

the designer's hallmarks of simplification and emphasis on form. However, whereas her repeated observations that such works as *Symphonies d'instruments à vent* and *Les Cinq doigts* were written "chez Chanel" (181; see also 185–86, 190, 250) are intended to support her argument, they instead raise questions about the distinction between influence and coincidence, synchronicity, or what Davis elsewhere calls the "mirroring" (252) of similar aesthetics of contemporary artists working in different forms at the same historical moment.

A particular strength of *Classic Chic* is that it is generously illustrated, with ninety-five figures that range from fashion plates and other magazine illustrations, to production photographs and programs, to portraits and other artworks, to musical scores, snapshots, and advertisements. Such extensive and varied illustrations are rare in scholarly publications and here function collectively to lend vivid support to Davis's argument about the intersection of music, fashion, and modernism in the early twentieth century.

Although the Ballets Russes figures prominently in *Classic Chic* and other popular social dance forms and crazes—for example, the tango—are mentioned in passing as sources of inspiration for fashionable modernism, Davis offers little in the way of choreographic or movement analysis that will be illuminating for dance historians. Where her book will be useful for dance studies, however, is in the insights that it offers into how early twentieth-century developments in concert and social dance gave rise to and/or corresponded with related trends in fashion and music.

Penny Farfan
University of Calgary

YES? NO! MAYBE . . . SEDUCTIVE AMBIGUITY IN DANCE

by Emilyn Claid, 2006. London and New York: Routledge. x + 214 pp., notes, bibliography, index. \$125 cloth, \$42.95 paper.

Emilyn Claid's *Yes? No! Maybe . . . Seductive Ambiguity in Dance* is an approachable book that relies on established theory to investigate spectatorship, representation, and identity in British dance of the last half of the twentieth century. Claid takes the reader on an engaging journey through her personal experiences as a young, earnest ballet dancer and then into an exploration of feminism and a reimagining of how to be a woman on stage in a new era. She discusses the role feminism has played for dancers negotiating their relationships with the audience, other dancers, choreographers, and with dance itself as a means of expression and communication. Claid resolves her work by taking ideas and information from those disparate worlds and then embracing queer theory as an alternative. For Claid, queer theory provides a fluid conception of identity that allows freedom of expression in the creation of dances and also in the audience's interaction with performance.

Claid's great contribution to current dance scholarship is her clear articulation of the power dynamic inherent in classical ballet. Her analysis of the teacher/student relationship leads compellingly to an understanding of the tension between the spectator and the performer. Outside eyes constantly impose themselves on ballet dancers; the gaze is strong and powerful to the point that its presence is felt even in an observer's absence. Ballet dancers inhabit the eye of the critic and set unattainable expectations for themselves as they strive toward perfection. The relationship is fraught because of the dancer's constant need to please and the

acknowledgement that nothing will ever be good enough.

Another intriguing aspect of this dynamic is the ballet dancer's negotiation of pain. Pain becomes rewarding because ballet dancers are taught that through pain comes achievement, through pain comes pleasure. Claid makes use of Foucault to examine the sado-masochistic relationship between teacher and student by noting that pain is not simply imposed upon a dancer by the teacher. Rather, the ballet dancer is engaged in the creation and nourishment of pain: "the power system perpetrates the dancer's desire: that which will bring the reward of success, with the dancer imposing the pain upon him/herself. The dancer, now a tool of the system, supports the system through a cycle of self-inflicted pain, inducing the power, which brings success" (40). The ballet dancer is a willing participant in the pain/accomplishment/power cycle.

After illustrating ballet's fascination with unattainable perfection and beauty, Claid relieves the reader by rejecting such notions and embarking upon an exploration of feminism and how dancers began to portray femininity in the 1970s. There is an absorbing discussion in this section about the use of parody as a means of questioning and destabilizing common practices. Claid has faith in parody's ability to help sabotage normativity, but she cautions, "for feminists, there will always be the danger that parody simply perpetuates the systems it tries to displace through its strategy to install and subvert. Postmodern use of parody requires complicity with the past and, although the techniques to install and subvert canons and conventions are clearly disruptive, the complicit conditions limit the extent of radical change urged by feminist politics" (64). In order to weaken the power of tradition, feminist performers may challenge outward displays of conven-

tional femininity by contesting the exhibition of thin, petite girls that flit lightly through space and becoming "strapping, strong, angry and outspoken bodies" that take on what are typically regarded as masculine movement characteristics (65). In re-imagining what is seen on stage and who does the looking, Claid encourages spectators to play a keen role in the parody. Their new role is to desire a performance in which women take equal space beside men.

