1995

The Evolution of the Romantic Ballet: The Libretti and Enchanter Characters of Selected Romantic Ballets From the 1830s Through the 1890s.

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THE EVOLUTION OF THE ROMANTIC BALLET: THE LIBRETTI AND ENCHANTER CHARACTERS OF SELECTED ROMANTIC BALLETS FROM THE 1830s THROUGH THE 1890s

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in
The Department of Theatre

by
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August 1995
To my dear patient mother with love
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank Dr. Gerilyn Tandberg and Dr. Bill Harbin, the chairpersons of my dissertation committee and the Department of Theatre, respectively, for their kind help and guidance during this project. I also wish to thank my mother for her patient understanding, support, and encouragement. Thanks also go to my committee members and all the library personnel across the country who helped me find old and unusual materials.
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ABSTRACT

With the collapse of Neoclassicism and its worn-out mythological subject matter, the middle class increasingly attended performances previously dominated by aristocratic audiences. New artistic tastes developed; people sought a return to nature and all its mysteries. An interest in folklore, fairy tales, legends, and old literature accompanied a timeless human need for periodic escapism and fantasy. Ballet became a major vehicle for that need. When Marie Taglioni initiated dancing on pointe as the Sylphide in La Sylphide (1832), ballet gained favor, and the Romantic era was born in dance. Ballet flourished, and new scientific methods for training dancers included a focus on the technical invention of the pointe shoe, which produced a totally new effect of weightlessness and femininity. For the first time, supernatural creatures could move on the stage with startling lightness. Overshadowed, male danseurs became mere porters of female sylphs, Wilis, peris, and other weightless mysterious creatures.

Romantic ballet experienced three distinct phases. Its zenith phase, the 1830s-1840s, produced the well-known La Sylphide and Giselle. The decline phase, 1850s-1880s, introduced Coppélia and Swan Lake. The revival phase, 1890s prior to Diaghilev, yielded Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker. All six ballets utilized enchantment/magic as an impetus for the action, and their plots depended upon enchanter characters to further that action.

The treatment of particularly the female enchanter characters in the libretti, all written by men, exemplified the Romantic view and
status of women in general. The idolized ballerina, the supernatural creature on the stage, epitomized women's fascinating combination of sensuality and innocence. Balletomanes found the duality erotic, and Romantic men sought simultaneously to exploit and protect the "weaker" sex.

The evolution of these major Romantic ballets is evident through an examination of each ballet's plot and source(s) of the libretto, supernatural elements, and character treatment. The study exposes the groundwork underlying the magical elements surrounding the scenarios and characters' actions. It also examines reasons why female enchanters outnumbered male enchanters, and how they reflected the status of women in Romantic society.
INTRODUCTION

The world was changing. Ancient Greek and Roman themes became tiresome to a rising middle class, who, unlike the nobility and aristocracy before them, had no real interest in watching various gods and goddesses strut across the stage. Neoclassical austerity had long dominated ballet. Since 1672, the Paris Opéra presented with regularity one classical ballet after another, such as Les Muses (1703), Les Amours de Mars et de Vénus (1712), Les Fêtes Grecques et Romaines (1723), Les Romana (1736), Pygmalion (1748), and Médée et Jason (1776). Napoleon's reverence for classical literature encouraged Neoclassicism's tenure in the arts in France, where ballet, like opera, entertained the aristocracy. In ballet, the new Romantic movement represented a desire to push the mythological deities aside.

During the 1780s, the middle class increasingly attended ballets, exerting more and more influence on subject matter and approach. Finally, in 1786, appeared the first comedic ballet, La Fille Mal Gardée, which concerned village life and peasants, helping to usher in the Romantic movement.¹ Not surprisingly, the theatres swelled with the attendance of a new segment of the population. Ballet provided a much needed escape from the dreary oppressiveness of the Industrial Revolution. Feelings of fear and alienation accompanied the scientific and technological advancements. People felt a need for the return to nature and the not so threatening past. Middle class audiences wanted good stories with emotional content that they could relate to, because prior to the 1830s, ballet had developed into rather abstract emotionless exercises in form. Indeed, the focus now began to shift
from form to content. Carol Lee, author of *An Introduction to Classical Ballet*, writes that the Romantic ballet became "noted for its emphasis on an escape into a fantasy world where the growing working class audiences could empathize with the alternately intense and delicate emotions of human beings interacting with unworldly creatures."\(^2\)

Romanticism, which emerged in the early years of the nineteenth century, has long defied scholars' attempts at precise definition. Although Romanticism first originated in Germany as a literary movement, its influence quickly spread to other art forms throughout the world. Romantic artists, "fascinated by the mysterious dark corners of the mind," sought to evoke an emotional response, rather than a rational one, from the receivers of their endeavors.\(^3\) The Romantic manifestations in both theatre and ballet productions during most of the 1800s were preoccupied with spectacle, antiquarianism, emotion over logic, nationalism, the exotic, and the supernatural. Both dramatic and dance action often emphasized the spectacular, such as intricate trap doors for surprise entrances and exits, special scenic effects for storms, breeches roles (*en travesti*), ghosts, and dancers on *pointe* who seemingly defied gravity.

Neoclassicism lost its former iron grip on the arts; rules and logic were pushed aside by a movement that urged its participants to "act on faith, to trust the inner experiences of life, to follow the sentimental longings of [the] heart," and to distrust "the strictures and painful rigidities of reasoned behavior."\(^4\) The Age of Romance brought a new view which rebelled against the old order. The heart took new precedence over the mind, for the seat of logic was believed
to be cold, unfeeling, and perhaps even untrustworthy. This mode of thinking resulted in a distrust of formal education; knowledge could be acquired from the great teacher, nature. The exaltation of nature promoted a curious vogue for rambling, unpruned gardens, places the artistic mind might imagine to be the abode of supernatural creatures, i.e.: fairies, nymths, eleves, Wilis, and ghosts. The depiction of "wild natural beauty" was often combined with things exotic, an obsession with "local color," and "strange landscapes and the customs and manners of far-off peoples." The Romantic movement embraced a particular fascination with the supernatural, as exemplified by numerous ballet libretti concerned with mysterious creatures possessing magical powers.

Ballet as an art form seemed especially suited to the Romantic preoccupation with the mysterious. When the groundwork for Romanticism was being prepared during the last part of the eighteenth century, an interest in folklore began to flourish. Walter Sorell, author of Dance in Its Time: The Emergence of an Art Form, calls it a period when numerous "poets, musicians, critics and philosophers became fascinated by the inexhaustible well of folkloric material and began to collect and study it." This interest, combined with a fundamental and timeless human need for periodic fantasy or escapism from the sometimes harsh realities of life, ultimately found its fullest expression in ballet. The strongest influences on the Romantic ballet were literary sources. Sorell writes, "The fairy tale is the handmaiden of Romanticism, a literary apotheosis of mankind's flight from reality,"
and he identifies Romantic ballet as "the ballet of fairy tales in all its varieties."7

Melodrama and opera also furnished direct literary influences on Romantic ballet.8 After the French Revolution, the arts remained Neoclassical, but as the political, social, and artistic atmosphere in Europe began to undergo significant changes, the arts reflected those shifts. The spread of the Industrial Revolution wrought profound changes that prompted artists to seek inspiration in the emotional rather than the logical, the subjective rather than the objective, the exotic rather than the familiar, the past rather than the present, and the supernatural rather than the normal.9 The melodramas of Pixerecourt and Kotzebue, the plays of Schiller and Goethe, and operas such as Meyerbeer's Robert Le Diable (1831, with its libretto by Eugène Scribe), provided strong influences upon Romantic ballet.10 Meyerbeer's opera featured a dance called the "Ballet of the Nuns" in which the white-shrouded ghosts of nuns who had broken their vows danced under moonlight in a ruined convent, having been summoned from the dead to seduce Robert, known as "the Devil," into accepting a fatal talisman. Marie Taglioni, the earliest famous Romantic ballerina, danced the part of Helena, the abbess. The next year, she appeared in a tailor-made ballet written by her dancer/choreographer father, Filippo Taglioni, called La Sylphide.11 In the role of a "dryad who lures a kilted young laird away on his wedding day, she skimed and floated over the moors," dancing for the first time on full-pointe, initiating a new style of ballet dancing which produced the effect of being airborne.12
Many other innovations, examined more closely later in this study, accompanied dancing on pointe: the Romantic tutu, tights (dancers' leg coverings), gas lighting, hidden scene changes, the removal of audience members from the stage, and the leitmotiv in music made more sensitive to the needs of dancers because it was composed specifically for ballet. Along with these creations, a new era in ballet began which broadened the types of themes that could be treated in ballet. Male danseurs began to find themselves porters of female sylphs, Wilis, peris, and other weightless creatures, and their roles became overshadowed by the increasing dominance of the ballerina and her corps. The male portion of the population found a new sensual facet of femininity to idolize and worship in the form of ethereal/supernatural ballerinas. Balletomanes, ballet enthusiasts possessing an almost crazed love for Romantic ballet and its performers, became "a tightly knit group with extremely conservative leanings both in politics and the arts." By the late 1800s, they exerted substantial power in resisting artistic change. Nevertheless, balletomanes' focus on ballet's latent eroticism punctuated the sudden triumph of the ballerina. Changes in social attitudes toward women and the technical invention of the pointe shoe were responsible for her rise.

