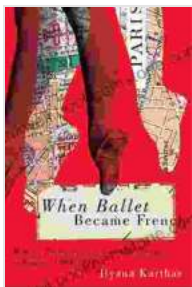


# Modern Ballet and the Cultural Politics of France, 1909–1958: A Tale of Innovation, Resistance, and National Identity

Modern ballet, a revolutionary movement that emerged in the early 20th century, left an indelible mark on the cultural landscape of France. Its innovative techniques, radical departure from traditional forms, and deep connection to the nation's social and political climate shaped its identity and significance.



## When Ballet Became French: Modern Ballet and the Cultural Politics of France, 1909-1958 by Sylvia Kristel

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 2771 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 405 pages  
Screen Reader : Supported



## A Catalyst for Innovation: Breaking with Tradition

The birth of modern ballet in France can be traced back to 1909, when Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes arrived in Paris. The company's performances captivated audiences with their exoticism, vibrant colors, and audacious choreography, challenging the established norms of classical ballet.

French dancers and choreographers were inspired by the Ballets Russes' daring and creativity. They began to experiment with new techniques, such as the use of dissonant music, non-narrative structures, and unconventional body movements. Notable figures like Jean Börlin, Léonide Massine, and Bronislava Nijinska emerged as pioneers of this new art form.



### **Cultural Significance: A Reflection of French Society**

Modern ballet became a vehicle for expressing the cultural and social transformations taking place in France.

1. **Post-World War I Disillusionment:** The horrors of the war had a profound impact on artists, who sought to break away from the traditional values and aesthetics of the past. Modern ballet reflected

this disillusionment through its dissonant music, fragmented rhythms, and rejection of idealized forms.

2. **Avant-Garde Movement:** Modern ballet became part of the broader avant-garde movement in France, which embraced experimentation, innovation, and the breaking down of conventional boundaries. It aligned itself with other artistic movements, such as cubism and surrealism, in challenging established norms.
3. **National Identity:** During the interwar years, modern ballet played a role in shaping the national identity of France. It represented the country's commitment to innovation, artistic freedom, and the pursuit of progress.

### **Political Resistance: A Symbol of Dissent**

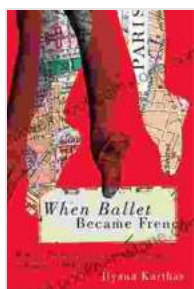
The development of modern ballet in France was not without its controversies.

1. **The Vichy Regime:** During the German occupation of France during World War II, the pro-Nazi Vichy regime attempted to suppress modern ballet, viewing it as a threat to traditional values. However, many dancers and choreographers resisted this suppression, creating clandestine performances and using their art as a form of protest.
2. **Post-War Tensions:** After the war, modern ballet continued to be a source of debate and division. It represented a challenge to the conservative cultural policies of the time and was often associated with left-wing intellectuals. This led to tensions between those who saw it as a legitimate art form and those who considered it a threat to French traditions.

## : A Legacy of Innovation and Influence

The development of modern ballet in France from 1909 to 1958 was a testament to the nation's rich cultural heritage and its unwavering pursuit of artistic innovation.

Modern ballet challenged traditional forms, reflected the social and political transformations of its time, and became a symbol of resistance and national identity. Its legacy continues to inspire and influence dancers, choreographers, and audiences around the world.

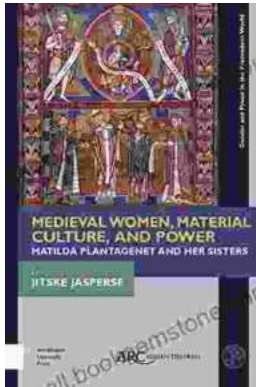


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