

# Contents

|                              |      |
|------------------------------|------|
| <i>List of Illustrations</i> | vii  |
| <i>Preface</i>               | xi   |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>      | xiii |
| <i>Abbreviations</i>         | xv   |

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |     |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Introduction:</b> | An anthropology of gesture: the place and gesture of movement in evolution theory; The impact of evolution theory and psychopathology on spectators; Ethnological spectacle and hybrid performance style | 1   |
| <b>1</b>             | <b>The Epileptic Singers</b>                                                                                                                                                                             | 11  |
|                      | Dangerous Dances                                                                                                                                                                                         | 13  |
|                      | Contagion                                                                                                                                                                                                | 19  |
|                      | A New Genre of Entertainer                                                                                                                                                                               | 34  |
|                      | Sex, Vulgarity, and Disease                                                                                                                                                                              | 39  |
|                      | Just For a Laugh                                                                                                                                                                                         | 43  |
|                      | Polaire                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 47  |
|                      | The Cancan                                                                                                                                                                                               | 50  |
|                      | The Last Laugh                                                                                                                                                                                           | 55  |
| <b>2</b>             | <b>Darwinism and Degeneration Theory in Popular Culture</b>                                                                                                                                              | 59  |
|                      | Making Order out of Difference                                                                                                                                                                           | 63  |
|                      | The Year 1878                                                                                                                                                                                            | 67  |
|                      | Phenomena: from Hybrids to Hottentots                                                                                                                                                                    | 68  |
|                      | What the Spectator <i>Really</i> Wants to See                                                                                                                                                            | 75  |
|                      | Doubtful Species: The Anthropoid in Our Past and Physical Anthropology in France                                                                                                                         | 79  |
|                      | Degeneration, Anthropological and Medical                                                                                                                                                                | 81  |
|                      | Monkey Business                                                                                                                                                                                          | 93  |
|                      | Trouble-Makers                                                                                                                                                                                           | 99  |
| <b>3</b>             | <b>What Is Ugly?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                     | 103 |
|                      | Part I: Scientific and Evolutionist Aesthetics                                                                                                                                                           | 103 |
|                      | The Wild Men of Paris                                                                                                                                                                                    | 116 |
|                      | Movement and Creativity                                                                                                                                                                                  | 120 |
|                      | The Body: Sex, Pain, and the Ugly                                                                                                                                                                        | 122 |
|                      | Part II: The Making of a New Café-Concert Aesthetic                                                                                                                                                      | 124 |
|                      | The Ugliness Prize                                                                                                                                                                                       | 125 |
|                      | The Grimace                                                                                                                                                                                              | 129 |
|                      | The Voracious Mouth: Animals and Cannibals                                                                                                                                                               | 138 |
|                      | The First Laugh                                                                                                                                                                                          | 141 |

|   |                                                                  |     |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 4 | <b>Natural Rhythm: Africans and Black Americans in Paris</b>     | 145 |
|   | The Music-Hall Helps the Cause of Colonialism                    | 145 |
|   | Before the Cake-Walk                                             | 146 |
|   | The Black Menace                                                 | 155 |
|   | Chocolat and Chocolates                                          | 159 |
|   | Retribution                                                      | 164 |
|   | The Minstrels                                                    | 165 |
|   | Cake-Walking Babies from Back Home                               | 172 |
|   | Trading Places                                                   | 191 |
|   | Chocolat Redux: An American in Paris                             | 195 |
| 5 | <b>Epileptic Singers and the Mysteries of the Dark Continent</b> | 199 |
|   | Fashion and the White Savage                                     | 202 |
|   | The Nude and the Naked                                           | 211 |
|   | The Blond and the Black Venus                                    | 216 |
|   | Polaire                                                          | 221 |
|   | The Ugliest Woman in the World                                   | 226 |
|   | Hybridity                                                        | 233 |
| 6 | <b>Darwin Meets Père Ubu</b>                                     | 243 |
|   | Jarry, Natural Historian                                         | 243 |
|   | Ubu Cocu                                                         | 253 |
|   | The Ignoble Double                                               | 256 |
|   | Bergson's Lesson                                                 | 261 |
|   | <b>Epilogue: Darwin's Avant-Garde: Ubu's Progeny</b>             | 265 |
|   | Dancing the Primitive                                            | 270 |
|   | Josephine Baker and the Danse Sauvage                            | 273 |
|   | <i>Bibliography</i>                                              | 277 |
|   | <i>Index</i>                                                     | 295 |

