

## Chapter 16

### Ancient Pantomime and the Rise of Ballet

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This book has argued that ancient pantomime matters to classicists because it was so important an element of cultural life under the Roman Empire. But why should it be a matter of concern to any other cultural historians? The reason is that the very idea of the ancient medium played a definitive role in the emergence of ballet, dance theatre and modern dance. The founding fathers of the balletic dance idiom, in the later 17th and 18th centuries, were consciously inspired by the example of ancient pantomime, and formulated their aesthetic projects in imitation of what they thought it entailed. Their own descendants, from Nijinsky to Duncan, Fokine, Graham, and Bausch, have thus indirectly been reacting to the ancient pantomime dancers (even if they have been unaware of it), whether they have been emulating or reacting against the principles of classical ballet.

By the early 18th century, when John Weaver (as we shall see) organised performances of danced mythical narrative that certainly make him best candidate for the title of the first ballet choreographer in the modern sense of the term, the nature of the ancient pantomime dancer was beginning to become properly understood. Weaver, rather charmingly and not at all inaccurately, glosses the term *pantomimus* as ‘Universal Actor in Dancing’.<sup>1</sup> Yet it is instructive to begin the story in 1606, when the excellent translator Philemon Holland published his version of Suetonius’ *Life of Domitian*. He had encountered what

he must have inferred was an important entertainer named Paris, described in Latin as a *pantomimus* (12.10). Since there was no equivalent within Holland's culture, and no studies of ancient pantomime available, he did not know exactly what this meant. He therefore assumed that Paris was a stage actor, and he translated *pantomimus* as 'player and counterfeit'.<sup>2</sup> Twenty years later, as the Puritan attacks on the legitimacy of the theatre grew ever more acerbic during the reign of James I, the great dramatist Philip Massinger was inspired by the story of this Egyptian-born player, his impact at court, and the love that Domitia, the Emperor's wife, conceived for him. Indeed, he made Paris the hero of his theatrical defence of his profession, an important stage play. But since Massinger perpetuated the mistranslation of *pantomimus*, he chose as his play's title, rather than *The Roman Dancer*, the rather different *The Roman Actor*. His Paris was conceived not as a dancer but as an archetype of the Jacobean acting profession, whose expertise was, quite unlike that of Paris, centred on vocal skills.<sup>3</sup>

By just one century later, it would have been very much for difficult for either Holland or Massinger to make or perpetuate this mistake. Ancient pantomime was rediscovered, effectively, during the later 17th and early 18th centuries, largely but not exclusively through the circulation of Lucian's treatise *On Dancing*. The rediscovery of pantomime, a fundamentally Enlightenment phenomenon, was rather later than the Renaissance rediscovery of the ancient tragic singer, the performer of *tragoedia cantata*, by the founding fathers of opera in Florence, Ottavio Rinuccini and Jacopo Peri in their *Dafne* of 1598. These men sincerely believed that they were reviving the art of the ancient

*tragoedus*. Although *Dafne* is lost, two years later Rinuccini explained their project in the dedication to his next opera, *L'Euridice*:

It has been the opinion of many...that the ancient Greeks and Romans sang entire tragedies on the stage; but such a noble manner of reciting has not only not been renewed, but, so far as I know, not even attempted until now by anybody, and this I thought a defect of modern music, very far inferior to the ancient'.<sup>4</sup>

The story of the rather later emergence of what we call ballet is a complex one, since stage plays in 16th-century Italy had sometimes been interspersed with musical *intermedii* on themes from classical mythology involving dancers and mime.<sup>5</sup> Yet it was to be directly from the new medium of *opera* that ballet emerged as a distinct and serious art form in its own right. It grew out of the danced interludes – *balli* -- within the performances of the Venetian operas that were developed in the early 17th centuries; important examples are the three beautiful youths dressed as Loves, and twelve graceful wood nymphs, who performed dances at the ends of Act I and II of the opera *Andromeda*, the first opera to be presented in public in Venice at the Teatro San Cassiano (1637).<sup>6</sup> But it was not until the practitioners who danced the *balli* needed to create their own professional 'family tree', with an accompanying aetiological narrative of origins which could rival that on the basis of which opera had been founded, that the real nature and significance of the ancient pantomime stars finally began to be acknowledged.

