huge drops of sweat outline the slanting ridges of his cheek-bones”⁶—was contingent upon the same situation: that on May 20, 1913, Nijinsky in his person and in his performance, was simply *there*. Photographs of Nijinsky were rendered redundant and unnecessary in the literal and performative face of the dancer’s presence. Equally unnecessary was the kind of evocative detail that would be

⁴ Qtd. in Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 289. Although Deflin does not mention Nijinsky’s performance in *Jeux* specifically, it seems unlikely that he would have pursued a post-performance interview with Nijinsky in which he intended to discuss the ballet and its reception without having seen the ballet performance itself. His mention of the “tennis belt” also is a strong indication that Deflin had seen the performance. It is unlikely that the article of clothing itself, seen in photographs of Nijinsky as a un-specific-looking belt, would have been read as a “tennis belt” without Deflin’s experience of seeing *Jeux* with its literal and metaphorical use of individuals playing a game of tennis.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 289. Deflin writes cheekily that “I had to use a bit of cunning in order to get into the Faun’s cage,” and goes on to describe his Russian-speaking friend’s crucial influence in causing the dressing room door to “gape wide.”

⁶ *Ibid.*, 290.

presented by Edwin Denby to the reader in 1943 who had, along with the author, already acknowledged the impossibility of ever seeing Nijinsky dance.

The majority of the Nijinsky photographs were created both to affirm what was already known by those who had witnessed Nijinsky's performance on stage—in other words the reality of the magnificence of his performance—and to publicize to those who had not viewed him what was possible for them to see, in other words the possibility of experiencing Nijinsky dancing on stage. In May 1913, the reader knew as she or he read the article in *Gil Blas* that Vaslav Nijinsky was *there*, and specifically *there* in Paris. While the fact of Nijinsky's existence is inherent in both the context and content of Deflin's article, so is the possibility that the reader might have purchased a ticket and seen him dance in *Jeux* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. Even if the reader could not afford to purchase such a ticket, even if the reader lived in a town to which the Ballets Russes would never travel, the incontrovertible fact remained that in May 1913 Nijinsky existed, and, equally significant, existed as a performer. Thus the fact of both Nijinsky's continuing state of existence and the intermittent, but absolutely crucial, existence of his body dancing on the stage allowed Emile Deflin to take brief note of the innumerability of Nijinsky photographs available to Parisians, and continue on to the living, moving body of Nijinsky that sat before him, embracing the memory of Nijinsky's moving body on stage minutes before.

As I discussed previously, however, in 1943 Edwin Denby was forced to rely solely on the photographs of Nijinsky in order to write about Nijinsky-as-performer. To be more specific, in order to write about Nijinsky from his own experience of Nijinsky, to write “originally” of Nijinsky rather than to describe the reactions of others to Nijinsky's performance, Denby was forced to rely solely upon photographs. Thus for Denby, the experience of Nijinsky in performance was replaced by an experience with the performance photographs of Nijinsky.

When Denby wrote his essay in 1943, Nijinsky was still alive but had not performed since 1919. Again, Edwin Denby had no possibility of viewing Nijinsky—who in 1943 was fifty-three years of age and relieved only slightly from his chronic mental illness—in performance. Nijinsky would continue to exist as a person, although in a constrained state, for another seven years, but his existence as a dancer on the stage had discontinued absolutely twenty-four years earlier. His dancer's existence had, arguably, suffered from mortification.

Derived from his poet's sensibility, Edwin Denby's prose style is marked by extraordinarily rich detail that encompasses both the analytic and the phenomenological. In his essay on Nijinsky's photographs, he composed his most brilliant, phenomenologically-propelled prose:

[T]here is no exhibitionism in Nijinsky's photographs. He is never showing you himself, or an interpretation of himself. He is never vain of what he is showing you. The audience does not see him as a professional dancer, or as a professional charmer. He disappears completely, and instead there is an imaginary being in his place. Like a classic artist, he remains detached, unseen, unmoved, disinterested. Looking at him, one is in an imaginary world, entire and very clear; and one's emotions are not directed at their material objects, but at their imaginary satisfactions. As he said himself, he danced with love.⁷

It seems clear, however, that if Denby had been able to view Nijinsky dancing on stage, he would not have focused all his immense literary talents on photographs of the dancer, however innumerable, and however provocative. Denby composed his famous, phenomenologically speculative ruminations upon the photographs of Nijinsky because the

⁷ Denby, "Notes," 20.

absence of Nijinsky's moving body forced him to do so. Thus the Nijinsky photographs presented themselves as the only means to experience something of Nijinsky's presence.

The difference between these two pieces of writing about Nijinsky, namely that one was written during the time Nijinsky was performing and one written at the time when Nijinsky would never perform again, may seem strikingly obvious. Deflin and Denby's texts would seem then to exist within a binary opposition of presence and absence. Denby, however, while certainly acknowledging the absence of Nijinsky's moving body, does not repudiate the existence of his presence in the photographs. Though he does not directly address this issue, Denby in fact relies upon this presence to hypothesize so fluently and with such conviction upon Nijinsky's performance.⁸

In the previous chapter, I argued for a theoretical template whose foundation is photographic realism, but a realism that integrates both the phenomenological valuation of performance photographs and the indexical relationship between the photographic image and its originating subject. This conception of photography is available only outside of the archive's notion of performance documentation and preservation. The theoretical template provides a means of acknowledging this researcher's, as well as Denby's, encounters with Nijinsky performance photographs.

In this chapter I initially provide an overview of the photographs and photographers of Nijinsky during his career with the Ballets Russes. In this study I am focusing my analyses on the photographs of Nijinsky that were taken from the years 1909–1917, that is, the years when he first appeared with the Ballets Russes in its first Paris season until his last performance during

⁸ I will argue that even what may seem to be an analytical approach and evaluation of the Nijinsky photographs that runs through Denby and other scholars' criticism are still phenomenological in that the writers' analyses of Nijinsky's anatomical and physiological features derive from their encounter with the photographs and from what Barthes terms in *Camera Lucida* the "absolute subjectivity" that emerges from their encounters and is reflected in their writings. See Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 55.

the Ballets Russes' second South American tour. I define this period of time as Nijinsky's "performance career." More specifically, within that seven-year time period, I have focused on photographs of Nijinsky in his performance as the Faun in his own ballet, *Faune*. I follow this overview with an analysis of the contemporary purposes of Nijinsky performance photographs.

Most significantly, I will explore Nijinsky's performative presence as it relates historically to the Nijinsky performance photographs. I argue that when in costume and makeup for a role and in the act of being photographed outside of a formal performance, Nijinsky experienced being "in performance," that is he experienced the act of being photographed as an act of performance.

Photographs of Nijinsky: An Overview

Through the twentieth and now twenty-first centuries, the "innumerable" photographs of Vaslav Nijinsky to which Emile Deflin referred have not merely endured, but have been and continue to be reverently preserved and exhibited. In 1937, thirteen years prior to Nijinsky's death, former Metropolitan Opera Ballet dancer Roger Pryor Dodge bequeathed his entire lifetime collection of original Nijinsky photographs to what was then called the Dance Collection of the New York Public Library, Lincoln Center,⁹ later renamed the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. The Roger Pryor Dodge Collection is made up of over five hundred photographs, drawings, and sketches of Vaslav Nijinsky, and constitutes the largest collection of Nijinsky photographs and renderings in the world. The Lincoln Kirstein Dance Collection donated by Kirstein in 1974 to the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts (now the Jerome Robbins Dance Division) also contains a large number of Nijinsky photographs. Additionally, the Jerome Robbins Dance Division owns the Howard P. Rothschild Collection of the Russian Ballets of Serge Diaghilev, which contains

⁹ Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*, 13.

numerous Nijinsky photographs. The Jerome Robbins Dance Division also owns smaller donated collections, including a dozen or more ostensibly informal photographs of Nijinsky as the Faun taken by dance critic and photographer Carl Van Vechten,¹⁰ and four photographs of Nijinsky in *Till Eulenspiegel* donated from the personal collection of Douglas Blair Turnbaugh.¹¹ Houghton Library within the Harvard College Library owns three “Scrapbooks Concerning Serge Diaghilev’s Ballet Russes” compiled and donated by Constance Gladys, the Marchioness of Ripon, which contain over forty Nijinsky photographs.¹² A small collection of Nijinsky photographs is owned by the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, as well as the National Endowment for the Arts Millennium Project.¹³ The Musée D’Orsay in Paris owns twelve photographs by the Baron Adolph de Meyer of Nijinsky as the Faune in *L’Après-Midi d’un Faune* as part of its permanent collection on the dancer.¹⁴ Eight photographs by Karl Struss of Nijinsky in *Faune* were rediscovered in 1976, four owned by Susan and John Harvith, and four by the Amon Carter Museum.¹⁵ The Bibliothèque Nationale de France has an unspecified number of Nijinsky photographs.¹⁶ John Neumeier, Artistic Director of the Hamburg Ballet, currently owns one of the largest private collections of Nijinsky photographs and memorabilia. The Nijinsky Foundation, whose director, Kinga Nijinsky Gaspers (Nijinsky’s granddaughter),

¹⁰ Carl Van Vechten, “Afternoon of a faun (Nijinsky) / Twelve photographs by Carl Van Vechten,” New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, [Photographs: informal shots] Catalogued as MGZEB 85-1073 Series A/MGZEA. No year is provided for the photographs.

¹¹ New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. The referenced photographs were owned by Turnbaugh, producer of the 2005 documentary, *Ballets Russes*, are credited to White Studio of New York City and were taken to publicize the world premiere of Nijinsky’s ballet in 1916.

¹² Harvard University Library, “Scrapbooks Concerning Serge Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes,” donated by Constance Gladys, Marchioness of Ripon (1859-1917).

¹³ Uncredited, Photographic reproduction of image printed in the New York World, October 29, 1916; appeared

¹⁴ Joelle Bolloch, e-mail message to author, June 12, 2006. From Oct. 24, 2000-Feb. 18, 2001, the Musée d’Orsay, in conjunction with the Stockholm Dansmuseet with the exceptional participation of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and of John Neumeier, director, Hamburg Ballet, presented an exhibition of Nijinsky’s life and career.

¹⁵ Acocella, Joan Ross, “Photo Call with Nijinsky: The Circle and the Center,” *Ballet Review* 14, no. 4 (1987): 70.

¹⁶ New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, Box 4 Accession number 89-90. Five photographs of Nijinsky and Karsavina. n.d. Listed as reproductions of photos in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

owns an unspecified number of Nijinsky photographs, which include Nijinsky performance photographs.¹⁷ Reprints of newspaper photographs of Nijinsky exist, but the existence of the original photographs is difficult to confirm.¹⁸ My research on the location of extant Nijinsky photographs has been extensive but not exhaustive.

What follows is a list the roles in which Nijinsky was photographed during his career with the Ballets Russes, ordered chronologically as he performed them in Paris, with the exception of his last role, which he performed only in the United States. Roles Nijinsky performed in the first two weeks of the 1909 Paris season include the turbaned and satin-draped Favorite Slave in *Armide*, and two roles in *Le Festin*, the black-haired, wild-eyed Captain of the Lezgins,¹⁹ and the ambiguous role of Bluebird/Prince in “L’Oiseau de Feu,” which was Petipa’s famous Bluebird Pas de Deux from *The Sleeping Beauty* as renamed by Diaghilev,²⁰ followed, in the second part of that season, by the Chopin-like, romantic Poet in *Les Sylphides*; in the 1910 season, the irresistibly amoral Harlequin in *Carnaval*,²¹ the indigo-colored, erotically-charged Golden Slave in *Schéhérazade*, and again, in *Les Orientales*, two roles, the bejeweled Temple Dancer in the “Danse Siamoise” variation, and a faceless “goblin” in the “Kobold” variation; in

¹⁷ While Ms. Gaspers did return my email letter, and provided me with a valuable contact in the person of Professor Yunyu Wang, she declined to respond to my query about the number and content of photographs she and her mother, Nijinsky’s daughter Kyra, owned. See Ms. Kinga Nijinsky Gaspers, e-mail message to author, Nov. 6, 2006.

¹⁸ Examples of the circuitous tracings of newspaper photographs of Nijinsky follows: In the NYPL exhibition, a “copy photograph” of a group shot of the Ballets Russes during its 1916 American tour that includes Nijinsky, derives from a newspaper clipping, *The New York World*. A group photograph of the Ballets Russes in Denver, Colorado in 1916, a gift of Lincoln Kirstein, is credited to the Mile High Photo Company. In the NYPL Catalogue, a photograph of Nijinsky and his wife Romola “on board ship . . . upon arrival in America with Ballets Russes” (1916, Cat.Item #2149) is listed as part of the Roger Pryor Dodge Collection, and credited to the Bain News Service. In 1948 the Library of Congress purchased the photographic files of the Bain News Service, one of America’s earliest news picture agencies, eleven years after Dodge donated his collection to the NYPL of Performing Arts. Cat.Item #4 in the NYPL Catalogue is titled “Nijinsky, Vaslav/Photographic Reproduction of newspaper photograph by White Studio” and again is part of the Roger Pryor Dodge Collection.

¹⁹ Parker, *Nijinsky*, 60.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 59. The role was confused and confused largely due to Bakst’s costume design for Nijinsky. In Petipa’s original conception and choreography, the male role in the Bluebird Pas de Deux is in fact that of the Bluebird, but Bakst costumed Nijinsky as a turbaned Prince. There has been confusion over this role in the West ever since.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 77. In Paris, Nijinsky was initially cast in the role of Papillon in *Carnival*. However, he made the role of Harlequin completely his own, and was only photographed in that role.

the 1911 Paris season, the marble-skinned, blonde-wigged Narcissus in *Narcisse*, the anguished, enslaved puppet in *Petruschka*, the blue-painted god Krishna in *Le Dieu Bleu*, the meltingly androgynous Spirit of the Rose in *Spectre*, and the faithless, redeemed Prince Albrecht in *Giselle*; in the 1912 Paris season, the almond-eyed, sexually emerging Faun in *Faune*; in the summer of 1913, the expressionless, sexually sparring “tennis player” in *Jeux*; and in 1916, Nijinsky’s last newly created role, the manic, mythological Till in *Till Eulenspiegel*. My research indicates that there are no extant photographs of Nijinsky either in *Cleopatra*²², or *Daphnis and Chloe*.

The majority of the Nijinsky photographs are full-body photographs of the dancer alone, in full costume and makeup—and posed. These poses may or may not reflect the choreography for the role in which Nijinsky is being photographed; I concur with Gesmer in his article, “Re-visioning Vaslav,” that the photographed poses often seem to “convey drama more than anything else,”²³ that is they do not necessarily reflect the particular ballet’s choreographic technique or dictates. In a significant handful of cases, Nijinsky seems to have been moving his body rather than posing it when the photograph was taken. I will discuss the significance of these “moving” photographs later in this chapter. A lesser number of photographs of Nijinsky, again in full costume and makeup, were shot as portraits, either headshots, or head and shoulder shots. In relatively few images he was photographed partnering a female dancer, for example Anna Pavlova in *Le Pavillon d’Armide*, his most frequent partner Tamara Karsavina in *Giselle*, *Spectre*, and *Schéhéhrazade*, Lydia Lopukhova in *Carnaval*, Lydia Nelidova, and later Flora

²² New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, Box 4 Accession number 89-90.111.RP283.01-.02. Photographs (2) are listed as follows: Waslaw Nijinsky in *Cleopatra* (?) Photographer: Hoppe, E.O. Without actual viewing the photograph, I cannot make a determination as to whether or not the photographs are of Nijinsky.

²³ Gesmer, Daniel, “Re-Visioning Nijinsky,” *Ballet Review* 28, no. 1 (2000): 83. However, I disagree with his next statement, that Nijinsky’s poses were “statically held.”

Revalles, in *Faune*, and Ludmilla Schollar (as well as Karsavina) in *Jeux*.²⁴ There exist only a handful of true performance photographs of Nijinsky, that is photographs taken on stage during an actual performance, including three or four photographs of Nijinsky and other dancers in a 1911 performance of *Petruschka*, and two photographs of Nijinsky and Karsavina in a 1911 performance of *Spectre*. Very few photographs of Nijinsky in rehearsal, either posed or unposed, exist.²⁵ A number of photographs exist of Nijinsky in street clothes, posed and informal, alone and in a group.

Rumors continue to abound about the possible existence of motion picture footage of Nijinsky dancing. Chat rooms within dance and ballet websites continue to engage in discussions both about whether or not footage of Nijinsky dancing exists, and whether it ever did exist.²⁶ However, there is no verified film of Vaslav Nijinsky dancing.

Late in 1916, Nijinsky, his wife, and the Ballets Russes under his direction, visited Charlie Chaplin in Hollywood. Nijinsky had admired Chaplin's work in the past, and Chaplin in turn felt great admiration for, and empathy with, Nijinsky. While it would appear to have been natural for Chaplin to have filmed or at least to have offered to film Nijinsky dancing, Chaplin was so disconcerted by the dancer's increasing depression and lethargy on the film set that in fact

²⁴ While Nijinsky was photographed together with his sister Bronislava Nijinska in the de Meyer sessions, with Nijinska in the role of the Chief Nymph, she never performed that role with him on the stage.

²⁵ The only known photograph of Nijinsky in rehearsal is in fact of Nijinsky rehearsing the cast of *Faune* in Berlin in 1912. See Néagu, *Afternoon of a Faun*, 53, photograph reproduced from *The Tatler* (London). The second photograph is an obviously posed shot of Nijinsky in rehearsal clothes shot in New York in 1916. See Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*, 157. The third is another obviously posed shot of Nijinsky dressed in "practice clothes," during the time he was a student at the Imperial Ballet School in 1907. See Krasovskaya, *Nijinsky*, 60.

²⁶ In an online, archived *New Yorker* article entitled, "The Faun," Joan Acocella references the rumor that there is presently youtube footage of Nijinsky dancing, among other roles, the Faun. However, she verifies, as do I, that it is the computer-generated work of Christian Comte, who is featured in the film *Revoir Nijinsky Danser*, dir. Nisic (Artline Films, 2000). See Acocella, Joan Ross, "The Faun," *New Yorker* (2009). http://www.newyorker.com/talk/2009/06/29/090629ta_talk_acocella. See Nisic, Herve. "Revoir Nijinsky Danser." France, 2000. In Ostwald's 1991 Nijinsky biography he references footage of Nijinsky that had been produced when the dancer and Diaghilev were in Germany in 1912 and goes on to state, "It [the footage] was recently televised in the Soviet Union." The source is cited as "personal communication" with filmmaker Georgii Vlasenko, who claims that the film shows Nijinsky dancing the Faun. See Ostwald, *Nijinsky*, 139, 151 (fn. 39).

the film star had the film removed from the cameras shooting Chaplin's movie because the silent film star tried so hard to illicit any kind of response from Nijinsky that he felt his comic performance had been ruined.²⁷ Clearly, although Nijinsky would perform for another year, the dancer was suffering from such a severe depression at the time of his Hollywood visit that he was unable to perform for the camera. Moreover, earlier in his career with the Ballets Russes, when Nijinsky was mentally stable and physically vital, Diaghilev would not have allowed Nijinsky to have been filmed dancing in any of his roles. Diaghilev objected to the idea of dancers being filmed silently, without music.²⁸ Whether or not Diaghilev's refusal to allow his dancers to be filmed dissuaded Nijinsky from being filmed is moot: the scholarly assumption continues to be that there is no film footage of Nijinsky dancing in existence.

Photographers of Nijinsky

In his meticulously researched 1985 article "Nijinsky Photographs and Photographers," Canadian journalist and author John Fraser (1944–) sought to point out and correct inaccuracies regarding photographic credits in two major, illustrated works: Paul Magriel's *Nijinsky*,²⁹ and Lincoln Kirstein's *Nijinsky Dancing*.³⁰ In correcting authors' errors in the listing of dates of photographs and photographers' credits, Fraser also provides a definitive recounting of the photographers who received credit for photographing Nijinsky, as well as some of the events leading up to the taking of the photographs themselves, and information on the purpose and use of specific photographs. An overview of these photographers and major categorizations of their photographs follows. I discuss the circumstances surrounding some of the photographic sessions, and the purposes and uses of specific photographs, later in this chapter.

²⁷ Ostwald, *Nijinsky*, 147-148.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 139.

²⁹ Paul Magriel, *Nijinsky* (London: A. & C. Black, 1946).

³⁰ Lincoln Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing* (New York: Knopf, 1975).

As previously stated, for this study I define “performance photograph” or “performance shot” as photographs of Nijinsky that, while almost never shot of Nijinsky in actual performance, and infrequently of Nijinsky moving freely, are photographs of Nijinsky posed as a character in a specific role. I am including “head” or “chest” shots of Nijinsky in my definition of “performance photographs” if Nijinsky was wearing the full costume and makeup of a specific role in that photograph.

The first photographer credited with performance shots of Nijinsky was St. Petersburg photographer K.A. Fischer.³¹ In late 1907, Nijinsky, acknowledged as a dance prodigy upon his graduation from the Imperial School and his celebrated graduation performance earlier that April, had already been hired by the Mariinsky Theatre at the level of *coryphée*, a significant step above the *corp de ballet* where graduates normally begin their careers.³² From among these new roles, Fisher took a photograph of Nijinsky as the Mulatto in *Le Roi Candaule*. Two years later in 1908, as Serge Diaghilev’s fledgling Ballets Russes poised for its first season in Paris, French impresario Gabriel Astruc begged for photographs of the company’s stars to use in a pre-production publicity campaign; Diaghilev sent Astruc “picture postcards” of the dancers sold by the Mariinsky Theatre, including one of Nijinsky in the ballet, *Don Giovanni*. Thus, the first photograph of Nijinsky in print in Paris was of the dancer performing in Russia.³³

However, two photographers, Auguste Bert and the Baron Adolph de Meyer, French and American respectively,³⁴ each with distinguished artistic careers, would achieve particular celebrity in the dance world for their photographic series of the astonishingly vital, chameleon-like Nijinsky. Additionally, in 1909, French photographer Charles Gerschel, already a respected

³¹ Fraser, John, "Nijinsky Photographs and Photographers." *Dance Chronicle* 7, no. 4 (1985): 439.

³² Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 41.

³³ Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*, 57.

³⁴ De Meyer was German-born and kept a studio in London.

and well-honored photographer,³⁵ took part in dance history when he took arguably the first performance photographs of Nijinsky in Paris, in his role of The Golden Slave in the ballet, *L’Pavillon d’Armide (Armide)*.³⁶

The argument that these were the first performance photographs of Nijinsky in Paris is a good one. May 19, 1909 was the date of opening night of the Ballets Russes, which clearly included Nijinsky’s performance in *Armide* that had so stunned the opening night audience; a photograph of Nijinsky in that role provided the May 22 cover of the Parisian magazine *L’Illustration*, under which as Fraser points out in his article, reads the by-line, “Phot. Ch. Gerschel, prise spécialement pour *L’Illustration*.”³⁷

The Ballets Russes’ 1909 Paris season included *Armide*, *Le Festin*, *Les Sylphides*, and *Cléopâtre*. The company’s second and third Paris seasons (1910 and 1911) showcased Nijinsky in all three of what would overnight become and remain arguably his three most famous roles: the Favorite Slave in *Schéhérazade*, the puppet Petruschka in *Petruschka* with its new score commissioned by Igor Stravinsky, and the Spirit of the Rose in *Spectre*.

In this second season, French photographer Auguste Bert³⁸ took the first and probably the most famous photograph of Nijinsky in *Schéhérazade*, as well as notable photographic studies of Nijinsky in *Petruschka* and *Spectre*, roles he danced in the third season. While not the only photographer who would shoot Nijinsky in these roles, Bert’s photographic studies of Nijinsky in

³⁵ Fraser, “Photographs,” 472. Gerschel held the posts of Officier de l’Académie, Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur, Chevalier de Mérite Agricole, and an “hors concours” member of the jury at the Franco-British Exhibition in London in 1908, and won a prize at the Brussels Exhibition of 1910.

³⁶ Gerschel’s photographs of Nijinsky figure prominently in my research and claim that Nijinsky experienced being photographed as being “in performance.”

³⁷ Fraser, “Photographs,” 439-440. As Fraser points out, another photograph by Gerschel of Nijinsky in *Armide*, performing an allegro jump, *entrechat*, was placed inside the same issue of the magazine.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 472. Before photographing Nijinsky, Bert, like Gerschel, was a well-lauded photographer and businessman. He was an Officier de l’Instruction Publique, Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur, Chevalier de Mérite Agricole, and an “hors concours” member of the jury at the Paris exhibition in 1900, St. Louis in 1904, and Liège in 1905; and won prizes at the exhibitions of Milan in 1906, London in 1908, Quito in 1909, and Brussels in 1910.

this performance triumverate, carefully composed, softly lit, and informed by the dancer's captivatingly unguarded face and form, were the first to present the tremendous disparity in appearance and sensibility of Nijinsky's body: a provocative, sexually mature man in *Schéhérazade* [fig. 1] whose hands, feet, head and chest seem massive in size and strength,³⁹ a dwarfish puppet in *Petruschka* [fig. 2] whose uncoordinated frame shrinks inside its loose, puppet's costume, and in *Spectre* [fig. 3], an androgynous if not entirely inhuman entity whose small, delicate hands and arms frame a face equally small and flower-like. The extraordinary physical and psychological disparity found in the photographic images of Nijinsky from *Schéhérazade*, *Petruschka* and *Spectre* confirm the experience of individuals such as American critic Carl Van Vechten who saw Nijinsky dance numerous times, and wrote of his performances, "On the stage Nijinsky makes of himself what he will, appearing either "tall or short, magnificent or ugly, fascinating or repulsive."⁴⁰

Bert was also involved in the recording of a costume design that, through Nijinsky's failure to wear it on the Mariinsky stage, triggered a situation that would cause the star to dance the remainder of his career outside of Russia. In St. Petersburg in February of 1911, before the upcoming third Ballets Russes season in Paris, Nijinsky instigated his dismissal from the Russian Imperial Theatre by deciding to eschew the "modesty skirt" in his costume for Prince Albrecht in the traditional, romantic ballet, *Giselle*. Back in Paris, after being dismissed by the Mariinsky Theatre, Nijinsky was photographed by Bert wearing the Mariinsky-approved costume.⁴¹ British audiences saw Nijinsky dance for the first time when the Ballets Russes traveled to London in June of 1911. Fraser has correctly attributed photographs of Nijinsky in his title role as

³⁹ Qtd. in Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 141. Michael Fokine, the ballet's choreographer wrote the following: "He [Nijinsky] resembled a primitive savage, not by the colour of his body make-up, but by his movements."

⁴⁰ Qtd., in Magriel, *Nijinsky*, "The Russian Ballet and Nijinsky," 9.

⁴¹ Fraser, "Photographs," 441.



Figure 1. Nijinsky as The Golden Slave in *Schéhérazade* (1912). Photograph by Bert. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Reprinted in Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*.



Figure 2. Nijinsky as Petruschka in *Petruschka* (1910).
Photograph by Bert. New York Public Library for the
Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.
Reprinted in Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*.



Figure 3. Nijinsky as The Spirit of the Rose in *Spectre de la Rose* (1910).
Photograph by Bert. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts,
Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Reprinted in Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*.

Petruschka to an unnamed photographer working for London's Dover Street Studios.⁴² In addition, photographer Otto Émile Hoppé, working out of London, took a small number of unusually meta-theatrical portraits of Nijinsky in *Spectre*, clearly revealing his heavy stage make-up.⁴³

It was also in London in June 1910 that British photographer Baron Adolph De Meyer took his first photographs of Nijinsky in his roles in the ballets *Armide*, *Carnaval*, *Schéhérazade*, and *Spectre*. Unlike Bert's portrait-like studies of the Ballet Russes star, these photographs of Nijinsky both as Harlequin in *Carnaval* and The Favorite Slave in *Schéhérazade* reflect an attempt by De Meyer to capture the sense of Nijinsky's body in motion. Thus, within De Meyer's photographic series from each ballet, *Carnaval* and *Schéhérazade*, it is possible to intelligently speculate as to the actual movements Nijinsky was engaged in while being photographed through studying not only the relationship of Nijinsky's body to the background from photograph to photograph, but of the position of Nijinsky's body from photograph to photograph against the same background.

Other photographers who are credited with taking photographs of Nijinsky during the years 1909-1913 were Stanislaus Waléry of Paris and Rudolph Balogh (1879-1944) of Hungary. Waléry is credited with taking photographs of Nijinsky in *Faune* and *Daphnis et Chloé* during the 1912 Paris season. Balogh is credited with perhaps the only extant photograph of Nijinsky in the title role in *Narcisse*, taken during the company's performances in Budapest in January 1913.⁴⁴

⁴² Fraser, "Photographs," 455.

⁴³ Ibid., 455. Fraser indicates that one of these "meta-theatrical" studies of Nijinsky in *Spectre* appeared in the March 15, 1914 issue of *The Sketch*.

⁴⁴ Fraser, "Photographs," 463.

Photographs of *Faune*

Adolph De Meyer

The 1912 De Meyer sessions of Nijinsky and the cast of *Faune* produced perhaps the most famous series of Nijinsky performance photographs in existence, a series that is acknowledged generally as one of the first photographic studies that included the shooting of at least part of an actual theatrical or dance performance within a controlled studio setting.⁴⁵ In the previous chapter, I argued that the fact that Nijinsky himself commissioned the publication of the De Meyer photographs confirms his creative control over *Faune*.⁴⁶ De Meyer's influence on the actual photographic session, however, cannot be definitively measured. In "Nijinsky and De Meyer," one of few articles focusing solely on the De Meyer photographic session with Nijinsky and the cast of *Faune*, Philippe Néagu credits De Meyer with at least some of the decision-making authority over the photo session. In speaking of the close-up photographs of dancers' hand and arm movements [fig. 4], Néagu writes of De Meyer's selection of shots: "Different parts of the body were chosen to introduce the Faun into the action, to underline the plasticity of the choreographed moments, and to express the underlying emotions of the characters."⁴⁷ While the results of the close-up, segmented photographs may be as Néagu asserts, and he also refers to the artist of the session as De Meyer, he does argue against the idea that the choice of shots was completely De Meyer's rather than the choreographer's.⁴⁸ The De Meyer sessions produced poses that accurately reflected the gestures and body stances of Nijinsky's score. At times,

⁴⁵ Later in this chapter, I will discuss the uniqueness of this photographic session in that it was the first and only that Nijinsky himself commissioned, operating in his role as producer, and choreographer, as well as dancer.

⁴⁶ Fraser, "Photographs," 508.

⁴⁷ Néagu, "Nijinsky and De Meyer," 60.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 60. Néague does, however, concede that Nijinsky did make some decisions as to which shots were taken, and which were published in De Meyer's album. Néague mentions that it was probably Nijinsky's decision to photograph his sister, Bronislava, although she is found nowhere else in the album. He is probably correct in this assumption as Nijinsky would have wished there to be a visual record of his dancing with Bronislava in the ballet.



Figure 4. Nymph's Hands and Arms from *Faune* (1912).
Photograph by Adolph De Meyer. Reprinted in Guest and
Jeschke, *Nijinsky's Faune Restored*.

however, the photographs were spatially inaccurate, that is compressing distances between dancers, or shot purely for publicity purposes, creating tableaux not found in the score.

Karl Struss

Hollywood cinematographer Karl Struss (1886-1981) worked in New York City as a freelance photographer prior to the years he became celebrated as the creator of special effects magic in the films *Ben-Hur* (1925), and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1932). In late October 1916, Struss was hired by the Metropolitan Opera Association to take publicity shots of Vaslav Nijinsky in *Faune*, possibly during the intermission between Nijinsky's performances in *Faune* and *Petruschka*, on October 24.⁴⁹ These obscure photographs, hastily set up and harshly lit, remained unpublished until 1987.⁵⁰

Bert and Waléry

While John Fraser contradicts Kirstein's attribution of a photograph of Nijinsky and Nelidova in *Faune* to Bert (he traces the photographic background to Waléry),⁵¹ Bert is credited with a 1913 photograph of Nijinsky as the Faun.⁵²

Other Photographers

Historical references do not exist for two photographers credited with taking photographs of Nijinsky. Fraser could not unearth evidence of the L. Roosen to whom Kirstein in *Nijinsky*

⁴⁹ Acocella, "Photo Call," 50, 70 (Ftn. 4).

⁵⁰ Ibid., 49. According to Acocella, all but one of the twelve Struss photographs of Nijinsky as the Faun were published for the first time in her article (Winter 1987). I discuss these photographs in detail in chapter two, "New Evidence: Nijinsky's Performativity in *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*." Along with the Waléry performance photographs of *Faune*, five of the Struss photographs were used as reference points by Ann Hutchinson Guest and Claudia Jeschke to fill in the sequence of *Faune* choreography. See Guest, Ann Hutchinson, and Claudia Jeschke. *Nijinsky's Faune Restored: A Study of Vaslav Nijinsky's 1915 Dance Score: L'Après-Midi D'un Faune and His Dance Notation System: Revealed, Translated into Labanotation and Annotated*, Language of Dance Series; No. 3. (Philadelphia: Gordon and Breach, 1991), 63-65. I also used these same photographs of *Faune* in my "editing" of photographs into the DVD of the Juilliard Dance Ensemble's 1989 performance of *Faune*.

⁵¹ Fraser, "Photographs," 463.

⁵² Guest/Jeschke, *Restoring Nijinsky's Faune*, 69. I included this photograph with the photographs of De Meyer, Struss, and Waléry in my "editing" of *Faune* photographs with the dvd of the Juilliard Dance Ensemble's 1989 performance.

Dancing attributes five photographs taken of Nijinsky in *Armide* in Paris.⁵³ What are perhaps the last performance photographs of Nijinsky, three headshots as The Favorite Slave in *Schéhérazade* taken during the Ballets Russes' second South American tour in 1917, are attributed to J. de Strelecki, for whom Fraser could find no contemporary reference.⁵⁴

Numerous uncredited photographs of Nijinsky exist, some appearing in magazines or newspapers of the time. One such uncredited photograph records what could be Nijinsky's costume sans "modesty skirt" from *Giselle*, which caused his dismissal from the Imperial Theatre.⁵⁵ Discrepancies also occurred in crediting photographs. In Magriel's *Nijinsky*, Hoppé was given credit for Bert's photographs of Nijinsky in *Spectre* because Hoppé had purchased the English rights to Bert's prints.⁵⁶ Nijinsky was photographed as the God Krishna in *Le Dieu Bleu* in 1912. These photographs have been attributed alternately to Bert and to Waléry.⁵⁷

Photographic "Retouching"

Excluding the use of soft, gauze-like lighting by photographers such as Bert and De Meyer, the most famous retouching of Nijinsky photographs took place upon the photographic image of his exotic, pearl-laden costume in *Schéhérazade*. While the 1910 production of *Schéhérazade* certainly titillated Parisian audiences with its orgiastic excesses, Diaghilev and designer Leon Bakst demurred from showing Nijinsky's naked body underneath the Favorite Slave's bejeweled vest. Nijinsky wore a sheer leotard-type garment that covered his arms as well as his chest and midriff. Both Bert and De Meyer engaged in inconsistent retouchings of the costume, sometimes painting out the neckline and sleeves, but in at least one photograph, leaving

⁵³ Fraser, "Photographs," 439.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 451. Fraser states that one of the three headshots, of Nijinsky in the same makeup and headdress, was reproduced in the magazine, *The Tatler*, on January 1, 1919, and that this is where he finds the photographic credit to J. de Strelecki.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 444.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 455.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 460. Fraser states that both Richard Buckle and Lincoln Kirstein attribute the photographs to Bert. However, the photographs first appeared in the June 1912 issue of *Comoedia Illustré*, credited to Waléry.

the wrinkled leotard showing across his midriff.⁵⁸ Two photographs that purport to show Nijinsky executing *allegro* jumps appear to have been retouched; in Bert's 1910 photograph of Nijinsky as Albrecht in *Giselle*, Nijinsky's foot en relevé becomes, retouched, en pointe and elevated off the ground. Daniel Gesmer posited that a 1909 photograph of Nijinsky in *Armide* by Gerschel, in which Nijinsky leaps against a darkened background without perspective, may have been shot with Nijinsky lying on the ground and shot from above.⁵⁹ In any case, a third French photographer, Eugène Druet (1868-1917), would shoot what would remain through the years the single, precious, and definitive image of Nijinsky *en l'air*.

While De Meyer's "action photography" of Nijinsky in *Carnaval*, *Schéhérazade*, and *Faune* are more revelatory of the dancer's body, Druet's series of indoor and outdoor photographs of Nijinsky in "Danse Siamoise" from the ballet *Les Orientales* rank, according to Lincoln Kirstein, "as one of the first and most complete documents of staged movement."⁶⁰ The photo session took place on June 19, 1910, almost exactly a year before De Meyer's first photographs of Nijinsky, in the studio and gardens of painter Jacques-Emile Blanche. Kirstein in his comment on Druet's historic photography of Nijinsky's "staged movement" may have been referring to the entire session, in which Nijinsky seems to have been allowed to move through Fokine's choreography freely, without posing, as Druet shot spontaneously.⁶¹ However, a single, outdoor photograph by Druet of Nijinsky dressed in the heavy and seemingly movement-restricting costume of "Danse Siamoise" exists as the only record of Nijinsky's legendary elevation as well as an index of his ballon, or the springing ability that enables a dancer to absorb

⁵⁸ Ibid., 449, 451.

⁵⁹ Gesmer, "Re-visioning Vaslav," 84. While I concur with the author that Bert definitely retouched Nijinsky's foot, I am not convinced that Gerschel shot Nijinsky lying on a black curtain. The photograph's lack of perspective, however, makes the extent of Nijinsky's leap unnecessarily questionable.

⁶⁰ Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*, 89.

⁶¹ Gesmer, "Re-visioning Vaslav," 84.

the effects of a leap in his feet and knees in order to rapidly propel himself back off the ground and into the air [fig. 5]. Druet caught Nijinsky at what appears to be the apex of a *demí-caràcter* jump.⁶² The photograph's impartation of Nijinsky's body in full flight is benefited both from the perspective provided by the demarcation of pathway and lawn in the background, as well as the fact that Nijinsky's entire body—including the tips of his fingers, which are at the highest point of the photograph, and his pointed feet, which are at the lowest—is in complete, sharp focus.

Part of the answer as to why there exists only one photograph of Nijinsky en l'air lies within the technological capabilities of photography circa 1910. Most performance photographs of Nijinsky were taken either in studios, or probably more often, in the theatres where the Ballets Russes was performing. Since the flash bulb was not invented until 1925 and so the amount of light photographers could employ indoors was severely limited, exposures were typically one-half second or even slower. Even so, hand-held cameras such as the Speed Graphic and Graflex could achieve exposures as short as 1/1000 of a second, fast enough to obtain a sharp image of someone leaping, but only out of doors and in the brightest sunlight. Hence, it would be a rare opportunity for Vaslav Nijinsky, who lived within an unending regime of afternoon rehearsals, classes, and evening performances, to be photographed out of doors in the middle of the day.

A second answer to the question of why there was no concerted effort to memorialize the movements of the most famous dancer in the world points to the tragic, premature end of his dancing career. In 1917, the year of his last public performance, Vaslav Nijinsky was twenty-seven years old, with eight years of his dancing prime still available to him. In the year 1910, however, during the second of the Ballets Russes' celebrated four Paris seasons, Nijinsky was

⁶² Ibid., 84. See my Footnote 63 about the controversy over whether or not the Gershel photograph of Nijinsky in *Armide* was artificially posed to simulate Nijinsky leaping. In any case, the Gershel photograph, while potentially authentic, is of Nijinsky in a "petite allegro" jump, as opposed to the "grande allegro" parameters of the jump Druet photographed. It would have been this kind of "grande allegro" leap that made Nijinsky's legendary reputation.