Women were idealized on the stage, and men in the plots were willing to die for them. Women in real life did not, however, enjoy this exalted status from the Romantic men who wanted simultaneously to protect and exploit them. Many a pretty young dancer in the corps de ballet found herself having to give sexual favors for financial reasons
to men who wanted to protect "helpless" women they found enticing. The Romantic age was consumed with beauty and the mysterious dichotomy of the sexual and spiritual facets of femininity. The ballets' libretti, all written by men, reflected the times and the then widely accepted patriarchal notions that kept women "in their place." Their treatment of the female enchanter characters in those plots exemplified the Romantic view and status of women in general.

This study will focus on the libretti and enchanter characters of six major Romantic ballets which have become part of the standard repertory. They were selected because they are major ballets heavily influenced by the Romantic movement: *La Sylphide* (1832, a production which marked the birth of the Romantic movement in the ballet world),15 *Giselle* (1841), *Coppélia* (1870), *Swan Lake* (1877, re-choreographed and presented again in 1895), *Sleeping Beauty* (1890), and *The Nutcracker* (1892). In addition, all six of the ballets utilized enchantment/magic as an impetus for the action, and their plots depended upon enchanter characters to further that action. Indeed, the characters remained at the core of what made those ballets Romantic, for they crystalized the nature of Romantic dynamics through the use of illogical, emotional, and supernatural elements. They also helped show the status of women in the period.

The ballets originated in theatres of two cultural centers: Paris and later St. Petersburg. Ballet itself was born in France during Louis XIV's reign, 1643 to 1715, and the early Romantic ballets first appeared in Paris during the 1830s and 1840s. This fertile period gave way to the decades of the 1850s to the 1880s, when Romantic ballets
declined in favor because public attention was drawn in other directions. Naturalism and Realism were exerting their influence on the theatre, while ballroom dancing, new fashion designs, fresh talent in the other performing arts, and the California gold rush all claimed public attention and favor. Ballet's decline was hastened by a lack of fresh creative talent to replace its brilliant creators who slipped into retirement or died. Romantic ballet continued to flourish in Russia, however, because a ripe artistic climate and state funding available for ballet harmonized with the genius and leadership of French dancer/choreographer Marius Petipa (1818-1910), who arrived in St Petersburg in 1847. Under his eventual leadership, in collaboration with his talented assistant, Lev Ivanov (1834-1901), the Maryinsky Theatre there produced Romantic ballets still performed all over the world. In Russia, the 1890s witnessed a revival of Romantic ballet which shortly preceded the international influence of the great Russian ballet impresario, Serge Pavlovich Diaghilev (1872-1929). Diaghilev's company, Les Ballets Russes, and his innovative approach to the dance would carry ballet into the new century with a whole new look.

The six ballets studied are grouped into three categories: 1) "zenith ballets" (such as La Sylphide and Giselle), or ballets produced during the 1830s-1840s, the zenith of the Romantic age; 2) "decline ballets" (such as Coppélia and Swan Lake), or ballets containing highly Romantic elements that were produced during the period's decline, 1850s-1880s; and 3) "revival ballets" (such as Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker), or ballets produced during the 1890s prior to Diaghilev, containing Romantic elements and produced after the heyday
and decline of Romanticism. The changes in each of Romantic ballet's phases can perhaps most readily be traced through a study of the men and especially the women who enchant (as opposed to those who are enchanted) in the plots. This study treats the magic workers as characters performing deeds in the plot action, with a look at the ways in which the magic workers represent the Romantic spirit inherent in the libretti. The study also examines the literary, legendary, and/or historical origins, as well as societal attitudes and supernatural elements influencing the enchanters' behavior.

Although the ballets of each category are all considered Romantic, they differ significantly in various respects due to the attitudes and influences of a changing society. The evolution of these Romantic ballets is especially evident through an examination of each ballet's plot and source(s) of the libretto, supernatural elements, and character treatment. Ballet is, after all, a legitimate form of theatre in which the actions are danced, not spoken. More precisely, the study takes a new and perhaps somewhat unconventional view of Romantic ballet, by focusing upon the supernatural/magical elements contained in the dance plots and brought to life on the stage by mysterious characters who do deeds and further the action by enchanting other characters. Although a good amount of information exists related to the Romantic ballet, this is the first study to examine the significance of a supernatural/magical point of view in the selected ballet libretti.

In many ways the Romantic era resembles the present. Both periods have seen many technological advances, from the transition of hand tools to machine and power tools to produce uniform material
goods on a large scale, to the creation of computers and the manned exploration of outer space. Despite our material and scientific progress, however, we remain mystified by the wonders of nature and the unexplainable. Strange creatures still fascinate us, whether they are the Romantic ghosts of dead girls jilted by their faithless lovers, wicked fairies or sorcerers, or whether they are present-day aliens from outer space. The writers and poets of these ballet scenarios were the "spiritual anchors of [that] fleeting art form" because "dance, like poetry, penetrates the mysterious world of our emotions, fantasies, and dreams."16

Magic was an intrinsic part of Romantic literature and drama, and ballet-goers, like other audiences, seemed particularly fascinated with the supernatural. The major Romantic ballets examined in this study, especially those of the period's heyday, are testimonies to the dominance of magic in ballet libretti. Each of the ballets treated in this study is still popular. Each has stood the test of time for more reasons than good dance choreography or the sheer virtuosity of the performers. The ballets had interesting plots and intriguing characters somehow rooted in history, literature, or legend, and especially magic. The study aims to lead to a fuller understanding of the supernatural/magical elements in Romantic ballet libretti by focusing upon the enchanter characters, with an attempt to discover and expose any historical, literary, legendary, or magical roots that influence their presence/deeds in the ballets' dramatic action. The study will also examine the historical period, with particular attention given to the status of women in Romantic society. Most of the
enchanter figures were female, and the very fabric of the ballets is saturated with the magical/supernatural; but many of the underlying and subtle details and "secret" knowledge have been lost in the passage of time. Contemporary audiences regularly accept a nuance of plot situation or character action without closer examination. This study will expose the groundwork.foundation underlying the magical elements surrounding the scenarios and characters' actions. It will also examine reasons why female enchanters outnumbered male enchanters, and why their treatment in the librettos reflected the status of women in Romantic society. Studying the magic-working characters from a theatre perspective facilitates a clearer understanding of the phases of the Romantic age and a society that relished that form of theatre known as ballet.

The study is organized into five chapters and eight appendixes. Chapter One examines the two zenith ballets, *La Sylphide* and *Giselle ou Les Wilis*. Chapter Two examines the two decline ballets, *Coppélia, Or The Girl with Enamel Eyes* and *Swan Lake (Le Lac Des Cygnes)*. Chapter Three examines the two revival ballets, *Sleeping Beauty* (also known as *The Sleeping Beauty* and as *La Belle au Bois Dormant*) and *The Nutcracker* (also known as *Casse Noisette*). The ballets are discussed according to plot variations, libretto sources, the primary magic workers and their magic, as well as social/sexual undertones. Each of the first three chapters concludes with a comparison/contrast of the two ballets in each phase. To facilitate a clearer and necessary understanding of the society that produced the aforementioned ballets, Chapter Four focuses on the accompanying related sociological and
historical background of the Romantic age and examines the causes for ballet’s zenith, decline, and revival, along with the resulting move of its stronghold from Paris to St. Petersburg. The fourth chapter also takes a special look at the balletomania phenomenon and the Romantic view of femininity and beauty. Chapter Five concludes by identifying and examining various trends and transitions evident from phase to phase, and by showing how the treatment of especially the female enchanters in the six ballets exemplified the Romantic view of femininity in general. The appendixes consist of the story of each ballet’s plot and related literary material where applicable.

ENDNOTES


2 Carol Lee, An Introduction to Classical Ballet (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1983) 84.


5 Guest 3.


7 Sorell 217.

8 Sorell 217.

10 Sorell 218–220.


13 Sorell 211–216.

14 Bland 56.


16 Sorell 216.
Both La Sylphide and Giselle ou Les Wilis represent the zenith phase (1830s-1840's) of the Romantic period. Both love stories employ a common theme of the period, the melancholic notion of man striving to attain the unattainable. Similarly, both concern a human male's love for an ethereal female.