It is not that information derived from the ancient sources on pantomime dancing was entirely unavailable, as Naerebout has demonstrated exhaustively in his brilliant study *Attractive Performances*.<sup>7</sup> Lucian was an extremely popular authors during the Renaissance. Although *On Dancing* was by no means a favourite at that time, as were his *True Histories* and his *Dialogues of the Gods*, the complete works of Lucian were widely available in printed form by the mid-16th century, and indeed in Latin translation.<sup>8</sup> This is why the Italian humanists and early dance historians, such as Rinaldo Corso in his *Dialogo del Ballo* (1555), could include colourful anecdotes, images and details – although as yet no understanding of the essentially masked, narrative and mimetic nature of pantomime – from *On Dancing* in their works.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, despite its availability, knowledge of Lucian’s text on the dance seems to have been slow to circulate, since, at least outside Italy, there are few signs of it even in studies that emphasise the ancient sources of courtly dancing, such as the influential Spanish treatise by Juan Esquivel Navarro (1642).<sup>10</sup>

The reason is that it was not until a few decades later that the point at which the dancers of intermezzi began to tell narrative stories themselves, rather than simply supply incidental spectacle to ornament the frame tale performed by operatic singers. A foreshadowing of this problem can be seen the operas of the 1640s, such as *L’Ulisse errante* by Giacomo Badoaro and Francesco Saccati, performed at the Teatro SS Giovanni e Paolo in Venice in 1644. The material for the second *attione* was provided by the *Odyssey’s* Circe episode. But since the sensibility of the time seemed to require that this sorceress was not let off scot-free, the act concluded with the addition of an extravagant danced spectacle in

which Circe's palace fell in ruins, and her statues *returned to life as the spell was removed*. This was no mere incidental dance, but movement integrated into the narrative.<sup>11</sup>

In France, Louis XIV had brought expressive ballet – although not narrative dance theatre – to a high level in his Versailles court, and once the School of Dancing was added to the Royal Academy of Music in 1672, a division between singing and dancing was recognized on an institutional level, leaving the door open for the emergence of the virtuosic solo dancer on the professional stage, even if his role was still confined to performances within the operas in the Italian tradition by Lully (for example, the 'baneful dreams' sequence in his *Atys* (1672)).<sup>12</sup> It was only a decade later that Claude Ménéstrier isolated the problem of integral movement as opposed to balletic *entr'actes* in his landmark treatise of 1682, *Des Ballets anciens et modernes*, which can certainly claim to be the first printed history of ballet. It also marks the conceptual dawn of the idea of ballet as an autonomous theatre art, which as a phenomenon inherently belongs to the Enlightenment.<sup>13</sup> It was also the book that brought ancient pantomime, properly understood as silent mime dancing of narrative subject-matter, to the general public's attention.

Ménéstrier describes pantomime's conventions and demonstrates how elements of contemporary public spectacle and ceremony can be improved by assimilating the ancient dancer's use of characterisation by visual means. Like the ancient entertainers themselves, Ménéstrier, an enterprising Jesuit priest, was also himself a peripatetic showman, famous throughout Europe for his choreography not of operas but of pageants, wedding ceremonies and fêtes.<sup>14</sup> He

distinguished between ‘*danse simple*’, which was a physical expression of musical cadences, and ‘ballet’, which he said should be a performance that represented an *action*, in the sense of the Aristotelian *praxis*. Indeed, in this treatise he becomes the first individual to use the phrase *ballet d’action*, although lamenting that most dancers would much rather execute pretty steps than represent any significant deed.<sup>15</sup> Yet even at this date his seminal work still insists that ballet is *not* fundamentally suited to the realisation of plays or dramas, since they are ultimately imitations of ‘nature’ and emotion rather than of ‘action’.

It was in the wake of Ménéstrier’s treatise, as the question of the precise role of dance within opera became more pressing, that antiquarian scholars of Greece and Rome also began to be seriously interested in ancient pantomime. Since Niccolo Calliachi’s dissertation *De Ludis Scaenicis* was not published until 1713, after his death, and he had been born at least seventy years before that date, it is impossible to be certain when the significant distinctions he draws between ancient mime and pantomime were first inferred and recorded systematically.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps it was indeed the Italians who first argued for a revival of pantomime, as an elevated mimetic narrative dance on ancient mythical themes. The Lucianic precedent is central to Gasparo Angiolini’s dissertation on ancient pantomime, written to explain his own *Ballet pantomime tragique de Semiramis*, produced in 1765. The use of Lucian by Angiolini – most famous for his collaboration with the composer Gluck -- is particularly apparent when he is emphasising the importance of moving the audience to terror and compassion.<sup>17</sup> But controversy rages (often aggravated by nationalist versions of cultural history) about the

inauguration and true originator of ancient pantomime's revival as *ballet d'action*.