Figure 5. Nijinsky “en l’air,” costumed for “Danse Siamoise” (1910). Photograph by Eugène Druet. Reprinted in Paul David Magriel *Nijinsky, Pavlova, Duncan: Three Lives in Dance* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977).

only twenty-one years old. It would have been hardly imaginable that the movements and presence of a young and exuberantly vital man would need to be memorialized.

Contemporary Uses of Nijinsky Photographs

During the Ballets Russes Paris seasons (1909-1913), performance photographs of Nijinsky were published frequently in art and theatrical magazines. Extant examples of such published photographs, verified in the Fraser article, represent arguably only a small percentage of Nijinsky performance photographs undoubtedly published in various news mediums in Paris, London, Berlin, Budapest, and other European cities in which the Ballets Russes toured. As I have previously described, French photographer Charles Gerschel was commissioned by the Parisian magazine *L'Illustration* to provide a photograph of performers of the Ballets Russes for the inside pages and cover of its May 22, 1909 issue.⁶³ A photograph of Nijinsky and Karsavina in *Giselle*, probably taken by K.A. Fischer in St. Petersburg before the Ballets Russes' first Paris season, was reproduced on the cover of *Comoedia Illustré*,⁶⁴—a weekly French theatre and art magazine that seems to be the original publication source of a large number of Nijinsky performance photographs. Photographs by Waléry of Nijinsky in *Le Dieu Bleu* from the 1911 Paris season all appeared in a June 1912 issue of *Comoedia Illustré*, and Waléry's studies of *Faune*, of Nijinsky alone and with Lydia Nelidova as the Main Nymph, were published in the May 15, 1912 issue, and reprinted in the British magazine *The Graphic* on February 22, 1913.⁶⁵ In addition, *Comoedia Illustré* published at least one of the Ballets Russes' souvenir program books, in which an audience first viewed the famous Bert photograph of Igor Stravinsky,

⁶³ Fraser, "Photographs," 439.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 445.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 460, 463.

composer of *Petruschka*, in full evening dress, standing beside Nijinsky posed as the eponymous puppet.⁶⁶

An unattributed photograph of Nijinsky in the purportedly obscene costume for Albrecht (*Giselle*) that led to his dismissal from the Mariinsky was published in the British magazine *The Graphic* on June 24, 1911 at the start of Ballets Russes' first London season.⁶⁷ As was often the case, a photograph of Nijinsky in a certain ballet role might have been published in a magazine but did not necessarily indicate he was currently performing that role in repertoire; in London in June 1911, audiences saw him in *Armide*, *Carnaval*, and *Spectre*, but he did not perform as Albrecht in *Giselle* until the following winter. A much more ironic timing would be evident in the publication of other Nijinsky photographs: British photographer's Hoppe's portraits of Nijinsky in *Spectre* were published in the British magazine *The Sketch* on March 15, 1914,⁶⁸ over six months after Diaghilev abruptly fired Nijinsky when hearing of his marriage to Romola de Pulszky. Even more tragically, a portrait of Nijinsky as The Golden Slave in *Schéhérazade*, taken in 1917 and one of the last photographs of Nijinsky as a dancer, was reproduced in the British magazine, *The Tatler* on January 1, 1919,⁶⁹ only eighteen days before Nijinsky's erratic private performance in St. Moritz would mark the end of his life as a dancer.⁷⁰ The accumulated phenomenological effect of Nijinsky's performances is to this day evoked simply by the word "Nijinsky." Thus publication of his photographs continued to be in demand, even after the dancer himself had stopped dancing.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 460.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 441.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 455.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 451.

⁷⁰ Nijinsky had not performed since his last appearance with the Ballets Russes in Montevideo in the end of September 1917, and so, at the time the photograph was published, had not danced in *Schéhérazade* in well over a year.

The large number and frequent publication of performance photographs of Nijinsky reflected the critical and public excitement that Diaghilev wished to perpetuate after the dancer's opening night performance as The Favorite Slave in *Le Pavillon D'Armide* at Théâtre du Châtelet on May 19, 1909, and excitement that would continue throughout his career with the Ballets Russes.

New Evidence

I return now to the publication of the first photograph of Nijinsky ever taken in Paris, in *Armide* on the cover of the highly prestigious *Comoedia Illustré* on May 22, 1909, viewed by the magazine's readership three days after his very first performance in front of a Parisian audience. The *Comoedia Illustré's* editorial decision to publish a photograph of Nijinsky, alone, on the cover of its magazine, posed above a caption that read, "Vaslav Nijinsky, the Russian Vestris,"⁷¹ underscores my claim that the phenomenological power of Nijinsky's performance, began with the body of Vaslav Nijinsky in motion. In other words, the performance photographs of Nijinsky did not create the phenomenological force of his live performance, but his moving body did.

Of primary significance, however, is the sequence of events that took place on May 19, 1909, in which French photographer Gershel took arguably the first performance photographs of Nijinsky in Paris and Nijinsky would experience autonomy of movement before the camera lens, an autonomy of movement he would re-experience that night on stage. From this historical evidence I construct my claim that Nijinsky would thereafter experience being photographed in makeup and costume as experiencing performance.

While the phenomenological force of Nijinsky's performance began with his body, that phenomenological and performative force would not end with the cessation of that body in

⁷¹ Fraser, "Photographs," 439. The caption (translated) reads in full, "Vaslav Nijinsky, the Russian Vestris. A dancer who has gained more success this week in Paris than the orators of the C.G.T.," referring to a French trade union that had called for its members to strike.

performance. That force, ironically, would find a repository in the Nijinsky performance photographs, photographs whose performative traces were overwhelmed during his career by the presence of Nijinsky's moving body in performance. Thus during his performance career performance photographs would act as a promissory note for the phenomenological experience the audience would have when they saw him dance on the stage. Since the time his performance career ended, however, the Nijinsky performance photographs have offered their performative traces for the new viewer to experience.

The Phenomenological Force of Nijinsky's Body in Motion

The overwhelming majority of the audience at Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris on May 19, 1909 had never before experienced a performance by Vaslav Nijinski. Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, or Saison Russes as it was first simply known, featured a group of young, ascending stars of the Mariinsky Theatre, including Tamara Karsavina, Adolph Bolm, Lydia Lopokhova, Alexander Orlov, Bronislava Nijinska, Alexandra Baldina, Anna Pavlova, and Nijinsky himself. It was true, however, that Diaghilev considered Pavlova and Nijinsky particularly essential to his company's success: a Russian newspaper at the time published a cartoon entitled, "S. Diaghilev Dispatches His Company Abroad," in which Diaghilev is drawn carrying two bird cages holding Pavlova and Nijinsky.⁷² As the twenty-year-old Nijinsky was now known to be the older Diaghilev's lover, his promotion to star status might have smacked of nepotism. Diaghilev, however, who risked bankruptcy, and was above all, ambitious for critical acceptance, would neither have placed Nijinsky as the company's male star had his talent not been proven, nor relied on him totally for the Saison Russes' success.

⁷² Krasovskaya, *Nijinsky*, 100. Diaghilev also had to recruit dancers from Moscow's Bolshoi Ballet, including Michael Mordkin, who would become Pavlova's long-time partner.

Nijinsky's brilliance had been acknowledged by instructors from the time he entered the Imperial Ballet School in 1898 at the age of nine. In 1906, a year before his graduation from the Imperial Ballet School, Nijinsky performed on stage at the Mariinsky Theatre in the ballet, *Don Giovanni*, an unprecedented professional performance by the non-graduate dancer arranged by his instructor Mikhail Obukhov. After initially ordering Nijinsky to contain his jumps and pirouettes so as to appear uniform with the ensemble of male dancers, minutes before Nijinsky's entrance Obukhov gave him permission to dance "full out."⁷³ Thus the Mariinsky audience, the most knowledgeable of ballet in the world, had its first enraptured encounter with Nijinsky. From the viewing of this performance, the reigning prima ballerina assoluta Mathilda Kchessinskaya had requested Nijinsky to partner her in her next ballet.⁷⁴

However, on the evening of May 19, 1909, while Diaghilev intended that Nijinsky would be one of the main attractions of the Ballets Russes' first Paris season, he did not dare rely on him as its only star. His love affair with Nijinsky, however passionate on Diaghilev's side, did nothing to assuage Diaghilev's real concerns about the success of the Ballets Russes; Diaghilev, now an enemy of the Russian Court, having been dismissed from his position as assistant to the Director of the Imperial Theatres, had gambled his entire career on the "Saison Russe."⁷⁵ Thus his infatuation with Nijinsky did not deter Diaghilev from promoting, if not other male, female dancers who might find themselves particular favorites of Parisian audiences.

In fact it had been over a century since a male ballet dancer, Auguste Vestris (1760-1842), had reigned as "le dieu de danse" at the Paris Opera. The advent of the Romantic Ballet in the early-to-mid nineteenth century had brought with it the lyric idealization of the female as

⁷³ Reiss, Françoise, *Nijinsky* (New York: Pitman Publishing Corp., 1960), 40.

⁷⁴ As I discussed previously in this chapter, even before his graduation, Nijinsky was guaranteed entrance to the highly hierarchical, if not militaristic, Mariinsky Theatre as *corphye* or soloist, a significant step above the *corp de ballet*, where every dancer normally began his or her career.

⁷⁵ Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 22, 64, 96.

embodied by Italian ballerina Marie Taglioni (1804-1884). With the death of the romantic ballet, France had lost its superiority within the ballet world; however, even though the Russian ballet had been developing strong male dancers for several generations, to most of the world, the ballerina still epitomized the ballet. Thus, although Anna Pavlova was dancing in Berlin and not due to appear in Paris for a fortnight, the first poster seen in Paris advertising the “Saison Russe” was a chalk rendering by the Russian artist Valentin Serov of the ballerina floating in third arabesque, in Fokine’s ballet *Les Sylphides*,⁷⁶ even though Nijinsky would dance the pivotal and singular male role in the ballet. In comparison, as far as can be determined, the only publicity photograph of Nijinsky published in Paris before the May 19 opening night was a reproduction of a souvenir postcard of the young graduate in *Don Giovanni*, photographed, as previously noted, by K.A. Fischer in St. Petersburg.⁷⁷

Nijinsky himself, however, through his first performance in Paris in the ballet *Armide*, would create the initial, crucial demand for his photographs, a demand that Diaghilev as a brilliant entrepreneur immediately filled and sought actively to exploit. In other words, Sergei Diaghilev used Nijinsky’s photographs to exploit, not create, the phenomenological impact of Nijinsky in performance.⁷⁸ Through a succession of performances in *Les Sylphides*, *Petruschka*, *Schéhérazade*, *Spectre de la Rose*, and *Carnaval*, it would again be Nijinsky who continued to feed the public’s hunger to see his body in motion. Thus, as I stated above, performance photographs of Nijinsky, created within the reality and presence of Nijinsky’s moving body, did

⁷⁶ Ibid., 76.

⁷⁷ Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*, 57.

⁷⁸ In this study I am concerned with the phenomenology of the Nijinsky photographs as experienced and then described by those who had not, or have not, seen Nijinsky perform, including this researcher. I agree with cultural historians that any “understanding” of Nijinsky’s performance through the phenomenology of his audience would have to be ascertained within a cultural/historical context. My assertion, while historically based, that the performance shots of Nijinsky exploited rather than created the phenomenological impact of his performance, is made in order to provide a foundation for my argument that these photographs contain traces of Nijinsky’s performative presence, and that Nijinsky’s performative presence was embodied through Nijinsky, and not a clever publicity campaign

not act as a replacement for his moving body, but triggered the memory of those who had seen him dance, and beckoned to those who had not seen what it was possible to experience. The obvious commercial purpose of the shooting and publication of photographs of Nijinsky—to sell tickets to the Ballets Russes’ performances—was contingent upon Nijinsky’s physical presence, and access to that presence for the price of a ticket.⁷⁹

The price of a ticket read as a signifier of performance, not to Nijinsky, but to the audience, along with all the attendant pomp and social preening of an opening night in Paris. As the first individuals outside of Russia to view Nijinsky’s body in motion *in performance*, the audience’s perception of that performance might arguably have been influenced by events that took place prior to Nijinsky’s entrance on stage in *Armide*. These events, however, reflect a contradictory set of interpretations of history.

Before the May 19^t opening, Diaghilev showcased Nijinsky to his growing entourage of Parisian celebrities and dilettantes by inviting them to view the company’s rehearsals.⁸⁰ Their reaction to their view of the dancer in rehearsals, however, was polite but muted; Nijinsky had danced technically well, but perfunctorily.⁸¹ As the librettist and designer of *Armide*, Alexandre Benois would later write of the young dancer’s movements prior to opening night: “Nor did anything extraordinary happen at rehearsals. Nijinsky performed everything with unflinching precision, but there was something mechanical and automatic in his execution.”⁸² Krasovskaya

⁷⁹ However, in chapter two, “Theory: The Nature of Photography,” I claim that, while the economic imperatives of photographing Nijinsky operated as both “memory trigger” and advertisement, the principle of archival preservation would claim these photographs as authentic “copies” of Nijinsky’s performance.

⁸⁰ Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 74. Evidently Diaghilev was extremely upset by what he considered to be Gabriel Astruc, his French co-producer’s, inadequate pre publicity, which strengthens my assertion that the majority of the first night audience knew very little, if anything, about Nijinsky. See Reiss, *Nijinsky*, 63. However, Karsavina mentions that during rehearsals, artist Dethomas was sketching Nijinsky, Robert Brussel was writing his first article on the ballet company for *Le Figaro*, and Svetlov, the famous St. Petersburg critic, was present. See Karsavina, *Theatre Street*, 197.

⁸¹ Krasovskaya, *Nijinsky*, 107-108.

⁸² Benois, Alexandre, and Mary Britnieva, *Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet* (London: Putnam, 1947), 289.

wrote that Alexandre Benois felt that Diaghilev, knowing full well that Nijinsky did not transform himself completely into a role until actual performance, had deliberately invited members of French society to the Ballets Russes' rehearsals, hence creating an atmosphere ripe for surprise and acclaim on the part of the opening night audience.⁸³ On May 11, however, music critic Robert Brussel had observed Nijinsky only in rehearsals at the theatre, yet had written in *Le Figaro* that Nijinsky danced as “a kind of modern Vestris, but whose dazzling technique is allied to a plastic feeling and a distinction of gesture which are certainly unequalled anywhere.”⁸⁴ Nijinska, as well, wrote that, “When rehearsing he danced at full force, the same as he would for a performance.”⁸⁵ It is probable, however, that Nijinska was speaking of Nijinsky's level of physical energy as opposed to his emotional/spiritual transformation into a role. It was, and still is, not uncommon for leading dancers to “mark” a role, that is dance with less energy and force, during rehearsal in order to preserve themselves physically for performance.

It is possible, therefore, that certain members of the opening night audience might not have been expecting to be amazed by Nijinsky's performance, and that certain members had every intention of being amazed. I speculate that Diaghilev, as impresario of the Ballets Russes, would have been satisfied with both groups' expectations and anticipations.⁸⁶

Nijinsky's Entrance in *Armide*

I turn now to events that occurred when Vaslav Nijinsky made his first entrance on the Paris stage in his role as The Favorite Slave in *Armide*, by means of a soaring *grand assemblé*.

⁸³ Krasovskaya, *Nijinsky*, 107-108.

⁸⁴ Qtd. in Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 78.

⁸⁵ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 266.

⁸⁶ It is true that witnesses to Pavlova and Nijinsky's rehearsals in both *Giselle* and *Les Sylphides* state that they were in and of themselves, incomparable theatrical and artistic experiences. See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 282-284. The “salon” atmosphere of the Chatelet rehearsals, however, together with the hammerings of builders doing remodeling, would not have been conducive to Nijinsky doing anything more than “rehearsing.” Regardless of the exceptions to accounts by observers that Nijinsky in rehearsal danced mechanically, it seems to have been universally acknowledged that on stage in actual performance he consistently raised his art to an altogether higher level than he maintained, it seems deliberately so, in rehearsal.

This jump—in which the dancer extends one leg high in the air, raising his entire body off the ground and traveling horizontally, while the second leg reassembles with the first while the dancer remains in the air—produced such a roar of applause that the Russian conductor Tcherepnine had to delay the first notes of Nijinsky's variation, or solo dance.

Bronislava Nijinska described in great technical and phenomenological detail this thirty-two-bar variation, performed by her brother after his initial, explosive leap:

While Nijinsky waits onstage holding his pose, his whole body is alive with an inner movement, his whole being radiant with an inner joy—a slight smile on his lips. . . . This inspired figure of Nijinsky captivates the spectators, who watch him spellbound, as if he were a work of art, a masterpiece.

Suddenly, from *demi-pointe preparation*, Nijinsky springs upwards and with an imperceptible movement sends his body sideways. Four times he flies above the stage—weightless, airborne, gliding in the air without effort, like a bird in flight. Each time as he repeats this *changement de pieds* from side to side, he covers a wider span of the stage, and each flight is accompanied by a loud gasp from the audience.

Nijinsky soars upwards, *grand échappé*, then he soars still higher, and with an imperceptible movement sends his body sideways. Four times he zigzags on the diagonal (three *grand jetés en attitude*) to land on the ramp by the first wing. With each *relentissement* in the air the audience holds its breath.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 270.

In the short variation thirty-two bars in length, Nijinsky had, in Nijinska's words, "surpassed even himself." His performance had "jolted the public from its conventional and restrained politeness."⁸⁸ By the end of the variation, the audience was screaming.

Bronislava Nijinska's description of and reaction to Nijinsky's variation in *Armide* could be read not only as the reaction of a sister who idolized her brother, but as a memorial inscribed over sixty years after the event, a memorial buffeted by a layered combination of psychological, historical, and cultural imperatives. It is true, however, that in 1909, Bronislava Nijinska, while two years younger than Vaslav, was already an extremely accomplished dancer, and had thus been invited to join the Ballets Russes.⁸⁹ Her technical descriptions of Nijinsky's movements are unprecedented in their detail and reflect her own formidable knowledge of ballet technique, of dancing, and of choreography.

It is not necessary to rely upon what could be argued as Nijinska's historically and culturally constructed memory of her brother's performance as proof that Nijinsky's performance was in fact a shock to the opening night Parisian audience. The impetus for Nijinska's "telling of her memory" indicates the substantive nature of the "something that surprised" that both she and the audience on the stage of the Théâtre du Châtelet experienced. Thus even if that experiential "surprise" is acknowledged as cultural and societal in its makeup, my claim that the "something that surprised" was Nijinsky's body in performance, receives reinforcement from the overt surprise expressed in the performance review of Henri Gauthier-Villars for *Comoedia Illustrée*:

⁸⁸ Ibid., 271.

⁸⁹ Ibid., xvii. In Anna Kisselgoff's Introduction to Nijinska's autobiography, she quotes the great British choreographer Frederick Ashton, one of Nijinsky's pallbearers, who said of Nijinska as choreographer, "She was a genius, one of the very few." It is perhaps empirically unverifiable, but reassuring as far as the veracity of her evaluation of her brother's gift, that it was the case of one genius watching another.

The blonde and queenly Baldina, Mlle Karsavina of the irresistible charm, the magic of the Feodorovas—I would celebrate them all if I did not feel bound above all to proclaim my admiration for the dancer Nijinsky, wonder of wonders, breaker of the record of *entrechats*. . . . Yesterday when he took off so slowly and elegantly, describing a trajectory of 4 ½ metres and landing noiselessly in the wings an incredulous *Ah!* Burst from the ladies.⁹⁰

While the gasps and *Ahs* of the audience, and Nijinska’s and Gauthier-Villars’ recollections of same, might have reflected a multiplicity of social and cultural dynamics, the decision to place Nijinsky’s photograph on the cover of *Comoedia Illustré* was contingent upon the substantive nature of those “gasps” and “ahs,” caused by the presence of Vaslav Nijinsky’s body in performance.⁹¹

Nijinsky’s entrance and variation in *Armide* would have made him a star of the Ballet Russes without any further achievement on his part, yet it was his final exit that would create an even greater phenomenological stir amongst the already stunned Parisian audience. Tamara Karsavina, from her position in the wings, observed the moment:

Tonight, excited by the warmth of the public’s reaction, instead of walking he chooses to leap off. He soars up and up as if he were flying into the tree-tops, and no one sees him beginning to come down. No living Parisian has ever beheld such a leap. The gasps of incredulity turn into a thunder of applause.⁹²

I posit that the true significance of Nijinsky’s exit from the stage of the Théâtre du Châtelet was in the *choosing* to make “such a leap.” I further claim that the autonomy Nijinsky found within

⁹⁰ Qtd. in Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 93.

⁹¹ Parker, *Nijinsky*, 62. It is important to note that even the articles written during the dress rehearsals on May 17th and 18th were not published until after the May 19th opening.

⁹² Karsavina, *Theatre Street*, 197.

that leap that seemed to have no ending had its beginnings earlier in the day, when he was called to the theater for a photographic session to publicize the opening night of the Ballet Russes first season in Paris. Thus I now present new evidence for the connection between Nijinsky's performance and his photographic presence.

Nijinsky's Performance and Photographic Presence

After an exhilarating and no doubt exhausting final dress rehearsal on May 18, 1909, Nijinsky had been awakened early and ordered to come to the Théâtre du Châtelet to be photographed in his costume for *Le Pavillon d'Armide*. Bronislava Nijinska, up early out of excitement for the upcoming opening night performance, was surprised to see her brother on the stage:

Vaslav [was] coming towards me dressed in his costume from *Le Pavillon d'Armide* and holding the headdress in his hand. He looked displeased. . . .
'Bronia, can you imagine, they didn't even let me sleep this morning. A messenger was sent telling me I must come immediately to the Theatre and get into my costume for the photographer, who was already in the Theatre waiting for me. But when I arrived there was no one here. The costumier was not in the Theatre. . . . Bronia, please fasten my costume at the back. The hair dresser isn't here. I can't find my wig and the makeup box has been put away and I don't know where to look for it. . . . How will I look in a photograph without any makeup? . . . I'd better leave now.'⁹³

The unnamed photographer then persuaded Nijinsky and Bronislava that the photographers were important to the success of the Ballets Russes and to Nijinsky:

⁹³ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 268.

For the first photographs Vaslav posed somewhat reluctantly, but soon he became absorbed and began to smile, and instead of just standing in different poses he was dancing so that the photographer could try to catch in his photographs the execution of one of Nijinsky's huge leaps. Until now, Nijinsky had not been familiar with the obligations of an artist to submit to the demands of the press, to give interviews and pose for photographers, for this was not expected of an Artist of the Imperial Theatres. So this was his first experience in such duties of an artist, and the photographs taken that morning, on the day of the premiere of the Ballet Russe, where he is seen wearing the costume from *Le Pavillon d'Armide* but without makeup and without the wig under his headdress, were the first photographs of Nijinsky in Paris⁹⁴ [fig. 6].

The May 22, 1909 cover photograph of *L'Illustration* does in fact show Nijinsky with a shiny face, and without the dark curly wig visible under his turban in other photographs of *Armide*.

Thus French photographer Charles Gerschel, clearly the photographer Bronislava referenced, would be involved inadvertently not only in the first photographs taken of Nijinsky in Paris, but of the dancer's discovery of his own autonomy of performance within the act of being photographed. For technical reasons already discussed, Gerschel was not able to capture Nijinsky indoors in an extended leap. Nijinsky himself, however, seemed to discover, not so much that his role might be recorded passively within the photograph, but that he himself might actively experience his own performance as he was being photographed.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Ibid., 269.

⁹⁵ Gesmer, "Re-visioning," 84. Because of what I believe was a significant discovery for Nijinsky in terms of acknowledging his own command of his body in motion, I am doubtful that as Daniel Gesmer speculates, Nijinsky would allow Gerschel to "lay him down" on a black velvet cloth to "simulate" leaping into the air. Looking at the photograph, I feel the speculation is rather ludicrous.



Figure 6. Nijinsky as The Favorite Slave in *L' Pavillon d' Armide* (1909). Photograph by Charles Gershel. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Reprinted in Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*.

Nijinsky's "Absence" Off Stage

In reading biographical accounts of Nijinsky's personal interactions with the social elite of Paris whom Diaghilev held in such high regard, including artists and photographers, I find a consistent lack of Vaslav Nijinsky's presence within writings that exist ostensibly to flesh out the events of his life. The astonishment of these celebrities who saw Nijinsky perform was multiplied by the contrast between Nijinsky's personae when performing and his personality and appearance off stage. Their conclusions as to his personal worth often reflected an astonishing, offhand cruelty: Misia Edwards, in Diaghilev's elite circle and described by Nijinsky to his sister as "a marvelous person and a beautiful woman. . . . [S]he speaks Polish and now we are great friends," called Nijinsky an "idiot of genius." Proust found him dull and unintelligent. Jean Cocteau wrote, "One would never have believed that this little monkey with sparse hair, wearing a skirted overcoat and a hat balanced on the top of his head, was the idol of the public." "Away from the scene," wrote critic Carl Van Vechten, "he is an insignificant figure, short and ineffective in appearance." Benois made a pointed contrast between Nijinsky as the Golden Slave in *Armide* and the off stage Nijinsky who was "a rather stocky man, not at all beautifully proportioned, and furthermore so timid that he seemed rather to fade into the background"⁹⁶ [fig. 7].

Bronislava Nijinska's memoirs provide us with evidence that Nijinsky was not only aware of the constraints upon his off stage actions, but sensitive to the state of existence where the opportunity for self-autonomy was available to him, that is within the movement of his dancer's body in performance. Nijinska was not often invited to Diaghilev's elite soireés;

⁹⁶ Qtd. in Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 273., Qtd. in Krasovskaya, *Nijinsky*, 116., Parker, *Nijinsky*, 109., Qtd. in Ostwald, *Nijinsky: Leap Into Madness*, 48, Van Vechten, "The Russian Ballet and Nijinsky," 7., Parker, *Nijinsky*, 109.



Figure 7. Vaslav Nijinsky (1910-1911). Photograph by Elliot & Fry, London. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Reprinted in Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*.

however, Nijinsky would speak to her of his admiration for the artists he spent time with, and his desire to live his life always amongst such artists. She wrote:

Naturally, however, Vaslav was not on the same equal friendly footing with them [the Parisian artists] as they were among themselves. He preferred to remain apart and silent, rather than join in their discussions or conversations, though he listened avidly and absorbed everything that could perfect his art . . . On several occasions he expressed to me his own opinions and the comments he would have made if only he had spoken at the meeting. But in the midst of Diaghilev's distinguished companions, the young Nijinsky froze and was not able to overcome his timidity. . . . He did not realize that he had achieved fame on his own merit and that he was great in his own art. Before he met Diaghilev, Vaslav was quite a different person; he used to be carefree and more relaxed.⁹⁷

A decade later, after his last public appearance as a dancer, Nijinsky would write in his diary of the years when he was with the Ballets Russes:

I have come to the conclusion that it is better to be silent than to talk nonsense. Diaghilev realized that I was stupid and told me not to speak. . . . Diaghilev noticed that I was a boring man and therefore he left me alone. . . . I said nothing because I felt that Bakst and Diaghilev think I am a kid and therefore cannot express my ideas.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 306.

⁹⁸ Nijinsky, Waslaw, and Joan Ross Acocella, *The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky*. Unexpurgated ed. (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1999), 52, 102-103, 107. Although while writing his diary entries, Nijinsky was struggling unsuccessfully against the mental illness that would veil the rest of his life, from within a spiraling "word salad" symptomatic of schizophrenia, he also wrote lucidly and clearly about past and current events in his life. While it would have been more linear to have switched the order of the first two quoted statements, Nijinsky's meaning seems clear.

Thus when not dancing on stage, but rather “in his own person,” Nijinsky was “made absent” by the society and artists who embraced him in performance.

Nijinsky’s passivity or absence extended to a not-surprising lack of communication with any photographer who was shooting him: De Meyer remarked that the dancer’s seeming lack of personality was “disconcerting.”⁹⁹ Karl Struss recalled nothing of Nijinsky when he shot him as the Faun at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1916, except that Nijinsky struck funny poses and the session was very hurried.¹⁰⁰

French photographer Druet famously photographed Nijinsky both formally posing and in motion, in a studio setting, and outside under the afternoon light, ostensibly to provide the painter Jacques-Emile Blanche with permanent models of Nijinsky from which he would paint a total of eight paintings of the dancer.¹⁰¹ There is no record of Druet’s impression of Nijinsky; however, the artist Blanche wrote that, “although the dancer had halting French, he remained silent throughout his single sitting, communicating only through gestures.”¹⁰²

While we may speculate that Nijinsky was equally shy with Druet in his photographic settings, and while the photographer was commissioned to take “still” photographs for Blanche’s use in painting, Druet also shot the dancer “in motion,” that is Nijinsky danced of his own accord while Druet attempted to capture the energy and presence that Nijinsky’s motion created.

We know that the resulting “un-still” Druet photographs of Nijinsky in *Danse Siamoise* constituted possibly both the first stop-action photograph and the first photographs of staged

⁹⁹ Gesmer, “Re-visioning,” 94. Qtd. from Shari Wendt, De Meyer Archivist, the G. Ray Hawkins Gallery, Los Angeles, letter to Daniel Gesmer, April 23, 1991.

¹⁰⁰ Acocella, “Photo Call with Nijinsky,” 50.

¹⁰¹ Gesmer, “Re-visioning,” 84. One of the most famous of Blanche’s works is very nearly an exact copy of Druet’s photograph: Nijinsky stands in low-heeled demi-caract er type shoes, wearing Bakst’s costume for *Danse Siamoise*, the heavy material appearing like chain mail, folded and encrusted with jewels and tassels. He stands with his left foot behind the right, the left leg slightly bent, and smiles bewitchingly, with downcast eyes, seemingly at the image of his own beautifully stretched hand, its fingers turned toward Nijinsky’s dramatically angled chin that, in turn, rests upon his fingers.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 84.

movement.¹⁰³ We do not know whose idea it was to photograph Nijinsky moving freely in Blanche's garden in Passy. We do know, however, that Vaslav Nijinsky had already danced in this unprecedented way before Gesmer's camera, that the session took place exactly one month before he leapt with such unencumbered joy before Druet's camera in the garden in Passy, and that moving spontaneously seemed to be Nijinsky's own idea.

Nijinsky's Autonomous Body

The night after the photography session with Gerschel, Nijinska would observe her brother's variation in *Armide* from her position in the wings, awaiting her own entrance in a more minor role. Nijinsky first entered the stage to dance the *pas de trois* with Tamara Karsavina and Alexandra Baldina. Nijinska did not describe the *pas de trois* nor the event that directly preceded her brother's variation that she recorded in such detail; perhaps her attention was focused in another direction due to her own upcoming entrance.¹⁰⁴ However, English critic Geoffrey Whitworth and ballerina Tamara Karsavina, onstage at the time, were both witness to Nijinsky's unprecedented act of spontaneous movement.¹⁰⁵ After the end of the *pas de trois* and the already enthusiastic applause, Nijinsky was to make his exit off stage and reenter for his variation. The ritual is practiced to this day in classical ballet performances; the dancer exits gracefully but calmly and without flourish off stage, and then reenters and positions himself for his variation or solo. As previously quoted, Karsavina, having just made her exit, looked back to Nijinsky who was still on stage:

¹⁰³ Ibid., 84. See also Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*, 89.

¹⁰⁴ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 270. Nijinska actually inaccurately states that one of the dancers with Nijinsky in the *pas de trois* is Alexandra Fedorova, and not Tamara Karsavina. An ellipsis follows her one sentence description of the *pas de trois*, "Nijinsky remains forever in my memory, dancing his variation in the *pas de trois* with Alexandra Fedorova and Alexandra Baldina . . ." possibly indicating a lapse in the Russian text. Regardless, it is historically confirmed that it was Baldina and Karsavina who danced with Nijinsky.

¹⁰⁵ Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 85.

Tonight, excited by the warmth of the public's reaction, instead of walking he chooses to leap off. He soars up and up as if he were flying into the tree-tops, and no one sees him beginning to come down. No living Parisian has ever beheld such a leap. The gasps of incredulity turn into a thunder of applause.¹⁰⁶

I argue that Nijinsky's photographic session with Gerschel the morning of May 19 might well have inspired or enabled the twenty-year-old dancer, trained ten years within the militaristic rigor of the Imperial Ballet School, to leap with such subversive and sublime autonomy that it caused him, to paraphrase Nijinska, both to surpass previous performances and give the public a phenomenological jolt.¹⁰⁷

As in his spontaneous leap on the stage of the Théâtre du Châtelet, Nijinsky must have taken charge of and been powerfully present within his own body at the moment he was being photographed by Gerschel. The concept of the autonomous in Nijinsky's performance and that autonomy's phenomenological effect is delineated by Karsavina's further description of Nijinsky's unauthorized leap as "an unrehearsed effect."¹⁰⁸ The "unrehearsed effect" connects the phenomenological impact of Nijinsky's first performance in Paris with Nijinsky's own experiential "surprise" within that performance, his spontaneous, unrehearsed, leap into the wings, a leap that in Karsavina's words "described a parabola in the air."¹⁰⁹

I then claim that Nijinsky's introduction to the experiential autonomy of movement in front of the camera may be read as the motivation for his parabola into the wings the evening of May 19, 1909. I now explore evidence, however, that shows it was the dual elements of makeup

¹⁰⁶ Karsavina, *Theatre Street*, 197.

¹⁰⁷ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 271.

¹⁰⁸ Karsavina, *Street*, 235.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 235.

and costume that provided the connective tissue imbrecating Nijinsky's performance with that of his photographic presence.

Makeup and Costume as Requirements for Nijinsky's Experience of Performance

In 1911, Alexander Benois would design the famous set and costumes for *Petruschka* offered to Parisian audiences in the Ballets Russes' third season. Benois observed Nijinsky, whom later composer Igor Stravinsky would call "the most exciting human being I had ever seen on a stage,"¹¹⁰ in rehearsal for the part of the doomed puppet:

He [Nijinsky] had not been successful in the part during rehearsals and it seemed as if he did not completely understand what was needed. He even asked me to explain his role to him . . .¹¹¹

While individuals who viewed Nijinsky in rehearsal observed his tremendous technical ability, clearly for Nijinsky, rehearsal was not performance. Thus the requirement, or the guarantee, of the extraordinary phenomenological presence of Nijinsky's moving body was Nijinsky's own experience of the reality of performance. "But in the end," Benois would continue, writing of Nijinsky's role in *Petruschka*, "he amazed us as he had in 'Pavillon,' 'Sylphides,' 'Schéhérazade' and 'Giselle.'"¹¹²

What, however, was the means to this end, that is the end being the performance itself, that so "amazed" those who viewed it? Benois continues:

This time also the metamorphosis took place when he put on his costume and covered his face with make-up—and it was even more amazing.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Venza, Joe, Emile Ardolino, Judy Kinberg, Dale Harris, Rudolf Nureyev, Robert Joffrey, WNET (Television station: New York N.Y.), Public Broadcasting Service (U.S.), and Joffrey Ballet. *Nureyev and the Joffrey Ballet in Tribute to Nijinsky*, 1980. Videorecording.

¹¹¹ Benois, *Reminiscences of the Russian Ballet*, 337-338.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 338.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 289-290.

Nijinsky's "active experience" of his own performance was subject to the use and wearing of makeup and costume. The fact that makeup and costume are usually withheld until rehearsals leading up to the actual performance is consistent with their significance to Nijinsky's experience of performance.

Regarding the question of whether or not Nijinsky wore his costume during rehearsals, Robert Brussel, invited to rehearsals at the Théâtre du Châtelet before the May 19 opening night, mentions "the ladies from Moscow, who work in short tunics of red or green silk and those from Petersburg, who are already in *tutus*."¹¹⁴ The tutus worn by the Mariinsky Theatre ballerinas, however, would have been "practice" tutus, such as Karsavina is wearing in a photograph of the company in rehearsal at the German Club.¹¹⁵ The fact that the female dancers were in rehearsal clothes provides indirect evidence that the male dancers, Nijinsky among them, would also have been only wearing rehearsal clothes. Nijinska, however, provides direct, first hand evidence: "For rehearsals [at Théâtre du Châtelet] Vaslav wore the same dancing costume that he wore in St. Petersburg: his black pants, held with a leather belt and buttoned at the side below the calf, molding his legs, and a white sports shirt with an open collar and long sleeves."¹¹⁶

I now recall Benois' comment about Nijinsky's preparation for his role in *Petruschka*: "This time also the metamorphosis took place when he put on his costume and covered his face with make-up."¹¹⁷ The adverb "also" that Benois employs is of extreme significance: it refers to the opening night of the Ballets Russes in Paris, May 19, 1909, pivotal in Nijinsky's career as Benois', when the designer watched the twenty-year-old dancer prepare to make his first entrance onto the stage of the Théâtre du Châtelet as The Favorite Slave in *Armide*:

¹¹⁴ Qtd. in Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 78.

¹¹⁵ Krasovskaya, *Nijinsky*, 98-99.

¹¹⁶ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 266.

¹¹⁷ Benois, *Reminiscences*, 290.

The final metamorphosis took place when he put on his costume, about which he was very particular, demanding that it should be an exact copy of the sketch made by the artist. At these moments the usually apathetic Vaslav became nervous and capricious. . . . He gradually began to change into another being, the one he saw in the mirror. He became reincarnated and actually *entered into* his new existence as an exceptionally attractive and poetical personality. The fact that Nijinsky's metamorphosis was predominantly subconscious is in my opinion the very proof of his genius. Only a genius, that is to say, a phenomenon that has no adequate natural explanation—could incarnate the choreographic essence of the rococo period as did Nijinsky in 'Le Pavillon d'Armide'—especially in the Paris version of my ballet.¹¹⁸

Thus the fact that Nijinsky demanded that the costume he put on “should be an exact copy of the sketch made by the artist,”¹¹⁹ indicates that the “putting on” of his costume marked for Nijinsky entrance into the liminal world of performance.

The makeup, both facial and body, that Nijinsky applied, and at least in some cases, designed for his roles, signified and emphasized both the extreme plasticity of his body, and a second line of demarcation into Nijinsky's perceived world of performance. As discussed previously, Benois specifically mentions both costume *and* makeup when discussing Nijinsky's performance as the puppet in *Petruschka*, a role that seemed to be eluding him in rehearsal:

¹¹⁸ Benois, *Reminiscences*, 291. It is important to note that at this point in ballet history, the librettist and/or designer of set and costumes was considered to be the “creator” of the ballet over and above the work of the choreographer, in this case, Michael Fokine who choreographed all of Nijinsky's roles with the Ballets Russes, save Nijinsky's own ballets. Hence it would be natural for Nijinsky to inquire of Benois regarding the character of *Petruschka*. See *Reminiscences*, 309-315, 336-337.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 291.

“This time also the metamorphosis took place when he put on his costume and covered his face with make-up . . . ”¹²⁰

After his performance as The Favorite Slave in *Armide*, Nijinsky’s roles would require more and more elaborate and transformative body and face makeup. Bronislava described the facial makeup her brother wore as Petruschka:

The tone of Nijinsky’s makeup is ashen; the paint of his puppet-face has flaked away; the lines of his features are faded; on his pale mouth, the outline of the lip has been washed away; of the once bright-red cheeks only a faded trace remains on one cheek; the eyebrows look as though they were hurriedly penciled in, one eyebrow flies up across the forehead; there are no eyelashes on his blank face¹²¹ [fig. 8].