Before La Sylphide (1832), the dignified but coldly logical ballet world of Western Europe immersed itself in dancing old Greek myths. In France, where ballet was born during Louis XIV's reign (1643-1715), a powerful Napoleon I (1769-1821) liked classical literature, and the Paris Opéra's Neoclassical ballet offerings corresponded to Napoleon's artistic tastes. Russia was still a feudal country, not yet ready to make its mark on the ballet world. A new change of direction in Europe, however, started in the late 1700s with a growing interest in exotic, foreign lands. The advent of technical effects, such as flying and the pointe shoe, facilitated the portrayal of weightlessness on the stage and thus prompted a great interest in ethereal creatures. The sylph became the first of major importance to fascinate the ballet-going public.¹

While stories involving sylphs enjoyed great popularity during the Romantic period, they had earlier invaded literature and theatre. In 1670, a work published by the Abbé Montfaucon de Villars entitled Le Comte de Gabalis discussed male sylphs. Earlier in 1614, the Rosicrucians established themselves as followers of Paracelsus. When Alexander Pope published his The Rape of the Lock in 1712, he drew from Le Comte de Gabalis, referring to it in his dedication:

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¹ For a detailed account of the history of ballet, see John Lassels' The History of the Royal and Academical Bath, performed at the Pump Room (1768), where ballet was performed by the Bath Royal circus. The book provides a comprehensive overview of ballet history, including its development in Europe and its influence on literature and theatre.
According to these Gentlemen [the Rosicrucians], the four Elements are inhabited by Spirits, which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs and Salamanders . . . but the Sylphs, whose Habitation is the Air, are the best-conditioned Creatures imaginable. For . . . any Mortals may enjoy the most intimate Familiarities with these gentle spirits. . .2

In 1743, Le Silphe, a play by French Playwright Poullain de Saint-Foix, opened at the Théâtre de la Comédie Italienne. By 1771, it had made its way to England and was deemed "one of the favorite pieces of dramatic writing" by an English translator.3 In 1774, a pantomime, Syphs, appeared at London's Covent Garden, and in 1779, The Sylph, an extremely successful English novel written by Georgiana Devonshire, the Duchess of Cavendish, enthralled readers. Washington Allston, a well-known painter, wrote a collection of poetry called The Sylphs of the Seasons in 1813, and seventeen years later in 1830, Charles Douvalle published in Paris a collection of poetry entitled The Sylphe, which was narrated by a male sylph in love with a human woman.

These and other pre-Romantic works set the stage for the creation of La Sylphide, helped further by the Waverly Novels of Sir Walter Scott who set his widely read stories in Scotland.4 Scott's works influenced writer Charles Nodier (1780-1844) to go on a pilgrimage to Scotland, after which he published in 1822 Trilby ou Le Lutin d'Argail (from which Eugène Scribe later adapted a vaudeville for the Gymnase Dramatique).5 Nodier's Trilby was a Scottish elf in love with a fisherman's wife, and the successful novelette treated the theme of "impossible or unrequited love affairs" (and curiously spawned a fashion vogue of ladies' Trilby hats).6 Alfred Nourrit, a leading tenor of the Paris Opéra, read Nodier's Trilby and adapted the
story into the libretto of La Sylphide, tailoring it especially for a ballerina named Marie Taglioni who was then appearing with him in an opera (libretto by Eugène Scribe) entitled Robert le Diable, which opened at the Paris Opéra in 1831 and made her an overnight success.\(^7\)

Taglioni danced the following year to even greater applause as the Sylphide in Nourrit's La Sylphide, whose music was composed by Jean Schneitshoeffer (dates unknown). So successful was La Sylphide, that a sequel, Fille du Danube and other revivals followed, along with an American version of La Sylphide called The Dew Drop, or La Sylphide, danced by Augusta Maywood in 1838 at the Park Theatre in New York.\(^8\) Taglioni danced the Sylphide all over Europe and was later sometimes accused of still portraying the nature spirit even when dancing other roles in different ballets.\(^9\)

La Sylphide's libretto by Charles (often called Adolphe) Nourrit, as adapted for the Danish stage in 1836 by August Bournonville, appears in Appendix A of this study.\(^10\) Since its debut, the ballet has been danced all over the world. Russian dancer/choreographer and director of the American Ballet Theatre, George Balanchine (1904-1983), narrated the story with some changes in his Balanchine's Complete Stories of the Great Ballets.\(^11\) Both plots remain essentially the same, save for subtle changes in details that made Gurn a less sympathetic character. For example, Balanchine had Gurn giving Effy (or Effie, as he spelled it) a dead rare bird instead of a bouquet of wild flowers. When Gurn tried to kiss Effy's hand, Balanchine had James tease him instead of threateningly stepping between them. Bourronville's version had Gurn offering Old Madge a glass of spirits when James discovered
her by the fireplace and ordered her away, but Balanchine omitted
Gurn's thoughtfulness on this count. In addition, Balanchine did not
involve Gurn in the old woman's prophecy at all, in contrast to the
erlier libretto which had him question the witch about his future, to
which she answered Gurn loved Effy truly and she would soon regret
that she rejected his love. Nor did Balanchine have Gurn attempt to
stop the wedding preparations or be scorned by the others following
the hag's prophecy. In Balanchine's story, only Gurn, not aided by
Effy, pulled the plaid from the chair when looking for the Sylphide.
Such changes heightened the focus on James by downplaying Gurn, the
alternate suiter, and perhaps sliced trivial nuances from the story to
create a tighter plot. The Bournonville version, however, brought
Gurn into focus by fleshing out his character and providing
interesting contrast with the fickle James. Further, Bournonville's
version presented a sympathetic and likeable view of Gurn, thus
making Effy's marriage to him more acceptable at the end of the story.

Other minor dramatic changes abounded, but some interesting
differences concerning the witches in Act II merit mentioning.
Bournonville had the witches all enter from different parts of the
stage, not all from the cave, as in Balanchine's narration. And he
made each witch bring a lamp, a broomstick, and a familiar spirit.
Balanchine omitted the magical tools altogether, along with Madge's
offering each a welcoming cup of glowing brew before calling them to
work. Instead of dancing, stopping, and then dancing again, as in
Balanchine's version, the hags performed their group magic
individually: some fenced with broomsticks, some spun, some wound,
and some wove the enchanted pink scarf. After completing their magic, they drank another cup of brew before disappearing into the cave. Balanchine’s witches, on the other hand, completed their evil task more economically by dancing around a huge black caldron from which they later pulled the deadly pink drapery. Both witch scenes helped create tension by showing evil proceedings in action, and both authentically embraced a Romantic interpretation of things dark and mysterious. Both helped delineate character by adhering to an evil portrayal of Old Madge and witches in general, and both showed credible magical proceedings. Quite simply, they were two magical approaches to accomplishing the same evil deed, but Bournonville offered more details in the form of broomsticks, familiar spirits, glowing brew, and so on. Unlike modern audiences who perhaps would not fully understand the deeper meanings of the witches’ stage, hand, and costume props, Romantic viewers were most likely knowledgeable of magic and things supernatural. Europe had a long history of magic and witchcraft through the Druids and other similar cultures. Such interests never died; it was a part of their culture. Magical knowledge and powers were handed down and/or inherited. People still practiced it, especially in rural areas, though it was often secretive and closely guarded. Today’s society is faster paced, attuned to the advances of modern medicine and computers. Superstitious beliefs and secret knowledge succumbed to technology; scientific formulas replaced old herbal remedies. As can be expected, the common knowledge of one era was lost in the following era.
Other differences involving the magic workers exist in the two librettis. Balanchine's version did not include the search party or Gurn's encounter with Old Madge. In fact, Balanchine pushed the whole curious alliance between Gurn and Old Madge to the background, resulting in a more economical telling of the story at the expense of character development. Further, in Balanchine's version, James attempted to give the Sylphide a bird's nest, but she was afraid of it. Bournonville's Sylphide held one in her hand as she sat on a bough. When James attempted to lure her down with the pink scarf, she descended and offered the nest to him, whereupon he ironically reproached her for her hardness toward innocent creatures. When she begged for the scarf, James wrapped it around her so that she could not move her arms. When she knelt and asked for mercy, he refused until her wings fell off. Bournonville's Sylphide died a slow agonizing death at the hands of her lover. Thus, Bournonville presented a likeable Gurn juxtaposed to a cruel James, while Balanchine presented an almost bumbling Gurn who contrasted sharply with a sympathetic James. Perhaps Bournonville's stronger Gurn was a product of his successful attempts to strengthen males' dancing roles during a phase when ballerinas dominated the stage and male dancers were relegated to the role of "porter."

In both versions of La Sylphide, the main magic workers include Old Madge and the Sylphide. Their similarities, differences, and magical methods become most interesting when juxtaposed to one another. They are both female. One is young and beautiful, the other an old crone. They both act out of selfishness. The Sylphide wants a
romantic companion, even if he is about to marry a peasant girl. The Sylphide flirts and guiltlessly steals James away from her. The libretto does not reveal whether she secretly knows James' capacity for restlessness and fickleness. Neither does it hint why she chose his wedding day to begin her campaign for his love. Yet she is not evil, but a childlike flirt who never thinks about consequences. She is a paradoxical mixture of selfishness, trust, mystery, playfulness, inquisitiveness, cunning, delicate fragility, and beauty. One cannot help feeling sad when she dies because she is always portrayed sympathetically as a delicate (albeit amoral) creature of the fairy world whose misfortune rests in falling in love with a human.

Old Madge, on the other hand, is not sympathetic at all. Like the Sylphide, the witch acts out of selfishness, but her motivation is unclear. Madge is angry with James because he was rude to her, but the young man apologized and tried to make amends. The old woman evidently doubts his sincerity, and because she is evil, seeks his unhappiness, even if it means killing someone. Madge's past is unknown and the libretto does not speak of why or how she became an evil witch. Nevertheless, the human old woman is full of hatred. Perhaps she remembers her own youthful beauty and a little romantic intrigue of her own and feels jealous of the Sylphide. This undercurrent of power playing between two female magic workers of contrasting "generations" to manipulate a man flows throughout the plot. Conflicts include good versus evil, young versus old, love versus hate, fairy world versus human world, innocence versus knowledge.
All of these themes underline man's being caught in the middle of opposing forces he cannot control.