# List of Illustrations

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                   |     |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1.1 | Albert Guillaume, Mlle Duclerc in “La Revue Déshabillée,”<br><i>Courrier Français</i> 19 August 1894. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                | 12  |
| 1.2 | Le Bal des Folles et des Hystériques at the Salpêtrière,<br><i>Courrier Français</i> 11 April 1886. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                  | 16  |
| 1.3 | Willette, “Another one of Marianne’s attacks that shows off her<br>ugly underwear,” <i>Courrier Français</i> 25 June 1899. Courtesy<br>Bibliothèque Forney                        | 18  |
| 1.4 | Henri Somm, “Suggestion,” <i>Courrier Français</i> 4 October 1885.<br>Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                                | 23  |
| 1.5 | Edgar Degas, “Mlle Bécot aux Ambassadeurs: Three Motifs,”<br>1876–77. Lithograph transferred from three monotypes.<br>Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of George Peabody Gardner | 35  |
| 1.6 | Polaire aux Ambassadeurs, Iconography dossier Polaire (1).<br>Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France                                                                           | 40  |
| 1.7 | F. Bac, Polaire, <i>La Vie en rose</i> 26 October 1902 Courtesy<br>Bibliothèque nationale de France                                                                               | 48  |
| 2.1 | André Gill, “Darwin!” <i>La Lune Rousse</i> 18 August 1878.<br>Courtesy Pierre Courtet-Cohl                                                                                       | 61  |
| 2.2 | Krao, the Monkey-Woman, <i>Courrier Français</i> 24 October 1886.<br>Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                                 | 70  |
| 2.3 | Jeftichew, the Dog-Man, <i>Le Trombinoscope</i> , vol. 2, no. 119 (1873).<br>Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France                                                            | 71  |
| 2.4 | Rosa-Josepha at the Théâtre de la Gaité, poster. Courtesy<br>Photothèque des Musées de la Ville de Paris                                                                          | 76  |
| 2.5 | “Mr. Verpillon has one this big,” <i>Courrier Français</i> 12 June 1892.<br>Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                          | 77  |
| 2.6 | Consul the chimpanzee, “Reading,” <i>Le Monde illustré</i> 3 October<br>1903. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                        | 95  |
| 2.7 | Jacques Villon, “Abduction,” <i>Courrier Français</i> 19 August 1894.<br>Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France                                                                | 102 |
| 3.1 | Unattributed painting, “Une Soirée dans le désert,” <i>The<br/>Architectural Record</i> , vol. 27, no. 5 (1910). Photo, Courtesy of<br>University of Connecticut Libraries        | 119 |
| 3.2 | “Where do they find such ugly actors?” <i>Le Rire</i> 29 April 1899.<br>Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                              | 129 |
| 3.3 | Toulouse-Lautrec, “Café Concert – Mme Abdala.” Courtesy<br>Bibliothèque nationale de France                                                                                       | 133 |