Certainly for Nijinsky the makeup process involved not only great concentration but an experience of self-autonomy within the application of the makeup itself.¹²² Whether or not Nijinsky designed the makeup for the character of Petruschka, Nijinsky did in fact design his makeup for his role in *Spectre*,¹²³ his face in his wife Romola’s words, “like that of a celestial insect, his eyebrows suggesting some beautiful beetle which one might expect to find closest to the heart of a rose, and his mouth was like rose-petals.”¹²⁴

Bronislava wrote that, “During the intermission Vaslav’s room was always crammed with visitors and friends. He changed his costume and created his makeup before their eyes. I knew how all these visitors interfered with Vaslav; he loved to be alone before going onstage . . . What

¹²⁰ Ibid., 198.

¹²¹ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 373.

¹²² Ibid., 369.

¹²³ Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 178. Leon Bakst did design Nijinsky’s makeup for *Narcisse*, including the unusual tan/lemon-colored body makeup. See Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 367.

¹²⁴ Qtd. in Buckle, 178.



Figure 8. Nijinsky as Petruschka (1912). Photograph by Elliot & Fry, London. New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Jerome Robbins Dance Division. Reprinted in Buckle, *Nijinsky*.

saved Vaslav, however, was his silence.”¹²⁵ Within the lack of privacy forced upon him, Nijinsky would have necessitated an absolute concentration on making up for a role; I posit the ritualistic act of applying makeup gained for Nijinsky instant entrance and access to his experience of performance, that is access to Nijinsky’s emotional attachment and commitment to a role.¹²⁶ Thus the connection between Nijinsky’s performance and Nijinsky’s experience of being photographed is greatly reinforced through the significance Nijinsky gave to the application of makeup and donning the costume of a specific character.

While I argue that the Gershel photographic session with Nijinsky held early in the morning of May 19, 1909, made available to Nijinsky his own autonomy of movement in front of the camera, and I argue, later that evening, on stage in performance, the photographs themselves, in which Nijinsky’s costume is not complete, and he is without makeup, read as perhaps the least charismatic of the performance photographs. Seen on the May 22 cover of the Parisian magazine *L’Illustration*, Nijinsky, incompletely costumed and without makeup, appears more like the twenty-year-old dancer Nijinsky *himself* dancing in front of photographer Gerschel, rather than Benois’ described “essence of the rococo period”¹²⁷ reflected in later photographs.

Thus I claim that Nijinsky first experienced the freedom and autonomy of movement within the act of being photographed during the Gershel session on May 19, 1909, and that created in future photographs an index of Nijinsky’s body moving freely without the constraints of choreographic technique or dictates, except his own. From first hand evidence of his exit from

¹²⁵ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 369.

¹²⁶ One of the ways Diaghilev courted the patronage of the socially elite was to invite them backstage to Nijinsky’s dressing room while he was preparing for a role; one night after performing in *Carnaval*, he had to strip down and apply the yellow-tan body makeup for his role in *Narcisse* in front of a group of twenty or thirty people. See Parker, *Nijinsky*, 104-105.

¹²⁷ Benois, *Reminiscences*, 291.

the stage after his opening night performance at the Théâtre du Châtelet on May 19, 1909, I also claim that from the Gershel photographic session, an autonomy of movement was also made more available to Nijinsky in actual performance on stage.

Because Nijinsky experienced the donning of makeup and costume as experiencing the act of performance within his body, and because he wore makeup and costumes during only two situations—performance on stage and being photographed in front of the camera—I claim that what the viewer sees in Nijinsky performance photographs is an index of Nijinsky’s experience of performance combined with his experience of his body’s autonomous mastery of its own gesture and movement. Thus I argue that, in the absence of his body in performance, the Nijinsky performance photographs remain as available sources of tracings or imprints of Nijinsky’s performative presence, indeed of Nijinsky’s experience of his own bodily autonomy.

Nijinsky’s meticulous, revolutionary choreography of *Faune*, photographed in London in 1912 by the Baron Adolph De Meyer, may then be read as the single event involving Nijinsky photographs that saw Nijinsky as both active initiator and recipient of the photograph’s depiction of his own body in performance. The De Meyer photographs, commissioned by Nijinsky himself for one thousand pounds,¹²⁸ represent an unprecedented attempt by a performer and choreographer to preserve the detail of his work, which Nijinsky would strive to do again two years later in the creation of his dance notation system. Thus the De Meyer photographs manifest both Nijinsky’s use of photography as reflecting his experiential performance body, consciously or subconsciously provided to the camera, as well as the recording of the movement of that body.

¹²⁸ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 508.

***Faune* Photographs: Availability of Nijinsky Performative Traces**

The unique elements of *Faune*'s form further concentrate the availability of performative traces within the viewing of the performance photographs. The relationship between the De Meyer photographs of *Faune*—and to a lesser extent those of Waléry and Karl Struss—and Nijinsky's choreography may be read as hermeneutic, that is, the individual, unique elements of the ballet reflect the significance of the performance photographs as a whole. In a supplement to the British magazine *The Sketch*, Nijinsky's ballet, with De Meyer's famous "laughing faun" photograph gracing its cover, is referred to paradoxically as "the danceless ballet of his [Nijinsky's] devising."¹²⁹ Thus it is the stillness that Nijinsky *sought* and achieved in his choreography, that, while confusing critics and audiences, presented photographers with an opportunity to in fact capture not motion, but the stillness" of that choreography. Néagu writes:

The revolutionary choreography, conceived as a succession of strongly accented and arrested movements in time, could not but facilitate the photographer's task, in the sense that De Meyer did not, for the most part, have to cope with the real problems of stop-action exposure.¹³⁰

Indeed, while De Meyer seemed to deliberately place the *Faune* photographs out of correct narrative sequence when the album was published in 1914,¹³¹ it is also true that many of the photographs reflect choreographic movements that are held for several measures. This decision, a natural enough one, to photograph the "held poses" thus enabled Ann Hutchinson

¹²⁹ Nectoux, *Faun*, 127. The cover features the De Meyer "laughing faun" photograph as centerpiece, surrounded by photos by Waléry of the nymphs.

¹³⁰ Néagu, "Nijinsky and De Meyer," in Nectoux, *Faun*, 58. Although the photographs are blurred in what Néagu describes as the Pictorialist style, De Meyer is not capturing motion, nor did he need to. Nijinsky's choreography was so explicit that Nijinsky himself could "stop the action" for the photographer. The only photograph in which De Meyer might have "stopped motion" is of the Faun "laughing like an animal," which De Meyer and/or Nijinsky did not include in the published album. See Néagu, "Nijinsky and De Meyer," 56, 62. For reference to Nijinsky's written note, "laughing like an animal" alongside of this movement, see Guest/Jeschke, *Nijinsky's Faune Restored*, 68, 132.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

Guest and Claudia Jeschke, who were decoding Nijinsky's notation system, to provide Néague with the correct sequence of the photographs as the ballet would have been actually performed in front of De Meyer's camera.¹³²

The De Meyer session is arguably one of the first instances of an entire ballet being performed inside of a photographer's studio for the express purpose of being photographed. Thus, through Nijinsky's use of arrested poses and tableaux, the *Faune* photographs do not merely represent a choreographer's attempt to record the *sequence* of his ballet, but in fact represent the *achievement* of photographically recording a ballet's choreography, choreography made up, in many cases, of *stillness*. The De Meyer photographs then become at least the partial record of the ballet "in performance."

Combining the photographic record of *Faune's* stillness, and Nijinsky's body as the Faune in stillness, thus concentrating the indexical nature of the Nijinsky performance photographs in general to the dancer's experience of performance, the *Faune* performance photographs of Nijinsky exist today as a unique repository of traces of Nijinsky's performativity, available to the viewer each time she or he gazes upon them.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that the contemporary use of Nijinsky photographs were integrally connected to the commercial need of Diaghilev, as producer of the Ballets Russes, to exploit the phenomenological force of Nijinsky's performance, in order to publicize performances of the Ballets Russes and to sell tickets to those performances. In the absence of Nijinsky's body in performance, however, the Nijinsky performance photographs make available to the viewer phenomenological knowledge of Nijinsky's performativity.

¹³² Ibid., 63, fn. 10.

I do not debate the significance or valuation of cultural constructs and their effect upon, or even construction of, the audience's perception and experience of Nijinsky's performance. The elements, even the substantiality itself, of the audience's perception of Nijinsky's body in performance, is certainly highly debatable within a post-structuralist discourse. I argue here, rather, that the audience's perception of Nijinsky's body in performance was motivated by their encounter with the presence of Nijinsky's body in performance, rather than by photographs that were published and captioned in order to create a perception of Nijinsky's performance. Diaghilev's intention in publishing photographs of Nijinsky was certainly to publicize the dancer he considered to be a prodigy; his intention in inviting celebrities and journalists to rehearsals of the Ballets Russes was the same. However, the fact that there appeared to have been very few photographs of Nijinsky available to the press before opening night of the Ballets Russes allows the reasonable statement to be made that the opening night audience was not overly influenced in its perception of Nijinsky's performance by the viewing of photographs of Nijinsky beforehand. My ostensibly simple argument, however, contains within it the crucial connection between Nijinsky's performance presence and that of his photographic presence.

The relationship between the presence of Nijinsky's performance and the presence of Nijinsky being photographed may be introduced, and then clarified, through the analytical steps that have deconstructed shooting and publication of the first performance photographs taken of Nijinsky in Paris. For the purposes of my study then, this deconstruction removes the necessity of considering the historical and the culture within the encounter between the Parisian audience and Nijinsky's body in performance, and clears the way to view the moving body of Nijinsky as the cause or instigator of the audience's encounter with that body, again regardless of other

methodological discourses that could be applied to the construction, valuation, ontology or lack of, that encounter.

From the establishment of the encounter that began with Nijinsky's body in performance, to the establishment of Nijinsky's own encounter with his body's autonomy of movement in front of Claude Gershel camera on the morning of May 19, 1909, the phenomenological encounter with Nijinsky photographs may be explored and further connected to Nijinsky's experience of his body's autonomy within onstage performance itself, as exemplified by his exit from the stage of the Théâtre du Châtelet the evening of May 19.

I have also established through first-hand historical evidence that Nijinsky's putting on of makeup and costume for a particular role triggered his experience of being in performance. Thus I claim that Vaslav Nijinsky experienced being photographed in a performance role in a similar way as he experienced the act of performance itself, and even experienced being photographed as connecting to his body's autonomy of movement without the constraints of choreography. From this, I establish that the performance photographs of Nijinsky as the Faun, due to Nijinsky's own "choreography of stillness," tightly imbricates Nijinsky's performativity and autonomy of movement within these specific performance photographs.

CHAPTER FOUR

NEW EVIDENCE: NIJINSKY'S SCORE OF *FAUNE*

Introduction

I am with Nijinsky and Nijinsky is with me; yet I see Yoav Kaddar and Yoav Kaddar is with me. He [Kaddar] is tall, lanky, not at all Nijinsky physically, yet the choreography keeps him so centered in something having to do with Nijinsky that I see both of them and do not solely wish for either. It is a complete thing for me, this viewing, this sighting. I am not disappointed that it isn't Nijinsky, because the idea that it isn't Nijinsky doesn't occur to me.¹

As I watched Yoav Kaddar dance the Faun in the 1989 videotaped performance of Nijinsky's choreographic score of *Faune*, I wrote written impressions, hastily scribbled impressions, which I later fleshed out. The above-referenced phenomenological impression pinpoints two theoretical questions: What is the nature of dance notation systems? And what is the nature of the body in performance? My reading of dance notation systems and the body in performance interrelates within my analysis later in this chapter of Nijinsky's praxis in *Faune*, as well as a specific part of that praxis, *Faune's* choreographic score.

In this chapter I will argue that (1) traces of Nijinsky's performative knowledge are to be found within Nijinsky's dance notation system, and traces of Nijinsky's performativity are to be found within the only example of that system, his score of *Faune*, and (2) both a material and a perceptual body is to be found within Yoav Kaddar's performance of the Faun, and my viewing of same, and that within the Kaddar performance of the Faun, a performance derived directly

¹See chapter five, "New Evidence: Performative Traces of Nijinsky in *Faune*," 222.

from the Nijinsky score/notation system,² I experience the material body as “belonging” to Kaddar and the perceptual body as “belonging” to Nijinsky.

Theory: Performative Traces in Dance Notation Systems

Brief History of Dance Notation Systems

Within European and Russian cultures, the earliest form of dance notation was found in the recording of court dances, the purpose of which was largely to instruct noble dancers of the period as opposed to preserve dances for the future. One of the first attempts to notate dances was found in a fifteenth century book of dance technique, *De arte saltandi et choreas ducendi*, by Domenico da Piacenza, one of a group of dance masters whose role was to instruct nobles both in dance steps and court etiquette. In this book a handful of alphabet letters were employed to indicate the sequence and number of steps, but not their detail, that is not how the steps were executed.³ It was not until the publication in early seventeenth century Venice of Fabritio Caroso’s book, *Nobilità di Dame*, that the floor plans of court ballets were drawn and recorded,

² Ann Hutchinson Guest and Claudia Jeschke, after decoding Nijinsky’s notation system, translated the score into labanotation. (I provide a definition and brief history of labanotation later in this chapter within my discussion of the nature of dance notation systems.) This first translation was *verbatim* from Nijinsky’s score; however, Guest taught students from the Royal Ballet School via body-to-body transmission. Before presenting the labanotation score to the Juilliard Dance Ensemble cast of *Faune*, including Yoav Kaddar, Guest modified the translated score, not to alter either the steps nor their sequence, but only to condense “Nijinsky’s more complex way of writing steps into standard Labanotation for ease of reading.” See Guest/Jeschke, *Nijinsky’s Faune*, 11. This ease of reading refers directly to the fact that Nijinsky’s system was “only body-oriented,” while Labanotation employs both body-oriented and “stance-oriented” directions. See Ann Hutchinson Guest, “Nijinsky’s ‘Faune’,” “Nijinsky’s Faune.” *Choreography and Dance* 1 (1991): 11. When I spoke with Guest in London, she confirmed that Nijinsky’s notation system was arguably too meticulous, indicating the process of either enacting a step or transitioning between one step and another with an unnecessary, anatomical complexity (Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, Apr. 2, 2007). Thus, while Guest’s reassurance/confirmation that the modifications to the labanotated translation did not alter the Niinsky score could be presented as empirical evidence, within the phenomenological methodology of this project, I instead present Guest’s personal reassurance/confirmation as part of my belief that the labanotated translation did not alter the Nijinsky score.

³ Ann Hutchinson Guest, *Dance Notation: The Process of Recording Movement on Paper* (New York: Dance Horizons, 1984), 43. The text covered Basse Danses (or low dances, that is, dances in which the dancers did not leave the ground). Only five dance sequences were indicated by five letters: “r” indicating the reverence; “s” indicating the “simple” step; “d” indicating the “double” step; “b” indicating a brane, or swaying step; and “r” indicating a backward step.

and were presented from an overhead view.⁴ In 1651, John Playford's *The English Dancing Master* contained not only letter abbreviations for dancers and steps, and simple symbols to indicate the repetition of steps, but also word descriptions of sequences, as well as basic floor plans.⁵

Saint-Léon

The essential relationship between dance movements and their musical accompaniment began to be addressed by French dancer, musician, and choreographer Arthur Saint-Léon (1821–1870), who in 1852 published *Sténochorégraphie*, a book that detailed his original dance notation system. One of his greatest notating innovations was the precise attachment of the movement indication to its appropriate music note-head.⁶ In addition, Saint-Léon, who was the first to employ stick figures prominently in his notation system, indicated the dancer from the point of view of the audience. He was also the first to describe, through his figures, slight, subtle turns of the upper body, known in the dance world as “épaulement.”⁷ It is highly significant to note that Saint-Léon was the first and only dancer/choreographer to create his own dance notation system before Nijinsky created his system circa 1912.⁸ Shortly after Saint-Léon's innovations, the German dance master Klemm was the first to employ musical notes to indicate dance movements.⁹

⁴ Ibid., 49.

⁵ Ibid., 50. Guest considers Playford's book to be transitional due to the combined elements found in his system of dance description. Eighteen editions of Playford's book were published, the last dated 1731. See Guest, *Dance*, 50.

⁶ Ibid., 57, 69.

⁷ Ibid., 68-70. Carlo Blasis was the first to actually use stick figures as pedagogic and aesthetic tools in his *Traité Élémentaire* (1820) but not within an actual dance notation system. See Jescke, “Notation Systems as Texts of Performative Knowledge,” 5.

⁸ Guest/Jeschke, *Nijinsky's Faune Restored*, 145. Significantly, Saint-Léon included part of his notated score of the Pas de Six (Dance or Steps for Six) from his ballet, *La Vivandière*. Saint-Léon's most famous ballet, *Coppélia* (1870), is still performed extensively worldwide, and his original choreography preserved in performance at the Paris Opéra. See Guest, *Notation*, 69.

⁹ Guest, *Notation*, 59. Guest writes, “Placement of the note stem on right or left indicated right or left foot; double stems signified both feet.”

Stepanov

The dance notation system that proves most significant for this project was created by Vladimir Ivanovich Stepanov (1866-1896), a dancer in the Imperial Ballet in St. Petersburg, Russia. A student of human anatomy who continued his studies in Paris, he published *L'Alphabet des Mouvements du corps Humain* in 1892. Eventually Stepanov would be appointed “Instructor of Theory and Notation of Dance” at the Imperial Ballet School, and it is there where a dance student and later partner of Nijinsky, Tamara Karsavina, would study the details of the dance notation system.¹⁰

As previously mentioned, Stepanov’s system was the first to employ the human anatomy as the basis for recording dance movements, and accommodates all dance movements, not solely those of classical ballet. Anatomical diagrams are a main focus in his book and from this focus Stepanov places notations for the legs, arms, and whole torso on a modified musical staff. Movements of secondary body parts—lower leg, lower arm, and chest—were notated on the stem of the musical note. Finally, movements of the extremities—foot, hand and head—were indicated on a small vertical line that was adjacent to the main musical note.¹¹

Stepanov met an untimely death at twenty-nine while in Moscow introducing his notation system to the Bolshoi Theatre School. His associate, dancer and choreographer Alexander Alexeievitch Gorsky, took on the responsibility of publishing a modified version of Stepanov’s system in 1899.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid., 72-73.

¹¹ Ibid., 73. One of the crucial differences between the Stepanov system and Nijinsky’s system, in fact between any previous system and Nijinsky’s system, was the equal treatment Nijinsky gave to all parts of the dancer’s body (Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007, and Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, May 8, 2007). See chapter five, “New Evidence: Performative Traces of Nijinsky in *Faune*,” 232-236, where I discuss the significance of this “equal treatment” as it relates to the tracing of Nijinsky’s performativity within the tenets of his notation system.

¹² Ibid., 74.

The French ballet master Marius Petipa (1822-1910) had been the Mariinsky Theatre's celebrated choreographer since 1847. Gorsky mounted several of Petipa's venerable full-length ballets from the modified Stepanov notation record of those productions: including, among others, the *pas de trois* from *The Blue Dahlia* and the full-length ballet *La Bayadere*.¹³

Nijinsky

Vaslav Nijinsky mentioned and wrote about his original dance notation system intermittently to individual colleagues and friends, and even more infrequently to the press.¹⁴ After Nijinsky's death in 1950, his widow Romola Nijinsky donated his hand-notated score of *Faune* to the British Museum. Without the existence of a key to explain the notation system, Nijinsky's score of *Faune* was considered to be an oddity, impossible to decipher despite the attempts of movement notation scholar Noa Eshkol in the early 1970s, and Ann Hutchinson Guest and Claudia Jeschke in the early 1980s.¹⁵ Later in this chapter I will discuss Nijinsky's notation system in extensive detail.

Rudolf Laban

In the 1920s, while dancer Margaret Morris (1891-1980) created a dance notation system that expanded upon Stepanov's system in incorporating both anatomical and performance aspects, including breathing, facial expression, muscular tension and relaxation,¹⁶ Rudolf Laban (1819-1958) sought to create a notation system that recorded not only ballet steps, but

¹³ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 144, 210.

¹⁴ See Page 198 of this chapter for details of the individuals to whom Nijinsky spoke or wrote of his notation system, or to whom he gave samples of scored movements, and of the few times he mentioned his system to the press.

¹⁵ In Guest's book, *Dance Notation*, published in 1984, four years before she and Jeschke broke Nijinsky's code, she writes: "The hope that a functioning, easily read transcription could be produced soon faded. Fresh attempts over the years on my part and also the painstaking work by Claudia Jeschke brought no further solutions. Nijinsky's lack of practical experience in using notation and the absence of colleagues at hand to try out and proofread what he had written were obvious handicaps." See Guest, *Dance Notation*, 77. Ironically, the year *Notation* was published and Guest stated that attempts to decode Nijinsky's system were futile, new Nijinsky notation material was discovered at the library of the Paris Opéra, Guest gained access to Gorsky's modifications to Stepanov's system on which she discovered Nijinsky had based his work, and Hutchinson and Guest received a grant from the L. J. Skaggs and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation to continue their research. See Guest/Jeschke, *Nijinsky's Faune Restored*, 7-8, 11.

¹⁶ Guest, *Dance Notation*, 79.

movements that applied to all forms of dance.¹⁷ In the late 1920s Laban created a system, based on both anatomical, spatial, and rhythmical elements, that is considered the universal notation system for dance and movement. Laban divided the right and left sides of the body and placed the bar lines (movement codes) on this central line in the middle of the body which, in turn, coordinated with the music bars.¹⁸

Laban's innovations included the creation of what Guest calls "families of symbols"¹⁹ that categorize dancers' limbs, joints, and dance surfaces. The symbols themselves were drawn as "blocks," and the level at which the body part was placed was indicated by a variety of "shadings" of the blocks themselves. Duration of a movement was uniquely shown through a transition of the symbol itself, that is, the beginning of the movement began at the beginning of the symbol, while the end of the movement was found at the end of the symbol. Guest writes, "The longer the symbol, the slower the movement; the shorter, the quicker."²⁰

Labanotation's keynote was its great efficiency and compression of movement symbology. It remains the only dance notation system that combines the indication of (1) the direction of the movement, (2) the vertical level of the movement, (3) the timing of the movement, and (4) the part or parts of the body that are moving.²¹ Laban's notation system, through these notation interactions, described movement within the context of "rhythm and the relationship between shapes as they follow one another."²² Thus labanotation assumes the essential nature of the performance itself.

¹⁷ Ibid., 81. Laban traveled extensively and based the fundamentals of his notation system upon his observations of a culturally diverse spectrum of dances.

¹⁸ Ibid., 82. Laban incorporated these two points from the notation principles of the eighteenth century French dance master, Raoul Auger Feuillet, who published *Chorégraphie ou l'Art de Décrire la Danse* in 1700. See Guest, *Dance Notation*, 62-63.

¹⁹ Ibid., 82.

²⁰ Ibid., 82-83.

²¹ Ibid., 84.

²² Ibid., 86.

While dance notation is not universally practiced within the dance world and there exists an ongoing debate as to whether dance notation or body-to-body reconstruction of dance works is preferable,²³ dance practitioners continue to be trained and accredited in labanotation, working with professional dance companies to preserve contemporary works as well as reconstructing past dances from labanotated scores.²⁴ In 1967 Dr. Ann Hutchinson Guest founded the Language of Dance Centre in London, where dance practitioners and scholars can study labanotation among other forms of dance notation, including The Movement Alphabet created by Guest.

Nijinsky's Notation System

Nijinsky joined the Imperial Ballet School in 1898 but was only admitted as a formal student in his third year of study.²⁵ While Nijinsky might have been taught the original Stepanov system of dance from *Alphabet des Mouvements du Corps Humain* (1892), we know that Nijinsky studied the Gorsky, modified Stepanov notation system when the Gorsky version (published in 1899) was introduced into the Imperial Ballet School curriculum.²⁶ Thus while he may have been taught Stepanov's original dance notation system, Nijinsky had studied Alexander Gorsky's modifications to the Stepanov system extensively, and by the time he began serious work on his own notation system, had based his system on the Gorsky version.

²³ In addition to that debate, the reconstruction of *Faune* based on Nijinsky's score, and a reconstruction of Nijinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* by Millicent Hodson and Kenneth Archer based only on photographs and memory-based notes are often categorized together. In one specific instance, dance historian and scholar Hannah Järvinen demeans the validity of both reconstructions equally, disregarding the significance of Nijinsky's notation of his own ballet, and follows with her assumption that dance reconstruction assumes an ability or a desire to "recreate" what audiences saw during the original performances. See Järvinen, "Performance and Historiography," 147, fn. 6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

²⁵ Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 37. When he achieved senior, graduating student status, Nijinsky had studied at the Imperial Ballet School for eight years.

²⁶ Guest, *Dance Notation*, 74. As I discuss later in this chapter, in the section "Nijinsky's Score," the Gorsky version of Stepanov's notation system was not translated into English until 1978. Guest had been attempting to decipher Nijinsky's notation system—which she knew had been based on the Stepanov system—from Stepanov's original system rather than Gorsky's adaptation on which Nijinsky had actually based his system. See Guest, "Nijinsky's *Faune*," 8.

In both the Stepanov and Gorsky versions, musical notes are employed on a three-line staff to indicate movement and timing of movement (musical notes) executed by the dancer's body (the staff), the first time musical notes were used to indicate both movement and the *timing* of movement.²⁷ Stepanov was also the first notator to address movement anatomically that is from an analysis of *how* the body creates movement.²⁸

The most radical difference between the Stepanov/Gorsky notation system and the one that Nijinsky created—and the point of greatest significance to this study—relates to the designation of the three body zones. Like Stepanov, Nijinsky employed musical notes. He expanded upon Stepanov's system, however, by providing a five-line, rather than a three-line, staff for the dancer's body, and by allocating a five-line staff for each body zone: (1) head and torso, (2) arms, and (3) legs and feet. Hence Nijinsky became the first individual in the history of notation systems to provide each section of the body, literally and aesthetically, an equal amount of space. While, like Stepanov, Nijinsky adopted an anatomical rather than a spatial perspective of movement analysis, by increasing the number of lines to designate movement in each of the three body zones, Nijinsky allowed for a tremendous amount of detail of movement to be notated, much more than in the Stepanov/Gorsky system. In allocating the same design for each zone of the dancer's body, Nijinsky, for the first time in dance notation history, judged each of those zones equally important for the execution of movement.²⁹ As I will explore later in this chapter, the decision from Nijinsky-as-notator to view dancer's movements as they are expressed *throughout* the entire dancer's body connects directly to Nijinsky-as-notator's assumptions of the

²⁷ As previously discussed, nineteenth century German dance master Klemm was the first to employ musical notes to indicate dance movement. See Guest, *Dance Notation*, 57.

²⁸ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 145.

²⁹ Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, May 8, 2007. See also Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007.

physical capabilities of Nijinsky-as-body. Thus Nijinsky-as-body reveals knowledge of Nijinsky-as-Faun, and therefore, most significantly, of Nijinsky-as-Performer, within the score of *Faune*.

Nijinsky's Score of *Faune*

In 1910 St. Petersburg, when Nijinsky engaged in secret rehearsals with his sister, creating the seminal body poses, gestures, and transitional movements of the Faun and Nymphs, Bronislava Nijinska would write in her journal: "I can see clearly the delicate refinement, the precision, the jewel-like work, the finely wrought filigree of his choreography."³⁰ Nijinsky sought the fulfillment and preservation of that "filigree-d" choreography within the extraordinary detail of movement made available in his notation system, and realized within the one example of that system, the score of *Faune*.

Nijinsky distinguished between seven kinds of "walking" steps in *Faune*: (1) normal (onto the whole foot with a straight knee), (2) the same "normal" step with the knee "soft," (3) "normal" step on half-toe, (4) "normal" step with a slightly bent knee, (5) "normal" step on a high $\frac{3}{4}$ ball of the foot, (6) "normal" step on a high $\frac{3}{4}$ ball of the foot with a bent knee, and (7) "normal" step in a low, level demi-plié.³¹ The Faun uses six of the seven in the ballet's repertoire of "walking" steps. Nijinsky indicated either forty-five, ninety, or 135 degrees of flexion of arms and legs, and used the symbols, > (greater than), and < (less than) written on the stem of the note. This allows for eight different degrees of "folding," each, of the arms and legs.³² Although his score allows for notating a pointed foot, Nijinsky used only "foot stretched" and "ankle stretched" positions in the non-balletic *Faune*.³³ The Faun employs both foot positions.

³⁰ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 316.

³¹ Ann Hutchinson Guest, "Nijinsky's Own *Faune*: The Hunt Is Over," *Dancing Times* (1992): 424. The ballet term "demi-plié" in reference to *Faune* refers to a "half" bending of the knees, without the torso and legs dropping down into a "squat," but without the classical ballet "turn out" from the hips.

³² Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 152.

³³ *Ibid.*, 154.

In the 1912 rehearsals for *Faune*, the Ballets Russes dancers were further confronted with head and neck positions that were completely alien; classical ballet does not usually deviate from a neck that is aligned with the spine, and contemporary dancers who perform Nijinsky's ballet still often find them a challenge. Nijinsky indicated "normal" and "alert" positions for the Nymphs, in which the neck maintains alignment with the spine, or is thrust forward slightly, respectively. Within the "alert" position, used when the Nymphs, for example, are made aware of the Faun's presence, the difficulty in the position lies in moving the neck forward without impacting or involving the upper body.³⁴ The Main Nymph (N5) also is given "head inclined forward," "head inclined backward," and "diagonal head" (bent downward). Nijinsky gives the Faun two head positions, an "arched head" that is achieved with the appearance of the Faun tucking his chin in slightly³⁵ [fig. 9], and a "diagonal head," (bent upward)³⁶ [fig. 10].

Ann Hutchinson Guest gives the example of the Nymphs' hands—described as fingers either "slightly bent" or "more bent," determined by exact degrees, as representative of the intricate, exacting detail of Nijinsky's score of *Faune*.³⁷ As previously mentioned, Bronislava Nijinska's observations and memories of the creation of her brother's ballet include her amazement at *Faune*'s subtle nuance of movement. From her experience dancing with the Ballets Russes, and working with the company's choreographer Mikhail Fokine, however, Nijinska was also well aware of the revolutionary nature of her brother's understanding and execution of the role of choreographer. Nijinska writes:

³⁴ Ibid., 188.

³⁵ The photographs of the Faun (Nijinsky) standing upright universally show the Faun with an "arched head," and chin slightly pulled in.

³⁶ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 22.

³⁷ Ann Hutchinson Guest, e-mail message to author, December 10, 2007. See also Herve Nisic, "Revoir Nijinsky Danser" (France, 2000).



Figure 9. Nijinsky and sister Bronislava Nijinska as the Faun (with “arched head”) and Main Nymph (1912). Photograph by Adolph de Meyer. Reprinted in Buckle, *Nijinsky*.



Figure 10. Nijinsky as the Faun with Diagonal Head (Bent Upward) (1913). Photograph by Bert. Reprinted in Guest and Jeschke, *Nijinsky's Faune Restored*.

It was the first time that a ballet had been mounted and rehearsed in the same way that a musical score is performed by an orchestra. In this new technique Nijinsky truly demonstrated his choreographic genius: he conducted his ballet, seeing each choreographic detail in the same way that the conductor of an orchestra hears each note in a musical score. Up to then the ballet artist had been free to project his own individuality as he felt; he was even expected to embellish it according to his own taste, possibly neglecting the exactness of the choreographic execution. The artists simply had to comply with the following rules: keep a line straight or a circle round; preserve the groupings; execute the basic *pas* [steps]. Nijinsky was the first to demand that his whole choreographic material should be executed not only exactly as he saw it but also according to his artistic interpretation. Never was a ballet performed with such musical and choreographic exactness as *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*. Each position of the dance, each position of the body down to the gesture of each finger, was mounted according to a strict choreographic plan.³⁸

In fact, Nijinsky indicated the degree of bend and the placement of each of the Faun's fingers and thumb upon the flute that he holds in the opening moments of the ballet.³⁹

The famous sustained torso twist of the Faun and Nymphs is again scrupulously detailed by Nijinsky in the score of *Faune*. Claudia Jeschke states that even if dancers possess some prior knowledge of *Faune*—from either the Nijinsky photographs or past performances such as the Joffrey/Nureyev production—they must “unlearn all idiosyncratic dance behaviour and

³⁸ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 427.

³⁹ Guest, “The Hunt is Over,” 424.

concentrate on minimalist, slow, highly stylized movements.”⁴⁰ This admonition is particularly true of the seminal stance of Nijinsky’s ballet. In the Joffrey production, Nureyev’s torso twist involved taking one shoulder forward and the other backward, resulting in tautness and tension in the shoulder area. In his score, Nijinsky indicated an “augmented twist,” in which the upper extremity of the torso, or the shoulder line, revolves as opposed to the shoulders revolving separately. In addition, Nijinsky indicated a “forward tilt for the pelvis with a diagonally backward folding for the chest,” an extremely subtle and rigorous body placement that was to be sustained for the Faun’s “walking sequences in the duet, and for his slow walk back to the rock.”⁴¹

There are only two “jumps” in *Faune*, a “spring on the spot” by Nymph Four, or the “Joyful Nymph,”⁴² and the famous “goat leap” by the Faun. Using language derived from Nijinsky’s extraordinarily detailed score, Hutchinson and Guest describe the Faun’s preparation, the leap itself, and its landing:

Both arms then extend in front of him, the left higher than the right, the right on the center line of the body, both with angled thumbs. This upward movement of the arms lifts him into two high forward steps which serve as a preparation for a swift run forward into a big *croisé*⁴³ leap toward 12 [stage left].⁴⁴ He passes

⁴⁰ Jeschke, “Re-Constructions: Figures of Thought and Figures of Dance: Nijinsky’s *Faune*,” 181.

⁴¹ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 23. In his system, Nijinsky separates the torso into three parts, (1) pelvis, (2) chest, and (3) head. See Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 148-149.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 35.

⁴³ *Croisé* is a French ballet term signifying that in this case, the dancer’s right foot “crosses” his left foot as he leaps in the direction of the stage left corner.

⁴⁴ “12” indicates Nijinsky’s method of indicating stage directions. Nijinsky used numbers to indicate stage directions, “0” towards the audience, “4” stage right, “8” upstage, and “12” stage left. See Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 161. In her dissertation, Järvinen incorrectly states that Nijinsky broke with tradition and indicated stage directions from the audience’s point of view. See *The Myth of Genius in Movement*, 198-199. This researcher specifically asked Guest to confirm that Nijinsky’s stage directions were indicated from the performer’s point of view. See Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007.

behind Nymph Five [the Main Nymph] just before taking off so that this goat-like leap can be seen. During the leap he turns his head to look back at her, swinging his right arm down and out in a V toward her, thumb still angled; his left arms lowers toward 12 [stage left], the hand now flat, with ankle flexed. [He pauses] after landing from the leap (a deepening of the landing here gives an animal-like quality).⁴⁵

Finally, Nijinsky continued Stepanov's use of musical notes for the timing of the movements he described, and was thus able to coordinate *Faune's* steps to Debussy's score with incredible precision, measure for measure.⁴⁶ Guest attests to the score of *Faune* as validation of Nijinsky's knowledge of music, citing his "accurate handling of dupel notes in 9/8 metre and other intricacies."⁴⁷ Nijinsky was thus capable of translating his instructions to Lydia Sokolova to "walk between the bars of the music and sense the rhythm which is implied" into his score.⁴⁸ Dancers therefore frequently must initiate steps in *Faune* off-beat, that is make their preparatory gesture before a step a beat before the bar line, the actual step occurring on count one of the next measure, such as when the Joyful Nymph (N4) enters with a rhythmically uneven step pattern.⁴⁹

Sally Sommer, in commenting on the Yoav Kaddar performance in the 1989 Juilliard Dance Ensemble's production of Nijinsky's original choreography of *Faune*, assumes an inviolable connection between the role of Faun and Nijinsky's performance: "From now on,

⁴⁵ Guest, Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 40. Guest and Jeschke provided the last "interpretation" of the notated jump.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 20, 147.

⁴⁷ Guest, "The Hunt is Over," 424. In 1936, Igor Stravinsky dismissed Nijinsky as a musical ignoramus, stating "The poor boy knew nothing of music," although he had praised Nijinsky's choreography for his *Le Sacre du Printemps* at its infamous 1913 premiere. See Parker, *Nijinsky*, 140. See also Krasovskaya, *Nijinsky*, 269. In 1967, however, four years before his death, Stravinsky recanted his criticism of Nijinsky's musicianship, stating that Nijinsky's choreography of *Sacre* had been the best. See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 471.

⁴⁸ Lydia Sokolova, and Richard Buckle, *Dancing for Diaghilev: The Memoirs of Lydia Sokolova*, The Lively Arts (San Francisco: Mercury House, 1989), 40.

⁴⁹ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 170, 184. See also Guest, "The Hunt is Over," 424.

dancers who take the role of the faun will be forced to discover the power of simplicity, of stillness, the elegance of unadornment. But this, precisely, is what Nijinsky could do so well.”⁵⁰

Sally Sommer’s assumption of the connection between the role of the Faun and Nijinsky’s performance of the Faun is not based solely on the fact that Nijinsky performed the role of the Faun in the past. Her assumption is based on the fact that Nijinsky choreographed the stance and movements of the Faun and that therefore, Nijinsky was choreographing for himself, knowing that he would be performing the role of the Faun. The Faun’s movements, many of them initiated off the beat as discussed, as well as the Faun’s seminal, physically demanding stance, were possible, and intrinsically viable, for Nijinsky’s moving body.

Claudia Jeschke

In 1974, Claudia Jeschke, a doctoral student whose thesis was dance notation systems, wished to include in her research what if any details of Nijinsky’s system were obtainable. At first unwilling to speak to Jeschke about his system, Nijinsky’s widow, Romola, sought her help two years later in deciphering the *Faune* score. Frustrated for years by Romola’s disorganization in regards to the substance and whereabouts of Nijinsky notation material, in 1984 Jeschke teamed up with Dr. Ann Hutchinson Guest and finally succeeded in decoding Nijinsky’s dance notation system.⁵¹ Jeschke, currently a professor at the University of Salzburg, and inspired by that historic research on Nijinsky’s system and the reconstruction of *Faune*, continues to explore the types of “performative knowledge” that may be made available through the system of notating dance movement and the reconstructions derived from it.⁵²

⁵⁰ Sally Sommer, “Reflections on an Afternoon,” *Choreography and Dance* 1 (1991): 84.

⁵¹ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune*, 7-8. Later in this chapter in the section “Nijinsky’s Praxis,” I detail the sequence of events that lead up to the deciphering of Nijinsky’s dance notation system and score of *Faune*.

⁵² Jeschke, “Notation Systems,” 4.

In her seminal article “Notation Systems as Texts of Performative Knowledge,” Jeschke’s analyses of nineteenth century dance notation systems and the “traces of non-literary performative knowledge” they contain create a theoretical template which I may place over Nijinsky’s own original dance notation system.⁵³ Jeschke is, as far as I can ascertain from my own research and by her own affirmation, the only scholar pursuing this scholarship.⁵⁴ Her highly original research provides me with a kind of crucial theoretical reassurance with respect to my phenomenological experience in viewing the Kaddar performance in *Faune*. My own written correspondence with Jeschke about Nijinsky’s system also strengthen my belief that traces of Nijinsky’s performativity are to be found within his score of *Faune*.