Magic on the human plane, through the witch, and magic on the fairy plane, through the Sylphide, both ironically work together to seal a human male's undoing. Of course, Old Madge and the Sylphide accomplish their magic in different ways. The Sylphide's main powers reside in the ability to fly, in appearing and disappearing at will, and in controlling James' dreams. The nature spirit's seductive innocence completes her mystery, a feminine "magic" to which any man might succumb. It was a reflection of Romantic male temperament, because the patriarchal society of that time found simultaneous fascination in the perceived dual nature of women: virginal innocence and sensuality. A female possessing both was appealing to the Romantic male. Further, the Sylphide tells James she will die if he rejects her because there will be no more beauty in her life. It was yet another reflection of the period, for society enjoyed a fixation on beauty. The lack of it in a Romantic woman's life was a grievous situation. It was a woman's duty to be beautiful because her femininity was measured by it. Society expected her to be beautiful and to surround herself with beauty. Ironically, the Sylphide dies, not because of romantic rejection, but for an opposite reason. James loves too possessively, too humanly. The fairy and the human are on different wavelengths even though they seek in one another something missing in their own respective worlds. To James, she is the perfect woman, all the more alluring because she is so elusive and ethereal. To the Sylphide, James is someone she can delight and tease and love in her own fairy
way because he is so humanly captivated by her charms in ways a male fairy would not feel. Even so, she seeks something beyond that.

Although the sylph was a popular figure in the arts during the Romantic age, she was, in the words of Juliet Neidish, "neither conceived nor created in that period," but traces back to ancient Greek and Roman times.\textsuperscript{12} The Romantics were fascinated with nature, an ironic result of the birth of the Industrial Revolution. As a nature spirit of delicate beauty, the sylph enjoyed the spotlight as never before. Theophrastus Bombastus Paracelsus von Hohenheim, also known popularly as Paracelsus (c. 1493-1541) was the first person to study nature spirits and write a complete treatise about them. The well-known Swiss physician and alchemist recognized two types of substances in nature: 1) Adamic flesh (from Adam), composed of air, water, fire, and earth, the four elements which man requires simultaneously for life, and 2) non-Adamic flesh, composed of only one element at a time. Each element was a "world of its own with its own inhabitants," called elementals, whose bodies were made of that one element alone, leaving them without souls and amoral because "a soul arises from compounds which consist of more than one element."\textsuperscript{13} Further, Paracelsus categorized elementals as follows: gnomes belonged to the earth, nymphs or undines belonged to water, salamanders belonged to fire, and sylphs belonged to air.\textsuperscript{14}

Paracelsus also wrote that though the elementals resembled human beings, they were not human. They could produce offspring from relationships with humans, but the resulting children would always be human. Elementals/nature spirits, the family to which sylphs
belong, usually appeared to people in dreams and were drawn to humans to serve them, trying to attract and hold them. Though considered mortal, they were thought to live longer than humans. When they did die, they simply transformed back into the particular element from which they came. Mostly, they were attracted to humans because they wanted a soul, and they knew that only a union with a human would produce an ensouled offspring. Hence, upon closer inspection, the Sylphide's intent was deeper and more serious, for the libretto assumed its audience already knew about elementals and the fairy world.

Paracelsus viewed the sylphs as the best of all the elementals, characterizing them as "mirthful, changeable, and capricious."15 Old Madge, then, remained a polar opposite: an evil and ugly old witch. John Widdowson identified a common characteristic witches share: "They are all abnormal in some way and their abnormalities are central to the frightening aura which surrounds them."16 He quoted the Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend, defining a witch as "'A person who practices sorcery; a sorcerer or sorceress; one having supernatural powers in the natural world, especially to work evil, and usually by association with evil spirits or the Devil.'"17 While this definition would somewhat describe Old Madge, Widdowson's source could use some updating, as not all "witches" embrace evil. Wiccan "witches" do not even recognize the Devil, a Christian convention. Nevertheless, because witches have usually been identified as frightening creatures in literature, their physical appearance typically included warts, bodily deformities, and extreme ugliness.
They were usually old, crippled, wrinkled, and bent, and often reclusive and antisocial, dressing in dirty, dark, and ragged clothes.

Unfairly, even the "white" witches and wise women who helped people with love spells and herbal cures were also feared and condemned by the common people. This probably occurred because they often physically looked and/or acted like their malevolent counterparts: ugly, eccentric, reclusive, and generally different from "'ordinary'" people. According to Brendan Lehane, author of Witches and Wizards of Time-Life Books' "Enchanted World" series, these people were healers who had inherited their skills (for the powers ran in families) and/or had been trained "in the use of herbs and in midwifery, as well as in weather prediction, in the discovery of theft and sometimes in fortunetelling."19

Nevertheless, Old Madge is anything but benevolent. In both versions of the plot, she summons her dark sisters for aid in completing her evil deed. They dance in circles around a fire and/or caldron. Circles figure prominently in magic working. Starhawk, a contemporary witch and author of the highly regarded The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess, says:

Energy flows in spirals. Its motion is always circular, cyclical, wavelike. The spiral motion is revealed in the shape of galaxies, shells, whirlpools, DNA. Sound, light, and radiation travel in waves—which themselves are spirals viewed in a flat plane. . . .

The implications of the spiral model are many. Essentially, it means that no form of energy can be exerted indefinitely in one direction only. Always, it will reach a peak, a point of climax, and then turn.20

A circle symbolizes the unity and completeness of all things as one thing, hence "'all as one.'"21 Magical power is contained within or
outside of a circle, and the practice of dancing around in a circle is
traditional, stemming back from ancient times. American Indians, for
example, always danced in a sunwise (east to west) circle. Sunwise or
clockwise, both are considered a circle direction for purposes of good,
while counterclockwise (or "widdershins," a witch term) was used for
evil workings. Many odd customs and superstitions associated with
this still persist, such as beating batter in a clockwise direction to
insure good health and proper baking.22

Old Madge and her sisters dance widdershins for their evil
purposes in the circle to raise what people in the Craft call a "cone of
power," a focused force or power raised by the witches' electric and
magnetic bodies and "brought together and held as a beam of light
(power) by [their] will, within the Magic Circle."23 It is subsequently
sent forth by the force of their will to accomplish the intended
purpose. The powers are neutral; it is the intent which determines
whether the result is evil or good, "black," "white," or "gray." A
famous contemporary witch, Lady Sheba, says a witch can bind her will
to the cone of power by pointing her wand in the direction she wishes
to send her power, visualizing the accomplished result.24 Indeed,
Balanchine's Old Madge pointed her walking stick/ wand into the caldron
at the last of the ritual, and succeeded in materializing a lovely but
lethal scarf of pink, a color long associated with femininity.

Obviously, elements of the witchcraft workings portrayed in La
Sylphide are authentic enough. Bourronville's version even mentions
the accompanying of familiars, or elemental servants, usually in the
form of various small animals, in the coven meeting. Witches have the
power to create elementals, and since the Sylphide is an elemental, Old Madge would be a formidable opponent for the pretty creature. According to the libretto, when the scarf touches the Sylphide's skin, it appears to burn her terribly. One could postulate the witch knew the Sylphide was made of air (non-Adamic flesh), and any contact with an object magically composed of another element, such as fire, would kill its victim.

Many layers of magic exist in La Sylphide. Because this libretto and many others of the period assumed audiences' prior knowledge of the supernatural, elementals, and magic, contemporary audiences can easily miss how puzzle pieces fit together. The witches' dancing in a circle around a fire and/or caldron, for instance, involves more than just the literal act of dancing. It fits well because it is dancing and it is a ballet, but witches really did dance in a circle (and still do) for magical purposes and energy raising. Witches and those familiar with magic know that a circle is between two worlds. That is, a circle is "between this world and the next, the dominions of the gods," and witches "cast circles" to keep in the power which "they believe they can raise from their own bodies and to prevent it from being dissipated before they can mould it to their own will."25

In addition, La Sylphide's libretto involves fertility lore and/or symbols, such as the caldron, the wand, and broomsticks. Even the fireplace and its chimney, where many of the fertility symbols seem to meet, are surrounded with superstition and lore. Zolar, a well-known astrologer and author of books on the paranormal, dreams, and fortunetelling, writes, "The hearth is said to be a magical place with
its own powers, since, once fire is lit there, smoke connects earth and sky. Chimneys must, therefore, be protected, since evil forces can enter the house by this means."26 James first notices the Sylphide near the fireplace, and Old Madge appears suddenly in a dark corner of the hearth. To ward off witches from entering through the hearth, country folk used to turn their brooms and fire tongs upside down and place them on the right side of the fireplace. La_Sylphide's librettist knowingly omitted this last from his story, for with such a protected cottage, there would not have been a story!