One crucial factor was however less a matter of individual innovation than internationally manifested structural developments in response to popular taste. In the very early 18th century, dance sequences began to be separated from operas, as public demand led theatre managers to hire dancers to perform longer afterpieces as well as, or in addition to, entr'actes and (most importantly) to perform them after plays as well as operas. Afterpieces would run for about an hour, but the most common form was an amalgam of individual dances and songs repeated from the entertainments offered in the foregoing interludes, especially 'character dances' (by sailors, Turks, or peasants, for example). There was still no significant linking narrative.

Who, then, invented the ballet with a plot in the Aristotelian sense? In the final section of Ismene Lada-Richards' book on Lucian and pantomime, she considers various early claimants to this title of founding father.<sup>18</sup> Some cite the mysterious narrative mime danced to music and dramatic verse at an entertainment on the theme of the brothers Horatii given by the daughter-in-law of the now elderly Louis XIV, the Duchess of Maine, in the summer of 1714.<sup>19</sup> The German-speaking dance tradition points to the contribution to dramatic narrative in dance made by Franz Hilverding in 18th-century Vienna. But an even stronger case can be made for John Weaver's much earlier *The Loves of Venus and Mars*, staged at Drury Lane on March 2nd 1717, followed in 1718 by *Orpheus and Eurydice* [see fig. 16.1], in which he took the demanding role of Orpheus himself, and rather later by *The Judgement of Paris* (1733).

What is really important about Weaver's productions is the care with which he had read Lucian's *On Dancing*, and the extent to which he consciously formulated his own practice in dialogue with the ancient text. His excitement at what he reads is palpable:

Nobody can deny, but that this was a very surprising *Performance*, and the *Wonder* of it so *great*, and the *Difficulty* of doing it so far beyond our *Conception*, that it in a manner *confounds Credibility*.<sup>20</sup>

In the same treatise, his concise summary of the Lucian's *On Dancing*, along with his eye for the significant detail or anecdote therein, demonstrate the care with which he had read this ancient authority. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Weaver's first attempt to stage, at Drury Lane, 'a dramattick entertainment of dancing attempted in imitation of the pantomimes of the ancient Greeks and Romans' (to give it his own title), took as its subject-matter *The Loves of Mars and Venus*. For this, as we have seen, was one of the few pantomimes that Lucian had described in any detail (*On Dancing* 63; see above, Ingleheart pp. 000). In Weaver's updated revival, the first scene introduces Mars, in a military camp, where he performs a Pyrrhic dance. The second introduces Venus, who dances in her boudoir, where she argues with Vulcan. In the third, Vulcan oversees the construction, by the Cyclopes, of the net with which he will entrap his wife and the rival who is cuckolding him; in the fourth Mars seduces Venus, in the fifth the work on the net is completed, and in the sixth the adulterous couple are apprehended.

Weaver's use of the term 'pantomime' may well have confused his spectators. One or two Englishmen with specialist knowledge of the ancient theatre seem to have understood the true nature of ancient pantomime as early as 1615,<sup>21</sup> and Ben Jonson rather tentatively uses the term in the context of the court masque.<sup>22</sup> But possibly by the second decade of the 18th century, and certainly by the third, a rival sense was to emerge that has subsequently become what is normally understood by the term 'pantomime' in the English language. For the Victorian children's pantomime, still a tradition at Christmastime today, grew out of the Italian farces featuring Harlequin and Columbine. And by the early 1730s, 'pantomime' had already become virtually synonymous with the type of performance that Dryden had nearly fifty years earlier derided as 'those nauseous Harlequins in Farce'.<sup>23</sup> A 1734 Drury Lane Harlequinade was entitled *Colombine-Courtezan. A dramatic pantomime entertainment. Interspers'd with ballad tunes*;<sup>24</sup> Colley Cibber regretted that the Harlequin-Columbine performances, as 'childish Pantomimes', had taken 'so gross a Possession of the Stage'.<sup>25</sup> It is scarcely surprising that Weaver dropped the term 'pantomime' in the title of his Orpheus ballet, his second 'dramatick entertainment in dancing...attempted in imitation of the ancient Greeks and Romans', but not 'in imitation of the pantomimes of the ancient Greeks and Romans'.<sup>26</sup>