Jeschke focuses on three published notation systems—Théleur’s *Letters on Dancing* (1831), Saint-Léon’s *Stenochorégraphie* (1852), and Stepanov’s *Alphabet des Mouvements du Corps Humain* (1892)—to trace the evolution the notators’ approach to the relationship between the body and its movement, to analyze how that relationship affects the form of the notation, and to identify the fragments of extant performativity.

According to Jeschke, Théleur’s system was the first to demonstrate a “definite though implicit interest in the construction of the whole body,”⁵⁵ The incorporation of the whole dancer’s body in notation continued with Saint-Léon’s use of stick figures, stick figures that indicate more than movements for the legs, but subtle positioning of arms, shoulders and head, known as “épaulement.”⁵⁶ The Russian dance master Stepanov, although not the first to employ musical notes as the basis for his notation, elaborated upon Saint-Léon’s separation of dancers’ body parts by indicating much more detailed delineation, or segmentation, of body parts, as well

⁵³ Jeschke, “Notation Systems,” 4.

⁵⁴ Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, Nov. 3, 2008.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

as creating a hierarchy for this segmentation, notating from the center of the body to the periphery that is “from the torso to the distant joints.”⁵⁷

Through her analysis of the segmentation employed in the Stepanov system, Jeschke begins to connect the elements of a notation system with the “performative knowledge” manifest within its form—the score—and its content—the actual performance of the dance. While in the eighteenth century the recording of dance movement followed only one part of the dancer’s body, following “two legs executing the movement *in space* [emphasis by author],”⁵⁸ Jeschke analyzes the representation of segmentation in nineteenth century dance notation systems as a direct indication of the “way movements might have been conducted and how they might have been perceived”⁵⁹ by both choreographer and dancer. In segmentation, the “observation of body weight” within separate parts of the dancer’s body leads to the concept of performance as “an issue of muscular energy.”⁶⁰ Movement that allows for the description of and emphasizes the segmentation of the dancer’s body—arms, legs, head and torso—also allows for and assumes a performance that emphasizes synchronized movements. A prerequisite to synchronizing movement is to isolate and segment body parts. According to Jeschke, “Isolation in nineteenth-century dance meant energetically initiated virtuosity—more turns, higher legs, faster jumps.”⁶¹ Nineteenth century male and female ballet dancers such as Fanny Ellsler, Jules Perrot (also the choreographer of *Giselle*), Carlotta Grisi, Lucille Grahn, and the legendary Italian ballerina Marie Taglioni were all noted for their abilities to isolate and bring attention to technical brilliance enacted by specific body parts. Thus the Stepanov notation system, for example, in its recording of dance movements within a whole, yet segmented, body, presents “idealized,

⁵⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 6.

⁶¹ Ibid., 6.

aesthetized physicalization of body and movements,” and in the reading of dance notation systems, and in the reconstruction of dance scores, Jeschke argues for the presentation of “models of—or, better, foci on—how they [this idealized physicalization] might have been applied in dancing.”⁶²

Thus dance notation systems, according to Jeschke, act as documentaries for the “body activities” of the past, “body activities” being her term for the “way movements might have been conducted and how they might have been perceived; the term [body activities] does not simply mean the movements according to a specific movement code, though it is not *not* those movements.”⁶³ Jeschke gives this imbrication of “pure body activities” and the “nonverbal communication focusing on physical experience” the term “performative knowledge.”⁶⁴ Significantly for this project, Jeschke makes an argument for that which is considered ephemeral, nonspecific, or ambiguous, to be ascertained within the material symbols of a dance notation system, and realized within the dance reconstruction.

Jeschke construes the reconstruction of dance performance from a score as a process providing both the substantial steps of the notated dance, as well as the “fragments” of performance, the traces of the “evidence of appearance” of the moving body or bodies that performed, or as Jeschke describes it, the “performative implications” that are found in the reconstructed score.⁶⁵ It is then within that reconstruction that focuses on the integration of both pure movement and conceptual essence, in which “traces of non-literary performative knowledge can be discovered, although sometimes only as fragments.”⁶⁶

⁶² Ibid., 6.

⁶³ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 4, 5.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 4.

Along with the indications of body activity that make up the material evidence of the performance within the notation system, Jeschke also theorizes about what she calls the “performative knowledge and strategies of the time” that can be ascertained and recovered during the process of dance reconstruction.⁶⁷ Her focus, however, rather than being on the audience response at the time of the dance’s original performance—which would speak to the perceptual or phenomenological impression of a historically-biased audience—is instead on the strategies of those most intimately engaged in the performance of the dance: the performer, the choreographer, and the notator.⁶⁸ Even the physical act of notating connects to the physical “act of choreo-*graphing*,” and again Jeschke returns to the choreographer/notator when she refers to the act of choreographing as the “structural relation between *knowing*, *writing*, and *inventing* body movement in space.”⁶⁹

Thus Jeschke acknowledges that segmentation and its representation in nineteenth century dance notation systems reflects the historic emergence of virtuosity in dance performance. Yet while she sees notation systems as memory holders, “reminiscent of performance rules” of the choreographer and his/her time, retaining “evidence of appearance,” and transferring “dance concepts,” Jeschke also categorizes a dance score as a known quantity by the choreographer and notator; the score in and of itself is, in Jeschke’s words, “resultative,” and “fulfills issues already known.”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Ibid, 4.

⁶⁸ Jeschke does not call upon cultural context to round out the knowledge of physical experience and perception. She speaks of the choreographer’s and notator’s relationship to the performance with historical background as inherent yet neither to be dissected away nor inserted into the idea of performance. Jeschke writes, “The more objective experience of the score: a proof of high movement intelligence which makes sense by just executing the actions. And it makes even more sense when used as a starting point for performance. The score for me is a reservoir of performance possibilities/performative potential.” See Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, May 8, 2007.

⁶⁹ Jeschke, “Notation Systems,” 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 4-6. It should be noted that Jeschke, when she refers to a dance score as “resultative,” that she is employing examples of dances, such as Saint-Léon’s notated sequence from his ballet *La Vivandière*, and in fact Nijinsky’s

Yet, significantly for this study, Jeschke argues for the creation of “new knowledge” inherent within the reconstruction of dance through a score notated from a specific notation system. The reconstruction “enables a new perspective on knowing,” hence forming the dynamic possibility for “new knowledge” for both performer and audience.⁷¹

Jeschke on Nijinsky

In her seminal article “Notation Systems as Texts of Performative Knowledge,” Jeschke speaks theoretically of the strategies and dance concepts transferred from the choreographer onto his or her notation system, and the new performative knowledge revealed in the reconstruction of a dance score. In response to my own questions about what may be found of Nijinsky’s performative knowledge or performativity within the score of *Faune*, Jeschke agreed to apply her theories to Nijinsky’s notation system and his one realization of that system, the score of *Faune*.⁷²

For an individual, including this researcher, unfamiliar with the particularities of dance notation systems, the following technical description of Nijinsky’s notation system by Jeschke may not readily convey its revolutionary approach to the dancer’s body and to its movements:

Nijinsky uses a tripartite system with five lines placed over one another in each third. In the lower third he notates the movement of the legs, in the centre third the movement of the arms and in the upper third the movements of the torso and

Faune, that had already been performed, and whose “results” on stage and in performance were in fact known by each choreographer.

⁷¹ Ibid., 4-5.

⁷² In her article, “Re-Constructions: Figures of Thought and Figures of Dance,” Jeschke does describe and analyze Nijinsky’s notation system and the initial reconstructions of *Faune*. She does not, however, apply her theories on performative knowledge to the exploration of how Nijinsky’s notation system reflects Nijinsky’s own performative knowledge. See Sabine Gehm, Pirkko Husemann, and Katharina von Wilcke, eds., *Knowledge in Motion: Perspectives of Artistic and Scientific Research in Dance* (Bielefeld Piscataway, NJ: Transcript; Distributed in North America by Transaction Publishers, 2007): 173-184.

the head. . . . The notation is based on an innovative system analysis of motion, which isolates the movements of the individual parts of the body.⁷³

In beginning to articulate the meaning of this “tripartite” system, Jeschke unequivocally states, “Nijinsky’s system is the first in the history of notation systems that gives the same design for the three body zones (head and torso, arms, legs and feet).”⁷⁴

Jeschke then continues to apply her theory that dance notation systems “refer to the act of choreo-*graphing*, to the structural relation between *knowing*, *writing*, and *inventing* body movement in space”⁷⁵ to Nijinsky’s system: “He [Nijinsky] considers these zones [head and torso, arms, legs and feet] as equally important for the movement execution. . . . He is very aware of synchronization, i.e., simultaneity and successivity.”⁷⁶

While Jeschke continues to applaud Nijinsky’s choreographic innovations in “observing the movements of the torso: mainly torsions (which result in making the pelvis a center) and complex contractions of the upper body sector,”⁷⁷ she then also, and most significantly for this project, acknowledges Nijinsky’s choreographic strategies as tracings of Nijinsky’s performativity. Hence Jeschke ends her statement that “he [Nijinsky] considers these [three body] zones as equally important for the movement execution” with a crucial parenthetical: “(which is awareness and as such an important part of performance).”⁷⁸ Thus Jeschke makes the practical observation that Nijinsky’s notation system has been created through Nijinsky’s own awareness of how the body moves in performance. From Nijinsky’s process of creation then Jeschke states that his score reveals “*Ereignis, Momenhaftigkeit*, something close to a

⁷³ Jeschke, “Re-Constructions: Figures of Thought and Figures of Dance,” 177.

⁷⁴ Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, May 8, 2007.

⁷⁵ Jeschke, “Notation Systems,” 5.

⁷⁶ Email Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, May 8, 2007.

⁷⁷ In chapter five, “Performative Traces of Nijinsky in the Score of *Faune*,” I discuss in detail the significance of Nijinsky’s “complex contractions of the upper torso” as connecting Nijinsky’s performing body with the notation and execution of the Faun’s famous stance.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, May 8, 2007.

‘performative quality.’ That means that . . . the score depict[s] two different things: the Nijinsky ‘personal style’ as well as one of the choreographic identities of the of the *work*.”⁷⁹

In choosing the term “personal style,” as well as the word “depict” (whose simple definition is “to represent by a picture”),⁸⁰ Jeschke calls attention to the visual representation of Nijinsky’s performativity within the score of *Faune*, rather than mere “performative knowledge,” which she designates as “choreographic identities of the work.” In suggesting that Nijinsky’s “personal style” is to be found within his score of *Faune*, Jeschke acknowledges that the body in performance that Nijinsky is aware of *is his own*. Thus I may claim that Nijinsky analyzed the separation, or segmentation, found in his own body, a segmentation that he transferred into his score as the energized but relaxed body stance for the Faun.⁸¹

Theory: The Perceptual Body of Nijinsky

The experience of dancing and of viewing dancing may be theorized within the experience of performance—that is, of the dancer’s body in movement before the viewer. I elaborate upon the original research of Portuguese philosopher Jose Gil and performance scholar and practitioner Phillip B. Zarrilli to provide a theoretical reading of both Yoav Kaddar’s experience in performing the role of the Faun as choreographed and recorded by Nijinsky in his original notation system and my own experience in viewing that performance. Both Gil and Zarrilli in turn elaborate upon Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological theories of the sensual and encountering body of subject and object. Their research is original, and particularly essential to this project in that their discourse incorporates the body that performs as well as the body that views that performance. Gil’s research in fact deals specifically with the body that *dances* and

⁷⁹ Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, June 5, 2007.

⁸⁰ Merriam Webster, "Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary," edited by Frederick C. Mish (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1988), 340.

⁸¹ In chapter five, “New Evidence: Performative Traces of Nijinsky in *Faune*” (239-243), I provide a complete analysis of the Faun’s iconic body stance, and its reflection of Nijinsky’s performativity.

the body that views that dancing. Gil provides significant theoretical support for my belief that I experienced traces of Nijinsky's performativity as I viewed Kaddar's performance of the faun. Thus I will begin with an exploration of Jose Gil's theory of the "space of the body" and the "virtual body" that this space creates.

The "Space of the Body"

In his 2006 article, "Paradoxical Body,"⁸² Gil proposes that as "dance transforms the body,"⁸³ the dancing body, in turn, creates a field of perceptual energy. This field of energy begins with the movement of the dancer and multiplies out, creating a perceptual "double" that is experienced by both the dancer and the viewer. Gil begins his argument with a rather abstruse definition:

We know that the dancer evolves in a particular space, different from objective space. The dancer does not move in space, rather, the dancer secretes, creates space with his movement. . . . We call it *the space of the body*. . . . *The space of the body* is the skin extending itself into space; it is skin becoming skin—thus, the extreme proximity between things and the body.⁸⁴

Gil then provides an "everyday" example that clarifies the experiential extension of the sensual "antennae" of the body:

We can perform the following experiment: let's immerse ourselves completely naked in a deep bathtub, leaving only our heads sticking out of the water; let's drop onto the surface of the water, near our submerged feet, a spider. The water

⁸² Gil's book, *Metamorphoses of the Body*, explores his concepts of "space of the body" among a wider spectrum of theory. While I reference this book in chapter five, "Paradoxical Body" constituted my initial encounter with Gil's theories, and I choose to employ it solely within this chapter. See José Gil, *Metamorphoses of the Body* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

⁸³ Gil, "Paradoxical Body," 27.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 21, 23.

created a space of the body defined by the skin-membrane of the bathtub's water. From this example we can extract two consequences pertaining to the properties of the space of the body: it prolongs the body's limit beyond its visible contours; it is an intensified space, when compared with the habitual tactility of the skin.⁸⁵

Thus Gil acknowledges and expands upon Merleau-Ponty's assertion that the body experiences itself and all phenomena outside of itself as not "in" space but "of" space, and will explore the fluidity of interior and exterior through the parameter of the "space of the body."⁸⁶

While Gil argues for this "everyday" experience of the space of the body, his theoretical focus is upon the body that moves outside of that which is considered everyday—the body that dances. Gil's analogy to classical ballet practice provides the practical entryway for me to begin to connect the highly theoretical concept of the "space of the body" both to the material and "internal" body of Yoav Kaddar as the Faun:

The learning of classical ballet technique shows this [the space of the body] clearly. Before the mirror, the student learns how a certain position of limbs corresponds to a certain kinesthetic tension, thus constructing a kind of interior map of those movements that will allow him to move in a precise manner, but without having to take recourse to an exterior image of the body.⁸⁷

Thus the deliberate, repetitive, intensified movements of the dancer—as opposed to the everyday movements of walking and running in which space is assumed—extends his or her body into a "perceptual body" that does not require conscious "supervision" of that body's external

⁸⁵ Ibid., 22.

⁸⁶ Ibid., Translator's Note, 23. See also Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 67-148, 203-298.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 23.

appearance, that is, where “the gestures of the dance unfold.”⁸⁸ As a former ballet dancer, I have experienced this aforementioned perceptual awareness of the external movements of my body, and this perceptual awareness has allowed me to “forget” the need to consciously direct the choreography or steps of the dance.⁸⁹ Thus the external movements of the body are manifested as a “perceptual” or “virtual” body that extends itself through space, through the choreography.

The “space of the body,” however also encompasses the internal dancer’s body that exists separately yet interconnectedly with the exterior movements of the dancer’s body:

Dancing movements are learned. It is necessary to adapt the body to the rhythms and to the imperatives of the dance. Muscles, tendons, organs must become the means for the unimpeded flow of energy. In terms of space this means to tightly imbricate interior space and external space, the inside of the body invested with energy, and the outside where gestures of the dance unfold.⁹⁰

Thus this “lived experience of the dancer,”⁹¹ presents the dancer’s body as also incorporating the space of the body “inwardly.”

Gil uses the “trance dance,” or possession dance, to exemplify the type of dancing body that is both material/actual (internal) and perceptual/virtual (external):

⁸⁸ Ibid., 23. In a fascinating reference, Gil provides the following examples of a “practical” application of the space of the body: “We know that Nijinsky over-articulated movements, thus de-multiplying distances by means of microscopic decompositions of movement. He thereby dilated the space of the body; he gave the impression of having all the time in the world, dislocating in space with the superb ease of someone creating (unfolding) space as he moved.” He later writes: “If a certain scenic place all of a sudden becomes unlimited, if the height toward which Nijinsky projects himself acquires an infinite dimension, it is because a depth was born there.” See Gil, “Paradoxical Body,” 26, 27.

⁸⁹ The experience that I describe connects somewhat to Sheets-Johnstone’s description of the “improvised,” dance: “How is such a dance possible? How can dancers create a dance on the spot? . . . In the course of giving this description, we will find that what is essential is a non-separation of thinking and doing, and that the very ground of this non-separation is the capacity, indeed, the very experience of the dancer, to be thinking in movement.” However, Sheets-Johnstone deconstructs the term “thinking” when she describes “the thought itself is. . . motional through and through; at once spatial, temporal, dynamic.” See Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Primacy of Movement* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1999), 485-486.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 23.

⁹¹ Ibid., 23.

We can see the body as a receptacle for movement. In possession dances (in the tarantella, in the “Saint Vitus dances,” and in many others) it is the body itself that becomes a scene or a space of the dance, as if someone—another body—was dancing inside the possessed subject. The dancer’s body unfolds in the dancing body-agent and in the body-space where it dances, or rather, the body-space that movement traverses and occupies.⁹²

The possessed subject, whose movements are somehow both experienced and witnessed as separate yet *not* separate from the subject himself, then parallels the dancer whose choreographed movements are both experienced and witnessed as separate yet *not* separate from the dancer.⁹³ Hence the external movements of the body may be manifested in performance as the extending, perceptual, virtual body that performs *with* the internal dancer’s, energized body. Dance performance, then, within Gil’s argument, “tightly imbricate[s] interior space and external space.” Thus all dance performance—created and viewed within the imbricated virtual and real parameters of the space of the body—may be read as a “possession dance,” where it is “necessary that interior space partake so intimately of exterior space that movement *seen* from the outside coincides with movement live or seen from the inside.”⁹⁴

At this point in Gil’s argument I begin to find a vivid description of my experience in watching Kaddar’s body, a body that in Gil’s words “produces a space of the body that implies force and that feeds itself through tensions,”⁹⁵ while enacting movements, gestures, and stances produced by Nijinsky through the vehicle of his score. I recall now my impression as I watch the Juilliard Dance Ensemble’s performance of *Faune*: “He [Kaddar] is tall, lanky, not at all

⁹² Ibid., 23.

⁹³ I will explore the role of the audience later in this section.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 23.

Nijinsky physically, yet the choreography keeps him so centered in something having to do with Nijinsky that I see both of them and do not solely wish for either.” Through Gil’s understanding of the space of the dancer’s body, within my viewing of the Kaddar performance of Nijinsky’s choreography of the Faun, I replace the external, virtual body with Nijinsky’s score, a score that Jeschke’s scholarship assures me contains traces of both Nijinsky’s performative knowledge and performativity, and the internal, material body with Yoav Kaddar himself.

I am reassured also that within my role of spectator of Kaddar’s performance of the Faun, I am also subject not only to the liminal quality of the stage, but to the phenomenological parameters, or lack thereof, of the space of the body. Gil writes:

From the start, the first aspect creates a deep impression on the spectator looking at the dancer on the stage (the spectator will endure simultaneously a process of becoming-dancer): all of the body’s movement, or all movement coming out of the body, smoothly transports the spectator across space. No material obstacle, object or wall, impedes the spectator’s trajectory, which does not end in any real place. No movement ends in a precise location within the objective scene—just as the limits of the dancer’s body never prohibit his gestures from extending beyond his skin. There is an infinity appropriate to danced gestures that only the space of the body is able to engender.⁹⁶

Thus, through the theory and practice of the space of the body, I as spectator may simultaneously experience, observe, and *perform* Nijinsky’s notated movements of the Faun and Kaddar’s materialization of those movements.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 25-26.

The “Chiasmatic Body”

While not dealing as explicitly as Gil with the theoretical and practical implication of the dancing body, in his article “Toward a Phenomenological Model of the Actor’s Embodied Modes of Experience,”⁹⁷ Zarrilli applies what he terms “post-Merleau-Ponty phenomenology” to the question: “[H]ow can the contemporary actor’s body and experience in performance be theorized?”⁹⁸ In exploring this question, Zarrilli extends upon Drew Leder’s scholarship on “the modes of bodily absence,” and offers a description very similar to Gil’s of the relationship between energy and form within the performer’s body. Zarrilli proposes “two additional modes of absence characteristics of acting: an aesthetic ‘inner’ bodymind discovered and shaped through long-term, extra-daily modes of practice, and an aesthetic ‘outer’ body constituted by the actions/tasks of a performance score—that body offered for the abstractive gaze of the spectator.”⁹⁹

Additionally, Zarrilli offers a solution to the problem of corporeal absence by describing a “chiasm,” a “braiding, intertwining, or criss-crossing” of modes of bodily experience. Zarrilli argues for four modes of bodily experience that may create a “lived experience” within the performer’s body: (1) the “ecstatic surface,” that incorporates and may be seen essentially as the body’s five senses, (2) the “depth/visceral recessive,” from Leder’s scholarship, that incorporates the body’s internal organs and processes, (3) the “subtle inner bodies,” which Gil refers to as the

⁹⁷ Phillip B. Zarrilli has written extensively on Indian performance forms, including the dance-drama Kathakali and the Indian martial art, Kalarippayattu.

⁹⁸ Zarrilli, “Toward a Phenomenological Model of the Actor’s Embodied Modes of Experience,” 653. Later in the article he writes, “This essay begins with an examination of Drew Leder’s post-Merleau-Ponty account of one of the most vexing problems of the body—corporeal absence, i.e., the question of why the body, as a ground of experience... tends to recede from direct experience” and therefore becomes absent to us.” See Drew Leder, *The Absent Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 1.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 655.

internal, energized, material body, and (4) the “fictive body of the actor’s score,” which Gil refers to as the external, virtual body that extends itself through the space of the body.¹⁰⁰

Zarrilli’s modes of bodily experience provide a more multi-layered, but substantially similar, paradigm to is the one proposed by Gil in “Paradoxical Body.” Zarrilli triggers a provocative, theoretical question for us, however, when he states, “One [the performer] is in a constant process of making adjustments to one’s presence and/or absence in relation to the bodies as they encounter *this particular* moment of enactment of a score.”¹⁰¹ According to Zarrilli’s argument, if Nijinsky’s score of *Faune*, as the single example of his notation system, constitutes a mode of “corporeal absence,” his score, in Zarrilli’s words an “aesthetic outer body,” may become “lived experience” if “intertwined” with Yoav Kaddar’s ecstatic surface body, recessive body, and aesthetic inner bodymind. If Nijinsky’s score is essential to the “lived experience” of Yoav Kaddar in his performance of the Faun, then Zarrilli’s paradigm allows for the possibility, notwithstanding Nijinsky’s *corporeal absence*, of Nijinsky’s *performative presence* within the “chiasmatic” body of Kaddar.

Now in the theoretical possession of a view of Nijinsky’s notation system and its only realization, the score of *Faune*, as containing fragments of performative knowledge, performativity, and performative presence of Nijinsky, I provide the narrative of Nijinsky’s incredible praxis—performance, choreography, notation, and reconstruction—that created an historic intimacy of dance interpretation.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 665.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 666.

¹⁰² See Karin Hermes-Sunke, “Reconstruction/Recreation/Reflections: Practice and Esteem of Repertoire,” in *ICKL* (1999): n.p., for graphs depicting the hierarchy of dance interpretation.

Nijinsky's Praxis in *Faune*

The premiere performance of *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* took place on May 29, 1912, at Paris's Théâtre du Châtelet, featuring Vaslav Nijinsky, Lydia Nelidova, and Bronislava Nijinska. The performance created a public stir not only because of its angular, "walking" movements that were seemingly disconnected to Debussy's celebrated music, but most famously to Nijinsky's final masturbatory pantomime. The media-conscious Diaghilev, to continue stirring the public pot, ordered a second performance immediately after the curtain fell on the first.¹⁰³ Thus the effect of the *Faune* was powerful and immediate, upon both the audience who viewed the first and succeeding performances, and the artists and media who passionately aligned themselves either for or against Nijinsky's work.

Nijinsky's seminal vision of the ballet appeared to him, however, two years earlier in the summer of 1910, when he and designer Léon Bakst discussed themes for the new ballet while vacationing with Nijinsky's mother and sister in Carlsbad, later joining Diaghilev in Venice for further discussions.¹⁰⁴ The dancer's much-deserved holiday had taken place after the end of the Ballets Russes' second Paris season, in which Nijinsky had triumphed as Harlequin in *Carnivale*, The Golden Slave in *Schéhérazade*, performing in Danse Siamoise and as the "goblin" in the "Kobold" variation in *Les Orientales*. While clearly it was through Diaghilev's authority as impresario that Nijinsky was to be given the opportunity to choreograph a new ballet, Nijinsky had probably requested such an opportunity, or at the very least completely embraced it when offered.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Parker, *Nijinsky*, 124.

¹⁰⁴ Neăgu, *Afternoon of a Faun: Mallarmé, Debussy, Nijinsky*, 19. See also Romola de Pulszky Nijinsky, *Nijinsky* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1934), 148. Diaghilev would first make note of the new ballet in a September 1910 entry in his "black book." See Neăgu, *Faun*, 20.

¹⁰⁵ Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 162. At this point it is perhaps necessary to refer again to dancer Serge Lifar's fantastical version of the origin of *Faune's* choreography, which he wrote was actually Diaghilev himself, who at the Piazza San Marco with Nijinsky, leapt to his feet and "began to depict the dense angular plastic movements of this ballet,

Upon their return to Paris, Bakst and Nijinsky, working together on the theme of the new ballet, had made an appointment to meet in the antique sculpture rooms at the Louvre museum in order to study styles for its décor. While Bakst waited impatiently for the choreographer in the floor showing ancient Greek sculpture, Nijinsky stood one floor above him, absorbed by the Egyptian sculpture.¹⁰⁶ It may have been during this return to Paris that Diaghilev sought Debussy's use of his *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un Faune* (1894) as the score of Nijinsky's ballet.¹⁰⁷

First performed in Paris on December 22, 1894, Debussy's music was inspired by the 1876 poem by symbolist Stéphane Mallarmé that creates an imagistic monologue for a satyr or faun who is interrupted in his slumbers by a group of nymphs.¹⁰⁸ After the Faun's sensual, erotic encounter with the queen, the queen is rescued by her sisters, and the faun is left alone again to dream over the events of the afternoon.

In Paris the dancer had evolved his fragmentary, theoretical ideas for the work. When Nijinsky returned to St. Petersburg in December of 1910 to perform at the Mariinsky Theatre,¹⁰⁹ he first spoke to his sister, Bronislava Nijinska, about the new ballet:

and so enthused Nijinsky that for a time all else was ousted from his mind." The event recounted by Lifar as taking place in 1911 and not 1910, has been universally acknowledged as invention by either Diaghilev and/or Lifar, but is significant of the assumption of Nijinsky as a "genius savant," incapable of aesthetic, intellectual, or theoretical analysis, an assumption created at least partially by Diaghilev himself, both during and after Nijinsky's career with the Ballets Russes. See Lifar, *Serge Diaghilev*, 146.

¹⁰⁶ Reiss, *Nijinsky*, 154. The story of Bakst and Nijinsky missing each other at the Louvre was told to Reiss by French artist Michel Larionov, a friend of Diaghilev, in an interview in Paris in July 1954.

¹⁰⁷ Neâgu, *Faun*, 21.

¹⁰⁸ According to Nijinsky's wife, the dancer never read the Mallarmé poem. See Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 239. Nijinsky himself, is quoted as saying "I have never read Mallarmé's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*; my command of French is not yet up to literary texts." See Neâgu, *Faun*, 43. However, there is some indication that French artists, including Jacques-Émile Blanche who had painted the famous portrait of the dancer, and knew Mallarmé as a young student, had discussed the poem with Nijinsky. See Neâgu, *Faun*, 36-37.

¹⁰⁹ Nijinsky, cast as Albrecht in *Giselle*, was dismissed by the Mariinsky Theatre after wearing a costume designed by Alexandre Benois that eschewed the traditional "modesty skirt." See chapter three, "New Photographic Evidence: Nijinsky's Performance," 113, for reference to Nijinsky's photograph in the "modesty skirt." The wearing of the shortened costume was in all probability encouraged by Diaghilev to guarantee Nijinsky's exclusive availability to the Ballets Russes. See Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 166.

Bronia, what I am going to tell you now no one must know about. . . . For the new season in Paris I am going to mount a ballet. It is going to be *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*, to the music of Debussy. . . . I want to move away from the classical Greece that Fokine likes to use.¹¹⁰ Instead, I want to use the archaic Greek that is less known and, so far, little used in the theatre. However, this is only to be the source of my inspiration. I want to render it my own way. Any sweetly sentimental line in the form or in the movement will be excluded. More may even be borrowed from Assyria than Greece.¹¹¹ I have already started to work on it in my own mind. . . . I want to show it to you.¹¹²

More than merely “showing it” to his sister, Nijinsky, now in confident possession of a clear choreographic vision, would mount the foundational poses for both the Faun and the Main Nymph on Nijinska’s body¹¹³ in rehearsals held secretly in their home; the secrecy was necessary in order to keep Michel Fokine, the Ballets Russes’ Choreographic Director, already sensitive to Nijinsky’s fame, ignorant of the dancer’s new role as choreographer. Nijinska took daily notes of these intimate rehearsals:

Whenever he had a free evening or was not attending rehearsals at the Imperial Theatre, Vaslav worked on his *Faune* at home. This all had to be kept secret, however, and so whenever he worked with me we had to work without a pianist. We already knew the music quite well, for we had heard it played by a good pianist. But to become completely familiar with the music during our rehearsals I

¹¹⁰ In such Fokine ballets as *Cleopatre* (1909), *Narcisse* (1911), *Thamar*, and *Daphnis et Chloe* (1912), the choreographer had employed exoticized movements to indicate the Egyptian and Greek settings of the ballets.

¹¹¹ Nijinsky’s reference to Assyria points to the possible validity of the previously described story told in 1954 to Nijinsky biographer Françoise Reiss by Michel Larionov, in which Nijinsky was so absorbed by Egyptian sculpture. See Reiss, *Nijinsky*, 102.

¹¹² Qtd. in Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 315.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 327. Nijinska’s words, “So far he had mounted the Faune, also the Principal Nymph [on me]” points to the possibility that Nijinsky mounted all roles, including all of the nymphs, on Nijinska.

would play two or three bars to Vaslav, and he would then dance or demonstrate the movements. I would then repeat those steps as best I could without the music.¹¹⁴

In Nijinsky's visual concept of the ballet, dancers' poses created a series of tableaux that resembled the two-dimensional figures on ancient Greek vases and Egyptian murals. In order to manifest this two-dimensionality in *Faune*'s static tableaux, Nijinsky experimented with postures that rejected classical ballet's turn out of the hips. The late Marie Rambert, the founder of English ballet and Nijinsky's assistant in staging *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913), said that Nijinsky created every choreographic work, including *Faune*, from one essential position or pose, from which he then created a "simple vocabulary" of steps, "mostly plain walking, running and simple jumping,"¹¹⁵ in the case of *Faune*, walking, running, and a single jump for the Faun that Nijinsky labeled as the "goat jump."¹¹⁶ In *Faune*, the seminal posture was "feet and hands . . . parallel to the footlights, with the body facing the lights."¹¹⁷ In order to affect the transitions between these tableaux without breaking the two-dimensional effect, in addition to enacting whatever traveling movement Nijinsky needed to further *Faune*'s narrative, he also abandoned classical ballet's pointed toes (*sur la pointe*) in favor of a naturalistic heel-first walking movement.¹¹⁸

The choreography of a classical ballet, within its initial intellectual, theoretical, roots—that is choreography as understood within the mind of the choreographer, and without its embodiment by a dancer—constitutes a very particular praxis: the choreography's conception, or

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 315.

¹¹⁵ Qtd. in Millicent Hodson, "Ritual Design in the New Dance: Nijinsky's Choreographic Method," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 4, no. 1 (1986): 66.

¹¹⁶ Marie Rambert, *Quicksilver: The Autobiography of Marie Rambert* (London, New York: Macmillan: St. Martin's Press, 1972), 63.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁸ Neâgu, *Faun*, 22.

theory, relies upon an assumption of past practice, a lexicon of movements that lend themselves to the creation of a series of steps, in ballet known as enchaînments. As Lincoln Kirstein wrote, ballet choreography “rests on an inherited academy, its presentation an equanimity and a body of long-tested practice. Ballets are planned, not improvised; they draw on past resources.”¹¹⁹

The choreography of *Faune* constituted a revolutionary abandonment of traditional balletic movements.¹²⁰ Nijinsky did not simply employ Greek or Egyptian archaic forms as windowdressing for the dancers’ bodies, as Fokine did in his exotically-themed ballets *Cleopatre* (1909), *Narcisse* (1911),¹²¹ *Thamar*, and *Daphnis et Chloe* (1912). Instead Nijinsky not only replaced the steps of classical ballet with his own lexicon of movements, but created in Kirstein’s words, “a new alphabet that could be used to develop many new languages.”¹²² In her journal notes, Nijinska wrote of the creation of this “alphabet”:

We [she and Nijinsky] are rehearsing in our living room. It is a large room but the only mirror is Mother’s pier mirror high on the wall. So I have brought the triple mirror from my dressing table and put it on the floor so that we can really see ourselves. At the very beginning of the ballet the Faune has a series of poses, reclining on a rock, sitting up, or kneeling. We sometimes spend all evening long

¹¹⁹ Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*, 18.

¹²⁰ Nijinsky continued this abandonment of traditional ballet “steps” in his three succeeding ballets *Jeux*, *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913), and *Till Eulenspiegel* (1916).

¹²¹ Fokine went to elaborate but unconvincing lengths to claim that Nijinsky had plagiarized Fokine’s choreography in *Faune*. See Parker, *Nijinsky*, 127. Bronislava Nijinska deals with this issue directly, stating that not only did she and her brother borrow from the choreographic style of *Faune*, which they were secretly rehearsing, to elaborate upon the choreography of their roles in *Narcisse*, performed in Paris in 1911, but that Fokine actually “distorted” *Faune*’s movements in his ballet, *Daphnis et Chloë*. See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 353, 434. Fokine’s flexibility, or lack of precision, in his choreography has been a subject of controversy particularly in regards to Nijinsky’s contribution to his roles in *Spectre*, *Petrouschka*, and *Schéhérazade*. See Beaumont, *Vaslav Nijinsky*, 15-16. See Reiss, *Nijinsky*, 86-87. Nijinska states clearly that, one at least one occasion on stage during *Schéhérazade*, Nijinsky was “amazing in his own newly created dance movements—half snake, half panther.” See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 296. Less controversial is the fact that Fokine often did not specify the choreography of groups of dancers, such as the peasants in *Petrouschka*, and the Slaves in *Schéhérazade*. In a conversation with Marie Rambert Nijinsky in fact criticized Fokine for not being more precise in his choreography. See Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 279-280.

¹²² Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*, 125.

on the floor in front of the mirror trying out different poses. Vaslav is creating his Faune by using me as his model. I am like a piece of clay that he is molding, shaping into each pose and change of movement. . . . It is amazing how Vaslav himself, from the very beginning, without any preparation, is in complete mastery of the new technique of his ballet. In his own execution each movement, each position of the body, and the expression of each choreographic moment is perfect.¹²³

Diaghilev and Leon Bakst, who had been commissioned to create the set and costume designs for the ballet, first viewed the beginnings of its choreography at the Nijinsky's home, where both Nijinsky and his sister enacted sequences between the Faun and the Main Nymph.¹²⁴ Diaghilev, in all probability alarmed at Nijinsky's choreography, which he considered too experimental and abstract, postponed the premiere of *Faune* from the 1911 to the 1912 Paris season.¹²⁵ Thus rehearsals with the full cast of *Faune* would not begin until January 1912 in Berlin.¹²⁶

The number of rehearsals required for *Faune*, a ballet only ten-and-a-half-minutes long, was unprecedented; various individuals recount that number as ranging between sixty and one hundred and twenty.¹²⁷ From all accounts, whatever the exact number, the rehearsals maintained

¹²³ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 316.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 328. According to Nijinsky's wife Romola, Nijinsky had also mounted the Faun's choreography on Alexander Gavrillov, a recent graduate of St. Petersburg's Imperial Ballet School, who had decided to immediately join the Ballets Russes rather than the Mariinsky Theatre. See Nijinsky, *Nijinsky*, 156-157. See also Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 388.

¹²⁵ It is also possible that Diaghilev was encountering negotiating problems with Debussy, who was highly unenthusiastic about the project, and that he was also concerned that Fokine would quit the company over Diaghilev's use of *Faune* before completing Fokine's ballets for the 1911 season. See Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 165.

¹²⁶ Neăgu, *Faun*, 22. Nijinska refers to the Berlin rehearsals as being with the full cast, but "unofficial." See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 404.

¹²⁷ Romola Nijinsky stated there were 120 rehearsals, however, her first introduction to Nijinsky did not take place until after the premiere of *Faune*. See Nijinsky, *Nijinsky*, 168. Marie Rambert also lists the number of rehearsals as 120, although she did not join the company until after *Faune* had opened. See Rambert, *Quicksilver*, 61. Jean-Michel Nectoux cites an interview with René Chavance the day before the ballet's premiere in which Nijinsky

a nightmarish atmosphere for both the choreographer and the dancers. The nightmare for the female dancers, excluding Bronislava Nijinska, began within the physical difficulties of achieving the unfamiliar, even torturous, poses under the relentlessly demanding eye of the world's greatest dancer. Even Nijinska, one of the strongest dancers in the company, and intellectually and artistically empathetic with Nijinsky's vision of *Faune*, had written of her first private rehearsals with her brother:

Vaslav is so demanding, unreasonably so. He wants to see his choreography instantaneously executed to perfection. He is unable to take into account human limitations. He is unwilling to realize the tremendous distance separating his vision from the means that are at the disposal of the artist. . . . He seems to forget that I am, after all, only nineteen and a girl, and naturally I can't grasp at once and render correctly his own choreographic scheme.¹²⁸

The six dancers thrust into a lexicon of movement not merely unfamiliar but alien, struggled to (1) maintain the two-dimensional poses, (2) to remain still in these poses for seconds at a time, and (3) to move from one pose to another in those same two-dimensional poses.

Nijinska wrote of the initial company rehearsals:

The artists were actually applying themselves, were trying their best. In fact as long as they were standing still, holding the pose as shown them by Vaslav, the group was very effective and approached visually what Vaslav wanted. But as soon as the nymphs had to change their poses and move, to form a new grouping or simply resume walking, they were not able to preserve the bas-relief form, to

himself states that there were sixty rehearsals. See Neâgu, *Faun*, fn. 21, 40. Bronislava Nijinska stated there were 90 rehearsals. My thought regarding Nijinska's assertion is that she may have included the private rehearsals with her brother within the total number she gives. See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 427.

¹²⁸ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 316.

align their bodies so as to keep their feet, arms, hips, shoulders, and heads in the same choreographic form.¹²⁹

Tellingly, heiress Ida Rubinstein, the untrained dancer who had caused an erotic sensation paired with Nijinsky both in *Cléopâtre* (1909) and *Schéhérazade* (1910), and whom Nijinsky had requested to dance the Main Nymph,¹³⁰ quit after one day of rehearsal. The tall and willowy Lydia Nelidova was hired by Diaghilev to replace Rubinstein, and quickly traveled from Moscow to Paris to join the cast.