At the ballet's opening, La_Sylphide "sealed the triumph of Romanticism in the field of ballet" with a plot that:

... introduced to French ballet the situation of a spirit falling in love with a mortal, epitomizing, with haunting effect, the quest of the Romantic artist for the infinite and the unattainable. The discovery of this situation, which was to recur with frequent regularity in future years, was a turning-point of the greatest significance in the history of ballet. It ushered in a golden age—an era of moonlight and ethereal sprites, and La_Sylphide was to become the prototype of many other masterpieces which were to embellish this period of Romantic ballet.27

Not long afterward, another ballet with a similar theme claimed the spotlight. It was Giselle. The original libretto had its first performance on June 28, 1841, at the Théâtre de l' Académie Royal de Musique. Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Théophile Gautier wrote the book, although some sources add a third collaborator, Jean Coralli, the choreographer. Gautier was responsible for the inspiration to turn an old Slavonic legend into what became an enduring ballet favorite.

Variations on the original story exist, with the adapted libretto by George Balanchine a primary example.28 The original (see Appendix
B), translated from the French by ballet historian and scholar, Cyril W. Beaumont,\textsuperscript{29} introduces Loys/Albrecht in humble peasant clothing. Balanchine adds a royal cape and sword to his costume, which he hands to Wilfrid. Hilarion secretly observes the action and watches Wilfrid hide the items in the cottage next-door. When Loys knocks on Giselle's door, Balanchine has him tease her by hiding at first. The lovers enjoy a little bantering as Giselle pretends to be annoyed about his hiding from her. The original libretto is more straightforward with Loys merely knocking on the door, followed by her falling into his arms as she pours out the contents of a disturbing dream she recently had about a lovely rival to his love, a foreshadowing absent from Balanchine's plotline. After the lovers greet one another, Giselle subjects Loys to the daisy test of plucking petals to "He loves me; he loves me not," and in the original, her test succeeds. In other later versions, Balanchine's included, the test concludes with, "He loves me not." Loys cheats a little by substituting another daisy, or by retrieving the daisy she threw down, and simply declares she was mistaken—that the last petal was really in his favor.

Other details differ in Act I. Contemporary versions of the ballet tighten the plot by omitting details that reveal Giselle's popularity and relationship with her friends in the village. They also often soften her suicidal despondency upon realizing her lover's fickleness by making her death accidental. Balanchine's libretto ignores that Giselle was elected Queen of the Vintage, although her wreath worn during the honor later crowns the marble cross on her grave. Nor was there mention of the village's old tradition of Bacchus
astride a cask during the celebration. Further, in Giselle's mad scene, contemporary versions, except Balanchine's, negate her suicidal nature (but forfeit the dramatic moment of her complete resignation and self-destruction) by having her fall on the sword just as her mother tries to drag it away. In both Balanchine's staging and the original libretto, she raises the sword high and forces it into her heart. This writer has seen an additional variation in which Giselle dies of heart failure while toying with the weapon. The contemporary Giselle is also more forgiving and less reproachful. In Balanchine's version, as she dies in her mother's arms, Giselle's last gestures to Loys seem to be of forgiveness, while in the original, she only looks at her lover disparingly.

Two final differences that downplay the suicidal tendencies of Giselle's suitor complete the contrasting first acts. Upon discovering she is indeed dead, Balanchine makes Albrecht, Loys' real name, attempt once again to kill Hilarion. In the original, he tries to kill himself. The scene ends with his being led away, overcome with sadness and love. Balanchine's version ends with Albrecht weeping beside Giselle as the curtain closes.

As can be seen, the original libretto's Act I characters are darker and more serious than in Balanchine's later libretto. While the updated Giselle stays true to the original plot, it gives the lovers a softer, less dramatic touch. The original libretto's Act I was a product of its time because it perpetuated the Romantic notion of melancholia and distraught star-crossed lovers literally dying for love.
Balanchine's Act I ends in crisis, and his Act II begins by building toward the plot's climax. The second act opens with the ghostly activities of the Wilis. Balanchine claims they are the spirits of girls who were engaged to be married, but who had died before their weddings. They dance with broken hearts. Slavonic legend describes a Wili as not only an affianced maiden who died before her wedding, but also as a young woman who died from loving to dance too well, perishing too young to satisfy that passion for dancing. At midnight, Beaumont says they "rise up and gather in bands on the highway, and lure any young man they meet to dance with them until he falls dead." Since one has to die first in order to join their ranks, their activities are somehow appropriately nocturnal. The second act opens as Myrtha, the Queen of the Wilis, plucks two fern branches from the lakeside and throws them into the forest to designate the place of her awful magic. In the original, she finds a sprig of rosemary and touches everything in sight to claim magically the place of her evil intentions and to awaken the Wilis to nocturnal duty. She has special ghostly helpers. Balanchine does not personalize the Wilis, but he recognizes two unnamed attendant Wilis to the queen. The original libretto identifies them as Moyna, an oriental odalisque, and Zulma, an Indian bayadère. In the original, more Wilis have definite nationalities and are more personalized. This technique enhances their focus and increases empathy for them as a group.

More differences between the two libretti exist regarding the "updating" of magical details. When Giselle spots Albrecht at her grave, she throws him a flower; in Balanchine, it is two white lilies,
familiar blossoms of mourning. A more dramatic example concerns Myrtha's wand breaking in the original just as she is about to touch Albrecht. This detail represents the triumph of love over hate and signals a turning point in the story, the beginning of the dénouement. Balanchine chooses a less idealistic approach; four tolls of a bell warn of dawn's approach and send the vampire-like Wilis scurrying. Contemporary audiences know of vampires' fear of dawn. The original's dramatic ending, in which the Wilis wilt and stagger into clumps of flowers and various vegetation with the coming of the sun's bright rays, undoubtedly tested the dancers' acting skills.

Balanchine ends his story with Giselle's quietly sinking back into her damp grave. Her final departure is significantly more melodramatic in the original, which has Wilfrid, the prince, Bathilde, and their entourage rush in just as Giselle is almost concealed by the soil. Her one free hand points to Bathilde and entreats the grieving and exhausted Albrecht to love and marry the lady since she herself is no longer of this world. The flowering grass then totally engulfs her as she sinks completely into her grave. Albrecht then rises, plucks some flowers, presses them to his chest and lips, and stretches his hand toward Bathilde while collapsing into the arms of those surrounding him. That ending quite parallels La Sylphide's, in which the dying Sylphide urges James to find and marry the jilted Effy.

The original Act II adheres to the Romantics' fascination with foreign peoples, with personalized Wilis dancing the native dances of their different cultures and countries. It also places more focus on the Slavonic legend, which gave them their eternal passion for dancing.
Although the updated magical details appear authentic, Act II, like Act I, is more melodramatic in general than Balanchine’s libretto.

Giselle, a frail but beautiful unworldly young woman in life, becomes a Wili at death and is inducted into her new status by Myrtha, the Queen of the Wilis, and her attendants. As a new ghostly follower of the heartless Myrtha, Giselle cannot let go of her love for Albrecht. She seems devoted to him, trying to protect him from the fatal exhaustion and watery burial as promised by Myrtha. Gautier’s libretto (for he is the author given primary credit for envisioning the plotline) gives no hint regarding how long Giselle and Loys/Albrecht had been involved, prompting some writers to ponder the delicate question of whether or not Giselle died a virgin. Why, they ask, would she have succumbed into madness at the close of Act I had she not previously deepened her relationship with him through a physical bonding, which would, of course, be the natural accompaniment to emotional love? They were, after all, betrothed. With this reasoning, then, she probably was not a virgin.

Nevertheless, she loves him in death, despite the complications of his other betrothal and despite her own ghostly sentence. But she loves him enough to give him his freedom in the end, for she realizes they now belong to two different worlds. Even as she sinks into the dirt, she reaches up for him as if in blessing, a final goodbye. It is poignant, and Albrecht realizes that her love for him was true and defied both the limitations of death and the dictates of the heartless Myrtha. He has lost a true prize forever. He would probably like to chance a return visit to her grave at night again if only to see her
just one more time, but we know he will not because her farewell is loving but final. Perhaps her genuine love (that transcends even death) and her act of forgiveness have released Giselle's soul from its sentence as a Wili forever.32

Myrtha, on the other hand, is anything but loving. The Queen of the Wilis and opponent of the gentle Giselle, Myrtha died of grief when she was quite young, the jilted victim of a betrothal that somehow went wrong. In death, she retains the beauty and youthful appearance of her twenties, when she became immortal. Beaumont describes her aptly as an "unhappy phantom, a female vampire filled with an insatiable lust for revenge which causes her nightly to frequent the mystic glade, to lure any male wayfarer into the web of her fellow vampires. . . ."33 She is beautiful but icy, melancholy but authoritative. We do not know how she came to be queen, or whether or not she has had any challengers to her authority. She is powerful, and Albrecht seems to be the first male ever to escape her. Giselle seems, likewise, to be the first Wili to defy her. Myrtha's surprised anger at the upstart new member of her band is dangerously foreboding. Her cold dead eyes dart sharply in commanding her followers to kill.