Nomenclature notwithstanding, Weaver's influence on ballet, in imitation of ancient pantomime, is undeniable. Brinson has drawn attention to the presence in London during 1717 of the young Marie Sallé, dancing at the rival theatre of Lincoln's Inn Fields for the entrepreneurial John Rich, who grew up to become a major choreographer as well as exponent of dramatic ballet, typified by

her famous *Pygmalion* (1734); moreover, the enormously tall and dignified man who danced the role of Mars for Weaver, Louis Dupré, went back to Paris and became the teacher of none other than Jean Georges Noverre.<sup>27</sup> Since Weaver's desire to revive ancient pantomime seems to have been slightly before his time, it is more usually Noverre who is lauded as the first great dramatic choreographer, who (like the ancient pantomime dancers) was particularly drawn to danced realisations of myths famous from classical Greek tragedy, such as the story of Medea. Through his friend David Garrick, whose interest in Greek tragedy is well documented,<sup>28</sup> and Garrick's wife, who had been the pupil of Hilverding in Vienna, Noverre arrived at a watershed in his career.<sup>29</sup> He began to see how the tragic and violent love stories, ending in death, so much appreciated by the ancient pantomime dancers, could once again become appropriate subject-matter for danced performances. It is also more usually Noverre than Weaver whose words, in his *Letters on Dancing* (1760), on the importance of dramatic action to ballet are quoted in dance history books:

Ballets, being representations, should unite the various parts of the drama. Themes expressed in dancing are, for the most part, devoid of sense, and offer a confused medley of scenes as ill-connected as they are ill-ordered...The subject of every ballet must have its introduction, plot and climax...<sup>30</sup>

But there can be little doubt that Weaver was the first dancer systematically to attempt to revive the ancient art of pantomime dancing *in practice*, within the commercial theatre.

What made Noverre incomparably significant was not that he was the first advocate of the *ballet d'action*, nor even the first practitioner, but that he created more than one hundred different examples of this new dance idiom. Some were dramatisations of contemporary storylines, some were 'comedy ballets', but many were based on tragedies, and ensured that ancient Greek tragedy would always be recognised as important to its foundation and early repertoire. Indeed, he was uniquely positioned to turn Greek tragedy into French dance art. His mother was a sophisticated Frenchwoman, but his father was a Swiss Protestant, and all over Europe Greek studies had been associated with the Protestant humanist tradition of education and values.<sup>31</sup>

Noverre's ballets on ancient tragic themes included *Les Danaïdes* (created in 1761), *La Mort d'Hercule* (1762), *Agamemnon vengé* (1771) *Iphigénie en Tauride* (1772), *Iphigenia in Aulide* (1782), and several versions of the story of Alcestis including his *Admète* (1761).<sup>32</sup> His incomparably influential ballet on the theme of Medea and Jason, ultimately derived from Euripides' *Medea*, was first performed in Stuttgart in 1763, but was almost immediately plagiarised by his rival Vestris, and produced in France to great acclaim.<sup>33</sup> Those old favourite themes of the ancient pantomimes, *The Judgement of Paris* (created in Marseilles in 1755) and *Les Amours d'Énée et de Didon* (1768-1773), were also in Noverre's repertoire, for Noverre was a great consolidator of previous experiments and experience. During this astonishing career, he was able to refine

and actualise all the discoveries and ideas of his predecessors, especially Weaver, Sallé, Hilverding, and Angiolini.<sup>34</sup> French scholars also often cite Louis de Cahusac, a French librettist who collaborated with Rameau and who in 1754 published *La danse ancienne et moderne, ou traité historique sur la danse*, which argues passionately for his idea of a *ballet en action* rather than *ballet d'action*, and the concomitant importance of single gestures as the 'bearers of the soul's emotions' in expressive dance.<sup>35</sup> But even in the arena of music, Noverre was the most energetic champion of the importance of dancers paying strict attention not only to the rhythm of the music, but also to its expressive function.