It is significant to note, however, that for all of the dancers' difficulties in executing *Faune's* movements, Nijinsky's choreography does not necessarily represent an essential rejection of balletic technique. Marie Rambert, whose background was in eurythmics and trained late in classical ballet, specifically stated that classically trained ballet dancers were required to maintain the extraordinarily rigorous body posture of *Faune*.¹³¹ Edwin Denby, with only the *Faune* photographs to study, explicates the necessary paradox of ballet training within the posture of *Faune*:

But the parallel feet in . . . *Faune* . . . are not a willful contradiction of the academic principle for the sake of something new. They can, it seems to me, be

¹²⁹ Ibid., 405.

¹³⁰ Nijinsky wanted the woman dancing the Main Nymph to be statuesque, emphasizing the shortness of Nijinsky as the Faun. See Jean Michel Nectoux, "Nijinsky, Choreographer of *Faun*," in *Afternoon of a Faun: Mallarmé, Debussy, Nijinski* (New York: Vendome Press: Distributed in the U.S. by Rizzoli, 1989), 23. Sir Frederick Ashton (1904-1988) stated that Nijinsky was "a tiny bit smaller" than Mikhail Baryshnikov, who is 5'6" tall. See Mindy Aloff, *Dance Anecdotes: Stories from the Worlds of Ballet, Broadway, the Ballroom, and Modern Dance* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 39. There is anecdotal evidence that Nijinsky was 5'4" tall; photographs show him obviously shorter than Diaghilev and others. Peter Ostwald states categorically that Nijinsky was 5'4". See Ostwald, *Nijinsky*, 15.

¹³¹ Rambert, *Quicksilver*, 55. Interestingly, however, Yoav Kaddar, the first dancer to learn and perform the role of Faun from Nijinsky's original score, came late to ballet training. When accepted to the Juilliard School in 1987, he had trained in classical ballet for only two years, at the American Dance Festival while attending Sarah Lawrence College; his background was in Israel folk dance. Unlike Rambert and Denby's comments, Kaddar has stated that he feels ballet training would *not* be a help in performing *Faune's* choreography. See E-mail Interview with Yoav Kaddar, September 8, 2008. Since in the early twentieth century, ballet dancers, including Nijinsky, exhibited less ballet "turn out" of the hips than contemporary ballet dancers, it is possible that Kaddar's amount of "turn out" more closely approximated that of Nijinsky's.

properly understood only by a turned-out dancer, as Nijinsky himself clearly was. For the strain of keeping the pelvis in the position the ballet dancer holds it in for balance is much greater with parallel or turned-in feet (which contradict the outward twist of the thigh); and this strain gives a new plastic dimension to the legs and feet, if it is carried through as forcefully as Nijinsky does. I am interested too to notice that in standing Nijinsky does not press his weight mostly on the ball of the big toe, but grips the floor with the entire surface of the foot.¹³²

In deliberating choreographing against classical ballet's "sweetly sentimental line,"¹³³ Nijinsky was not merely abandoning the curve of pointed toes and curling wrists, but rejecting the mimetic representation of emotion that focused the audience's attention on the face and emotion-indicating gestures. Marie Rambert recalled that when rehearsing the young dancer who replaced Nijinska as the Joyful Nymph,¹³⁴ Nijinsky chastised her for using a "frightened" facial expression as she encountered the Faun: "Nijinsky corrected her, saying that everything he wanted was already in the movement she performed."¹³⁵ In writing of Nijinsky's performance as the Faun, Cyril Beaumont wrote, "Perhaps the most unusual characteristic of Nijinsky's portrait was this lack of emotion, all feeling being subject to the exigencies of pure form."¹³⁶

During the stressful rehearsals of *Faune*, Nijinsky commented to his sister, "Don't worry, Bronia. I have no doubts of the merits of my ballet. I know that I have created *L'Après-midi d'un*

¹³² Denby, "Notes," 19.

¹³³ Qtd. in Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 315.

¹³⁴ In July 1912, Nijinska had married Alexander Kotchetovsky. When she became pregnant, she had to leave both the cast of *Faune* and rehearsals for her role as The Chosen Victim in *Les Sacre du Printemps*. See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 438, 461-462.

¹³⁵ Paraphrased in Quentin Crisp, "Marie Rambert and Nijinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*," *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 19, no. 1 (2001): 5.

¹³⁶ Qtd. in Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*, 126. While *Faune* was not performed in London in the summer of 1912, Beaumont viewed the production the following February (1913).

Faune exactly as I see it.”¹³⁷ However confident Nijinsky wished to appear to his sister, he was undoubtedly aware of the cast and Diaghilev’s lack of belief in the ballet. “It was almost insulting,” wrote Kirstein, “that he [Nijinsky] did not require them [the dancers] to leap, spin, or demonstrate symmetrical grace. He had sighted another range, another texture, which seemed to them idiotically simple, deformed, subhuman, and ugly.”¹³⁸ Bronislava, who attended all *Faune* rehearsals, wrote, “The majority of dancers in this ballet could not understand Vaslav’s composition. They did not like the choreography at all. They felt they were restricted and would often complain.”¹³⁹

The restriction put upon the dancers in *Faune* was not only due to what they considered to be stilted, ugly movements: Nijinsky was unrelenting in his demand for complete control of every “stilted, ugly” movement they made. It is important to note that at this point in ballet history, a librettist and designer such as Alexandre Benois in *Le Pavillon d’Armide* and Leon Bakst in *Schéhérazade* was considered to be the “creator” of the ballet over and above the work of the choreographer. Thus, at the time of *Faune*’s production, while Michel Fokine, the Choreographer or Ballet Master of the Ballets Russes, certainly created precise steps and combinations, he also often allowed the ensemble to use their own movements on stage,¹⁴⁰ and incorporated Nijinsky’s own interpretation into the roles in *Spectre de la Rose*, *Petruschka*, and

¹³⁷ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 428.

¹³⁸ Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*, 41. Léon Bakst, designer of *Faune*, was a solitary and powerful supporter of Nijinsky’s ballet. During rehearsals, in the face of Diaghilev’s ultimatum to Nijinsky to change the ballet completely, Bakst declared, “You’ll see . . . Paris will go crazy over this ballet,” turned and embraced Nijinsky. See Nectoux, “Nijinsky, Choreographer of *Faun*,” 25. See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 431.

¹³⁹ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 427-428.

¹⁴⁰ Marie Rambert, speaking of her role as one of the Shah’s wives in *Schéhérazade*, wrote: “Fokine didn’t give us any special movements for this scene. It was left to the dancers, in the way Nijinsky so much disapproved of.” See Rambert, *Quicksilver*, 78.

Schéhéraza.¹⁴¹ According to Marie Rambert, in contrast to Fokine, “Nijinsky insisted that every movement on stage be composed.”¹⁴² Nijinska wrote: “Never was a ballet performed with such musical and choreographic exactness as *L’Après-midi d’un Faune*. Each position of the dance, each position of the body down to the gesture of each finger, was mounted according to a strict choreographic plan.”¹⁴³

Yet Nijinsky’s inability to articulate his theory to the dancers only further convinced them the exactness of *Faune*’s steps mirrored not Nijinsky’s brilliance, but his freakishness. Thus as the dancers struggled to execute his choreographic vision, their skepticism extended not only to Nijinsky’s capability as a choreographer, but within that, whether the dancer, however brilliant as a performer, possessed any practical intelligence.

Nijinsky, however, had been aware long before *Faune* that people in and surrounding the company, with the exception of his sister and Marie Rambert, considered him very nearly imbecilic; as previously referenced, in the words of Misia Sert, one of Diaghilev’s socialite friends, Vaslav Nijinsky was “an idiot of genius.”¹⁴⁴ Nijinsky, who on stage in *Spectre de la Rose* caused Jean Cocteau to write, “I shall never again smell a rose without this ineffaceable phantom appearing before me,”¹⁴⁵ was described by Cocteau off stage as a “little monkey with sparse hair.”¹⁴⁶ Van Vechten, who wrote some of the most famous phenomenological descriptions of Nijinsky’s performances, wrote that Nijinsky off stage was “so timid that he seemed rather to fade into the background.”¹⁴⁷ Lydia Sokolova, a dancer who had burst into tears

¹⁴¹ Michel Larionov, art and dance historian and witness to the choreographic processes of both *Spectre de la Rose* and *Petruschka*, was convinced that Fokine allowed and encouraged Nijinsky to collaborate in the choreography of his individual roles in both ballets. See Reiss, *Nijinsky*, 87.

¹⁴² Crisp, “Marie Rambert and Nijinsky’s *Le Sacre du Printemps*,” 4.

¹⁴³ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 245.

¹⁴⁴ Krasovskaya, *Nijinsky*, 116.

¹⁴⁵ Qtd. in Parker, *Nijinsky*, 105.

¹⁴⁶ Qtd. in Ostwald, *Nijinsky*, 48.

¹⁴⁷ Qtd. in Parker, *Nijinsky*, 104.

during a *Faune* rehearsal when Nijinsky instructed her to “walk between the bars of the music,”¹⁴⁸ later exclaimed over both the ballet and Nijinsky’s performance. She wrote, however, that “reasoning and systematic organization of his thoughts were beyond him [Nijinsky],” and that as far as the “ingeniously thought out” choreography of *Faune*, “He must have had enormous help from the composer.”¹⁴⁹ Thus Nijinsky would later write in his diary: “Diaghilev realized that I was stupid and told me not to speak. . . . I now understand Dostoevsky’s ‘Idiot’ because people take me for an idiot.”¹⁵⁰

After the premiere performance of *Faune* on May 29, 1912, Nijinsky expressed bewilderment that the description that at least some audience members gave to his ballet was one of obscenity. He was quoted in a Munich newspaper in 1913: “I was astonished, indeed horrified when part of the audience and certain reviewers detected indecency in my gestures.”¹⁵¹ Gaston Calmette, editor of *Le Figaro*, refused to print Robert Brussel’s review of the production, and instead the day after the premiere wrote an editorial, lambasting Nijinsky’s choreography as both obscene and absurd:

I am . . . convinced that every reader of *Le Figaro* who was at the Châtelet yesterday will endorse my protest against the very curious spectacle that was presented to us in the guise of a profound piece of theater, redolent of beautiful art

¹⁴⁸ Sokolova, *Dancing for Diaghilev*, 40. British dancer Sokolova, new to the Ballets Russes and just cast as one of the nymphs in April 1913, was approached by Nijinsky during rehearsal: “[Nijinsky] said, with Mim [Marie Rambert] interpreting, ‘You must try to walk between the bars of the music and sense the rhythm which is implied.’ I went dizzy, clutching my head. I burst into tears, ran off the stage, and collapsed.”

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 38, 40. Debussy, however, had attended no rehearsals, except the final dress; he stated, “From time to time, I asked to attend a dress rehearsal, but the great choreographer would always tell me that it was too soon; I should wait another day.” At the final dress rehearsal, Debussy had been upset at what he considered the lack of symmetry between movement and music, regarded Nijinsky in his words, as “that young savage,” but did not seem to consider the closing moments of the ballet as offensive. There is no indication that Nijinsky asked for, or received, any advice or guidance from Debussy in terms of the choreography’s interaction with the musical score. See Neâgu, *Faun*, 32-33.

¹⁵⁰ Waslaw Nijinsky, and Joan Ross Acocella, *The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky*, Unexpurgated ed. (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 1999), 51, 120.

¹⁵¹ Qtd. in Nectoux, “Testaments,” in *Afternoon of a Faun: Mallarmé, Debussy, Nijinski* (New York: Vendome Press: 1989): 43.

and poetic harmony! . . . We were offered an unseemly Faun who perpetrated vile, bestially erotic movements, and disgustingly shameless gestures—nothing more than that. Well-deserved hisses greeted the only-too-realistic mime, the ill-shaped animal body, and the countenance even more repellant in profile than in full face. The public will never accept so brutish a reality.¹⁵²

Calmette went on to praise the “astonishing performer” in his role in *Spectre de la Rose*, which he had performed the same evening, adding, “This is the kind of show the public wants,” and then concluded by declaring that the ballet *L’Après-Midi d’un Faune* “is doomed to oblivion.”¹⁵³

In direct response to Calmette, French sculptor Auguste Rodin famously defended both Nijinsky’s performance and his ballet in print:

The doleful mime of *Petruschka* is also the dancer who, with his final leap in *Spectre de la Rose*, makes us believe that he is flying off into the infinite; but none of Nijinsky’s roles has shown off his extraordinary powers like his latest production of *L’Après-midi d’un Faune*. No more leaps and bounds here; simply the attitudes and gestures of an animal only half conscious of itself. He stretches out, leans on an elbow, walks in a crouch stands up again, moves forward and back in a rhythm sometimes deliberate, sometimes jerky, tense and angular. His gaze is watchful, his arms outstretched; his hands open wide and their fingers interlace; his head turns in deliberately awkward but convincing lust. Mime and attitude are in complete harmony, so that the whole body expresses the desires of the will; he *becomes* the character by conveying in their totality the feelings that animate it; his beauty is that of antique frescos and sculptures; see him, and you will at once

¹⁵² Qtd. in Nectoux, “A Faux Pas,” in *Afternoon of a Faun: Mallarmé, Debussy, Nijinski* (New York: Vendome Press: 1989): 47.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 47.

long to draw him or sculpt him. You might think him a statue as the curtain rises, stretched full-length on the ground, the flute to his lips; but equally astonishing is his ardor as he lies, at the close of the ballet, face down on the abandoned veil which he kisses and embraces with all the fervor of passion.

As a study in plasticity, the performance offers an entire grammar of taste. We must not be surprised to see this eclogue by a contemporary poet set in ancient Greece; the transposition is a happy opportunity to inform archaic gesture with the strength of an expressive will. I would wish so noble a venture to be more generally understood, and I trust that, besides this gala performances, the Théâtre du Châtelet will organize others, open to all artists, who may come to learn in communion with the spectacle of beauty.¹⁵⁴

Nijinsky himself was clearly aware that he was performing as he had never performed before, that he was moving his body—and other bodies—in ways he himself was dictating. The dancer, who rarely commented on his own performance, wrote, “I have danced at London’s Convent Garden, in Rome, in Brussels before King Albert and his family, in Dresden, before the Court at Vienna’s Imperial Opera, but never have I felt as I did recently in Paris when I performed *L’Après-Midi d’un Faune*. I was at once author and actor, and in both capacities I was deeply moved.”¹⁵⁵ While Diaghilev professed entrepreneurial satisfaction with the controversy over *Faune* that increased audiences and ticket sales, Nijinsky’s “revolution of authorship” began in fact to free the dancer from the iron control Diaghilev exerted upon both his career and

¹⁵⁴ Qtd. in Neâgu, *Faun*, 51.

¹⁵⁵ Qtd. in Nectoux, “Testaments,” 43.

personal life. In his sister's words, "Vaslav had found himself a choreographer. But his independence and self-assertion marked the beginning of the break with Diaghilev."¹⁵⁶

After the Parisian uprising over *Faune*, the ballet was not performed in London that summer; what did take place in London, however, was photographer Adolph De Meyer's famous session with its cast. The De Meyer photographs represent an unprecedented attempt by a performer and choreographer to preserve the detail of his work. I discuss the De Meyer, Struss, and Wálery photographs of *Faune* in chapter three; the main point of relevance here, however, is the mere fact that Nijinsky himself commissioned the publication of the De Meyer photographs, which highlights his continuing praxis within *Faune*.¹⁵⁷

In fact, it is important to recall that it was Nijinsky, although hurting financially in 1914,¹⁵⁸ who contributed most of the publication money for the photographic album; it is a logical assumption that Nijinsky himself, obsessed with every detail of his ballet, requested such a close up record of what Nijinska described as the "delicate refinement, the precision, the jewel-like work, the finely wrought filigree of his choreography," and would have wanted such a record published.¹⁵⁹ Although there is good evidence—discussed below—that Nijinsky was in the process of creating his dance notation system before the premiere of *Faune*, and therefore before the De Meyer sessions and the publication of the album in 1914, it is plausible to assume that Nijinsky wanted a literal, visual, record of his choreography to aid in the accuracy of his notation; Claudia Jeschke states that "The De Meyer photographs were extremely helpful during the time when we [she and Ann Hutchinson Guest] deciphered the score. All of them proved to

¹⁵⁶ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 431.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 508.

¹⁵⁸ Nijinsky, peremptorily fired by Diaghilev after marrying Romola De Pulska in September 1913, was in 1914 attempting to produce his own ballet company in London. See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 478, 498.

¹⁵⁹ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 316.

be very accurate.¹⁶⁰ I suppose that Nijinsky had them when he notated *Faune* three years after the premiere and when there were no dancers available [when he was under house arrest in Hungary].”¹⁶¹ Thus it may be assumed that Nijinsky wished to avail himself of every possible form of preserving the choreography of *Faune*.

By the summer of 1912 when De Meyer was in London photographing Nijinsky’s performance in and choreography of *Faune*, Nijinsky was at least in the beginning stages of creating his notation system. In April of 1912, a month before *Faune*’s premiere in Paris, Nijinsky had mentioned his notation system in an interview in *Comoedia*.¹⁶² One year later Marie Rambert provides primary evidence that Nijinsky offered to write out some choreography from *Le Sacre du Printemps*—in rehearsal in May 1913—in Nijinsky’s own notation system.¹⁶³ Given the revolutionary form of the ballet, it is probable that Nijinsky was initially motivated to create his notation system to accommodate the extreme specificity of its performance text. As Bronislava wrote:

I realize that the slightest deviation, any undue tension in the rhythm of the movements, any small mistake, could destroy the whole composition, leaving only a caricature of the choreographic idea. I can see all this very well, and even

¹⁶⁰ While there are a few of the De Meyer photographs that deviated from the choreographic tableaux or “pictures” created by Nijinsky’s choreography, the movements portrayed in the photographs of the bodies themselves do correspond completely to Nijinsky’s score. See Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 2.

¹⁶¹ Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, May 8, 2007.

¹⁶² "Interview with Nijinsky," *Comoedia*, April 18, 1912.

¹⁶³ Qtd. in Hannah Järvinen, *The Myth of Genius in Movement: Historical Deconstruction of the Nijinsky Legend* (University of Turku, 2003), 197. See Marie Rambert, “Interview with John Gruen,” New York Public Library Dance Collection (July 30, 1974). Additionally, in 1917, in South America, during what would be Nijinsky’s last tour with the Ballets Russes, he notated a few measures from the *Faune* score in an autograph book of a friend whom he and Romola were visiting. See Reiss, *Nijinsky*, 168.

so, it is often impossible for me to master the refinements of each detail of the movement.”¹⁶⁴

In 1916, however, having rejoined the Ballets Russes after his exile in Hungary during which Nijinsky had completed handwritten notation of the *Faune* score, he described his system as able “to record any complete dance.”¹⁶⁵ Thus Nijinsky had definitely begun to envision his system broadly, and in 1918, while living with his family in St. Moritz, only a year before the tragic end of his career, he wrote a letter to his friend Reynaldo Hahn:

I work, I compose new dances and I am perfecting the system of dance notation, which I have invented in these last years. I am very happy to have found this notation, which for centuries has been searched for, because I believe, and I am sure, my dear friend, you will agree, that this notation is indispensable for the development of the art of dance. It is a simple and logical means to note down movements. In a word, this system will provide the same service for the artists of the dance that musical notes give to musicians.¹⁶⁶

The uniqueness of Nijinsky’s accomplishment in creating his notation system-as-praxis cannot be overstated. In fact, to date there have been only two other individuals in the history of dance to create an original dance notation system initially to record choreographic works in which they themselves performed: Saint-Léon (1815-1870),¹⁶⁷ and American

¹⁶⁴ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 316. I refer later in this chapter to the fact that the extreme specificity and originality of the choreography in turn caused extreme distortion in that choreography when dancers relied upon memory-based, body-to-body transferences of the ballet.

¹⁶⁵ Qtd. in *Musical America*, April 15, 1916, “Nijinski Writing Book to Perpetuate His Art (by H.F.P.)”

¹⁶⁶ Qtd. in Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 6.

¹⁶⁷ Saint-Léon published his notation system in his book, *La Sténochoréographie, ou Art d’écrire promptement la danse*, published in 1852. A partner of the great ballerina Fanny Cerrito, Saint-Léon’s only enduring ballet is *Coppelia*; only a few sections of his dances have survived in his notation, including the *pas de six* (dance for six) from his ballet *La Vivandière* (circa 1845).

dancer/choreographer Eugene Loring (1911-1982).¹⁶⁸ Laban while beginning his career as a dancer and choreographer, moved relatively quickly into the role of theoretician.¹⁶⁹

By 1918 Nijinsky had either neglected to create or mislaid the original key to decoding the notation system from which he scored *Faune* in 1915. After scoring *Faune*, he made crucial, albeit incomplete, changes to his notation system, changes that caused decades of confusion on the parts of those scholars crucially involved in the attempt to decode the specific notation system Nijinsky had employed in *Faune*'s score. Thus while Nijinsky's vision for his notation system, a vision aborted at the onset of his mental illness in 1919, was to ideally provide a universal language for all dance movement, the first system that Nijinsky developed roughly between 1910 and 1915 can be read as the perfect system to record *Faune* with all its particular choreographic singularities, and to thereby provide future performers and audiences with the availability of an embodied code of movement from both Nijinsky's aesthetic mind and moving body.

Tragically, Nijinsky's dance notation system would act as neither a universal and "indispensable" means of notating dance, nor the means of preserving *Faune*'s choreography even during his lifetime. In April 1916, elaborate diplomatic channels were finalized to allow Nijinsky to leave Hungary and rejoin the Ballets Russes in New York City, Diaghilev having rehired the dancer due to critical and public demands.¹⁷⁰ That April, upon viewing the

¹⁶⁸ Eugene Loring choreographed and starred in his most famous ballet, *Billy the Kid* (1938), with a score by Aaron Copland. In the mid-1950s Loring created a notation system he coined "kinesography" in order to score *Billy the Kid* and other works. In my interview with Guest, she described Eugene Loring's dance notation system as being far inferior to that of either Saint-Léon or Nijinsky. See Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007.

¹⁶⁹ In 1928, his book *Kinetographie Laban*, initiated the dance world into what remains the most universally acknowledged system of dance notation. Ann Hutchinson Guest and Claudia Jeschke, after breaking the code of the Nijinsky score of *Faune*, then translated the score into labanotation in order to provide the Juilliard Dance Ensemble dancers with a universally studied means of accessing Nijinsky's choreography. See Guest/Jeschke, *Nijinsky's Faune Restored*, 11.

¹⁷⁰ Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 355.

performance of *Faune* now headed by Leonide Massine, Diaghilev's newest protégée,¹⁷¹ Nijinsky issued the following statement to the *New York Times*, that printed it under the headline, "Nijinsky's Objections to Diaghileff's Way of Performing His Ballet 'Faun' Leads to Its Withdrawal":

[T]he ballet, 'The Afternoon of a Faun', should not be given as the organization (The Ballet Russe) is now presenting it. That ballet is entirely my own creation, and it is not being done as I arranged it. I have nothing to say against the work of Mr. Massine, but the choreographic details of the various roles are not being performed as I devised them. I therefore insisted strongly to the organization that it was not fair to me to use my name as its author and continue to perform the work in a way that did not meet my ideas.¹⁷²

While Nijinsky had only completed the score of *Faune* in August-September 1915, and while obviously the Ballets Russes had no access to that score, there is no evidence, upon arrival in New York, that Nijinsky was given the opportunity or the time to instruct the dancers in the ballet's actual choreography through the use of his score. Instead it seems that Nijinsky, furious over the distortions to his choreography, re-rehearsed the cast throughout the summer of 1916, replacing himself in the role of the Faun, but that the rehearsals consisted of Nijinsky himself demonstrating the correct movement and style to the cast.¹⁷³ Hence it took Nijinsky's own body in movement, rather than a score and notation system whose existence evidently remained unknown to the company, to clarify *Faune's* choreography.

¹⁷¹ Massine had been taught the role of Faun by Serge Grigoriev, the "administrator" and sometime Ballet Master of the Ballets Russes. By this time, Fokine was no longer with the company. See Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 361. Bronislava Nijinska, who knew *Faune's* choreography nearly as well as her brother, was at that time living in the Soviet Union, and without legal means of leaving the country. See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 513.

¹⁷² Qtd. in Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 18.

¹⁷³ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 6.

On October 24, 1916, Nijinsky once again took the stage as the Faun. The morning after *The New York Times* commented on the transformation of both the performance of the Faun, and of the ballet in general:

Waslav Nijinsky appeared as the faun in ‘L’Après-midi d’un Faune’ with the Diaghileff Ballet Russe for the first time in America at the Manhattan Opera House last night. . . . As Mr. Nijinsky performed the principal role, it seemed hard to remember why so much unfavourable comment had been caused last season, leading to professional interest in the presentation on the part of the police.¹⁷⁴ The curious poses of the nymphs, which seemed to make ancient Greek bas-relief live again, had their old appeal. It was noticeable, however, that the queer, jerky timing of their movements which had been apparent last season was less conspicuous last night. Whether this was due to the fact that Mr. Nijinsky desired the movements to be smoother, it was nevertheless, a noticeable different effect and one which to many would probably seem to lack all of the piquancy that was formerly present.¹⁷⁵

Through the years, without Nijinsky’s presence as both choreographer and performer, both the form and content of *Faune*, the most famous manifestation of Nijinsky’s praxis, would continue to deteriorate. With frightening rapidity, Nijinsky’s mental health also deteriorated; after being left by Diaghilev with the complete directorship of the Ballets Russes’ United States tour, Nijinsky, exhibiting intermittent symptoms of manic depression, would unknowingly end

¹⁷⁴ This comment probably indicates that Nijinsky had already made the decision to modify the eroticism of the ending moments of the ballet; interestingly, the comment points to the fact that in Massine’s performance the overt eroticism was still present. It is also possible that, while Massine’s movements may have been technically similar to Nijinsky’s, they lacked Nijinsky’s infusion of eroticism and tenderness present in the score as well as in Nijinsky’s performance.

¹⁷⁵ Qtd. in Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 18.

his dancing career during the company's 1917 South American tour. His last performance of *Faune* took place on September 23, 1917, at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, Argentina.¹⁷⁶ In 1918 he moved to St. Moritz, Switzerland, with his wife and young daughter, Kyra.¹⁷⁷ At the time of his letter to Reynaldo Hahn outlining his goals for his dance notation system, Nijinsky was seen to be clearly struggling with the onset of a debilitating mental illness, even while he worked meticulously on improving if not completely re-creating his notation system, filling up four notebooks with notation and, as time went by, images of circles obsessively repeated.¹⁷⁸

On Sunday, January 19, 1919, Vaslav Nijinsky, just prior to his diagnosis of schizophrenia, danced to a simple piano accompaniment, in a private salon of the Suvretta House, a hotel in St. Moritz. This performance, which he declared to be “my marriage to God,”¹⁷⁹ simultaneously mesmerized and terrified the invited audience. On the Sunday Nijinsky, at age 29, ended his life as a dancer, he began a diary that would famously—for six and a half weeks—chronicle his deep descent into mental illness.¹⁸⁰

Over thirty years later, in 1950, the year Nijinsky died in London, his widow Romola donated the *Faune* score to the British Museum. Any key to his system Nijinsky might have

¹⁷⁶ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune*, 178.

¹⁷⁷ Their second daughter, Tamara, was born on June 14, 1920.

¹⁷⁸ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune*, 6. Nijinsky is quoted as saying to his wife, Romola, “You know, femmka, the circle is the complete, the perfect movement. Everything is based on it—life, art, and most certainly our art. It is the perfect line.” See Acocella, “Photo Call with Nijinsky: The Circle and the Center,” 66. Ann Hutchinson Guest states that while the score of *Faune* was considered legitimate, albeit unreadable, it was “his later notation ideas . . . the notebooks of 1917/1918 in which he also wrote his diary” that were considered a product of his mental delusions. Ann Hutchinson Guest, e-mail message to author, October 7, 2008.

¹⁷⁹ Nijinsky, Romola, *Nijinsky*, 424.

¹⁸⁰ *The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky* was first published in 1936. Nijinsky had written both in Russian and French. The published diary was in English, translated by Jennifer Mattingly and extensively edited by Romola Nijinsky; she cut about forty percent of the diary, mainly for content—references to sexuality, homosexual and heterosexual, Nijinsky's oft references to defecation, as well as scenes of their domestic life, were excised, euphemized, or reinterpreted. Romola also omitted a so-called “fourth notebook,” which contained letters Nijinsky had written to a wide spectrum of individuals. *The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky: The Unexpurgated Edition*, translated from the Russian by Kyril Fitzlyon and edited by dance critic Joan Acocella, was published in 1995. All of Nijinsky's writings censored by Romola were reinstated, including the “fourth notebook” containing his “new” notation material.

recorded was never found. Thus Nijinsky's notation system, and its sole example, his score of *Faune*, would lie fallow for nearly seventy-five years, petrified in the British Museum.

Although Romola had donated the score of *Faune* to the British Museum, she focused a great amount of energy on attempting to both “read” the score, and to produce a performance of Nijinsky's ballet from it. Just as Nijinsky found choreographic distortions in his ballet upon his return to the Ballets Russes in 1916, the production of *Faune* performed in the 1920s by a Ballets Russes, now headed by Leonide Massine, once again reflected Massine's convoluted memories of Nijinsky's ballet. From the 1930s to 1950s, Ballet Rambert produced a memory-based version of *Faune* mounted by Leon Woizikowski, a Polish dancer originally recruited by Diaghilev to join the Ballets Russes after Nijinsky was fired, and Lydia Sokolova, who had run crying from a rehearsal of *Faune*, unable to understand Nijinsky's directions.¹⁸¹ Romola, however, had no knowledge that Marie Rambert owned a 1931 film of the Woizikowski staging, although inaccuracy of the production—choreography passed on by memory from Massine to Woizikowski and without Nijinsky present to make corrections—would have probably have proved less than beneficial to the individuals who would become involved in the decoding of Nijinsky's score.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Lydia Sokolova (1896-1974), was an English dancer formerly known as Hilda Munnings, before having her name changed to the “Russian,” a frequent occurrence with non-Russian dancers in the Ballets Russes.

¹⁸² Ann Hutchinson Guest mentions Marie Rambert's omission of this piece of information perhaps as an indication of the general lack of communication and organization of materials having to do with Nijinsky's ballet. See Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 7. Guest also makes the point indirectly that since Rambert *had* been present with Nijinsky rehearsed new cast members in the ballet, and that Rambert's memory was almost completely “visual,” that is she knew if a movement was “right” or “wrong” when she saw it, that perhaps the Woizikowski version of *Faune* might have benefited from her “memory” of working with Nijinsky, and that if Rambert and Guest had viewed the 1931 film, more progress might have been made. See Guest, “Nijinsky's Own *Faune*: The Hunt Begins,” 318.

Romola could not read Nijinsky's dance notation system, and thus was incapable of even beginning to decode the score of *Faune*.¹⁸³ She prevailed upon celebrities in the dance world such as Madame Nicolaeva Legat, the widow of Nicolas Legat, Nijinsky's instructor at the Imperial Ballet School, to help decipher the system. At a lecture for the British Dance and Movement Notation Society in 1956, Madame Legat when asked was forced to admit she had no idea how Nijinsky notated "walking," or a *port de bras* [arm movement] in his system.¹⁸⁴ It was at that lecture that Ann Hutchinson Guest, a dance historian and expert on dance notation, was asked by Madame Legat, and agreed, to study a copy of Nijinsky's score of *Faune* and the material in his notebooks.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Nijinsky's system was based upon, but far more detailed than, the Stepanov system he had learned at the Imperial Ballet School in St. Petersburg, based on the dance notator's 1892 book, published in French.¹⁸⁵ Fortunately, Guest was familiar with the Stepanov system, a familiarity that allowed her to immediately see the foundational connection in Nijinsky's system, as well as the extreme differences between the two.¹⁸⁶ After studying both the *Faune* score and his notebook materials, however, Guest could only conclude that Nijinsky's score of *Faune*, and the notebooks, written two-to-three years after the score had been completed in 1915, reflected two different dance notation systems.¹⁸⁷

Guest's attempt to reconstruct the ballet through the memories of those who had either performed the ballet or worked with Nijinsky proved equally frustrating. While Marie Rambert,

¹⁸³ Romola claimed that Nijinsky *had* taught her the system, but it became clear that in fact he had not or that she could not remember; she had no idea how to read the notation of the score of *Faune*. See Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 7.

¹⁸⁴ Ann Hutchinson Guest, e-mail message to author, October 7, 2008.

¹⁸⁵ Ann Hutchinson Guest, "'Nijinsky's Own *Faune: The Hunt Begins*," *Dancing Times* (1992): 319.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 318. However, Guest continued to have an obstacle even within her knowledge of the Stepanov system; she was unaware that Nijinsky had used Alexander Gorsky's modified system, published in Russian in 1899, which did not become available to her until 1978 when an English translation was published by Roland John Wiley. See Guest, "The Hunt Begins," 319.

¹⁸⁷ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 7.

who had worked intimately with Nijinsky during his creation of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, was present when Nijinsky rehearsed new cast members of *Faune*, “Rambert’s memory was visual; she knew if the movement [in *Faune*] was ‘right’ when she saw it, but could not describe the positions or sequence of the narrative events.”¹⁸⁸ Guest worked intermittently, and without success, on the Nijinsky materials for the next twenty years.¹⁸⁹

In 1976 at the Paris Opéra, Romola attempted to collaborate with Leonide Massine to reconstruct the choreography of *Faune*, ostensibly aided by Massine’s memory of performing the role in 1916, as well as the 1912 De Meyer photographs. Claudia Jeschke, who had met Romola two years earlier and was now working on her dissertation on dance notation systems, had wanted to include Nijinsky’s system within her study. Traveling to Paris, she now found herself present at intense arguments between Romola and Massine over the staging of the ballet for the Paris Opéra Ballet; Romola, who had danced the role of one of the Nymphs in the 1913 South American tour¹⁹⁰ and witnessed numerous performances after her marriage to Nijinsky, was convinced that Massine was almost completely wrong in his memory of the choreography.¹⁹¹ Once again, when she came in possession of copies of the score of *Faune* and Nijinsky’s later notebooks, Jeschke concluded that Nijinsky’s notebooks reflected an evolved system, and that they were no help in deciphering *Faune*’s score.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 7. See also Guest, “The Hunt Begins,” 318.

¹⁸⁹ Romola had also asked Noa Eshkol, another expert on dance notation, to work with Nijinsky’s notebooks to try and decipher his notation system. After translating all for notebooks from Russian into English, and working for two years, Eshkol came to the same conclusion as Guest—that Nijinsky had been working on two different notation systems, and there was insufficient material to be able to “read” the score of *Faune*. See Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 7.

¹⁹⁰ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune/Restored*, 178.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 8. Ann Hutchinson Guest stated that “There is a black-and-white film at the Paris Opera of Massine and Romola, with a young Claudia Jeschke at their side, trying to reconstruct the *Faune* ballet, working with the de Meyer photographs on their lap.” Ann Hutchinson Guest, e-mail message to author, December 8, 2007.

¹⁹² Ibid., 8. Jeschke had only just begun her attempts to decipher the score; even with her minimal guidance, however, Guest points out that the Paris Opéra Ballet production with Charles Jude, of “all the many memory-based reconstructions” was “the closest in general presentation and feeling to the ballet as Nijinsky wrote it down.” See Guest, “The Hunt Begins,” 319. In addition, in a French film documenting the confusing spectrum of attempts at

Although Nijinsky's sister Bronislava died on February 21, 1972, Romola Nijinsky had been struggling since her husband's death in 1950 to reconstruct his ballet. An obvious question is why Romola did not consult Nijinska—the person most intimately involved in Nijinsky's choreographic process of *Faune*, on whom arguably all of the roles were originally mounted by Nijinsky, and who originated the role of the Joyful Nymph—about the original choreography of Nijinsky's ballet.¹⁹³ Anecdotally, it appears that there was a long-standing, perhaps mutual, jealousy and suspicion between Nijinsky's sister and widow. According to Guest, "To my knowledge she [Nijinska] was not involved with the recreation attempts. . . . I do not think that Romola would have wanted to involve Bronislava. Romola was not an easy person, and I can well believe that she and Bronislava did not get along."¹⁹⁴

In 1981, the Joffrey Ballet produced *Nureyev and the Joffrey Ballet in Tribute to Nijinsky*, a production produced for public television, in which the great Russian dancer Rudolf Nureyev danced three of Nijinsky's most famous roles: Fokine's ballets *Petruschka*, *Le Spectre de la Rose*, and Nijinsky's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*.¹⁹⁵ While the Joffrey/Nureyev performance of *Faune* was assumed to be the most authentic reconstruction of the ballet, it is again of great significance to recall that the Joffrey production's choreography, while crediting Nijinsky as choreographer, was derived from Woizikowski's staging of *Faune* for Ballet Rambert, which he, in turn, learned from Leonide Massine, whose performance and staging had been so distorted

reproducing Nijinsky's *Faune*, there is a sequence in which Charles Jude, in 2000 director of Opéra de Bordeaux, demonstrates "choreography" from *Faune* in 2000 that is from the 1976 Paris Opéra production created from Romola and Massine's "collaboration." Jude's movements in the film, demonstrated to another dancer, differ from both the Nureyev-based Joffrey performance, and from Nijinsky's original score as performed by the Juilliard Dance Ensemble in 1989. See Nisic, *Revoir Nijinsky Danser*, 2000. Ann Hutchinson Guest, e-mail message to author, October 7, 2008.

¹⁹³ Nijinska actually performed the role of the Faun in tribute to her brother in the summer of 1922, at the Paris Opéra. See Neâgu, *Faun*, 129.

¹⁹⁴ Ann Hutchinson Guest, e-mail message to author, December 8, 2007.

¹⁹⁵ WNET (Television station: New York N.Y.), Public Broadcasting Service (U.S.), and Joffrey Ballet. *Nureyev and the Joffrey Ballet in Tribute to Nijinsky*, Videorecording.

from Nijinsky's original that the dancer had in 1916 attempted to remove his name as choreographer.

Past distortions of Nijinsky's choreography, however, were combined with new distortions in the Joffrey/Nureyev production. In January 2007, in a London interview, Guest stated that Elizabeth Schooling, a former member of Ballet Rambert in the 1930s, was present as consultant at the rehearsals for the Joffrey/Nureyev *Faune*.¹⁹⁶ According to Guest, Schooling stated that Nureyev made "additions and distortions" to the Woizikowski staging of *Faune*, claimed that he knew "intuitively" what Nijinsky's choreography was, and would in Guest's words "not be stopped."¹⁹⁷

"Angularity" is a physical attribute consistently applied to the movements in the memory-based, body to body transmitted reconstructions of *Faune*. Recall the words of the *New York Times* critic who in 1916 commented that, upon Nijinsky's return as both choreographer and performer in *Faune*, "that the queer, jerky timing of their movements which had been apparent last season was less conspicuous," and that it seemed due to the fact that "Mr. Nijinsky desired the movements to be smoother."¹⁹⁸ The interpretation of "angularity" and "smoothness" as visual, binary opposites seems to have its basis within the cultural context of *Faune*'s first audiences. In 1912, audiences were accustomed to dancers' movements based on the rounded arms, delicately extended fingers, and pointed toes of classical ballet. In 1912, the movements performed by the cast of *Faune* would have been unprecedented to the audience viewing them. Thus the "heel first" walking gait of Nijinsky's Faun would have appeared extreme and

¹⁹⁶ Guest believes that Schooling was approximately sixteen years old when Woizikowski staged *Faune* for Ballet Rambert. Ann Hutchinson Guest, e-mail message to author, December 10, 2007.