Her methods are steeped in magic and legend. A fuller understanding of them results in studying the rich Slavonic tradition of the dead women, discussed by Heinrich Heine, the author of De l' Allemagne. Completed in 1833, the work, written in French, first appeared in a Paris journal entitled Europe Littéraire, and appeared later that year in German with the title, Zur Geschichte der neueren
schenen Literatur in Deutschland. The first French edition (1835) was called *De l' Allemagne*. Nevertheless, the Slav word for "vampire" is *vila*, the plural is *vile*, and *wili* is probably a Teutonic form of *vile* because the "w" in German is pronounced with a "v" sound. Beaumont notes that Puccini’s first opera, produced forty-three years after *Giselle* in 1884 in Milan, was based on the same legend with the Italian title, *Le Villi*.

Further, Heine’s poem, "Germany," which recalls the splendor and goodness of times past in Germany, hints briefly at women who died in the flower of their youth:

In dark coffins, too, are sleeping
Splendid dames and lovely girls:
Yes, these chests have in their keeping
Treasures more than gold and pearls.

Here the breezes tell strange stories
As with Minnesinger's breath,
For the courtly love of yore is
Also sleeping here with Death.

Nevertheless, a certain passage in Heine’s *De l' Allemagne* especially inspired Gautier. It concerned a legend of Slavic origin that was well-known in a certain part of Austria, the legend of the Wilis, or betrothed girls who have died before their wedding days. Their passion for dancing still burns, causing them to break free of their tombs at midnight and surround in a fatal circle any unsuspecting male they may encounter on the highway and force him to dance with them until he dies of exhaustion. They still wear their wedding dresses, crowns of flowers on their heads, and flashing rings on their fingers. They have the deadly pale faces of ghosts, yet they possess the youthful beauty of their passing. Heine called them "'lifeless
bacchantes'" who "laugh with terrible joy," and who "beckon seductively, with the promise of sweet rewards."36

Called "diaphanous harridans"37 by modern writer Doris Hering, the Wilis are "the spirits of maidens whose marriages had not been consummated."38 Indeed, Beaumont offers more information on why the Wilis are so consumed with vengeance on the opposite sex in citing Meyer's *Konversationslexikon*: The Wilis are "a species of vampire consisting of the spirits of betrothed girls who have died as a result of their being jilted by faithless lovers."39 Nonetheless, it seems to matter little to the Wilis whether they were jilted at the altar, or whether they were jilted before the marriage bed because they have fallen victim to the whims of men.

Gautier called them "cruel nocturnal dancers, no more forgiving than living women are to a tired waltzer."40 In an article he addressed to Heine and contributed to *La Presse*, Gautier described Myrtha as "two startled blue eyes set in an alabaster oval . . . a beautiful, slender, chaste, and graceful form" that emerged from a waterlily.41 She uses asphodel and verbena wound into a magical garland to initiate Giselle and causes two little wings to sprout from her back. According to Scott Cunningham, asphodel is another name for the daffodil, which is associated with the element, water, in addition to love, fertility, and luck powers.42 Similarly, verbena (also called vervain) is powerful in matters of love, youth, and sleep, among other things. Drinking the plant's juice (having gathered the plant before sunrise on the first day of the New Moon) will insure the maintenance of chastity for seven years as it will kill the sex drive
when thus taken. When it is carried, verbena will offer everlasting youth.⁴³

Many references to herbs and various plants noted in history for their magical uses and associations are found in this ballet. In the first act, Giselle plucks the petals from a daisy to determine the fidelity of her lover. The daisy is associated with the element, water. The daisy's power focuses best on matters of lust and love. Magically, if one sleeps with a daisy root under her pillow, an absent lover may return, and wearing a daisy will bring love.⁴⁴ Further, Giselle wears a crown of grapevine leaves which later tops her tombstone cross. Grapes are also associated with water and fertility powers.⁴⁵

Regarding Myrtha, more plants have magical significance. Her very name is taken from "myrtle," which is ruled by Venus and has water as its ruling element. Myrtle is powerful in matters of love, fertility, and youth, and has reigned as a love herb for a very long time. Myrtle, when worn, increases fertility, but when worn by brides, it protects them from becoming pregnant too quickly. When a woman carries myrtle wood, her youthfulness will be preserved, as will love.⁴⁶

Quite appropriately, then, is the Queen of the Wilis named, for she is youthful in death, a bride (albeit a jilted one), and associated with water. She even emerges from a waterlily in her first appearance. Known also as lotus, waterlilies are associated with water, and their seeds and pods serve as antidotes to love spells!⁴⁷ When Myrtha begins her magic in Balanchine's account, she throws two fern branches into the forest to designate her place of magic. Associated with the element, air, ferns are connected with eternal youth. When
worn or carried, ferns can help one discover treasures. Later, she plucks a myrtle branch to use as a magic wand in the original libretto, but Balanchine substituted this for a sprig of rosemary. Rosemary is associated with fire as well as love, lust, mental powers, sleep, and youth.

One final plant has magical significance: the willow tree under which Giselle's remains lie. An old way of categorizing herbs was to assign each plant a gender, according to its basic vibrations. Masculine herbs have fiery, strong vibrations, while feminine ones work more softly, quietly, and subtly. The willow, and all the magical plants heretofore mentioned, are feminine, with the exception of rosemary, which was substituted by Balanchine from the original version of the story. Appropriately, all of the original story's plants are feminine, for that softer vibration is used for and/or associated with the same magical purposes in Giselle: recapturing youth, attracting love, increasing beauty, and causing visions. The willow is also associated with the moon and water, and it is used for love, love divination, protection, and healing purposes. Cunningham notes that burial mounds in Britain were often near lakes and marshes, and these grave sites were usually lined with willows. All parts of the willow protect one against evil; knocking on a willow tree or carrying a piece of its wood will avert evil. How appropriate that Giselle's lover finds safety and refuge at her grave from the deadly Myrtha. The cross there offers protection as a symbol of Christ, and the willow spreading its sheltering branches above her grave offers magical/pagan safety.
Almost all of the magical plants in the story are associated with the water element, and it is fitting that the Wilis are known as water spirits. They appear as twinkling lights in marshes and graveyards and enjoy a variety of names: Jack O' Lanterns, Will-O-the Wisps, Corpse Candles, Fairy Fire, and Foolish Fire. The fearful glowings can lure people to their deaths in such places as swamps and open graves. They can, however, be driven away with a cross, exactly paralleling the protection device so neatly sewn into the ballet, of a cross over the unfortunate girl's grave.52

Magic and Slavonic legend figure into the background and plot of Giselle. Heinrich Heine and Victor Hugo, sometimes called the Father of Romanticism, heavily influenced this ballet.53 In a letter, dated July 5, 1841, Théophile Gautier enthusiastically discussed the inspiration Heine's De L' Allemagne furnished him:

My dear Heinrich Heine, when reviewing, a few weeks ago, your fine book, De L' Allemagne, I came across a charming passage—one has only to open the book at random—the place where you speak of elves in white dresses, whose hems are always damp, of nixes who display their little satin feet on the ceiling of the nuptial chamber, of snow-colored Wilis who waltz pitilessly, and of all those delicious apparitions you have encountered in the Harz mountains and on the banks of the Ilse, in a mist softened by German moonlight; and I involuntarily said to myself: "Wouldn't this make a pretty ballet?"

In a moment of enthusiasm, I even took a fine large sheet of white paper, and headed it in superb capitals: Les Wilis, a ballet. Then I laughed and threw the sheet aside without giving it any further thought, saying to myself that it was impossible to translate that misty and nocturnal poetry into terms of the theatre, that richly sinister phantasmagoria, all those effects of legend and ballet so little in keeping with our customs.54

One night, however, at the Paris Opéra Gautier met the future librettist of the ballet Gautier had envisioned. Jules-Henri Vernoy,
Marquis de Saint-Georges, described by Gautier as a "witty man", set the action in a "vague country, in Silesia, in Thuringia ... on the other side of the Rhine, in some mysterious corner of Germany" to allow more freedom in the story for a ballet. In the letter, Gautier described the story's adaptation and told Heine that the great Lucien Petipa danced the role of Albrecht, and Carlotta Grisi (an Italian ballerina that Gautier adored until his death) was Giselle. Adèle Cumilâtre (some sources spell it Dumilâtre) danced Myrtha. The ballet was well-received, and Gautier proudly ended his letter with, "So, my dear Heine, your German Wilis have succeeded completely at the French Opera."

Gautier was probably also familiar with another of Heine's works, *Les Nuits florentines*, which contains more of the Wilis' legend. The story of a young girl who loves to dance, it follows a gypsy girl dancing on Waterloo Bridge who later appears in Parisian society, dancing under dripping chandeliers. Her transformation mirrors and perhaps foreshadows that of the peasant girl, Giselle.