As Claid developed as a performer and dance maker, she coveted an active and engaged audience that made an effort to understand and suspend conventional expectation. *Yes? No! Maybe . . .* takes issue with traditional spectatorship and describes a watching that "was a radical re-education for the performers and . . . spectator, and was a practice of un-learning time and space . . . As we understood the emergence of the practice, we re-figured the practice of watching" (91). In her work, Claid challenges the audience's ways of seeing by moving dance to new locations, disrupting expectations for interactions between performers and spectators, and giving more power over the experience to the performer by developing a malleable and unpredictable relationship with the audience. Both performers and audience members have a chance to "re-educate" by approaching the performance with openness, without applying preformed beliefs.

Claid's interest in flexible performance characteristics is demonstrated throughout the book by a fascination with androgyny. Androgyny seduces her with its dream of fluid identities and the sense that it allows an individual to have the best of both worlds. She grounds androgyny in myth and ancient history and writes lovingly of the young men who were considered to be a "harmonized union" of male and female qualities that "transcend[ed] sexuality, mortality and pro-

creation of the real body" (30). She gracefully guides the reader to appreciate the display of different gender identities on the same dancing body. The transcendental promise of androgyny is a means of re-figuring what is real and offering a new standard for performance and spectatorship.

Claid acknowledges the standard view that dance feminizes men in the eyes of the spectator. She praises those men who have unabashedly embraced the feminine in their movements. Then, she seeks the same identity mutability for women. She yearns for women to have a wide scope of gender expression, yet her strongest examples of such range are male dancers: men who embrace beauty and fluid movement, and men who are comfortable under the gaze of an audience. Claid clearly states that it is possible for women to masculinize themselves on stage and thus attain androgyny, but her examples do not completely persuade me to agree.

Part of the problem with Claid's argument is that she is dealing with biological sex and sexual identity characteristics at the same time. A continuation of the Cartesian binary that divides experience into opposites is at work. Queer theorists like to reject the binary as too simplistic a way of living in the world, so it is a step backward to enmesh sex and identity. Masculinity and femininity act as two poles on a long spectrum of identity experience and are often considered opposites in the same way that male and female are seen as opposites. Claid specifically calls dance "a language that signifies as feminine," so it is less than convincing that it is even possible for dance to masculinize women (160). Claid demonstrates women moving along the continuum of femininity into the territory of masculinity, but it remains questionable that they will ever make it far enough to be considered androgynous.

In a challenge to other statements in

the book, Claid remarks on the problems androgyny might cause for feminists, "the high-art aesthetic of classical androgyny represent[s] a denial of the female desire, feminine sensuality and eroticism" (70). In a community that seeks to promote new ways to perform and view the feminine, a rejection of the female form and its identifying characteristics is problematic. But Claid does not reject femininity. While she rightfully wants women to have the choice to perform their femininity with individuality, she also wants spectators to seek such variety. It is difficult to resolve what seem to be contradictory voices that desire dance to exist without clear boundaries yet want feminists to hold onto an essential femininity. It may be through contradiction, however, that we can come to a clearer understanding of the queer theory appreciation of many identities playing out on one body. Awkwardly for Claid, her proof lies mostly with male examples. I am quite sympathetic to the idea of performing fluid identities, but I am not convinced it can be achieved in the manner she presents. I am left questioning the potential for *dance* to be the medium through which women might achieve androgynous performativity.

Gretchen Alterowitz
Seattle, Washington

FINNISH DANCE RESEARCH AT THE CROSSROADS: PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL CHALLENGES

edited by P. K. Pakkanen and A. Sarje. 2006. Helsinki: The Arts Council of Finland 175 pp., photographs, notes, references. \$35 paper.

This anthology of collected research articles is part of a series of yearbooks that started in 1997. This is the first time a volume has been published in English with the explicit purpose of providing international readers