¹⁹⁷ Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007. In one communication, Guest writes that Nureyev, with a great passion to perform Nijinsky's signature performances, felt that "he had direct messages from above!" as far as the correct choreographic movements. Ann Hutchinson Guest, e-mail message to author, December 10, 2007.

¹⁹⁸ *New York Times*, April 8, 1916.

exaggerated in its angularity, as the audience would have had no other type of dance movement to compare it to. In later decades, with the advent and evolution of the “naturalized” movements of modern and jazz dance, it seems likely that the contemporary 1912 dance sensibility interpreted the critical response to *Faune* within the cultural context of how “angularity” in movement “looked.”¹⁹⁹ Thus, in Sally Sommer’s words, as the years and decades passed, “the more angularity got stressed in performance, until the faun’s walk was deconstructed to a hyperdramatic, jagged ambulation.”²⁰⁰ In the Joffrey production, Nureyev’s Faun wields his arms and hands with aggressive “slicing,” “penetrating” motions, “like weapons in a dangerous sexual game where the faun stalked his victims.”²⁰¹ Hence Nureyev’s performance may be read as being as much of a caricature of Nijinsky’s performance as Massine’s was only four years after the ballet’s 1912 premiere, the seminal movements of the ballet reinterpreted by both Massine and Nureyev as “queer” and “jerky.” Thus from Massine’s 1916 Ballets Russes performance, through those of David Lichine, Leon Woïzickovsky, George Zoritch and Igor Youskevitch in the Ballets Russes de Monte-Carlo from the 1930s-1940s,²⁰² to Nureyev’s final iconic postmodern caricature, these performances produced “an entire body of theory about *Faune* that exploited the separation of sound [Debussy’s score] and motion, and extending their theory still further, [that] separated Nijinsky from the artistic context of his times,”²⁰³ so that Nijinsky became a proto-postmodernist, “a crazed genius literally out of step with his times.”²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 17-18. Guest and Jeschke comment specifically that Nijinsky did not add the detail of initial heel contact for the walking steps [as Nureyev executed them] although his notation system would have allowed him to describe such a detail. See Guest/Jeschke, *Restored*, 19.

²⁰⁰ Sommer, “Reflections,” 83.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 84. The decision for the Faun to raise his arms up over his head was Nureyev’s. See Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007.

²⁰² Neăgu, *Faun*, 134.

²⁰³ Sommer, “Reflections,” 83.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

In 1984, nearly ten years after the Paris Opéra *Faune* based on the collaboration of Romola and Massine, Guest and Jeschke, determined to reconstruct Nijinsky's original choreographic score of *Faune*, and supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, began to collaborate in their efforts to "break Nijinsky's code."²⁰⁵ Ironically, although Nijinsky did not leave a key to his notation system, the written materials needed to decipher the score had always existed—donated by Romola, who evidently did not understand their significance, to the Paris Opéra Ballet. These materials consisted of a sequence of classical ballet enchaînements created by the Enrico Cecchetti, maestro of the Ballets Russes, and some group poses from Luca Della Robbia's *Cantoria* marble bas relief sculptures, both of which Nijinsky had recorded using the same notation system in which he recorded *Faune*.²⁰⁶ The series of enchaînements Nijinsky notated were steps or "exercises" Cecchetti taught repetitively in a specific sequence. As Cecchetti's philosophy and sequence of instruction of balletic technique developed into and remains one of the major systems of classical ballet training, Guest and Jeschke were completely familiar with the steps Nijinsky had notated; the Cecchetti sequences provided the first, and most crucial, Rosetta Stone materials to break Nijinsky's code. The class exercises, however, so familiar to all ballet dancers, were not notated in absolute detail by Nijinsky, although he delineated each correct finger position for the *port de bras* [arm movements]. The absolute detail in notation Nijinsky provided for the poses of the *Cantoria* figures—children whose trunks, arms, hands, and feet were intricately intertwined as they sang—revealed to Guest and Jeschke Nijinsky's process of recording naturalistic movements,

²⁰⁵ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 8.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 8. Nijinsky also notated the opening movements of *Ballets Inachevés*, a ballet he wanted to choreograph to music by Bach, however, this notation did not prove as crucial to Guest and Jeschke as the *Cantoria*, and the Cecchetti exercises. See Claudia Jeschke, "Movement, Movement Notation, Movement Theory," in *Afternoon of a Faun: Mallarmé, Debussy, Nijinski* (New York: Vendome Press): 107.

which would form the foundation of the nymphs' poses.²⁰⁷ Significantly for this study, the De Meyer photographs provided confirmation of a notation detail not provided by either the Cecchetti or *Cantoria* materials: the “circular” point from which Nijinsky measured the degree of limb rotation, that is, they way directions for the lower arm were determined.²⁰⁸

As a point of historical research, there is no definitive answer as to when Nijinsky first experimented with his notation system. Neither the Cecchetti exercises nor the *Cantoria* notations are dated. Nijinsky does, however, include in these notation samples a note about the catalogue of the museum Kunstanstalt Gerber in Cologne; the catalogue contained reproductions of the *Cantoria* panels that Nijinsky evidently used as the references for those notations. The catalogue was possibly a gift from Dr. Wilhelm Bode, director of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum and an expert on the work of della Robbia, whom Nijinsky met at the beginning of 1912 during the Ballet Russes' Berlin season, before the May 29^t premiere of *Faune*.²⁰⁹ While there exists some circumstantial evidence that Nijinsky had begun to create his notation system—creating the Cecchetti and *Cantoria* samples—while in rehearsals for, and prior to the premiere of his first created ballet, Nijinska possessed a page of her brother's notation of the first few steps of *Faune*, not in his original notation system, but in the Stephanov system which they both had learned at the Imperial Ballet School. The name of Tchernicheva as the Fourth Nymph dates the page as having been written by Nijinsky in early 1913, in either London or Berlin, clearly *after* the

²⁰⁷ Guest, “The Hunt is Over,” 424. See also Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 8.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 424.

²⁰⁹ Jeschke, “Movement, Movement Notation, Movement Theory,” fn. 9, 122. Romola also states that in early 1912, in Berlin, Dr. Bode gave Nijinsky “a copy of a frieze of the fragments of the Parthenon at the Kaiser Friedrich Museum,” referencing Bode's past friendship with Nijinsky. See Nijinsky, *Nijinsky*, 193. In her dissertation, Hanna Järvinen incorrectly cites Nijinska as stating that Nijinsky might have viewed the original *Cantoria* bas reliefs in 1909 when he visited Florence. Nijinska in fact writes that Nijinsky visited Venice, not Florence in 1909. See Järvinen, *The Myth of Genius in Movement: Historical Deconstruction the Nijinsky Legend*, 197. See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 279.

premiere of his ballet.²¹⁰ While it is possible that Nijinsky had not completed his original notation system, and/or had wanted to communicate the opening to his sister, who read Stepanov notation, it is impossible to know when his notation system was completed.

After Guest and Jeschke succeeded in what had been, for decades, the highly implausible task of decoding Nijinsky's dance notation system, they followed their second impetus—to provide a score that would—in partnership with the De Meyer photographs—act as the sole references for a reconstructed performance of Nijinsky's *Faune*. Toward that end, they translated Nijinsky's *Faune* score into labanotation, the most universally accepted dance notation system created in the late 1920s by Rudolf Laban, which Guest and Jeschke felt was the most expedient way for dancers to access Nijinsky's score, not only because it would alleviate the need for dancers to learn a completely foreign dance notation system, but the labanotation translation manifested some of the extreme detail of Nijinsky's score more expediently than did Nijinsky's own system.²¹¹ Thus Guest and Jeschke completed the first working, translated score of Nijinsky's *Faune* in spring 1988.²¹²

Guest and Jeschke first introduced the translated score to students at the Royal Ballet School in order to obtain an initial visual impression of the choreography, along with giving the score to dance notation classes at the College of the Royal Academy of Dancing in London, and at Waterloo University in Canada. The score was presented to professional dancers for the first time in Naples, and produced at Teatro San Carlo on April 11, 1989. Les Grands Ballets Canadiens performed *Faune* on October 27, 1989.²¹³

²¹⁰ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, photo.fn. 102. One of the original Nymphs (Tcherepanova) had died in the fall of 1912, and Nijinsky had replaced her with Tchernicheva.

²¹¹ Guest, "Nijinsky's *Faune*," 11.

²¹² Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 11.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 11. *Faune* remains in the Les Grands Ballets Canadiens repertoire. See Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 11.

It was at the Juilliard School in New York, however, that, for the first time in Guest and Jeschke's reconstruction process, dancers were required to learn their roles in *Faune* solely from Nijinsky's translated score, along with the sporadic use of the De Meyer, Waléry and Struss photographs to confirm the subtlest details in the poses.²¹⁴ Juilliard School staff members Thomas Augustine and John Brady created reconstructed the Leon Bakst's costume and set designs, respectively. Dr. Jill Beck rehearsed two casts selected out of the Juilliard Dance Ensemble, and staged the performance with consultation provided by Guest by phone, and towards the end of the rehearsal process, in person. Thus on December 8, 1989, then-Juilliard student Yoav Kaddar danced the role of Faun, the first time in over seventy years performed as described by Nijinsky, its choreographer and star.

Thus over seventy years after an anonymous critic at the *New York Times*, viewing Nijinsky for the first time as the Faun, stated that "the queer, jerky timing of movements which had been apparent last season was less conspicuous last night," and speculated "whether this was due to the fact that Mr. Nijinsky desired the movements to be smoother,"²¹⁵ a second *New York Times* critic, Jack Anderson, after viewing the Juilliard/Kaddar performance, commented:

The Juilliard production, staged by Jill Beck of the school's dance faculty and directed by Mrs. Guest, proved an eye-opener. . . . The ballet still depicted a shy faun's amorous encounter with some nymphs. . . . What looked different was the quality of the movement. . . . Sharp angles still exist. But there are also many softer, gentler, more flowing phrases. If the choreography no longer appears

²¹⁴ Rebecca Stenn, "A Performer's View: Notes on Learning, Rehearsing, and Performing *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*," 39. See also Beck, "Recalled to Life: Techniques and Perspectives on Reviving Nijinsky's *Faune*," *Choreography and Dance* 1, no. 3 (1991): 36. One of the few specific details not accessible from Nijinsky's score and recovered from a view of the photographs was the direction in which a dancer's palm was facing in any one pose. See Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 176.

²¹⁵ Qtd. in Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 18.

determinedly unconventional, it now seems more varied than before, and when sharp gestures do come they have the effect of kinetic punctuation marks. . . .

[T]he Juilliard production looked convincing.²¹⁶

The connection between the aforementioned reviews from *The New York Times*, dated 1916, and 1989, respectively, of two separate phenomenological events, is neither practice, that is performance, nor theory: the same dancer did not, could not possibly, have danced the role of the Faun. Two different performances were put before two different audiences.

In 1916, while Nijinsky had completed the notation of *Faune*'s score, there is absolutely no evidence, and virtually no likelihood, that he used the score in his own "reconstruction" of the badly distorted production being performed by the Ballets Russes in his absence. He rather transmitted his own intellectual, aesthetic, and somatic knowledge of his ballet to the dancers performing the Nymphs, and replaced Massine with himself, once again dancing the Faun. In 1989, Nijinsky's own score replaced his own presence, both as choreographer and performer. Thus the connection between the reviews—the elements that exists within the two performances witnessed by the two *New York Times*' reviewers—is Nijinsky's choreographic and performative knowledge of his ballet *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*.

In chapter five I describe my phenomenological encounter with the 1989 Juilliard Dance Ensemble performance of Nijinsky's score of *Faune*, an exhaustive analysis of Nijinsky's performativity found within the score of *Faune*, and the application of my theoretical and methodological template to selected moments of that phenomenological encounter as the argument of my project is established.

²¹⁶ Jack Anderson, "A 'Faune' Derived from Nijinsky's 1915 Notations," *New York Times* (Dec. 11, 1989), <http://nytimes.com/1989/12/11/arts/review-dance-a-faune-derived-from-Nijinsky-s-1915-notations.html>.

CHAPTER FIVE

NEW EVIDENCE: PERFORMATIVE TRACES OF NIJINSKY IN *FAUNE*

Introduction

I begin this chapter with a personal narrative that describes the phenomenological encounter that motivated and forms the content of this study: my April 6, 2006 viewing of the videotaped Juilliard Dance Ensemble's performance of Nijinsky's original score of *L'Après-midi d'un Faune (Faune)* with Yoav Kaddar dancing the role of the Faun. My viewing is unique among all other phenomenological encounters that I have described or referenced in this study, including those of Nijinsky's sister, dancer/choreographer Bronislava Nijinska, ballerina Tamara Karsavina, critics Carl Van Vechten and Cyril Beaumont, and designer Alexandre Benois and composer Igor Stravinsky who saw Vaslav Nijinsky perform and would later speak and/or write of their experiences.¹ My viewing is unique as well among the encounters of individuals such as Edwin Denby, Lincoln Kirstein, Joan Acocella, Daniel Gesmer, and Kevin Kopelson who never saw Nijinsky perform but would later write and/or speak of their experience in viewing/encountering the performance photographs which remain as the primary material evidence of his performance.² The published works of Denby, Kirstein, Acocella, Gesmer, and Kopelson, spanning the 1940s through the late 1990s, reflect phenomenological encounters in which no actual movement of Nijinsky's body was available as part of that encounter.

¹ I exclude individuals such as Valentina Hugo and Rodin who saw Nijinsky perform and created paintings and drawings that reflected their phenomenological encounter.

² As previously stated in chapter one, I define "performance photographs of Nijinsky" as those photographs taken of Nijinsky in makeup and costume, rather than the more narrow definition of photographs taken of Nijinsky during actual performance, the number of which is less than ten. See chapter three, "New Photographic Evidence: Nijinsky's Performance."

Like these writers, I have had no access to the actual movement of Nijinsky's body; the Nijinsky performance photographs are the only material evidence available to me. My experience differs from theirs, however, in one single, highly significant, aspect: within the experience of absence that I share with these writers, I have created a new experience, a new subset if you will, an experience that contains both material evidence of Nijinsky's performance, *and* the moving body of a dancer. Like Bronislava Nijinska, Tamara Karsavina, Cyril Beaumont, and Carl Van Vechten, my phenomenological encounter on April 6, 2006, was with the movement of a dancer's body, not with the movement of Nijinsky's body, but with the movement of another dancer, Yoav Kaddar, a dancer who was moving in ways I believed had been choreographed, performed, and notated by Nijinsky.³ Layered and imbricated within my phenomenological encounter with Yoav Kaddar's moving body were my memories of my phenomenological encounters with the performance photographs of Nijinsky as the Faun. Thus the imbrication of these two encounters—with (1) the moving body of Yoav Kaddar, and (2) my memory of the Nijinsky performance photographs—forms the phenomenological event that carries my argument for the present availability of performative traces of Vaslav Nijinsky, which is the focus of this chapter.

Significantly, the description of my viewing is also the description of an individual (myself) who has intermittently viewed performance photographs of Nijinsky as the Faun for a period of time in excess of forty years, and viewed the same photographs intensively over the last six months prior to my viewing/encountering the aforementioned Juilliard Dance Ensemble performance and performance of Yoav Kaddar as the Faun. Significant as well for this study is the fact that the description of my viewing is also the description of an individual (myself) who

³ I use the term "believed" deliberately, referencing Merleau-Ponty's assertion that the phenomenological experience is predicated upon, and is sufficiently validated by, the "belief" in the authenticity of what the viewer encounters. See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 27.

had initially viewed the film of the Joffrey Ballet's 1981 production of *Faune* starring Rudolf Nureyev some fifteen-to-twenty years earlier, and repeated times during the previous year (2005).

My Viewing of Juilliard Dance Ensemble's *Faune*

Overview

I began initial firsthand research on my study of Nijinsky's performative memory at the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts in New York City. My viewing of the videotaped performance of *Faune* by the Juilliard Dance Ensemble took place in one of the viewing cubicles in the Jerome Robbins Dance Division on April 6, 2006, my first day of three spent in New York City.

I knew through recent secondhand research on *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* and my reading of *Nijinsky's Faune Restored*⁴ that in 1989 Ann Hutchinson Guest and Claudia Jeschke had broken the code of Nijinsky's original dance notation system, and that the 1989 Juilliard videotaped performance that I was about to see was the first performance in which dancers had learned the ballet's choreography solely from Nijinsky's own original score, as opposed to learning choreography from body-to-body transmission.⁵ I was aware that, from Guest and Jeschke's book, Nijinsky's score designated movements that were not as "stiff" and "angular" as memory-based reconstructions, these memory-based performances having been the only ones viewed by audiences since Nijinsky stopped performing the ballet himself in 1917. The book,

⁴ See Guest, and Jeschke, *Nijinsky's Faune Restored*, Language of Dance Series; No. 3. Philadelphia: Gordon and Breach, 1991.

⁵ Students from the Royal Ballet School in London had learned Nijinsky's *Faune* choreography directly from Dr. Ann Hutchinson Guest, that is from body-to-body transmission. See Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 11. However, for the Juilliard Dance Ensemble performance in 1989, Jill Beck "staged" the ballet but did not interfere with or influence the dancers' interaction with the score, which was the dancers' only means of learning the choreography of *Faune*. Guest came in to adjust movements, but from her knowledge of the score, not her knowledge of having "seen" a performance. Photographs by De Meyer, Bert, and Struss, as well were used to hone positions. See Guest, "Nijinsky's Faune," 21.

however, makes no specific references to the Joffrey Ballet's videotaped 1982 *Nureyev and the Joffrey: In Tribute to Nijinsky*⁶ performance of *Faune*, which as the latest in a series of memory-based reconstructions of Nijinsky's ballet.⁷

My Memories of 1982 Videorecording: Joffrey/Nureyev *Tribute to Nijinsky*

As a great admirer of Rudolf Nureyev's (1938-1993) dance career,⁸ I had loved Nureyev's performance in *Faune*. It is possible, but I cannot confirm, that I viewed the broadcast of the videotaped Joffrey Ballet production of *Faune* when it was first televised in 1982. Since the year of that first broadcast, however, I had viewed his videotaped performance at least three times. When at the University of Georgia, and upon my decision in 2004 to write my dissertation on the performative memory of Vaslav Nijinsky, I had viewed the Nureyev performance again.⁹ I subsequently purchased the VHS tape of the Joffrey/Nureyev performance.

In my first viewings of the Nureyev performance in *Faune*, and in subsequent viewings, I recall believing and thinking to myself, "My God, these are the movements that Nijinsky made; I'm seeing the way Nijinsky moved." During my more recent, 2005 viewings of the videotaped performance, I had been particularly struck by the intensity of Nureyev's muscular strain in executing the Faun's movements, and felt emotional intensity verging on actual discomfort upon viewing his performance. I deemed his committed, and intensely coiled performance as the Faun to be a direct result of Nureyev's idolization of both Nijinsky the dancer, of Nijinsky's ballet, and of his dedication to performing it as Nijinsky had performed it.

⁶ The videorecording of *Nureyev and the Joffrey: In Tribute to Nijinsky* (1982) included Nureyev's performances of three signature Nijinsky roles in *Petruschka*, *Le Spectre de la Rose*, both choreographed by Michel Fokine, and Nijinsky's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*.

⁷ Leonide Massine, David Lichine, and Romola Nijinsky (assisted by Marie Rambert) had all attempted to reconstruct the ballet. See Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007.

⁸ My only viewing of Nureyev performing live was his performance in *Sleeping Beauty* with the National Ballet of Canada, at the Berkeley Zellerbach Theatre in the mid 1970s. I had viewed extensive televised, videotaped, and filmed performances of Nureyev, including his first televised performance in the United States.

⁹ The University of Georgia's Media Library contains a VHS recording of *Nureyev and the Joffrey: In Tribute to Nijinsky* (1982), which I checked out twice, and consequently purchased my own copy.

I had read the Guest/Jeschke chronicle of their decoding of Nijinsky's score, and their description of the dissimilarities between that score and the memory-based productions that were performed after Nijinsky's retirement from dancing. Hence I was able to acknowledge intellectually that the Nureyev performance was somehow "inauthentic." I felt, however, a strong emotional loyalty to the beauty and commitment of the Nureyev performance, which I felt was one of the most intensely enacted theatrical performances I had ever viewed, either live or recorded. Without denying Guest and Jeschke's conclusions about Nijinsky's restored Nijinsky score of *Faune*, a fair assessment of my own belief regarding Nureyev's performance would be that I could not imagine another performance feeling more "right" to me.

The videotape of *Faune* was one of several films about Nijinsky I had requested from the audio-visual department, including two French films, *Revoir Nijinsky Danser* (2000), and *Nijinsky: Une Âme en Exil* (2001). I had decided to watch the Juilliard performance first because my major professor, Dr. David Z. Saltz, had suggested a few days before my trip to New York City that I write a "newly constructed" paper on the performance memory of *Faune* for an upcoming presentation at the University of Leeds, as opposed to presenting a general overview of my research based on my prospectus.

Hence I was looking forward to and excited about viewing the Juilliard performance, but was not anticipating a phenomenological "event" upon its viewing.¹⁰ My neutrality at viewing the Juilliard performance videotape may have again reflected my ambivalent attitude to my

¹⁰ As previously detailed in chapter one, for the purposes of this study the definition of a phenomenological "event" is "something which takes possession of us in an unforeseen manner, without warning, and which brings us towards an unanticipated future." See Dastur, "Phenomenology of the Event," 182. I must add that I am aware of the paradox of my statement, in that the lack of anticipation of such an event might well be argued as requisite to *having* such an event.

recent research that presented an indisputable argument that Nureyev's performance did not in fact reflect movements choreographed and notated by Nijinsky.¹¹

This then is the overview of my state of mind as I sat in one of the cubicles of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library of the Performing Arts and waited for a media technician to begin playing the VHS tape of the 1989 Juilliard Dance Ensemble's production of Nijinsky's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* on my monitor.

Description of Juilliard Dance Ensemble's of *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* (2006)

The following juxtaposes a narrative of the ballet¹² with my responses (italicized) as I viewed the videotaped performance:¹³

The Faun is revealed – playing his flute – reclined upon a large rock, facing stage left, his downstage (right) leg bent, his left leg straight, his left foot (in a gold sandal) comfortably flexed.

My response to the first visual image of the faun reclining on the rock is “Oh, the curve is right,” meaning the curve of the rock is like the De Meyer photograph, and seeing the figure of the faun so relaxed upon the curve shocks me, and the figure of the faun takes me so off guard that I think for the next ten and a half minutes I have to remind myself to breathe. I think it is the curve of the rock that triggers in me a remembrance of the Nijinsky photograph, and I first respond that the “curve is right,” before absorbing that it is the reclining figure of Yoav Kaddar that is “right” because it is like Nijinsky in the photographs. I don't know exactly when I realize that Kaddar is “right” because he both moves and is still with the same ease that Nijinsky

¹¹ As previously referenced, much later, in April 2007, during an interview with Guest in London, she commented that Elizabeth Schooling, formerly with Ballet Rambert in the 1930s, was present as consultant at the rehearsals for the Joffrey/Nureyev *Faune*, and communicated to Guest that Nureyev “made up” numerous movements and steps, claiming that he “knew” what Nijinsky's choreography was, and would in Guest's words “not be stopped.” See Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007.

¹² For a definitive narration of the ballet's movements, given in choreographic detail and in context with Debussy's score, see Guest/Jeschke, *Nijinsky's Faune Restored*, 33-46.

¹³ As I viewed the Juilliard performance, I found myself scribbling notes (sometimes seen in quotes in the description) that, later that night in my hotel room, I expanded.

projected in the photographs. I do recall, however, the first shock at seeing the curve of the rock. But at some point I can see that in Yoav Kaddar's pose as the Faun is the exact same curve of Nijinsky's back from the De Meyer photographs. The curves are the same—of the rock and of Nijinsky/Kaddar's back.

I feel that the flute continuing to play in Debussy's score connects in a very natural and dramatically logical way to the Faun turning back to his flute, playing and continuing in his reverie.¹⁴

The Faun turns stage right and gestures with his right hand and arm—and then turns again stage right to look at something? someone? off stage. The Faun returns to his reclining posture and to his flute, bringing it up to his lips and playing. He stops playing, puts the flute down, squats sideways upon the rock, and turns back again stage right to look at something? someone? off stage. He reaches for a bunch of grapes, holds them in his hands, and gazes upon them sensuously, hungrily. He puts the grapes down, picks up a second bunch of grapes, and repeats the action.

When Yoav Kaddar takes the grapes and holds them, devours them with his eyes, my heart stops and I perhaps say out loud, ah! Because the De Meyer photograph of Nijinsky slips into the moving Faun that I am watching, and there are tears in my eyes because I feel that I know what it is to see Nijinsky move and hold the grapes in front of his face. And with that moment, Nureyev's movement of smashing the grapes against his face—that image I thought so inviolable—is diminished and made . . . nothing. There is no longer anything of Nureyev's

¹⁴ I did not have this experience in viewing the Joffrey/Nureyev performance that is I did not make the visual and auditory connection between the Faun playing his flute and the flute interlude in Debussy's score. When reviewing the Nureyev performance for this particular connection, I noted that while the opening moment of the ballet is similar to Nijinsky's score in that the Faun is playing the flute, the second time the Faun puts the flute up to his mouth in Nijinsky's score, mimicking Debussy's second flute interlude, is not paralleled in the Nureyev performance; as Debussy's second flute interlude begins, Nureyev's Faun lies on the ground on his back and then pulls himself up to a sitting position, none of which is indicated in Nijinsky's score.

movement to attach my memory to. I am almost angry at myself, and embarrassed, that I ever thought Nureyev's performance was authentic to Nijinsky's.

The Faun lays and stretches his entire body. He reclines this time from the opposite direction on the rock as Three Nymphs enter from stage right, the Third Nymph looking back from where she entered. A Fourth Nymph enters quickly from stage right, takes a little leap, makes to turn back and exit, seems to be waiting for someone? and then a Fifth (the Main Nymph), Sixth and Seventh Nymph enter. Now all the Nymphs move very slowly. The Nymph in the middle (the Main Nymph) steps downstage a bit and removes the first, and then the second of three scarfs she wears over a short tunic. The Faun reacts to her removal of the scarfs; he actually sits up a moment before and then turns his head front as she removes the first two.

No one seems to see anyone else on the stage. As though the Faun and the Nymphs are moving along and through separate planes of glass. They pause. They breathe. Then they move again.¹⁵ And it seems to me that the Faun first reacts not because of the dropping of the scarf but because he smells something in the air—that he sniffs the fragrance of the Main Nymph in the air.

Surrounded by the other Nymphs, as the Main Nymph pantomimes “splashes about in the water,” the six other Nymphs form a sort of curtain around her, and then criss-cross, twice exchanging places.

When the Main Nymph unties her first scarf or wrap, it seems as though the other six nymphs create a fluctuating, gossamer curtain (of their costumes and moving bodies) through

¹⁵ Professor Yunyu Wang is a certified dance reconstructeur who studied under Ann Hutchinson Guest, and staged the first Asian production of *Faune* at the Taiwan University of the Arts in 2005, for an audience that included Nijinsky's daughter and granddaughter, Tamara Nijinsky and Kinga Nijinsky Gaspers. Wang stated that the choreography and staging of *Faune* resembled to her a series of “photographs being taken,” and that in particular the nymphs will “pose and are photographed,” while the Faun continues to move or “pass through the photographs.” In addition, Wang felt that the nymphs and the Faun often moved in “different time zones,” which explains why they often seem oblivious to each other's presence. See Yunyu Wang, personal interview with author, February 25, 2007.

which the Faun now sees. I think he sees because the Main Nymph's removal of her final scarf suddenly floods the stage with small windows; suddenly nymphs and Faun, previously moving along separate planes, become aware of the other through the removal of her final scarf.

The Faun steps down off of the rock and down to the ground. One Nymph moves stage right, and within proximity of the Faun. She is startled by him, and leaps slowly away, exiting stage left.

The Nymphs still are a curtain and I focus on the beautiful tableau they create, and then oops! Suddenly the Faun is over there—as though in one second he somehow moved down the rock and over to stage left. I blinked and there he is . . . not an apparition but something/somebody suddenly on a plane that makes him visible, not only to the Nymph who runs away from him in slow motion, but to me.

The Faun comes closer to the group of Nymphs. The Main Nymph is now dressed only in a short tunic. Two of the Nymphs, disapproving of the Faun's presence, take two of the Nymph's scarves with them, and exit stage right. The two remaining Nymphs appear shocked that the Main Nymph has allowed herself to be seen sans scarves near the Faune, then they too exit slowly stage right.

There is not as much "stopping" as in the Nureyev performance (Nureyev's performance is so strained it seems now to me to be paralyzed, containing somehow less fluidity than the Nijinsky photographs), that is even when the Faun and the Nymphs are still, their bodies are not "stopped"; it seems as though both their breathing and the music, and the way their bodies are posed, keep the bodies fluid (like water) and full of electricity. This seems exactly to me like the Nijinsky photographs, by that I mean, (1) the Nijinsky photographs, and (2) the Faun and Nymph together on the stage in the actual ballet that I am watching, seem to be both full of "movement."

Why didn't I see before how relaxed Nijinsky's body was in the photographs? How could I not have seen how wrong Nureyev's body was to be so strained?

Suddenly aware of the Faun's presence, the Main Nymph picks up her one remaining scarf, and makes to leave. The Faun interrupts her, and they both stop, very close to one another, but not touching. Finally, under his gaze, the Main Nymph at first bends down to him, and then, rising slightly, leans backward, locking her eyes with his.

Now I remember the photographs of Nijinsky and his sister [as Faun and Nymph] and the "running" quality of their poses in the photographs, as though I could sense their hearts beating, lungs filling, eyes widening, focusing on the other. I feel that same memory in what I'm seeing now—hearts beating, lungs filling, eyes widening, focusing. It is L'Après-midi d'un Faune; it's simple, that is, what I'm experiencing is, simply, the ballet.

Now to—no, with—the drugging-ly beautiful music, the Faun and the Main Nymph encounter the other. It is just him—that is why she bows down and then rises again to be nearly pushed over from the force—of just him. There's no strain, no fixation of glance, no pretense of erotic force. Now it seems to me that the Main Nymph is not as much bowing down to him (as in the Joffrey/Nureyev production), as she is revealing herself boldly to him, in her second, backward movement. Debussy's music takes the place of the Faun's shoulders and arms that would otherwise reach out to overpower the Nymph; Nijinsky allows Debussy's music, and the Faun's own presence, to cascade over her. The stillness is in the music even as the music is ceaseless; the movement is in the music even as the Faun and Nymph do nothing. The stillness is in the movement even as the movement is arrested; the movement is stillness even as the Faun and the Main Nymph move. The Faun does nothing; he breathes; he looks; he does not touch. Here is Nijinsky—I know it—this is Nijinsky; only Nijinsky could have conceived so easily of

such force in soft stillness. And how can I tell this? How do I know this? What would I say exactly that I “know”?

In the non-movement I am overcome with the assumption of such force of presence on the stage, the same force of presence I suddenly am able to fully recognize in the De Meyer photographs. I am with Nijinsky and Nijinsky is with me; yet I see Yoav Kaddar and Yoav Kaddar is with me. He is tall, lanky, not at all Nijinsky physically, yet the choreography keeps him so centered in something having to do with Nijinsky that I see both of them and do not solely wish for either. It is a complete thing for me, this viewing, this sighting. I am not disappointed that it isn't Nijinsky, because the idea that it isn't Nijinsky doesn't occur to me.

In response to his proximity to the Nymph and her gaze, the Faun scrapes his feet backward in the grass, then walks quickly stage left and makes a short, contained leap. The Main Nymph follows him.

The Faun's leap! I feel like I've never seen anything like it—why is it so extraordinary? Is it its singularity? It seems very difficult not only to make the leap with the body so twisted around its axis, but even more difficult to “land” it in pli , on one foot. Is it a window into Nijinsky's elevation and ballon—so naturally assumed by Nijinsky the choreographer, that when I view this one small leap beautifully enacted and “understood” by Yoav Kaddar, that I see all of Nijinsky's tremendous leaps in this one, running “plop” up into the air, and reception back into the floor?¹⁶

In the placement of the belly, in the thighs, I see Nijinsky. His knowledge of Debussy's music is stupendous, unbelievable; how could I have never seen it before? His body continues

¹⁶ My phenomenological reaction to Nijinsky's leap reminds me retrospectively of a review I would later read of Nijinsky's performance published in the *Christian Science Monitor* (1916). The anonymous critic wrote: “This Russian does not come on the stage with hammer and saw to build up something grand and imposing, as he does nothing synthetically. He makes no long statements. He says everything he has to say the first moment he enters.” See “Mr. Nijinsky Takes Part in Dance Duet,” *Christian Science Monitor*, Nov. 9, 1916.

with the music even through his one foot as it steps down ever-so-gently, with such subtle pressure, upon the ground.¹⁷ The emotion is more in the body of Yoav Kaddar than was in Nureyev's body—more in his belly, in his groin and in his sex. What is it in the choreography that has placed emotion in certain parts of the body? Or is it that? How Nijinsky/Yoav's foot/feet—the flexion and the percussion as choreographed and performed—move with deliberate rapid pace, then find their place, and sustain the energy and the body's occupied space. How incredibly difficult, what a demand upon the dancer's entire musculature and fascia to move through and continue moving through these poses from inception to stillness and beyond.

The Faun and the Main Nymph walk and pose, walk and pose, together. They move back and forth across the stage, close, arms entangled, but without touching. First two nymphs, then a third, fourth, and fifth, enter from stage right, and look on in disapproval as the Faun and Main Nymph continue to move together. The Main Nymph, perhaps aware of the others, picks up her scarf, loses her balance and drops the scarf, and as she is about to fall to her knees, the Faun catches her arm within his own. It is the only time that they touch. Now completely aware of the other Nymphs, the Main Nymph picks up the scarf again, but as she runs off stage rights, drops it. First two Nymphs leave, then the last two, the final Nymph gazing back at the Faun, and when she exits it appears as though she leaves somewhat reluctantly.

The way the Faun physically expresses surprise (when he sees the other Nymphs) within his neck and the movement of his neck is just like a deer! How is that possible? Is it in the choreography? The Faun lifts and moves his neck but his eyes appear to have already focused on the suspicious objects, the Nymphs, before he moves his neck. Yoav Kaddar's eyes do not widen

¹⁷ Yoav Kaddar remarked that he found traces of Nijinsky's performance in two areas of *Faune*, (1) in the stage picture presented, in the sweep and design of his choreography, and (2) in the subtle, nuanced details of the Faun's movement. See Personal Interview with Yoav Kaddar, Feb. 19, 2007.

*(anymore than Nijinsky's do in the De Meyer photographs), but there is the absolute sense of an animal moving his neck to stare with deepening pools of eyes at the nymphs—not with fear, but that combination of wariness and acceptance that wild animals possess.*¹⁸

The Faun kneels down slowly, and picks up the Main Nymph's scarf. As he does so, four Nymphs enter quickly, again from stage right. The last two stand protectively, while the front two gesture to the Faun, in order to keep him away. All four of the Nymphs leave. The Faun seems barely to have acknowledged the Nymphs, returns again to the scarf, but glances back stage right where they exited.

The Faun, secure again in his solitude, picks up the scarf and, laughing, runs back and forth with it. One Nymph, and then a Second Nymph, enter from stage right one last time, chastise him, and leave.

The Faun stretches the scarf out in a loving manner and, holding it very carefully, examining it, walks back up the hill, and to his rock. Kneeling on the rock, he nuzzles the scarf over and over again, contemplates it, and lays it down upon the length of the rock. The Faun lowers his body very slowly onto the scarf, then suddenly arches up in a gesture of sexual climax, and slowly collapses down upon it.

*The end movements—the Faun moving back upon the rock, nuzzling the scarf, laying it down, and then lying, arching upon it—they don't seem complete and finished to me the way the rest of the ballet.*¹⁹ Yet Yoav Kaddar's last movements float up through the last two photographic

¹⁸ I co-presented with Yoav Kaddar at the International Humanities Conference in Hawaii in January 2008. During our workshop on January 11, "The Praxis of Vaslav Nijinsky in *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* Revisited: The Bodied Spaces of Viewer and Dancer," I was able to witness Yoav Kaddar enact the movement—the slow swiveling of his neck to stare at the Nymphs—from a point on the "stage" so that I was in the position of one of the Nymphs. I was able to receive the full impact of the Faun's "stare," which, through the position of the neck specified by Nijinsky's score, caused Yoav's eyes to "lower" beneath his brow, creating a feline, animal-like expression. Kaddar confirmed that both the neck position and "slow swivel" were specified in the score.

¹⁹ Guest notes that Nijinsky's scoring of the last moments of the ballet, the Faun's infamous rise and fall upon the Nymph's scarf, is the least detailed portion of the score. Guest speculated that Nijinsky, keenly aware of the public

images of Nijinsky in the De Meyer session, and it is the completeness and detail of the photographs that live somehow in Kaddar's face and body and the weight of his head as it rests at that last, heavy, slumberous moment of the ballet.

I see Nijinsky lying upon the scarf floating all around Yoav Kaddar lying upon the scarf, and when Yoav Kaddar, in the very final moment of the ballet, turns his hands palm up, I can't tell whether I'm seeing embodiment of the Nijinsky photograph, if I'm actually seeing Nijinsky's hands turning palm up, or whether I'm seeing Yoav Kaddar rest into the De Meyer photograph.

The feeling is so powerful, I'm feeling it so powerfully in my body that I have—that I have experienced something extraordinary—more even than “right,” beyond the feeling that the ballet is “right,” it's a feeling that I have just seen something that no one else has seen! I look around at the others engaged in their research and wonder what it is I've just seen—what have I seen? Is it what I think it is? Is it what I have experienced that it is? Something phenomenal?

Points of Reflection and Focus

As previously discussed throughout this study, I argue that reflection upon my phenomenological encounter produces connections sans the necessity of viewing those connections as “evidence” of what I came “to know” through the encounter. This analysis explores my experience of performative traces of Nijinsky in *Faune* within my imbricated viewing of the present embodied score, and my past memory of Nijinsky performance photographs.

controversy over the ballet's ending, was himself unclear on how the Faun should enact the ending movements. See Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007.

My analysis will thus focus on performative traces of Nijinsky found within the score of *Faune*, and specifically within the role of the Faun.

In conclusion, I use specific quotations from my previously described phenomenological description to trace Nijinsky's bodied space²⁰ within the present embodiment of the *Faune* score, that is specifically within Yoav Kaddar's performance as the Faun in the 1989 Juilliard Dance Ensemble's production, as well as the "presentness"²¹ of the Nijinsky performance photographs of *Faune*, and my memory of those photographs, within my phenomenological encounter with the bodied spaces of Vaslav Nijinsky and Yoav Kaddar as the Faun.

Thus I claim that an imbrication of the bodied spaces of Vaslav Nijinsky and Yoav Kaddar, as well as my memory of the Nijinsky performance photographs of *Faune*, are to be found within my experiential viewing of the 1989 Juilliard Dance Ensemble production of *Faune*.