Victor Hugo also influenced Gautier's active imagination. Hugo's *Fantômes* (1828) embraced the theme of the decay of beauty. The poem concerns a frail girl who lives for dancing, only to be killed by a cold wind after attending a ball one night. The girl's mother had forseen her daughter's death in the story, a device also used in *Giselle*. The poem appeared in Hugo's *Les Orientales*, a collection published in 1829. Vernoy de St. Georges, the librettist, had taken notice of one of Hugo's *Orientales* involving a haunted ballroom where dancers were condemned to dance all night. Gautier's original idea
seemed an attempt to pull it all together by opening the ballet with a ballroom bewitched by Wilis where a young Giselle dances all night. She is killed at dawn by the Queen of the Wilis who places her hand of death on the young girl's heart. The second act has the Wilis dancing by the side of a lake and contains a good number of stock foreign characters. Interest in people and places of other countries was typical of the Romantics, but Gautier's excessive use of exotic characters turned the second act's activities into an "Oriental bazaar" which "nearly engulfed" Giselle and Albrecht. Gautier wisely discarded this first attempt, but his enthusiasm was renewed when he ran into Vernoy de St. Georges later at the Paris Opéra.

Giselle has been called the Hamlet of ballet, and its connections to La Sylphide remain undeniable. In fact, the ballet that "started" the Romantic period in the dance world, and the ballet that became the period's zenith have many similarities regarding storylines and characters. Both ballets have two acts, and while La Sylphide contains some magic in the first act, both La Sylphide and Giselle have the main magical doings concentrated in the second act. Further, both ballets are love stories in which the partners start out being in love with a human, but somehow eventually love a nonhuman creature. In La Sylphide James loves Effy at first, but later falls in love with a Sylph, an elemental. In Giselle Albrecht loves Giselle, and continues to love her ghost after she dies. Both ballets share unearthly competition of female characters over male characters. Doris Hering, the author of Giselle & Albrecht, writes, "... Giselle and Myrtha are ... women engaged in a competition, not over a man, but over his destiny. The
competition is intensified by the pressure of time." Giselle wants her lover's salvation; Myrtha wants his death. They seem polar opposites, even though they are both Wilis. The action reflects the old struggle of love versus hatred (for Myrtha hates men), life versus death, punishment versus forgiveness, and the end of one phase followed by a new phase. The same themes persist in La Sylphide. Effy and the Sylph are in competition over James with the added time pressure of the impending wedding ceremony of the two human lovers. A third female, Old Madge, desires the Sylph's death. Here again, two female magical characters are at odds, and again the same love versus hatred theme applies: James' love for both Effy and the Sylph, Gurn's love for Effy, Effy's newly discovered feelings for Gurn, the Sylph's love for James, all juxtaposed to Old Madge's hatred of the Sylph in general and of James for treating her rudely. The life versus death and punishment versus forgiveness themes are also present in La Sylphide. Just as Giselle dies while still in love, the Sylph dies yet enamored with James. Both females die in the flower of their youth, and both leave male suitors grieving immeasurably. Both male suitors receive punishment for their untruthfulness. Albrecht loses Giselle forever to death and narrowly escapes death himself, while James has to live forever with the guilty knowledge of having caused, albeit unknowingly, the Sylph's agonizing final moments. His lot is to endure a life of solitude and sorrow as an outcast, for he no longer enjoys the comfort or understanding of his friends. Both men struggle with guilt in the end.
Finally, the theme of the ending of one phase, followed by a new phase persists in both ballets. Ironically, both ballets show love as continuing in some form after the heartbreaking hardship. Marriage has just or will soon occur for the remaining partner: Albrecht will soon wed Bathilde, and Effy has just married Gurn. Even so, both ballets end sadly because the original love plans go awry, beautiful young women die needlessly, with their male suitors being somewhat instrumental in their demise, and both male suitors grieve as the stories close.

More similarities remain regarding the magic workers' success in their attempts. Giselle and La Sylphide both contain magic workers who succeed and fail. Giselle manages to save Albrecht's life, but she fails to overcome death to continue the relationship. Myrtha fails to kill the young man. Likewise, the Sylph causes James to fall in love with her and reject Effy, but she fails to survive Old Madge's fatal magic. Old Madge succeeds in her evil revenge, but gains nothing personally beyond that.

The main love interests share some common traits: James and Albrecht are fickle, while Effy and Giselle are sincere in their love. Though flirtatious and childlike, both the Sylph and Giselle die victims of their suitors. Only the rejected Effy survives her romantic blow. One last relationship exists between death and magic in both ballet's libretti: Death cancels the Sylph's magical abilities in La Sylphide, but it causes Giselle's in Giselle. Paradoxically, love cancels the latter's magical abilities and permits the dead girl to rest in peace.
Thus, both La Sylphide and Giselle, with their similar storylines and characters, occupied the zenith period of the Romantic era in the dance world. As prototypes for later Romantic ballets, both represented a search for something new in the early half of the 1800s. The rising middle class in Paris wanted good stories with emotional content, and looking to the mysteries of nature, magic, and the supernatural seemed a logical place to start. La Sylphide and Giselle involved local color, foreign lands and characters, and presented the unearthly, magical realm of elementals, witches, and ghosts. Both contained lovely young supernatural female creatures who die because of the actions of fickle lovers, who remain grieving guiltily at the end. More importantly, however, they spawned a whole era of ballets to come that shared the same basic plot situation of two lovers having to deal with enchantment and the supernatural. In the zenith phase of the Romantic period, magical forces typically overwhelmed the lovers, making them victims in unhappy endings. The decline phase began a move away from such melancholic conclusions and toward more promising endings for the lovers. That type of ending would be embraced more fully in the revival phase of the 1890s, when the lovers would overcome the effects of enchantment to "live happily ever after." La Sylphide and Giselle were and remain love stories that shared common themes and elements, and provided the basis upon which later ballets of the period built.
ENDNOTES


2 Juliet Neidish, "Whose Habitation is the Air," Dance Perspectives 61 (Spring 1975): 6-7.

3 Neidish 6-10.

4 Neidish 6-10.


8 Neidish 12.


12 Neidish 4-6.

13 Neidish 5-6.

14 Neidish 5-6.

15 Neidish 6.
16 John Widdowson, "The Witch as a Frightening and Threatening Figure," The Witch Figure: Folklore Essays by a Group of Scholars in England Honoring the 75th Birthday of Katharine M. Briggs, ed. Venetia Newall (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973) 201.

17 Widdowson 201.

18 Widdowson 202-203.


22 Zolar 84.


24 Lady Sheba 6.


26 Zolar 75.


28 Balanchine 168-177.


31 Beaumont 19.

33 Beaumont 82.

34 Beaumont 18-19.


37 Hering 165.

38 Hering 10.

39 Beaumont 19.


41 Gautier, "Writing Giselle" 196-198.


43 Cunningham 216-218.

44 Cunningham 88.

45 Cunningham 116.

46 Cunningham 160.

47 Cunningham 144.

48 Cunningham 102-104.

49 Cunningham 189-190.

50 Cunningham 25-26.

51 Cunningham 222.

53 Hering 15.

54 Gautier 192.

55 Gautier 192-193.

56 Gautier 193.

57 Gautier 199.


60 Hering 10–11.

61 Kirstein 151.

62 Hering 11.

63 Kirstein 151.

64 Hering 165.
CHAPTER TWO
THE DECLINE BALLETs

Both Coppélia, Or The Girl with the Enamel Eyes, and Swan Lake epitomized the decline phase of the Romantic period. Like Giselle and La Sylphide before them, these ballets continued the focus on romantic love, its problems, and its magical elements. All four ballets concerned faithful and loving females and fickle males. They reflected the Victorian double standard regarding gender roles and the notion of the ideal woman. The Romantics, as have others before them, used the performing arts, in addition to patriarchal religious concepts, to show the feminine segment of society what was expected of them in their actions, aspirations, and appearance, prescribed with the best interests of men in mind; of course, most of the librettists, directors, and playwrights were men.

Coppélia's story, as narrated by George Balanchine in his Balanchine's Complete Stories of the Great Ballets and re-told in Appendix D of this study, was first performed on May 25, 1870, at the Théâtre Impérial de l' Opéra (Paris Opéra) in Paris. It starred sixteen year old Giuseppina Bozacchi as Swanilda. A shift from the previous preoccupation with tragic plots, the famous comic ballet has enjoyed a parallel with Giselle in that both love stories involved a test of devotion for their male love interests, with both Giselle's Albrecht and Coppélia's Franz learning lessons from their mistakes. The difference rested in their outcomes. Albrecht learns a tragic lesson (from a ghost) from which he would never recover, while Franz learns a lesson (from a "doll" who was really his fiancée in disguise) that changes his
life for the better. Balanchine linked the two plots, calling *Giselle* "ballet's great tragedy" and *Coppélia* "its great comedy."³