By the late 18th century, the rise and increasing popularity of ballet as an art form, the importance of which rivalled both spoken drama and opera, was also accompanied by a deluge of new books on the history of dancing. These were often adorned with attractive illustrations, and aimed less at the dancing profession or classical scholars than the wider readership, including women, who enjoyed watching ballet. The place of the ancient sources on the pantomime dancer in these certainly needs further investigation, as do the records of how their authors visualised the medium in practice. One of the more important is de L'Aulnay's, *De la Saltation théâtrale, our recherches sur l'Origine, les Progrès, & les effets de la pantomime chez les anciens* (1790), which, as he admits, has been partly inspired by the popularity of the ballets for which the composer Gluck had written the musical scores.<sup>36</sup> L'Aulnay uses Plutarch's *Sympotic Questions*, Quintilian and Cassiodorus as well as Lucian,<sup>37</sup> but is most concerned that his readers gain a visual sense of the exoticism of the ancient medium. It is from his treatise that the beautiful engraving of a pantomime mask reproduced as **fig.**

ooo above pp. ooo is taken,<sup>38</sup> and in his passage on the diversity of the musical instruments that accompanied the pantomime choirs, he rather improbably suggests that one such might have been a kind of bagpipe, played by another, and very scantily dressed dancer **[fig. 16.2]**.

The imaginations of other 18th-century exponents of the genre of books on ancient dancing were particularly fired by the individual pantomime stars whose careers are mentioned in the historiographers of Rome, above all Bathyllus. Francisco Ficoni's treatise on the ancient stage included a beautiful plate offering a reconstruction of Augustus' monument to Bathyllus **[fig. 16.3]**.<sup>39</sup> Bathyllus was once again to be figure large in the public imagination after Jean Bertheroy (the pseudonym of a militant feminist named Berthe-Corinne Barillier) had published her novel *Le Mime Bathylle* in 1894; this exciting novel uses historical fiction to examine contemporary fin-de-siecle aesthetic and social debates, and is rather less accurate when it comes to the details of the ancient dancing profession. Maurice Marodon's ancient dancing star performed, it seems, barefoot, semi-naked and certainly unmasked **[see fig. 16.4]**.

The themes of the ancient pantomime to which the discussions in this book have repeatedly returned – the plots of Greek tragedies, the Judgment of Paris, Aeneas and Dido, Venus and Mars -- were all realized in 18th-century ballets, and can still be seen on the contemporary stage. In the forthcoming study of ancient drama in post-Renaissance dance, edited by Fiona Macintosh, this fascinating narrative will be examined in depth and detail. To conclude the current volume, just a few examples will suffice. Apuleius describes a Judgment of Paris ballet, and two ballets on this theme, a traditional realization by

Frederick Ashton and a more risqué choreography by Antony Tudor actually competed against one another for public attention in London in 1938. Tudor's version, which offered an 'amusing exposure of sordid music-hall dancing',<sup>40</sup> is still today in the repertoire of the Ballet Rambert. Martha Graham's production of Vivian Fine's ballet *Alcestis*, which dated from 1960,<sup>41</sup> aroused an intense controversy when performed in New York City in 1968

In his 1999 theatrical production of a version of Ted Hughes' *Tales from Ovid* (1997, translations from the *Metamorphoses*), staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company, Tim Supple decided, it seems almost intuitively, that members of the performance ensemble should mime the stories to incidental music, while a narrator recited the poetry.<sup>42</sup> Ballet met both solo vocal performances and synchronized swimming in Sasha Waltz's ballet *Dido and Aeneas* at Sadler's Wells, London in 2007. It is unlikely that Tudor, Graham, Supple or Waltz knew anything much about Pylades and Bathyllus. They may well never have heard of them. Yet through the medium of the line of dance theorists, practitioners, and historians that stretches from Corso in the 16th century to the inauguration of *ballet d'action* and 'classical' dance in the 18th, they work in a cultural tradition that without any doubt traces its conceptual roots all the way back to the glamorous stars of ancient pantomime.