Nijinsky's Performativity in *Faune* Score

In 1911, at the onset of the Ballets Russes' third Paris season, both Jean Cocteau and Cyril Beaumont witnessed Nijinsky's performance as Harlequin in *Carnaval*. Cocteau described the evocation and movements of the dancer as "desire, mischief, self-satisfaction, arrogance, rapid bobbings of the head. . . . and especially a way of peering out from under the visor of the cap he wore pulled down over his eyebrows, the way one shoulder was raised higher than the other and his cheek pressed against it, the way the right hand was outstretched, the leg poised to relax," while Beaumont responded, "Think of him one moment poised in an attitude of mockery, the next bounding and rebounding in the air with the facility and precision of a spun wheel. All

²⁰In this study, I have expanded upon the term 'space of the body' as defined by Jose Gil in his article, "Paradoxical Body," and employ the term, 'embodied space,' in this chapter, and as discussed earlier in this chapter.

²¹In this study, I use the term "presentness" as an elaboration of the concept of the photographic image as "the living image of a dead thing," employed by Roland Barthes. See Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 79.

his movements were precisely timed; the gracefully extended hand with the beckoning finger; the impish mockery of his one big step to Columbine's dainty two."²²

As I discussed in chapter four, Claudia Jeschke writes that "pure body activities" found within the dance score by any notation system "designates the way movements might have been conducted," and that dance notation contains "evidence" of the appearance of dancers' bodies in motion.²³ Jeschke, in her highly original research, sees the notation of dance movements as providing traces both of how movement was executed and the appearance of that execution that constitute traces of both process and image. I expand upon Jeschke's theoretical reading of dance notation systems as making "fragments" of performative knowledge available to both performer and audience,²⁴ to find that the notated movements of the Faun reflect Nijinsky's awareness of his own body in performance. Thus within Nijinsky's reflected awareness within the score of *Faune*, I discover traces of Nijinsky's performativity.

I now track how Nijinsky's score of *Faune*, read as a representation of his notation system, connects to (1) his performance in general, and (2) specifically his performance as the Faun.

Segmentation and Over-Articulation of Nijinsky's Body

As previously discussed, Nijinsky was the first dance notator in history to judge each zone of the dancer's body—(1) head and torso, (2) arms, and (3) legs and feet—equally important for the execution of movement.²⁵ Within Nijinsky's assumption of equality of all parts of the dancer's body lies his additional assumption of the dancer's ability to achieve an extreme segmentation or separation within the movement of his or her body parts. Within the score of

²² Qtd. in Parker, *Nijinsky*, 104.

²³ Jeschke, "Notation Systems," 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁵ Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, May 8, 2007. See also Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007.

Faune, and specifically within the role of the Faun described there, I find that the dancer's body—which Nijinsky assumed was capable of such segmentation and of such detailed expression of each body part—was Nijinsky's own. Viewing Nijinsky's leaps as a model for his notion of the perceptual fluidity of the dancer's body, José Gil writes, "Nijinsky over-articulated movements, thus de-multiplying distances by means of microscopic decompositions of movement."²⁶ In the case of Nijinsky's notation system, and its sole example, the *Faune* score, the significance given to each body zone, and the segmented or "over-articulated" movements described within each, finds resonance in first hand descriptions of Nijinsky's performance such as those of Cocteau and Beaumont, as well as phenomenological descriptions of Nijinsky performance photographs.²⁷ Thus these phenomenological artifacts provide the underpinnings for a new experiencing of Nijinsky's score of *Faune* as a singular reflection of the dancer's knowledge of his own performativity, as delineated within the revolutionary innovations of his own notation system.

British dance critic Cyril Beaumont (1891-1976), who saw *Petruschka* during the 1910 Paris season, provides an additional description of movement distinguished by extreme segmentation and over-articulated detail when he recalled Nijinsky's performance as the doomed puppet:

Nijinsky succeeded in investing the movements of his legs with a looseness suggesting that foot, leg and thigh were threaded on a string attached to the hip;

²⁶ Gil, "Paradoxical Body," 27. In chapter four, "New Evidence: Nijinsky's Score of *Faune*," I expand upon Gil's theory of and interior and exterior "space of the body" to create its parallel in my viewing Yoav Kaddar's performance of Nijinsky's described and performed movements of the Faun.

²⁷ In chapter three, "New Photographic Evidence: Nijinsky's Performance," I claim that Nijinsky, when in makeup and costume, was photographed in the act of experiencing his own performance, and that phenomenological writings of Nijinsky photographs reflect this experiential memory of Nijinsky's performativity. I therefore find these writings valid as observations of Nijinsky's performativity. See Denby, "Notes." See also Acocella, "Photo Call with Nijinsky: The Circle and the Center." See also Gesmer, "Re-Visioning Nijinsky." See also Kopelson, *The Queer Afterlife of Vaslav Nijinsky*.

there was a curiously fitful quality in his movements, his limbs spasmodically leapt or twisted or stamped like the reflex action of limbs whose muscles have been subjected to an electric current.²⁸

Boston critic H.T. Parker (1867-1934) wrote similarly of the minuteness and demarcation within Nijinsky's moving body in his performance in the Bluebird Pas de Deux from *The Sleeping Beauty*:

His light bounds into the air were impeccably swift, agile, exact: the play of hand, arm, head and body were in perfect symmetry, each little stroke of detail—the end or the beginning of a pirouette, for example—was flawless and fluid; each flowing movement, each momentary pose exhaled ease, grace, elegance, fancy.²⁹

“Segmentation,” writes Jeschke, “is the prerequisite of *techne*, of technical achievement, i.e., the prerequisite of the use of technically defined and creatively available energy, texture. It is perceived and documented in the place where it is generated, namely in the body parts . . . and in the way that it is expressed, namely as movements.”³⁰ Thus in Nijinsky's notation system—and his score of *Faune*—the availability to describe movements that require rigorous segmentation and over-articulation, that is technically virtuosic movements, was in fact made “available” from Nijinsky's own performance virtuosity.

Nijinsky, therefore, understood the requirements of a dance notation system through his knowledge of what his own body was capable of achieving in performance. While Nijinsky's

²⁸ Qtd. in Parker, *Nijinsky*, 106.

²⁹ Qtd. in H.T. Parker, and Olive Holmes, *Motion Arrested: Dance Reviews of H.T. Parker*. 1st ed. (Middletown, Conn. New York: Wesleyan University Press; Distributed by Harper & Row, 1982), 129. While Parker does not mention the Bluebird Pas de Deux specifically, he mentions that the Ballets Russes was performing Second Act variations from *Sleeping Beauty*, traditionally entitled “The Enchanted Princess,” which contains The Bluebird Pas de Deus, one of Nijinsky's most famous roles, and known for its virtuosic male solo. I therefore feel it is probable that Nijinsky was dancing that role.

³⁰ Jeschke, “Notation Systems,” 5.

choreography for Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913) has been lost, Bronislava, originally cast by her brother as The Chosen Maiden, describes Nijinsky demonstrating a leap in 5/4 time to the cast during early rehearsals:

During his huge leap he counted 5 (3 + 2). On count 1, high in the air, he bent one leg at the knee and stretched his right arm above his head, on count 2 he bent his body towards the left, on count 3 he bent his body towards the right, then on count 1, still high in the air, he stretched his body upwards again and then finally came down lowering his arm on count 2, graphically rendering each note of the uneven measure.³¹

In speaking specifically of Nijinsky's notation system, and of its "equal design" for the three body zones, Jeschke speculates that Nijinsky "considers these zones as equally important for the movement execution—which is awareness and as such an important part of performance. . . . He [Nijinsky] is very aware of synchronization, i.e., simultaneity and successivity."³² Nijinsky's awareness of synchronization, of over-articulation, of the succession of movements, as a choreographer and notator, began with the acceptance of his own body's capabilities in performance. Thus I make the connection between Nijinsky's greatest innovation as a dance notator—the view that each of the body zones is equally important to movement—and his own awareness of performance, and specifically, his own performance.

In fact Nijinsky may not have been consciously aware that, as a dancer, he possessed a supreme ability to differentiate, and over-articulate, the different areas of his body when he danced, or that other dancers did not possess similar abilities. From Nijinska's writings of their

³¹ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 460. Nijinska had to give up the role when she found she was pregnant, which initially enraged Nijinsky. See Nijinska, *Memoirs*, 461-462. Nijinska's description of her brother's demonstrated leap also points to Nijinsky's supreme musicality which I will discuss later in this chapter and may be tracked specifically within the notated Faun performance.

³² Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, May 8, 2007.

first, private rehearsals of *Faune*, it seems clear that Nijinsky discounted the technical difficulty of his choreography, his sister accusing him of being “unable to take into account human limitations. He is unwilling to realize the tremendous distance separating his vision from the means that are at the disposal of the artist.”³³ Additionally, when Nijinska writes “the artist,” she seems to be referring to not only herself, but every other artist besides Nijinsky. Combining with Nijinsky’s lack of understanding of the difficulty of his choreography was the dancer’s own, paradoxical, blindness to his own phenomenological impact, so that, as Crisp writes, “Nijinsky had no conception of the power of his own movement.”³⁴ Lincoln Kirstein, in writing of Nijinsky’s days at the Imperial Ballet School, states “to casual observers the boy seemed taciturn, unaware of his gift, even backward.”³⁵ Marie Rambert, who worked intimately with Nijinsky on *Le Sacre du Printemps*, recalled that when rehearsing Maria Piltz, the dancer who replaced Nijinska as The Chosen Maiden, Nijinsky’s own movements “were epic. They had an incredible power and force, and Piltz’s repetition of them—which seemed to satisfy Nijinsky—seemed to me only a pale reflection of Nijinsky’s intensity.”³⁶ Clearly Nijinsky considered himself an artist; whether or not he consciously acknowledged either his technical virtuosity or his charismatic presence, his notation system and representative score of *Faune* are indicative that he assumed both—virtuosity and charisma—within the role of the Faun. Later in this chapter I will explore how Nijinsky’s charisma—the most phenomenologically elusive part of his performativity—may be specifically traced within the role of the Faun.

³³ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 316.

³⁴ Crisp, “Marie Rambert and Nijinsky in *Le Sacre du Printemps*,” 8. Crisp’s statement precedes verbatim statements from Marie Rambert about Nijinsky’s process in *Sacre*; my impression of the statement is that it reflects Rambert’s opinion rather than the author’s, which gives it more historical weight.

³⁵ Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*, 55.

³⁶ Qtd. in Crisp, “Marie Rambert and Nijinsky,” 9-10.

Nijinsky's Expression of Emotion in the Body

The equal value given to each of the three body zones in Nijinsky's notation system, and subsequently in the *Faune* score, reflects Nijinsky's ability to express emotion physically through every part of his body; this very particular phenomenological impact was described by those individuals who saw him dance as well as those who view his photographs in lieu of his performance. In 1912, an anonymous Parisian critic described Nijinsky's performance in *Swan Lake*:

This young Russian dancer does not dance his ballets, he acts them, he lives in them. If it is correct to say that he dances, then we should say that he dances as well with his face, his hands, his entire body as he does with his legs. Without uttering a single word, he still compels us to comprehend him, and this is very moving.³⁷

The summer following *Faune*'s 1912 premiere in Paris, Cyril Beaumont saw Nijinsky in *Les Sylphides* in London and wrote: "He danced not only with his limbs, but with his whole body. . . ."³⁸ Four years later in 1916 American critic Carl Van Vechten wrote of Nijinsky's performance in *The Enchanted Princess*:

He merely danced, but how he danced! Do you who saw him still remember those flickering fingers and toes? 'He winketh with his eyes, he speaketh with his feet, he teacheth with his fingers,' is written in the Book of Proverbs, and the writer might have had in mind Nijinsky in *La Princesse Enchantée*.³⁹

³⁷ Qtd. in Krasovskaya, *Nijinsky*, 190.

³⁸ Qtd. in Parker, *Nijinsky*, 130.

³⁹ Qtd. in Kirstein, *Nijinsky Dancing*, 79. It is possible that both Van Vechten and H.T. Parker wrote of Nijinsky's famous solo variation from the Bluebird Pas de Deux, performed in New York in 1916.

Finally, Edwin Denby, who provided the most famous phenomenological descriptions of Nijinsky photographs, wrote famously that Nijinsky's "thighs in the *Spectre* picture with Karsavina are as full of tenderness as another dancer's face."⁴⁰

How do I employ these descriptions of Nijinsky's performance—in which metaphor is used by each writer to convey their phenomenological impression that Nijinsky danced with his whole, but also segmented, body—as a means of tracing these elements specifically within his performance as the Faun? In viewing Nijinsky/Faun in the "lost" *Faune* photographs by Karl Struss, Joan Acocella observed, "And you can see how the muscles of his body receive and design the movement. These are among the most important facts of Nijinsky's dancing."⁴¹ The "reception and design" of Nijinsky's muscles are also the most important facts of Nijinsky's choreography and notation of *Faune*. Hence I discover a connection between Nijinsky's dancing and the choreography and notation of his ballet, so that the score of *Faune*, in Jeschke's words, "depicts two different things, Nijinsky's 'personal style,' as well as one of the choreographic identities of the 'work.'"⁴²

Jill Beck, in reminiscing upon her experience at staging Nijinsky's *Faune* for the Juilliard Dance Ensemble in 1989, states that one requires knowledge of the whole of Nijinsky's ballet before one can explore its separate parts, a situation that she refers to as the "hermeneutic circle."⁴³ I find that I may employ this equivocal notion of viewing the whole as prerequisite to viewing its parts *literally* as I now view the separate parts of Nijinsky's moving body, a body

⁴⁰ Denby, "Notes," 19.

⁴¹ Acocella, "Photo Call," 51. In 1985, Acocella discovered twelve photographs of Nijinsky and Flora Revalles in *Faune*, taken in 1916 by Karl Struss backstage at the Metropolitan Opera after a performance of the Ballets Russes. Eight of the photographs were owned by Susan and John Harvith, the other four had been "missing in action" at the Amon Carter Museum. See Acocella, "Photo Call," 70, fn. 1.

⁴² Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, June 5, 2007.

⁴³ Beck, "Recalled to Life: Reviving "Faune," 65. Beck quotes Hirsch's reference to philosopher Dilthey's "hermeneutic circle." See also E.D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), 8.

which while in movement was the expression of “his personal style.”⁴⁴ Thus the notion of Nijinsky’s entire body expressing his performance as the Faun begins paradoxically with a deconstruction of that body.

Nijinsky’s Torso

I begin my exploration of Nijinsky’s moving, segmented, *performing* Body-as-Faun with the torso—that part of Nijinsky’s body perhaps most responsible for the quality of movement-within-stillness and stillness-within-movement in *Faune*’s choreography. Recalling that Nijinsky’s first body zone incorporated the head, torso, and pelvis, Guest/Jeschke’s description of the Faun’s stance speaks to the dynamic relationship between the muscles of Nijinsky’s torso and pelvis in achieving the Faun’s seminal pose:

While the pelvis should not rotate toward the audience, as this would destroy the twist within the body (the effect of a divided front), some slight—but minimal—‘give’ in the pelvic alignment is usually necessary in order to achieve the impression of a full $\frac{1}{4}$ twist in the upper body without strain. This body position requires an inner relaxation which allows maximum upper body twist with ease and freedom. The torso is alert by not tense⁴⁵ [fig. 11].

As previously referenced, the twist in the upper part of the body, a twist that is allowed and kept “relaxed” through the slight forward “give” or “tilt” to the pelvis, then also allows the shoulder to revolve with the upper torso, without strain, and the chest to sink or fold backward.⁴⁶ As Jeschke writes, “It is not a specific issue to describe the pelvis in the Nijinsky notation. But it is an unprecedented issue to observe the movements of the torso [in *Faune*]: mainly torsions

⁴⁴ Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, June 5, 2007.

⁴⁵ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 17. Although the pelvis, located in the lower part of the stomach, is often considered part of the torso, Nijinsky separated the pelvis from the upper part of the torso, pointing again to Nijinsky’s ability to segment the two parts of his torso in order to achieve a particular body position.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.



Figure 11. Nijinsky in the Faun's Seminal Pose (1913). Photograph by Bert. Reprinted in Buckle, *Nijinsky*.

(which result in making the pelvis a center) and complex contractions of the upper body sector.”⁴⁷ Jeschke is referring to Nijinsky’s observations of the torsions (“twists”) of the torso seen certainly in the Nymphs’ stance, but most particularly in the stance of the Faun. Thus she underscores the revolutionary way in which Nijinsky-as-Notator describes the extraordinarily segmented, over-articulated stance created by Nijinsky-as-Choreographer and performed by Nijinsky-as-Faun.

The sustained torso twist of the Faun’s stance, incredibly difficult to sustain throughout the ten-minute ballet, may be traced to possibly the most dynamic element of Nijinsky’s dancer’s body: the simultaneous control, and segmentation, he maintained over his torso, or “center.” Acocella writes of the Struss photographs of the Faun: “Nijinsky has the surest possible sense of center. You can read this again and again in the line of the body, its tilted weight completely secure.”⁴⁸

In viewing the *Faune* photographs, Denby writes of Nijinsky’s stance as the Faun:

In these photographs, at any rate, the expression does not come from the chest; it comes from below the chest, and flows up through it from below. The thorax, so to speak, passively, is not only pulled at the top up and back; at the bottom and from the side it is also pulled down and back. Its physical function is that of completing the circuit of muscles that hold the pelvis in relation to the spine. And it is this relation that gives the dancer his balance.⁴⁹

The absolute, and at the same time, relaxed control of his body’s core enabled Nijinsky to sustain an amazing “contraposition” of “head opposing feet, arms opposing head,” that succeeded in

⁴⁷ Claudia Jeschke, e-mail interview with author, June 5, 2007.

⁴⁸ Acocella, “Photo Call,” 52.

⁴⁹ Denby, “Notes,” 17-18.

“merely tightening the web of tension that Nijinsky had made of the body.”⁵⁰ While Jeschke is not willing to necessarily connect Nijinsky’s torsions to an unequivocal statement that Nijinsky danced from a physical and/or metaphorical “center,” Guest states that Nijinsky, in his unique representation of each body zone in the *Faune* score, mirrored how Nijinsky-as-Faun “pulled himself together to function in a more streamlined way.”⁵¹

This “pulling himself together” that Guest refers to had everything to do with how the dynamic of Nijinsky’s torso determined the concept and realization of the Faun’s stance. Acocella describes the element of “pivoting” in the *Faune* choreography, “with head and body often turning independently of another,” and then concludes with the statement, “Even when head and body are pointed in the same direction, there is almost always something in the body that is pulling away from that direction.”⁵² That “something in the body” was the energy manifested by Nijinsky’s torso, which unprecedented within classical ballet, incorporated a separate, but equally significant, energy emanating from Nijinsky’s pelvis. Thus Nijinsky’s notation system, in which Nijinsky separates the torso into three parts, (1) pelvis, (2) chest, and (3) head, is a direct reflection of Nijinsky’s body in the performance of the Faun.⁵³

In the 1980 Joffrey production, Nureyev’s execution of the Faun’s “torso twist” involved little energy from the pelvis and stomach, rather a movement of the shoulders—one forward and the other backward—that resulted in great strain in the shoulder area, but a lack of muscle segmentation within the torso region. Denby flatly contradicts Nureyev’s somatic approach to the Faun’s stance when he describes Nijinsky’s in the *Faune* photographs:

⁵⁰ Acocella, “Photo Call,” 52. Daniel Gesmer discusses Nijinsky’s anatomy based on nude sketches of the dancer made by Maillol in 1911, and writes of his “somewhat short torso, narrow shoulder girdle, small ribcage, and tiny waist [that] tightened his body mass around a central axis.” See Gesmer, “Re-visioning Vaslav,” 89.

⁵¹ Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007.

⁵² Acocella, “Photo Call,” 52.

⁵³ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 148-149.

From the photographs one can see that the present dancers of *Faune* have not even learned Nijinsky's stance. Nijinsky not only squares his shoulders far less, but also frequently not at all. He does not pull in his stomach and lift his thorax. Neither in shoulders nor chest does he exhibit his figure. His stomach has more expression than his chest. . . . [T]he expression does not come from the chest; it comes from below the chest, and flows up through it from below.⁵⁴

Thus Nijinsky's ability to both delineate and differentiate the muscles of his upper torso and his pelvis—much like contemporary modern dancers—creates a stance for the Faun that then affects, and frees, every other part of his body. Yoav Kaddar, in recalling the execution of the Faun's stance, speaks both to the strain of the pose if attempted from the chest and shoulders, and the freedom of movement when realized from a segmented torso:

Personally, I worked on “lifting” out of my pelvis and allowing the torso to spiral upward in a continuous flow of energy. One has to “lift” [out of the pelvis] otherwise the “stance” is almost impossible, even painful. Furthermore “lifting” generates life and energy to this positing and it turns it into a movement rather than a position or a “stance.”⁵⁵

In fact the “life and energy” generated from the “lifting” of the pelvis for the Faun's “stance” allows other body zones to generate movement as “free” extensions of that lifted and centered region of the Faun's body, whose model was Nijinsky's body. Denby found just such

⁵⁴ Denby, “Notes,” 17. It is important to remember that Denby's essay was written in 1943; he was therefore not commenting on the Nureyev performance, but probably on performances by Leon Woizikowski who mounted the production for the Ballet Rambert in England in the 1930s.

⁵⁵ Yoav Kaddar, e-mail message to author, November 11, 2008. Yoav speaks specifically to the Faun's “stance” as lending itself very much to modern dance, and refers to the “spiral” in the upper body as one of the basic techniques in Graham. See also Yoav Kaddar, e-mail message to author, Sept. 8, 2008.

energy that seemed “lifted” from Nijinsky’s pelvis when viewing his arms in performance photographs:

One is struck by their [his arms’] lightness, by the way in which they seem to be suspended in space. . . . they seem to flow out unconsciously from the moving trunk, a part of the fullness of its intention. . . . their force—like the neck’s—comes from the full strength of the back. And so they lead the eye more strongly back to the trunk than out beyond their reach into space.⁵⁶

As previously mentioned, Nijinsky designed a five-line staff to encompass detailed movement description within each body zone, (1) head and torso, (2) arms, and (3) legs and feet. In particular, the neck, hands, and feet—viewed as extensions of Nijinsky’s own “lifted” torso and pelvis—are detailed in the choreography of the Faun, and preserved within Nijinsky’s score. Thus the freedom achieved from the combined control and segmentation of his center or torso enabled Nijinsky to create brilliant over-articulation of these parts of his body, an over-articulation that created the phenomenological experience of a particular part of Nijinsky’s body “expressing emotion” in a singular way, the movement of that single body part separate but also integrated into the complete phenomenological impact of Nijinsky’s performance. Geoffrey Whitworth, who witnessed Nijinsky’s performances, wrote: “Another fusion of qualities most noticeable in the art of Nijinsky, and most rare, is that fusion of utter freedom of movement with unflinching sense for decorative effect.”⁵⁷ It is possible to trace the controlled force of Nijinsky’s neck, hands and feet through the “decorative effect” of the described movement of the corresponding parts of the mythological Faun.

⁵⁶ Denby, “Notes,” 16.

⁵⁷ Geoffrey Arundel Whitworth, *The Art of Nijinsky* (New York: B. Blom, 1972), 27.

Nijinsky's Neck and Head

Edwin Denby began his famous 1943 essay, "Notes on Nijinsky Photographs" with the line, "Looking at the photographs of Nijinsky, one is struck by his expressive neck. It is an unusually thick and long neck," but observes the source of both the neck's phenomenological and somatic impact when he continues, "But its [Nijinsky's neck] expressivity lies in its clear lift from the trunk, like a powerful thrust."⁵⁸ Conversely, the power of Nijinsky's trunk in "lifting" and freeing the neck parallels Yoav Kaddar's description of his pelvis "lifting" itself into a state of movement even within the motionless state of the Faun's standing pose.

Nijinsky's neck is thus "easily free"⁵⁹ to extend itself in *Le Pavillon d'Armide* "long" and "bound by a pearl necklace," or constrict itself, appearing in *Petruschka* even to be nonexistent, such that "the heavy head" of the puppet, "hangs forwards, rolling from side to side, propped on the shoulder."⁶⁰ Marie Rambert recalled that Nijinsky had used the neck in a specific stretched position as a "fifth limb" in the choreography of *Le Sacre du Printemps (Le Sacre)*.⁶¹

Hence Nijinsky assumed the model of his own dancer's neck—free to extend, contract, or disappear—as he created, performed, and later described the two head positions for the Faun: (1) a "diagonal head" bent upward when for example he first stretches languorously upon the rock, and (2) the famous "arched head" with chin tucked in, when he signals his first erotically charged awareness of the Main Nymph, an attitude Denby defines as "animal dignity,"⁶² and which continues through the *pas de deux*, most particularly in their tableaux.⁶³ Acocella similarly describes the emotionally "moving" experience of viewing the Struss photograph in which the

⁵⁸ Denby, "Notes," 15.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁰ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 270, 373.

⁶¹ Kenneth Archer and Millicent Hodson, "Confronting Oblivion: Keynote Address and Lecture Demonstration on Reconstructing Ballets," in *Preservation Politics: Dance Revived, Reconstructed, Remade*, edited by Stephanie Jordan (London: Dance Books Ltd., 2000): 13.

⁶² Denby, "Notes," 16.

⁶³ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 22, 34, 40.

Faun is turning his head right, in the direction of the Main Nymph: “You can feel the face cutting through the air’s resistance.”⁶⁴ Thus in *Faune*, Nijinsky’s neck acts, not as a fifth limb as in *Le Sacre*, but as the storyteller who foreshadows the encounter between the Faun and the Main Nymph.

Nijinsky’s Hands and Feet

The attention paid to the extension and movement of the Faun’s hands and feet in the score of *Faune* may be traced directly to Nijinsky’s accentuation of both in performance. Hilda Munnings, the young English dancer who joined the Ballets Russes in 1913 and would soon change her name to Lydia Sokolova, provides a rare firsthand comparison of how Nijinsky moved when not dancing, and when preparing to perform:

When addressed, he turned his head furtively, looking as if he might suddenly butt you in the stomach. He moved on the balls of his feet, and his nervous energy found an outlet in fidgeting: when he sat down he twisted his fingers or played with his shoes. He hardly spoke to anyone, and seemed to exist on a different plane. Before dancing he was even more withdrawn, like a bewitched soul. I used to watch him practicing his wonderful jumps in the first position, flickering his hands; I had never seen anyone like him before.⁶⁵

Sokolova makes a highly interesting observation of Nijinsky’s hyper-awareness of his feet and hands when not dancing. It is her last statement, however, that furnishes us with a dramatic example of Nijinsky’s hyper-awareness of his hands in relationship to his dancing.

Two years earlier Bronislava Nijinska watched her brother as he stood in the wings of the Théâtre du Châtelet, preparing to make his entrance as The Favorite Slave in *Schéhérazade*:

⁶⁴ Acocella, “Photo Call,” 52.

⁶⁵ Sokolova, *Dancing for Diaghilev*, 38.

I watched, fascinated by his absorption as he worked on the flexibility of his hands. His hands performed their own dance; the brightly colored gems in his rings twinkled and scintillated in the air around his body. His agile fingers moved as lightly and swiftly as a spider, and then as he opened and closed his hands slowly, his fingers twisted with the power and elasticity of an octopus.⁶⁶

Tamara Karsavina, Nijinsky's most frequent partner, also describes Nijinsky waiting in the wings during the opening night of Ballet Russes' first season: "Nijinsky paced up and down with that soft, feline step of his, stroking and unclasping his hands."⁶⁷

It can be argued that in all three accounts Nijinsky may have been "flickering" and "unclasping" his hands to release tension. The release of tension, however, denotes the significance of Nijinsky's hands within his performance. H.T. Parker writes at amazing length of how Nijinsky focused his characterization of the puppet Petruschka on his "black mittened hands":

Again in his box, the restless, tireless, black hands shuffled up and down and over the wall as though to thrust through them, and find a way out of confinement and for Petrouchka out of himself. Or they beat upon the air in his impotence, humiliation, burning desire to express his passion and pain as a man and not as a doll. And it was with these clutching black hands, almost, that Petrouchka breathed his last breath.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 375.

⁶⁷ Karsavina, *Theatre Street*, 198.

⁶⁸ Parker, *Motion Arrested*, 130. As previously mentioned, controversy still exists as to how much actual choreography Nijinsky created in his famous roles from Fokine's ballets. Regardless, whether or not Fokine created the movement of Petruschka's hands "beating the air," it seems clear that it was specifically within Nijinsky's performance that the phenomenological impact of the hands "beating the air" was felt. I also find it significant that Nijinsky's costume for Petruschka included black mittens; dancers who succeeded him in the role wore white. See Denby, "Notes," 19. While the color choice may have been Alexandre Benois', the designer would late in life comment that Nijinsky "brought to life the sad, tragic puppet, without using any of the over-heavy present-day

Paradoxically, the significance of Nijinsky's own hands in performance are underscored through the iconic, sculpted, seemingly frozen, hand gesture of the Faun—sustained throughout the performance. Nijinsky's choreography assumes his own ability as a dancer to “give the hands energy and expression without making them stiff and thus drawing unnecessary attention to them.”⁶⁹ Thus the detail available in Nijinsky's notation system strongly valued the Faun's “lack” of hand movements, and also makes available, in Jeschke's words, “communicative memory” of his own performativity.⁷⁰

The Faun's hand position as described through Nijinsky's notation—the hand flat, fingers close together but with a gentle quality, not tense or stiff, and with an abducted wrist—is maintained throughout the ballet, with the exception of when the Faun holds the flute, picks up the grapes, and picks up, carries and handles the Main Nymph's scarf.⁷¹ This attention Nijinsky then gives to the hand, a body part carefully placed and then rather ignored in classical ballet, may be read as representative of his innate philosophy as dancer and choreographer; both Nijinsky-the-dancer and Nijinsky-the-choreographer understood performance, either consciously or unconsciously, as a continuous relationship between the energized center and the over-articulated extension of head, neck, hand and foot. Thus Nijinsky's ostensibly trivial detail of designating the exact placement of the Faun's four fingers and thumb upon the flute may be read as representative of the absolute importance of choreographic detail to the whole of the Faun

make-up. His innate taste enabled him to seize the subtle nuances. . . . He chiseled the role in an extraordinary way and in this sense can be called the author,” sentiments which at least open it up to possibility that Nijinsky chose to accentuate his hands in the role. See Krasovskaya, *Nijinsky*, 177.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 26. Whitworth underscores the dancer's innate ability to simultaneously integrate and accentuate movement, writing of Nijinsky as Petruschka: “Although nobody can dominate a scene like Nijinsky, he is capable at the same time of the most exquisite self-restraint.” See Whitworth, *Nijinsky*, 62.

⁷⁰ Jeschke, “Re-Constructions,” 177.

⁷¹ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 27.

performance.⁷² As Cyril Beaumont wrote: “In *L’Après-Midi d’un Faune*, he was no simple fawn, a type assumed at random, he had absorbed something of every description one had ever heard ascribed to such beings; the lewd gestures, the deliberate, brutish movements—nothing was forgotten.”⁷³

Nijinsky’s *Ballon*: “The Goat Leap”

A long-standing legend that continues to circulate even as it is thoroughly debunked is that Nijinsky’s extraordinary *ballon* (the ability to spring back up in the air after landing from an initial jump) was due to a skeletal abnormality in his feet. In his 1991 biography, *Vaslav Nijinsky: A Leap into Madness*, Dr. Peter Ostwald, who might be expected to have known better, reported soberly that “there has been speculation that Nijinsky’s feet were unusual, with the bones resembling those of a bird. None of his medical records support this assumption, nor can I detect anything abnormal in photographs of his feet.”⁷⁴ Twenty years earlier Marie Rambert wrote: “The most absurd theories were put forward about his [Nijinsky’s] anatomy. People said that the bones in his feet were like a bird’s—as though a bird flew because of its feet!” Rambert goes on, however, significantly for this study, to describe Nijinsky’s actual feet:

He had such a high arch and such strength and suppleness of foot that the sole of one foot could clasp the back of the ankle of the other as though it were a hand (in the position *sur le cou de pied*).⁷⁵

Nijinska also stated that even Nijinsky’s toes were unusually strong.⁷⁶

⁷² Ann Hutchinson Guest makes the point that the choreography for the six supporting nymphs is even more detailed than for the Faun and the Main Nymph. See Guest, “The Hunt is Over,” 426.

⁷³ Beaumont, *Nijinsky*, 25.

⁷⁴ Ostwald, *Nijinsky*, 15-16.

⁷⁵ Rambert, *Quicksilver*, 60. In fact, during pre-rehearsals of his ballet *Jeux*, Nijinsky practiced his role in women’s *pointe* shoes, but decided against performing on stage *sur les pointes*. See Buckle, *Nijinsky*, 281.

⁷⁶ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 294.

Ann Hutchinson Guest stated to me that one of the greatest differences between Nijinsky's score and the memory-based reconstructions of *Faune* lie within the "foot work" Nijinsky choreographed and described. Reiterating that Nijinsky possessed a very high arched toe, as well as an extremely long Achilles tendon, Guest makes the direct connection between Nijinsky's physiognomy and the number, and detail of "walking" steps in *Faune*, six out of the seven performed by the Faun, sometimes with a very lifted arch:

Nijinsky was obviously very aware of that part of the body [the feet] and the effect that it had on the performance. I think his awareness is reflected in his score.⁷⁷

Both Marie Rambert and Bronislava Nijinska attributed at least part of Nijinsky's extraordinary *ballon* and *elevation* to his anatomical gifts. Rambert remembers:

He *did* have an exceptionally long Achilles tendon which allowed him with his heels firmly on the ground and the back upright to bend the knees to the utmost before taking a spring, and he had powerful thighs. . . . His landing, from whatever height he jumped, was like a cat's. He had that unique touch of the foot on the ground which can only be compared to the pianist's touch of the fingers on the keys. It was as subtle and as varied.⁷⁸

Nijinska was even more specific in her description of her brother's ability to spring into the air without any visible "preparation":

In the *allegro pas* [quickly executed jumps and beats] he did not come down completely on the balls of his feet, but barely touched the floor with the tips of his toes to take the force for the next jump, using only the strength of the toes and not

⁷⁷ Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007.

⁷⁸ Rambert, *Quicksilver*, 60.

the customary preparation with both feet firmly on the floor, taking the force from a deep *plié* [bending of the knees].⁷⁹

Nijinsky, celebrated for his amazing leaps, became so frustrated at continually being asked “how high” he jumped, that he declared in French, with uncharacteristic egotism, “I am not a jumper, I am an artist!”⁸⁰ So it was that in *Faune*, the artist who was “not a jumper” and yet was the most famous “jumper” in the western world, choreographed for the Faun one jump only, what Nijinsky called the “goat jump.”⁸¹ Within the extreme difficulty of the jump, and even within its exclusivity, I find Nijinsky-the-choreographer acknowledging and exploiting Nijinsky-the-dancer.

I have seen two videotaped performances of Nijinsky’s *Faune* recreated from his score: the 1989 Juilliard Dance Ensemble performance with Kaddar as the Faun, which I described in detail above, and the first Asian production of *Faune*, staged by Yunyu Wang in 2005 at the Taipei National University of the Arts, under Guest’s direction, with H. B. Jiang dancing the Faun. In 2007, during my interview with Guest in London, I mentioned a difference I had noticed between the “goat jumps” in the two productions, and asked if the difference was due to some modification of Nijinsky’s score she had incorporated into the 2005 production.

“What was the difference you noticed?” Guest asked.

“In the Juilliard performance, after Yoav takes the jump, he pauses; he stays in *plié*. In the Taipei performance, the dancer doesn’t pause after the jump; he moves through it.”

Guest responded with a smile. “It’s because he couldn’t do it. After the landing you have to deepen the *plié* before you continue with the next four steps. He couldn’t do it—and most of

⁷⁹ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 294. Nijinska claimed that as often as she tried, she could never discern Nijinsky’s preparation for a *pirouette* [turn]. See Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 401.

⁸⁰ Reiss, *Nijinsky*, 97.

⁸¹ Rambert, *Quicksilver*, 63.

them can't. In the score there is very clearly a pause. It's the control. They can't control the descent of the jump."

She went on to discuss that not only does the jump have its own "expression" because the Faun is looking backward stage right at the Main Nymph as he jumps stage left, but that the head position, along with the two-dimensional body position, makes the jump very awkward and very difficult to execute.⁸² Yoav Kaddar, recalling the "goat jump" nearly twenty years after his performance, wrote, "I can actually still feel the jump in my muscles. It's an awkward jump as it has no real physical preparation, it comes out of nowhere."⁸³

Kaddar's reference, from his own physical and performance experience of the jump, that no "real physical preparation" for the jump was described by Nijinsky in the score, links directly to Nijinska's description of her brother's jumps. Since preparation for both jumps and turns relate to the strength and flexibility of both the feet and Achilles tendon, Nijinska's observation that he seemed to execute *pirouettes* without any preparation also validates Nijinsky's physiological subtext for choreographing and describing the "goat jump" without an orthodox preparation, and with an extremely difficult landing in which the Faun/dancer must deepen his plié while maintaining his foot completely flat upon the ground. As Acocella observes in the Struss *Faune* photographs of Nijinsky, "Above all, you can feel the fit of Nijinsky's foot on the floor, and how the feet secure his weight."⁸⁴

Why would Nijinsky choreograph the role of Faun to contain, within a ballet however brief and however anti-balletic in form, a solitary jump, to be contrasted with the remainder of a

⁸² Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007. During my dissertation defense, held on Dec. 1, 2010, however, Yunyu Wang provided me with an alternate explanation for Jhiang not holding the leap, stating that he began the leap one count too late, and therefore was required to continue the step in order to stay with the rhythm of the music, and to remain faithful to Nijinsky's meticulous score.

⁸³ Yoav Kaddar, e-mail message to author, June 12, 2007.

⁸⁴ Acocella, "Photo Call," 51.

performance literally grounded? The answer may be that, although Nijinsky may have harbored a conscious need to disaffect those who saw him only as a “jumper,” within the requirements of the narrative as well as within the parameters of Nijinsky’s performance, one jump was enough. As the anonymous critic from the *Christian Science Monitor* wrote in 1916, “The Russian does not come on the stage with hammer and saw to build up something grand and imposing, as he does nothing synthetically. He makes no long statements. He says everything he has to say the first moment he enters.”⁸⁵ Thus within its technical execution, so minutely described in the score, and its solitary existence within the Faun’s performance, the “goat leap” as Nijinsky described it, reads as a microcosm of Nijinsky’s performativity.

Nijinsky’s Musicality

Parallel to the relationship of choreographic detail in the Faun performance as a whole is the relationship between the Faun’s stillness and “simple, sparse actions,”⁸⁶ and the overt, flowing lyricism of Debussy’s score. Even though Nijinsky had correlated each choreographic movement measure for measure to Debussy’s score, Nijinska verified that he did not “count out” the steps to the original cast.⁸⁷ Since Nijinsky had designed many steps and sequences of steps to begin “off the beat,” the cast faced the added difficulty of having the “off beats” *not* counted out. Guest and Jeschke, experts in the specificity of dance notation, spell out the ambivalency of the musicality required to perform Nijinsky’s ballet:

Debussy’s flowing sound must be experienced inwardly by the dancers, and the dance and music must relate through a sustained inner dynamic (an alert attention) on the part of the performers. . . . Practical necessity may dictate that some form of counting be used at first, but the aim should be a movement relationship to the

⁸⁵ “Mr. Nijinsky Takes Part in Dance Duet,” *Christian Science Monitor*, Nov. 9, 1916.

⁸⁶ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 20.