|      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |     |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 3.4  | Xileff, "Black Laughter from Overseas," <i>Courrier Français</i> 13 April 1895. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                                                                                            | 144 |
| 4.1  | Amazons from Dahomey at the Casino de Paris (1892). Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                                                                                                                        | 149 |
| 4.2  | André Rouveyre, "We have all we need for the moment, we'll eat her when we're in the Sahara," <i>Le Rire</i> 7 December 1901. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                                              | 156 |
| 4.3  | F. Lunel, "Eden Concert – The Fusion of the Races," <i>Courrier Français</i> 17 January 1889. Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France                                                                                                                 | 157 |
| 4.4  | Widhopff, Advertisement for Kola Marque, <i>Courrier Français</i> 22 July 1900. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                                                                                            | 158 |
| 4.5  | Toulouse-Lautrec, "Chocolat dancing in a Bar," <i>Le Rire</i> 28 March 1896. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                                                                                               | 161 |
| 4.6  | Willette, Advertisement for Pihan Chocolate, <i>Courrier Français</i> 17 January 1889. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                                                                                     | 162 |
| 4.7  | J. Raffaelli, "The English Minstrels," <i>Courrier Français</i> , special supplement for flood victims, 1886. Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France                                                                                                 | 167 |
| 4.8  | Widhopff, The Cake-Walk at the Olympia Music-Hall. <i>Courrier Français</i> 8 February 1903. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                                                                               | 176 |
| 4.9  | The Cake-Walk interpreted by Eugénie Fougère, Iconography Dossier Per 9996, Department Arts du Spectacle, Bibliothèque nationale de France                                                                                                              | 179 |
| 4.10 | "Cake-Walk de salon," composite for sheet music, taken from two separate images in <i>L'Illustration</i> 10 January 1903. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                                                  | 181 |
| 4.11 | George Edward, "The Cake-Walk: How the Parisienne insists on demonstrating that we descend from the ape," <i>Le Rire</i> 7 January 1903. Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France                                                                      | 183 |
| 4.12 | Willette, "How the French are perceived abroad," <i>Courrier Français</i> 10 September 1899. Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France                                                                                                                  | 184 |
| 4.13 | A. Willette, "Parisians deprived of the Comédie Française return to the life of savages," <i>Courrier Français</i> 8 December 1901. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                                        | 185 |
| 4.14 | Henriot, "The Inferiority of Man," <i>Le Monde illustré</i> 7 February 1903. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                                                                                                               | 186 |
| 4.15 | Rodriguez, "President Loubet awards a medal to the sole monkey of the Chiffa Falls (North Africa), creator of our national Cake-Walk; Who said that the Cake-Walk was American in origin?" <i>Le Rire</i> 7 February 1903. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney | 187 |
| 5.1  | Lucien Métivet, "Civilisation!" <i>Le Rire</i> 23 January 1897. Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France                                                                                                                                               | 203 |

|      |                                                                                                                                         |     |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 5.2  | Ferdinandus, "The Zulus in a box at the Folies-Bergère," <i>Le Monde illustré</i> 22 November 1879. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney        | 204 |
| 5.3  | "The Art of Raising a Sagging Neckline," <i>Fantasio</i> 15 December 1906. Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France                    | 206 |
| 5.4  | Willette, "The Undressed Revue at the Ambassadeurs Concert," <i>Courrier Français</i> 29 July 1894. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney        | 210 |
| 5.5  | At-home Attire of a Bambara Woman from Soudan, <i>Fantasio</i> 1 September 1906. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                           | 213 |
| 5.6  | Lucien Métivet, "Censorship and the Nude," <i>Le Rire</i> 14 December 1901. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                | 215 |
| 5.7  | A. Marie, "La Vénus Noire, Voyage en Afrique centrale," <i>Le Monde illustré</i> 13 September 1879. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney        | 219 |
| 5.8  | Polaire, "The Lady the most ugly of the world!" <i>Femina</i> 15 September 1910. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                           | 228 |
| 5.9  | English School, "Miss Julia Pastrana. The Embalmed Nondescript, exhibited at 191 Piccadilly" (1862). Courtesy Bridgeman-Giraudon, Paris | 229 |
| 5.10 | Sem, caricature of Polaire, <i>Album du Vrai et faux chic</i> (1914). Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                      | 231 |
| 5.11 | The Darling Girls, <i>Paris qui Chante</i> 12 May 1907. Collection of author                                                            | 240 |
| 6.1  | La Mère Ubu in blackface, <i>Fantasio</i> 15 April 1908. Courtesy Bibliothèque Forney                                                   | 260 |