1 Weaver (1728), 19.

2 See Holland in Whibley (1899), 238 and 245; Hall (2002), 424-5.

3 See Sandidge (1929), 21-3; Hall (2002), 424-6.

4 Translated by Donington (1981), 104-5; see Hall (2002), 430-1.

- 5 For sources see Brinson (1966), 26-7.
- 6 See the original sources translated in Worsthorne (1954), 26, 34-5.
- 7 Naerebout (1997), section 1.2.
- 8 See Naerebout (1997), section 1.2 with n. 17. The Latin versions of Lucian's treatises, for example Micyllus (1538), will have made them accessible to a very wide audience. A scholarly history of the printed editions and translations of *On Dancing* would be a most useful 'new direction' in which pantomime scholarship could move. Libanius' oration (no. 64) on the same theme, Reply to Aristides on Behalf of the Dancers, which dates from more than two centuries later, did not begin to receive serious attention from classical scholars, let alone dance specialists, until much later. The crucial event in Libanius studies was the appearance of the relatively late edition -- Greek text edited directly from the manuscripts, with Latin Introduction and annotation -- by Johann Reiske of his complete *Orationes* and *Declamationes*, published in Altenburg between 1791 and 1797.
- 9 Corso (1555), 11-12.
- 10 For this seminal text, with an English translation and commentary, see Brooks (2003), 197-305.
- 11 Less integral, perhaps, was the dance of monsters that concluded the Underworld *attioni*, and the dancing Months who concluded the Calypso episode. On this opera and its different *attioni* see Bjurström (1961), 50, 52, 60, 60-3, 95.
- 12 Lynham (1972), 120-1.

- 13 Guest (1996), 1 and 3, where he point out that the great Enclopédie of Diderot and D’Alambert, published from 1751 onwards, which is widely regarded as the cornerstone of the Enlightenment intellectual project, gave dance an honoured place. it included articles not only on ancient pantomime, but on Ballet, Choreography and Gesture.
- 14 See Schwartz and Schlundt (1987), 53; Lee (2002), 79-80.
- 15 See Cohen and Matheson (1974), 38.
- 16 Calliachi (1713), 53-98.
- 17 Angiolini (1765).
- 18 Lada-Richards (2007), 000
- 19 See Lee (2002), 91-2.
- 20 Weaver (1728), 7.
- 21 See Brathwaite (1615), 126, from the Epilogue to his *Strappado for the Divell*: ‘In time No question but hee'l prooue true Pantomime, / To imitate all formes, shapes, habits, tyres / Suting the Court.’
- 22 Jonson (1640), vol. 2, section headed ‘Masques’ (which has separate pagination), 45: ‘After the manner of the old Pantomime’.
- 23 See Dryden’s epilogue, appended to Etherege (1676).
- 24 Anon (1734).
- 25 Cibber (1740), xv, 299.
- 26 Weaver (1718).
- 27 Brinson (1966), 163-4. See also Guest (1996), 86, who points out that Dupré was responsible for the teenaged Noverre’s first professional engagement, at the Opéra-Comique in 1743.

- 28 Hall and Macintosh (2005), 129, 144-5, 195.
- 29 For the intense correspondence between the two men, see Lynham (1972),  
25-49.
- 30 *Letters on Dancing* no. 2, translated by Cyril Beaumont in Cohen and  
Matheson (1974), 60.
- 31 See Hall and Macintosh (2005), 34-6; Hall (2007*b*), 10-11.
- 32 Dates taken from Lynham (1972), Appendix B, 165-73.
- 33 See the entertaining account by Guest (1996), 43-9.
- 34 Lee (2002), 110-11, and 106-7.
- 35 See Lee (2002), 90.
- 36 See L'Aulnaye (1790), 10.
- 37 L'Aulnaye (1790), 12, 19.
- 38 L'Aulnaye (1790), 78n. describes it (his plate VII no. 1) as 'un de plus  
beaux masques de Pantomime que nous connoissons.'
- 39 See Ficoroni (1750), Plate V, discussed by him at 18-20.
- 40 Chazin-Bennahum (1994), 84.
- 41 McDonagh (1973), 286, 321.
- 42 After all, Hughes had written phrases in his Introduction that would have  
immediately have caught the interest of an ancient pantomime dancer  
(Hughes (1997), ix): 'Ovid was interested in...what a passion felt like to the  
one possessed by it. Not just ordinary passion, either, but human passion  
*in extremis* – passion where it combusts, or levitates, or mutates into an  
experience of the supernatural'.