⁸⁷ Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 450.

music through a sense of ‘spacing in time’, a sense of proportioning the parts of the step or movement sequence so that its inner timing remains intact when the whole is placed correctly on the music phrase.⁸⁸

Lydia Sokolova, a member of the second cast of *Faune*, recalled, “One walked and moved quite gently in a rhythm that crossed over the beats given by the conductor. . . . For every lift of the hand or head there was a corresponding sound in the score. It was most ingeniously thought out.”⁸⁹

It is significant in the exploration of this “inner timing” to remember that Nijinsky mounted all the roles, Nymphs and the Faun, either using himself or his sister Bronislava, molding her “like a piece of clay.” Bronislava would in addition play two or three measures of Debussy’s score at a time, and Nijinsky would build the choreography measure by measure.

The uniqueness of Nijinsky’s score lies also in its parallel to a musical score, not only within its structure, but in Nijinsky’s conceptualization. Claudia Jeschke states that the decoding of Nijinsky’s notation system, i.e., the *Faune* score, “relied particularly on the very musical approach which Nijinsky took to movement analysis. He segmented movements and gestures like sounds and created exceedingly complex temporal relationship between the individual body parts—these are so precisely timed as to be impossible for the human body to actually achieve in the way that a musical instrument can.”⁹⁰ Both Guest and Jeschke have written of the practical

⁸⁸ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 20.

⁸⁹ Sokolova, *Dancing for Diaghilev*, 40. Sokolova, who had been driven to tears by Nijinsky’s instructions to “walk between the bars of the music,” also believed that Nijinsky probably was incapable of such detailed musical knowledge and felt “he must have had enormous help from the composer,” which in fact was not true. See Sokolova, *Dancing*, 20.

⁹⁰ Jeschke, “Re-Constructions,” 177.

difficulties of dancers achieving the rhythmical dynamic between *Faune*'s movements and Debussy's score.⁹¹

It is also significant to recall Nijinska's account of her brother's choreographic process: "In his own execution, each movement, each position of the body, and the expression of each choreographic moment is perfect."⁹² Thus the ambivalence within the relationship of the choreography to Debussy's score is only resolved through an "inner timing" whose origin is an imbrication of Nijinsky's choreographic concept, the choreography itself, and Nijinsky's creation of an original notation system to record the "inner timing" of his own performance.

Nijinsky's "Presence"

Yoav Kaddar, describing the challenges of the "goat leap," ends with an admission: "But Nijinsky choreographed it so I had to do it."⁹³ The space around the Faun's famous and difficult "goat leap" is both choreographic and aesthetic; it is the Faun's one jump in the ballet because it is the only jump that Nijinsky needed to execute in order to "say everything he has to say."⁹⁴ The space, that is the "stillness" pervasive within *Faune*'s choreography, and especially around the Faun himself, demands something else of the dancer in that role—a physical and emotional transparency that assumes an intense performance presence.

Jill Beck, in acknowledging the solitude that surrounds the Faun at the beginning of the ballet, writes: "We need to be given time to empathize with the faun, to identify him as the focus of our attention."⁹⁵ Yoav Kaddar considers this voyeuristic focus on the Faun—determined by

⁹¹ See Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 19-20, 182-184. See also Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007.

⁹² Nijinska, *Early Memoirs*, 116.

⁹³ Yoav Kaddar, e-mail message to author, June 12, 2007.

⁹⁴ "Mr. Nijinsky Takes Part in Dance Duet," *Christian Science Monitor*, Nov. 9, 1916.

⁹⁵ Beck, "Recalled to Life," 66.

Nijinsky's score and sustained throughout the ballet—the greatest challenge and the greatest responsibility of the role:

As the Faun, there is nothing to hide behind. Everyone can see *you*; there is no costume that modifies the body; there is often no movement. It's easy to go across the stage with intricate movements. But to simply walk across the stage; it makes you very vulnerable. The Faun is the most difficult role. You'd better be present—otherwise everything falls apart.⁹⁶

Thus Nijinsky the choreographer and notator assumed within the role of Faun an ability of the dancer to (1) realize extreme segmentation, over-articulation and extensions of not only his torso but his appendages, the head, neck, hands, and feet, (2) experience the timing of each step and gesture within a particular melodic span when no marked pulse is discernible,⁹⁷ and (3) create and assert a physical, emotional “life” and “energy” within the characterization of the Faun, even in sustained moments of stillness.⁹⁸ The performance of Faun then requires Nijinsky's example, which his score provides.

The relationship between choreographer, performer, and notator is often a linear one, with each role enacted by a different individual.⁹⁹ In the extraordinary praxis of Nijinsky in *Faune*, however, the three roles may be seen almost as Gil's virtual dancing “doubles,” or

⁹⁶ Yoav Kaddar, telephone interview with author, June 12, 2006. Gil might have been speaking of the parameters of dancing the role of the Faun when he writes, “Basically dancing means confusing lexicon with grammar, such that gestures do not relate back to any meaning outside of corporeal movements: everything is displayed in expression, there is nothing hidden, no background.” See Gil, *Metamorphoses of the Body*, 168.9.

⁹⁷ Guest/Jeschke, *Faune Restored*, 20.

⁹⁸ Susan Lee Hargrave describes the energized performance created by Nijinsky as Faun as “a carefully sculptured character-body.” See Susan Lee Hargrave, “The Choreographic Innovations of Vaslav Nijinsky: Towards a Dance-Theatre” (Cornell University, 1980), 139.

⁹⁹ The intimacy of the connection between Choreographer, Performer, and Notator is of course multiplied when all three roles are enacted by the same individual as in the case of *Faune*—and made more so when the notation system has been created specifically by the Choreographer/Performer to accommodate a particular dance work. Karin Hermes-Sunke explores this usually linear relationship with a series of graphs. See Hermes-Sunke, “Reconstruction/Recreation/Reflections: Practice and Esteem of Repertoire,” 5-6.

Nijinsky's case, "triples," creating not identical, but "complementary" movements.¹⁰⁰ Within each performance of Nijinsky's *Faune*, within each performance of a dancer who performs the Faun, these "tripling" roles of choreographer, performer, and notator, receive and assert traces of Nijinsky's performativity. It thus makes it possible, even probable, that Yoav Kaddar would make the statement that his favorite part of the rehearsal of *Faune* was when he went home and worked on his part alone with the score, "alone with Nijinsky," he said.¹⁰¹

Researcher's Theoretical Re-Viewing

Earlier in this chapter I provided a phenomenological narrative of my response to the April 6, 2006 viewing of the videotaped Juilliard Dance Ensemble performance of Vaslav Nijinsky's original score of *Faune*. I now place the methodological and theoretical template created in chapters one, two and four of this study over specific sequences of that response as a means of furthering my primary goal: to provide evidence, not that my experience was authentic, but rather to strengthen my belief that the experience was authentic. My strengthened belief in the authenticity of my experience also acknowledges the ambiguity of that experience that is of my experiencing, not Nijinsky's performance, but some small part of something that is of Nijinsky's performance. Thus through my viewing of the Kaddar performance, in fact because of my viewing of the Kaddar performance, a new recollection of Nijinsky performance photographs as the Faun was also made available, a recollection that created with Kaddar's moving body enacting Nijinsky's choreography my experience of what I read as "traces" of Nijinsky's performativity:

*Seeing the figure of the faun so relaxed upon the curve of the rock shocks me . . .
and I first respond that the "curve is right," before absorbing that it is the*

¹⁰⁰ Gil, "Paradoxical Body," 25.

¹⁰¹ Yoav Kaddar, conversation with author, January 5, 2008.

reclining figure of Yoav Kaddar that is “right” because it is like Nijinsky in the photographs. I don’t know exactly when I realize that Kaddar is “right” because he both moves and is still with the same ease that Nijinsky projected in the photographs.

The Nijinsky photographs, and the Faun and Nymph together on the stage in the actual ballet that I am watching, seem to be both full of “movement.” Why didn’t I see before how relaxed Nijinsky’s body was in the photographs? How could I not have seen how wrong Nureyev’s body was to be so strained?

In chapter two, I refer to memory studies as a discipline *not* employed within this study. While the principle of the neurological “rewriting” of past memory with current memory may provide a potential explanation for recollecting the Nijinsky photographs as I simultaneously experienced that Kaddar seemed “right” in his movements, I do not read a neurological explanation as a strengthening of my belief in the authenticity of my experience. Rather in this study it is read as a means of removing me from the intimacy and pre-reflexivity of that experience.¹⁰²

Instead, in my narrative I find two sequences, crucial to this study, where the embodiment of Nijinsky’s score by Yoav Kaddar was necessary in order to trigger a “new memory” of the Nijinsky photographs. Merleau-Ponty describes my situation:

¹⁰² See chapter two, “Theory: The Nature of Photography,” 94-97. In a like situation in terms of this study, Jeschke has researched neurophysiologist Wolf Singer’s and Annette Hartmann’s proposals that those who view dance perceive not only the movement of the dancer, but the memory of our own body’s movement. Because this speaks to a scientific explanation for my experiential encounter, I have the same problem with incorporating it into my theoretical template. See “Wolf Singer in conversation with Dorothee Hannappel,” 30, and Hartmann, “Mit dem Körper memorieren,” 197. As States wrote, “No observer (subject) can fully observe or confront the self or the world because we can never stand outside what it is that we are trying to encompass and understand,” and thus I find it perhaps even more important in the analysis that takes place after the phenomenological experience to choose analysis and research that validates belief, rather than patronizes it through explaining it according to traditional, scientific standards. See Bert O. States, “Performance as Metaphor,” *Theatre Journal* 48, no. 1 (1996): 1.

Before any contribution by memory, what is seen must at the present moment so organize itself as to present a picture to me in which I can recognize my former experiences. . . . But past experience can appear only afterwards as the cause of the illusion, and the present experience has, in the first place, to assume form and meaning in order to recall precisely this memory and not others.¹⁰³

Thus my view of Kaddar's performance of Nijinsky's score is *required* in order for me to recognize or recollect the Nijinsky photograph with what I call in chapter two a new, "non-archival sight."¹⁰⁴

Schneider speaks of the negative power of the archive regarding the "seeing" of performance documents, of the "missed event" that the archive emphasizes and intends for me to emphasize as I look at a photograph of Nijinsky as the Faun: the "paper, frame, and photo of the action all represent to the viewer that which the viewer missed—and which, standing before the document, you *witness yourself missing again*."¹⁰⁵

Since the theoretical template for viewing the Nijinsky faun photographs stems from my initial and continued experience of viewing them prior to this study, I assume for myself a non-archival viewing of the Nijinsky faun photographs, a viewing that is experienced outside of the archive where a photograph of Nijinsky as Faun is preserved under the glass of both performance-as-absence and fetishized copy, that is the opposite of my viewing Nijinsky's photographic image as both "present" and containing "presence." My non-archival sight also assumes a non-archival "memory" of the Nijinsky Faun photographs. Thus I am unencumbered by frame, paper, and photo in both my viewing of Nijinsky as the Faun and in my memory of that viewing.

¹⁰³ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 19, 20. See also chapter one, "Introduction," 16.

¹⁰⁴ See chapter two, "Theory: The Nature of Photography," 55.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

Finally, in chapter three, I propose that due to Nijinsky's revolutionary choreography, in which poses were often held for several bars of Debussy's score, *Faune* gave photographers the opportunity to not capture motion, but capture the stillness of that moment or moments of Nijinsky's ballet. If, as I have been arguing, the documentation or photograph of performance is an index or imprint of that performance, my experience of the photograph of Nijinsky as the Faun "so relaxed upon the curve of the rock," and my memory of it, phenomenological and non-archival, are in fact the memory of, not "performance arrested," but of performance itself.

I don't know exactly when I realize that Kaddar is "right" because he both moves and is still with the same ease that Nijinsky projected in the photographs.

My description that Kaddar "both *moves* and is still with the same ease that Nijinsky projected in the photographs" asks for a deeper exploration of Kaddar's performance as a requirement for my new memory of the Nijinsky photographs. That requirement now connects to my theoretical foundation as to the relationship between dance/movement and the body of the performer. Does the memory of the photograph—experienced in the present as I watch Kaddar's moving body—become another virtual element of Gil's "space of the body," and of Zarrilli's "chiasmatic body, in which Kaddar's moving body is read as the internal, material body and Nijinsky's score is read as the external, virtual body?"¹⁰⁶ This "doubling" of the virtual and material dancing bodies—created in this study by the virtual body of Nijinsky-as-score and the material body of Yoav Kaddar—therefore creates the potential, within the dancing experience, of "multiplicities of dancing bodies."¹⁰⁷

Yet in speaking to my own experience, that of the spectator who watches Yoav Kaddar the dancer enacting Nijinsky's score, Gil extends that "space of the body" to me: "No material

¹⁰⁶ See chapter four, "New Evidence: Nijinsky's Score of *Faune*," 180-187.

¹⁰⁷ Gil, "Paradoxical Body," 25.

obstacle, object or wall, impedes the spectator's trajectory, which does not end in any real place. No movement ends in a precise location within the objective scene—just as the limits of the dancer's body never prohibit his gestures from extending beyond his skin. There is an infinity appropriate to danced gestures that only the space of the body is able to engender."¹⁰⁸ Thus these "multiplicities of dancing bodies" are also created within the experience of the spectator.

I propose that my memory of the Nijinsky Faun photograph that shows him "*so relaxed upon the curve of the rock,*" and my view of Kaddar as the Faun "*so relaxed upon the curve of the rock,*" may be read as Gil's "doubling" of the virtual and the material, my experience existing within an "infinity appropriate to danced gestures that only the space of the body is able to engender."¹⁰⁹

When Yoav Kaddar takes the grapes and holds them, devours them with his eyes, my heart stops and I perhaps say out loud, ah! Because the De Meyer photograph of Nijinsky slips into the moving Faun that I am watching.

The single sequence of my narrative encompasses nearly the totality of the phenomenological underpinnings of this study.

The De Meyer photograph of Nijinsky, that is the memory of the De Meyer photograph, speaks to the extraordinary nature of the photograph itself, and its ability, within its viewing, to "wound" me through that element that transcends the cultural or social contexts in which it was created. So I may read Barthes' "punctum" as Nijinsky-as-Faun's gaze upon the grapes, so that ironically my "gaze" was set upon Nijinsky's, and recalled in the moment of watching Kaddar gaze hungrily upon the grapes in his hand.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 25-26.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 26.

¹¹⁰ See chapter two, "Theory: The Nature of Photography," 55-59. Dance critic George Jackson wrote that, "Photographs of Nijinsky lead to his eyes. It is a distinct gift." See Aloff, *Dance Anecdotes*, 82.

Additionally, the historical research I document in chapter three convinces me that Nijinsky experienced the act of being photographed when in makeup and costume as a *performative act*, so what stays within my memory of viewing the photograph is my experience of Nijinsky being photographed as the Faun—and hence experiencing his own performance. Writers that focus on the Nijinsky performance photographs, detailing the experiential “movement” found in Nijinsky’s body when photographed, underscore the images’ phenomenological and performative potency. As Guest remarked to me, “He was totally in the movement when the [any] photograph was taken.”¹¹¹ Thus my research further strengthens my belief in my phenomenological encounter.

My writing of “ah!” in and of itself also exemplifies Dastur’s definition of the “phenomenological event,” that “which takes possession of us in an unforeseen manner, without warning, and which brings us towards an unanticipated future. . . . It [the event] does not happen in a world—it is, on the contrary, as if a new world opens up through its happening.”¹¹²

In addition, my statement that “my heart stops and I perhaps say out loud, ah!” points to a symptom of the phenomenological encounter, my embodied knowledge of the substance and matter of what I am encountering, due to the knowledge of my own body and its awareness of the world around it: “And in so far,” writes Merleau-Ponty, “as my hand knows hardness and softness, and my gaze knows the moon’s light, it is as a certain way of linking up with the phenomenon and communicating with it.”¹¹³

¹¹¹ Ann Hutchinson Guest, personal interview with author, April 2, 2007 Denby also wrote of the movement experienced in the viewing of Nijinsky performance photographs: “In nearly all his pictures one feels, besides the documentary interest, an immediate sense of movement, of the impulse to dance.” See Edwin Denby, *Edwin Denby: Dance Writings*, Edited by Robert Cornfield and William MacKay. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 90.

¹¹² Dastur, “Phenomenology of the Event,” 182. I also take note that the ah! that I wrote after my experiencing of viewing Kaddar’s performance of the Faun mirrors the sound—the ah!—of the Parisian audience on the night of May 19, 1909, watching Nijinsky leap from the stage. See chapter three, “New Photographic Evidence: Nijinsky’s Performance,” 139.

¹¹³ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 317.

My moment of “recognition” of the Faun’s movement as he “devours” the grapes with his eyes is also benefited by the emotional/rational opposition explicit within theatre. It is the liminal “floor” of the stage that provides me with an essential negotiating tool to “see what I can see” of Nijinsky, a precedent for belief through the suspension of disbelief, but, through that suspension, a persistent allowing of performative memory to shift from the motionless archive of the Nijinsky photograph onto the moving body of a dancer in front of my eyes. When Garner writes of the phenomenology of performance, that “so powerful is this persistence of the actual and its modes of presence that one witnesses its phenomenal effects, even when the referent is materially absent,” he describes for me the moment of seeing Kaddar’s eyes devour the grapes and my belief that that moment “feels the same” as my memory of the Nijinsky photograph.¹¹⁴

Within my memory of the De Meyer photograph of Nijinsky gazing at the grapes, I also rely upon a succession of scholarship that defines photography for me as not merely realistic, not merely a process in which the *photographic depiction* of Nijinsky gazing at grapes, resulting from the chemically produced *photographic image* resulting in turn from the *optical image* in the camera, has as its substantive origin, Nijinsky’s body. Further, photography is defined as an index of the body of Nijinsky, an index that I encounter phenomenologically in the present each time I view the photograph.

Roland Barthes, in *Camera Lucida*, describes the singularity of the “wound” or punctum of the photograph. In the case of Nijinsky/the Faun’s gaze upon the grapes, a presence is located within the photograph itself, and the moment of the photograph being “taken” stays within the photograph as a perpetual and persistent “now.” Thus the photograph also creates a synchronous

¹¹⁴ Yet again, I need Kaddar’s body in performance in order to ascertain the traces of Nijinsky’s performativity found in his photographs and to validate the rightness of the choreography. Additionally this shifting of the photograph of Nijinsky as the Faun “holding grapes” from the “motionless archive” to the realm of a present, performative “tracing” of Nijinsky as the Faun “holding grapes” reasserts both my theoretical read of (1) the nature of photography generally as indexical, and (2) the nature of the performance photographs of Nijinsky-as-Faun.

phenomenological relationship between photograph and viewer.¹¹⁵ That perceptual “present-ness” can be additionally described through a combined phenomenological/empirical approach to photographic documentation, illustrated famously by Barthes’ statement that the “there-then” of the photograph’s historical content becomes the “here-now,”¹¹⁶ of its viewing in the present.

My use of the phrase “*into the moving Faun*” also connects directly to the scholarship of Jose Gil and Phillip Zarrilli on the notion of “the space of the dancer’s body” as both virtual and real, and “the moving Faun” as encompassing a “sum of performance” that is read as more than either the part that Yoav Kaddar or Vaslav Nijinsky dances, or danced. Gil describes the space of the dancer’s moving body as including the very stage floor from which his feet push off into the leap, as well the extension of his body in that leap. Thus the *space of the dancer’s body*, as Gil specifies it,¹¹⁷ or as Zarrilli presents it, “a bodily-based awareness in which absent or negative space is inhabited as part of the performance process,”¹¹⁸ is both real and virtual. The time and the space in which the Faun performs is within the “space of the dancer’s body.”

Yoav Kaddar stated that, “I didn’t want to become Nijinsky. I wanted to become a Faun, to be Yoav doing *Afternoon of a Faun*.”¹¹⁹ From the firsthand accounts of Nijinsky’s performance, one of the strongest phenomenological impacts described was a sense of Nijinsky “submerging his natural self into the character of the moment.”¹²⁰ Nijinsky clearly understood that his score assumed a future dancer, *another* dancer other than himself, to “embody” the role of the Faun. Nijinsky understood the absolute importance of the moving body in performance as the “end” of the “means” which was his score, a score that as, embodied symbolism, operates, or

¹¹⁵ See chapter two, “Theory: The Nature of Photography,” 59-77.

¹¹⁶ Roland Barthes, and Stephen Heath, *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 44.

¹¹⁷ Gil, “Paradoxical Body,” 23.

¹¹⁸ Zarrilli, “Model,” 666.

¹¹⁹ Yoav Kaddar, telephone interview with author, June 12, 2006.

¹²⁰ Beaumont, *Vaslav Nijinsky*, 26.

is operated on, in Claudia Jeschke's words, by "knowing, writing, and inventing body movement in space."¹²¹

If the Faun, as "sculpted character-body"¹²² moves within the knowledge that is reflected in Nijinsky's score, that is Nijinsky's own knowledge of his own body in performance, and if Faun also moves within Yoav Kaddar's embodiment of the score, then what description of *whose* body creates the "space of the body" that I experienced? My theoretical question becomes practical within two selections from my phenomenological response:

I see Nijinsky lying upon the scarf floating all around Yoav Kaddar lying upon the scarf, and when Yoav Kaddar, in the very final moment of the ballet, turns his hands palm up, I can't tell whether I'm seeing embodiment of the Nijinsky photograph, if I'm actually seeing Nijinsky's hands turning palm up, or whether I'm seeing Yoav Kaddar rest into the De Meyer photograph.

I am not disappointed that it isn't Nijinsky, because the idea that it isn't Nijinsky doesn't occur to me.

Gil expands upon Merleau-Ponty's notions of embodied consciousness and the body as existing not "in" space, but "of" space,¹²³ and describes the space of the dancer's body as an autonomous field created by the dancer's movements, that prolongs the "body's limits beyond its visible contours."¹²⁴ Hence the space of Yoav's dancer's body may include the very stage floor from which his feet push off into the "goat jump" of the Faun, but most particularly and significantly, the extension of his body in that leap. Gil writes: "The [dancer's] body gives itself

¹²¹ Jeschke, "Notation Systems," 4.

¹²² Hargrave, *Choreographic Innovations*, 139.

¹²³ See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 67-148, 203-98.

¹²⁴ Gil, "Paradoxical Body," 23.

new extensions in space, and in such ways it forms a new body—a virtual one, but ready to become actual and ready to allow gestures to become actualized in it.”¹²⁵

Hence in the performance of the Faun, Yoav Kaddar provides the “inner body mind,” the energized space of the dancer’s body, and Vaslav Nijinsky provides the externalized gesture, a gesture Jeschke promotes as containing traces of Nijinsky’s “performative knowledge.” Yoav Kaddar, fifteen years after performing the Faun, spoke to me of what parts of the choreography seemed to contain “lingering traces” of Nijinsky’s performance: “Definitely the more obvious elements, the bigger picture, that is the way the Faun moved and held himself. But I also felt him in a more delicate, subtle level—the beautiful place when the Faun brings the scarf up and sniffs at it, and then the slow walk toward the rock. Somehow—those moments are lingering from Nijinsky, the more sensual, delicate moments.”¹²⁶ The audience is included within this phenomenological experiential dynamic, so that Yoav Kaddar “feels” Nijinsky in the nuanced details of the choreography, so do I, the viewer, “feel” both Kaddar and Nijinsky within the performance. In writing the words, *I can’t tell whether I’m seeing embodiment of the Nijinsky photograph, if I’m actually seeing Nijinsky’s hands turning palm up, or whether I’m seeing Yoav Kaddar rest into the De Meyer photograph*, I describe an encounter that is experienced as layered, interwoven, real and virtual, what Zarrilli, again expanding from Merleau Ponty, describes as the “braiding, intertwining, or criss-crossing,” that “characterizes the body’s fundamental relationship to the world.”¹²⁷

“Not Not Nijinsky”

So in experiencing something that causes me to write, *the idea that it isn’t Nijinsky doesn’t occur to me*, I am, in Sheets-Johnstone’s words, “reflect[ing] backwards towards an

¹²⁵ Ibid., 22.

¹²⁶ Yoav Kaddar, telephone interview with author, Feb. 19, 2007.

¹²⁷ Zarrilli, “Toward a Phenomenological Model,” 655.

elucidation of the structures of consciousness . . . by elucidating the immediate world of lived experience, the world as it is immediately and directly known through a pre-reflective consciousness. This initial and direct knowledge constitutes the foundation upon which all future knowledge is built.”¹²⁸ So while this study involves both research and analysis, both continually, and finally, rest back with my experience itself, and the knowledge retained from that experience.¹²⁹

Given my thesis describing the imbrication of Kaddar’s moving body with Nijinsky’s score manifesting as a virtual, performative body, I may make additional claim that Kaddar’s performance is not Nijinsky’s performance, but is not not Nijinsky’s performance, a perhaps more palpable analogy than Schechner’s deservedly famous reference to Olivier and Hamlet.¹³⁰ Within the liminal, phenomenological non-boundaries in which I experience Kaddar’s performance of Nijinsky’s Faun, in States’ words, I “retain[] as “co-present” both what [I] have consented to disbelieve (reality) and the belief [I] have temporarily “willed” in its place (the illusion).”¹³¹

“Negative Discovery”

Nureyev’s performance is so strained it seems now to me to be paralyzed, containing somehow less fluidity than the Nijinsky photographs; that is even when the Faun and the Nymphs are still, their bodies are not “stopped”; . . . the Nijinsky photographs, and the Faun and Nymph together on the stage in the actual ballet that I am watching, seem to be both full of “movement.”

¹²⁸ Sheets-Johnstone, *Phenomenology of Dance*, 13.

¹²⁹ See chapter one, “Introduction,” 19-20 for Merleau-Ponty’s statement on the phenomenological encounter as the only true basis for analysis.

¹³⁰ See Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, 110.

¹³¹ Bert O. States, “The Phenomenological Attitude,” in *Critical Theory and Performance*, edited by Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992): 372.

My aforementioned “response” describes a realization that incorporated my memory of the Nijinsky photographs but again *required* the moving body of Kaddar, moving in the ways Nijinsky described in 1915, ways that reflected Nijinsky’s performativity to me, if only as “traces.” Thus both the Nijinsky photographs and Nijinsky’s score of *Faune* are experienced as examples of ephemeral residues of Nijinsky’s performance as the Faun, requiring the embodiment of dancer Yoav Kaddar to make available these residues to me, the Viewer. Thus my response, and my rejection of Nureyev’s authenticity of performance, reflect an availability of multiple “re-appearances” of that which is remaining of Nijinsky’s performance, as opposed to the understanding of “performance as disappearance.”¹³²

*The way the Faun physically expresses surprise (when he sees the other Nymphs)
within his neck and the movement of his neck is just like a deer! How is that
possible? Is it in the choreography?*

This part of my narrative provides initial entrance into (1) Guest and Jeschke’s research in and decoding of Nijinsky’s original notation system, and score of *Faune*, and (2) Jeschke’s continuing and original research on the performative knowledge available through dance notation systems. Elaborating upon the above-referenced scholarship, my own research directly connects Nijinsky’s own moving body, in this instance, his extraordinarily flexible and expressive neck, to the meticulously detailed choreography of the Faun. Thus the movement of Nijinsky’s head and neck served as a model for both the form and content of the Faun’s movements.¹³³

I approached my viewing of the Juilliard performance of *Faune* with an underlying skepticism. This skepticism was born, not out of my distrust in the scholarship and findings of

¹³² See chapter two, “Theory: The Nature of Photography,” 74-76, 92-94.

¹³³ See chapter five, “New Evidence: Nijinsky’s Performativity in *Faune*,” 247-248.

Guest and Jeschke in the decoding of Nijinsky's system, but in my experiential belief that the Joffrey/Nureyev performance of *Faune* was an authentic reconstruction of Nijinsky's performance. As Merleau-Ponty writes, "The musical meaning of a sonata is inseparable from the sounds which are its vehicle: before we have it no analysis enables us to anticipate it; once the performance is over, we shall, in our intellectual analyses of the music, be unable to do anything but carry ourselves back to the moment of experiencing it."¹³⁴ Thus it was my phenomenological encounter with Yoav Kaddar's performance as Faun that enabled my belief in the authenticity of Nijinsky's score. My belief in Jeschke's research on the performative knowledge available in Nijinsky's dance notation system, detailed in chapter four, is consequently strengthened through my experiential knowledge of, in both my and Jeschke's words, the "rightness" of the score as performed by Yoav Kaddar.¹³⁵

I look around at the others engaged in their research and wonder what it is I've just seen—what have I seen? Is it what I think it is?

The above statement that I wrote—a description of my response to the time "after the encounter"—may be read as the scholarly "problem" to which this study has been my answer. As Bert O. States observes, "It is one thing to *have* such a phenomenological experience, another to know what to do with it from an analytical standpoint. It turns out to be an immensely complex problem."¹³⁶ In attacking this "complex problem" of seeking scholarly validation for that which, through its phenomenological principles, stands defiantly against the need for validation, I have explored my desire for my own encounter with Nijinsky's presence, an encounter whose realization is predicated on my eyes "being opened" to the phenomenon in front of me.

¹³⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 182.

¹³⁵ Claudia Jeschke, e-mail message to author, May 8, 2007.

¹³⁶ States, "The Phenomenological Attitude," 197.

Finally, in my belief that I have encountered *something of what it was like* to see and encounter Nijinsky, I have also expressed the desire for its result—my own memory of Nijinsky’s performance. It is thus through a rigorous description of my encounter, rather than through evidentiary defense, that I may acknowledge whatever view of Nijinsky that remains available to me, and whatever memory of him that has become my own.

CONCLUSION

The foundation for this study is love, and its connective action, the desire to see, or to be with, the object of that which is loved. Love and desire are of course not unknown subjects within scholarship. In the introduction, I considered Peggy Phelan's suggestion that memory, sight, and love, are the three states of mind whose goal is to produce a "believable image."¹ In chapter two, I employed Roland Barthes' love of his dead mother, at the core of his book *Camera Lucida*. In chapter four, I elaborated upon Jose Gil's scholarship on the "space of the body" to describe this study's theory of the dancing body in performance—and I now turn my attention again to Gil's work, and in particular to the elements of desire that are incorporated specifically within the body that dances.

In "Paradoxical Body," Gil speaks of the "body's capacity to assemble," its most transcendent example being the body's capacity to "assemble the body's assemblages" into dance. Gil goes on, however, to enlist the essential motivation that propels this assemblage: desire, specifically non-eroticized, non-sexualized desire. He argues that

[t]his is why dance realizes in the purest way the assembling vocation of desire. . . . The de-sexualization of bodies accompanies the deployment of the movement of assemblage; that is to say, of danced movement as the movement of desire. If dance de-eroticizes bodies, it is because danced movement has become desire (desire to dance, desire to desire, desire to assemble).²

¹ Phelan, *Unmarked*, 1.

² Gil, "Paradoxical Body," 30.

To Gil's list of the objects of desire, I now add: the desire to see dance and, specifically, my desire to see Vaslav Nijinsky dance.

If, as Phelan states, memory, sight, and love are predicated upon believability, the authenticity of memory, sight and love/desire require that I believe that that which I remember, see, and love/desire, are substantial. I neither intended nor was prepared for my experience on April 6, 2006, when in a cubicle of the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, I viewed the 1989 Juilliard Dance Ensemble's performance of Nijinsky's *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*. Within that experience, however, I believed, and maintain a belief, that an imbrication of memory, sight, and desire made available to me performative traces of Vaslav Nijinsky in the role of the Faun, and that I know I am in possession of the memory of that experience. Thus I am fulfilled in my desire to see Nijinsky dance and to have my own particular memory of that sight, or rather my desire to believe that I have seen him dance has been fulfilled.

The medium for this experiential belief and of the fulfillment of my desire, exclusive of the videotape of the performance, was my body. "The body," Husserl wrote, "is . . . the *medium of all perception*. In seeing, the eyes are directed upon the seen and run over its edges and surfaces. When it touches objects, the hand slides over them. Moving myself, I bring my ear closer in order to hear."³ If the body of Nijinsky and the moment of his leap in *Faune* are no more, toward what or whom do I move? To what do I bring my eyes and my ears closer?

My experience of watching the Kaddar performance of the Faun, however, was not so one-sided, not so unrequited. Merleau-Ponty describes the phenomenological encounter as the intimate "coming toward" of the viewer and that which is viewed:

³ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. Translated by R. Rojcewicz and A. Schwer (Boston: Kluwer, 1989), 61.

The object which presents itself to the gaze or the touch arouses a certain motor intention which aims not at the movements of one's own body, but at the thing itself from which they are, as it were, suspended. And in so far as my hand knows hardness and softness, and my gaze knows the moon's light, it is as a certain way of linking up with the phenomenon and communicating with it.⁴

Yet while I “linked up” with the sight of the Kaddar performance of Faun, imbricated as it was with the virtual body of Nijinsky-as-score and my own memory of the De Meyer photographs of Nijinsky-as-Faun, there was yet another aspect that married the experience even more firmly to my belief in its authenticity: the research employed in this study after the experiential fact.

The theoretical template I created to read the Nijinsky photographs retroactively validated the first phenomenological ah! I experienced upon my sight, as a child, of a photographic image of Nijinsky in makeup and costume. The sight of that photograph was, theatrically speaking, the attack of the play whose title was my desire to see Nijinsky dance. Nothing, after I saw that photograph, would be the same. As I wrote in the introduction to this study, How could I love something so much, and yet have missed it?

My original research uncovering strong circumstantial evidence that Nijinsky experienced the act of being photographed in makeup and costume as a performative act, as with my research on the nature of the Nijinsky photographs, provided retroactive validation not only of phenomenological writings centered upon the Nijinsky performance photographs, but of my cousin E.K. Waller's previously mentioned, spontaneous reaction to seeing Bert's photograph of Petruschka on my wall: “You fall in love with that performer, don't you?”

My research on Nijinsky's notation system and its sole example, the score of *Faune*, produced evidence that both his notation system and his choreography of his ballet reflected

⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 317.

direct traces of his performativity. Thus I argue that he used his own dancer's body as the template for what Jeschke calls "the structural relation between *knowing*, *writing*, and *inventing* body movement in space"⁵ This research also provides retroactive validation for Yoav Kaddar's statement to me that when he was home rehearsing alone with the score of *Faune* that he was "alone with Nijinsky,"⁶ a statement that may be read as the fulfillment of the desire to dance with Nijinsky. Kaddar's statement, in addition, points directly to Gil and Zarrilli's scholarship on the symbiotic relationship between virtual/fictive and material/inner body in performance,⁷ in which Kaddar's material/inner body dances "with" the virtual/fictive body of Nijinsky's score, shown in this study to reflect traces of the legendary dancer's performativity.

Yet, in the end, all of my research returns me to the beginning—my love of Nijinsky's performance and the desire to see Nijinsky's dance—just as Merleau-Ponty states that, "once the performance is over, we shall, in our intellectual analyses . . . be unable to do anything but carry ourselves back to the moment of experiencing it."⁸ Love then and its means of expression, desire, drives this study as surely as it drove Nijinsky himself. Denby wrote of Nijinsky, "As he said himself, he danced with love."⁹ Thus, within Gil's framework of dance as physicalized but de-eroticized desire, it is understandable that Nijinsky, in response to the outrage of some at the Faun's final, explicit gesture of desire enacted upon the Nymph's scarf, would say in the sincerity of the dancer, "I was astonished, indeed horrified when part of the audience and certain reviewers detected indecency in my gestures."¹⁰

⁵ Jeschke, "Notation Systems," 5.

⁶ Conversation with Yoav Kaddar, January 5, 2008.

⁷ See chapter four, "New Evidence: Nijinsky's Score of *Faune*," 182-189.

⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology*, 182.

⁹ Denby, "Notes," 20.

¹⁰ Qtd. in *Afternoon of a Faun: Mallarmé, Debussy, Nijinsky*, 43.

The price maintained for love, however, is the certain knowledge of its loss through death. In this study I also argue that the availability of the performative traces, and the bodied space, of Nijinsky's performance in *Faune* is contingent upon the acceptance of the absence of Nijinsky's performance that is the death of his performance. Hence as I accept that I will never see the moving body of Nijinsky in performance, I may see with "new eyes" what is available to me now. Thus within my experience of watching the Kaddar performance of the Faun, as I exclaimed ah! at the "something" of Nijinsky that I experienced, I simultaneously gave expression to his elegy.

My experience thus argues against scholarship that reads performance-as-absence as well as archivalism's preservation of performance ephemera as fetish. My phenomenological encounter with the Kaddar performance of Nijinsky's enacted and notated movements, and my recollection of the Nijinsky performance photographs, are experienced as neither copy nor fetish but as embodied performativity and indexical traces of performance. Thus this study realizes the demarginalization of Nijinsky who has floated at the center of a myth that places him squarely in the archive, and on the edge of what remains of his own performance.

An example of Nijinsky-as-copy and Nijinsky-as-fetish surfaced fairly recently on the internet. As I mentioned in chapter three, Christian Comte, featured in the film *Revoir Nijinsky Danser*, has posted computer-generated "dance footage" of Nijinsky in *Faune*, among other roles, on his YouTube site.¹¹ The "dance footage" from *Faune*, which lasts only seconds in the aforementioned film, on YouTube consists of Nijinsky photographs as the Faun that have been connected through computerized graphics to produce "movement" to Debussy's score that last for upwards of fifteen seconds.

¹¹ See www.youtube.com/user/christiancomte .

The draw to watch the YouTube sequences was overwhelming to me, and I admit to an initial eyebrow-raised reaction. As I continued to watch and re-watch the sequences, however, the doctored, moving images began to resemble a dead body that was being electronically stimulated. By contrast, at a conference in Hawaii attended by both Yoav Kaddar and myself, I experienced the moment when Yoav slowly swiveled his neck to stare at me as I stood in the position of one of the Nymphs. I received the full impact of the Faun's stare, his eyes lowered beneath his brow. The elements of that stare, instigated by the position of Kaddar's neck, specified in Nijinsky's score, modeled after Nijinsky's own, remarkably strong and malleable neck, encompass for me the living element of Nijinsky's performativity.

Applications of this Study

In the program of the 1912 Paris premiere of *Faune*, audiences read from the eponymous poem by Mallarmé: "The curtain falls, so that the poem may continue in every memory."¹² The curtain has fallen on Nijinsky. The poem of his memory has continued through both his photographs and the written accounts of those who saw his performance; both have provided us with a phenomenological memory, in States' words, "not [of] all possible meanings but of meaning and feeling as they arise in a direct encounter with the art object."¹³

I, however, through an experience that in Dastur's words arrived "unexpectedly" and came to me "by surprise,"¹⁴ found poetic traces of Nijinsky's performance within the viewing of the Juilliard Dance Ensemble's 1989 videorecorded performance of *Faune*. If such a phenomenological event is predicated upon its unexpected nature, is it possible to construct such an event in the hope, or the anticipation of surprise?

¹² WNET (Television station : New York N.Y.), Public Broadcasting Service (U.S.), and Joffrey Ballet. *Nureyev and the Joffrey Ballet in Tribute to Nijinsky*, Videorecording.

¹³ States, "The Phenomenological Attitude," 370.

¹⁴ Dastur, "Phenomenology of the Event," 182.

While I maintain a healthful dose of skepticism based on the paradoxical nature of planning a surprise, I nonetheless believe that a “performance event” in which audience members would be able to move through a phantasma of De Meyer photographic images of *Faune* and live dancers performing Nijinsky’s score has the potential to create an atmosphere in which both unexpected, and surprising experiences might be realized.

It is in the nature of the process of love to mourn its loss and celebrate what is left behind. Such a performance event would, ideally, accomplish both actions, as the ability of Vaslav Nijinsky to astonish, to take breath away, continues to reverberate within those individuals who touch and who are touched by even the faintest glimpse of his performance.

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