Librettists Charles Nuitter and Arthur Saint-Léon, who was also the ballet's choreographer, took their inspiration for *Coppélia* from an 1815 short story by E.T.A. Hoffmann entitled *Der Sandmann* (summarized in Appendix C of this study).⁴ Hoffmann's story is darker and more serious in its description of a disturbed young man both haunted by a malevolent Coppélius, and infatuated with a beautiful doll. Having rejected his human girlfriend, Clara, the young man, on the verge of asking for Olimpia's (the doll's) hand in marriage, discovers on his arrival at her house, Coppélius and her "father" pulling the figure apart in a violent argument. The unfortunate Nathanael snaps mentally, and at the story's close, he falls to his death from a tower after trying to kill Clara. The tragic and darkly sinister elements have been lost in the ballet's comic libretto, but both the short story and the libretto retain a common theme of a doll purposely created to appear convincingly human. The doll is so lifelike it is almost possible for it to assume an independent or eternal life with the aid of magic somehow involved.⁵ The beautiful doll is a perfect creature fashioned by a *man*, and her silence is an appealing indication she does not try to think for herself, argue, or attempt to challenge "authority." The Romantic Franz adores the doll for those qualities. The tongue-in-cheek humor rests in his being so blinded by those things that he cannot see her stiffly mechanical reality. That humor is compounded by the rejected girlfriend who decides to take matters into her own hands and complicates the plot.
Nuitter and Saint-Leon's libretto changed Hoffmann's tale by emphasizing the girlfriend's jealousy of the doll and her attempts to regain her lover's devotion. They also altered characters and created new ones to produce a light, charming story about the improbable love triangle. Coppélius changed from a rather demonic figure who has the power to control the happiness of others to an almost bumbling old dabbler in the mystical arts. The transformation of Coppélius retained only the old man's mystery. Lincoln Kirstein calls the old alchemist/magician a "self-deceived charlatan," and Cyril Beaumont refers to him as "'half-mechanic, half necromancer.'"6

In 1869, Nuitter and Saint-Leon corresponded by letter during their work on the libretto for Coppélia. Their letters give one an idea of their process, progress, headaches, and triumphs. For example, on September 14th of that year, Saint-Leon, working in St. Petersburg, wrote to Nuitter in Paris, describing his changes to the opening of Act I. Thinking the changes would shorten the act by six minutes and make things more lively, Saint-Leon proposed to raise the curtain with men drinking at a table. He suggested that some men and women enter simultaneously from the back on their way to the Burgomaster. After everyone leaves, Antonia (later changed to Swanilda) enters and is surprised at not seeing Frantz (later spelled Franz). She goes to the window of Coppélia, her rival. Jealous, she dances to attract the girl's attention. Hearing a noise, Antonia hides and observes Frantz interact with the doll. Next, the crowd enters, accompanied by the Burgomaster and a man following him carrying a decorated banner depicting a bell. He announces a fête, and everyone drinks to the health of the Lord of
the Manor (who has presented the bell). A Mazurka follows, and everyone dances until night falls. Finally, everyone exits. The scene with Coppélius follows. 7

Saint-Léon gave his reasons for the changes:

In my opinion the act will gain greatly by this—the sharpshooters [added characters in a first draft, not present in Hoffmann's story] and the second entrance of the crowd, which slow down the action for no purpose, disappear and nothing effective has been omitted. . . . We shall have to prepare Delibes [composer of Coppélia's music] for this amputation, or rather this adjustment. The ballet will gain by it. I seem to have found an ending to the second act at last, without lengthening it by a single minute. . . . At long last, in this way I shall have no more qualms. 8

The first act was tightened even more, with the curtain rising to show old Coppélius coming out of his door. Immediately following his exit, Swanilda enters an empty stage to see Coppélia sitting on a balcony. In a letter to Nuitter dated November 29, 1869, Saint-Léon referred to this last change as "the Caesarian" which he felt was the "boldest" of two proposed cuts, and which, in his opinion, had "the best chance of being played." 9

But Saint-Léon continued to struggle with how to end the ballet. After trying out three unsatisfying endings, he finally settled on one he felt would work:

I have not been lazy, but this ending is the best. The other day I even tried out this scene with three mimes behind locked doors, and was pleased. All the other endings drag. Delibes wrote to me and I replied that I was still undecided. I have tried out several other versions, but looking them all over, I have come back to the second version. 10
That dénouement has the Burgomaster entering after a fanfare of trumpets. Antonia's friends also enter, grumbling because they doubt the fête will take place. The Burgomaster is embarrassed at first, but soon realizes the discord stems from a lovers' prank, jealousy, and delusion. He promises to settle matters with Coppélius later, and he gives Antonia and Frantz his blessing with an embrace before accompanying them to the fête. Antonia's girlfriends lead Coppélius away, and after a march, scene change, short ceremony and divertissement, the ballet ends. Saint-Léon was pleased, writing, "That makes a perfect contrast to the preceding scene," and added that "one must think first of all of the general effect" because the "possibility of its being performed is helpful to the repertoire."11

The ballet's ending became even tighter and more positive by omitting the initial presence of an unhappy Coppélius and grumbling villagers being led to the fête. The ballet's last act opened, instead, with a square filled with happy villagers on a festival day, with Franz and Swanilda (their names newly changed) lined up with other young couples to receive their dowries. When an irate Coppélius enters and wants financial compensation for damages caused to his dolls and workshop, Swanilda offers him her dowry. The lord of the manor, however, offers the old man a bag of gold so the young girl can keep her dowry. Coppélius exits and everyone breaks into celebration, as the newly married Franz and Swanilda perform a happy wedding dance, ending the ballet.

Coppélius is the sole magic worker in this decline phase ballet, just as he is in Hoffmann's earlier story. His transformation,
mentioned earlier, from a frightening figure to a mysterious and comical old man is dramatic. In Hoffmann's story, Coppélius is an old lawyer who dines with the family of the child, Nathanael, the predecessor of Franz in the ballet. Unnerved whenever she hears Coppélius trudge up the stairs of their apartment, Nathanael's mother whisks the children safely to bed. The children call him the Sandman because they never actually see him enter on these nocturnal visits. He perpetuates morbid fascination in young Nathanael who identifies the Sandman with a bogeyman who delights in throwing sand in the eyes of children who will not go dutifully to bed. The sand causes their eyes to "jump out of their heads all bloody," after which he puts them into a bag and "takes them to the half-moon as food for his little ones" who sit in a nest and pick out the eyes of naughty little children with their owl-like hooked beaks. At one point in Hoffmann's story, the fiendish Coppélius physically abuses Nathanael by twisting his arm and leg joints into unnatural positions, causing the child to faint from pain.

The torment does not cease when Nathanael grows to manhood because not only do his childhood nightmares and memories still haunt him, but he is also stalked by a thinly disguised Coppélius who calls himself Coppola. His malevolent influence ultimately causes Nathanael's descent into madness and death.

The ballet takes a much lighter approach than the original story and, due to the Industrial Revolution, the fascination with things mechanical found expression on the stage. Hoffmann's original story reflected his intrigue with machines replacing human beings. The
ballet's librettists expounded upon that idea, creating a room full of lifelike dolls. When Swanilda puts them in motion all at once, the atmosphere is both chaotic and funny. What a delight for Romantic audiences to see the mechanized contraptions, advances of technology, go awry! It brought back the human element to an age that imprisoned much of society in dreary factories that belched black smoke and forced child labor. In effect, it represented a sort of human triumph over machines. The librettists knew audiences would appreciate seeing humans control machines, instead of the other way around, and they also set about to soften the old Coppélius. While Hoffmann's Coppélius was suspected of practicing alchemy and black magic, the librettists believed that such an evil character would be out of place in a comic approach. Therefore, they turned him into a bumbling old alchemist/magician.

A basis of reality lies behind Coppélius' theatrical magic regarding the tools used, the type of magic employed, and the nature of the spell. Coppélius attempts magic of a darker nature in trying to steal Franz's life force/soul to give to his doll, Coppélia. He consults a huge old book for instructions on the procedure. Such books are called grimoires and are indispensable to witches, past or present. Modern day witch, Lady Sheba, defines a grimoire as "Witches' personal workbook, a book of spells." A grimoire is synonymous with "book of shadows." It is a recipe book of sorts containing a witch's collection of favorite spells, including instructions and ingredients needed, planetary information, and herbal lore. A witch's grimoire is very personal and secret. Often its contents were, and still are, written in
Runes, "the magical, sacred alphabet of the witches." Similarly, herbs mentioned in spells frequently enjoy other more grotesque names to mislead the reader should the book of shadows fall into the wrong hands. Actually, such horrifying ingredients as "tongue of dog," "bloody fingers," "blood," and "eyes" are all benign, being, respectively, hound's tongue herb, foxglove, sap from an elder tree, and any one of a group of plants resembling an eye, such as daisy, aster, camomile, or even eyebright. Unfortunately, the old Coppelius does not reveal what ingredients he slips into Franz's cup to free his soul, but one can safely assume the magical solution is plant-based, and it probably does more than just put the young man to sleep.

Further, the old alchemist/magician's magic is based on the universal law of "Like Unto Like," or "That Like Produces Like," also known as "the Law of Similarity." In other words, when a witch makes a poppet (doll) or clay or waxen image of someone, that figure "becomes" that person through representational elements on the figure. The elements must be like that person, or must have once belonged to that person, such as nail clippings or hair. In this way, contact is important in the transference of "being" from person to poppet. One can apply this idea of sympathetic magic to Coppélus' attempt to make his doll human by snatching something that is in contact with a human: Franz's soul. He made her look like a human; he needs to make her act like a human.

A modern witch called Starhawk gives us a clue as to what mysterious incantation Coppélus utters as he performs the spell. The words may closely resemble those of a spell entitled "Healing Image
Spell," found in her book, _The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess_. She tells the reader not to "represent the problem" when creating the poppet, but to "create the image of the solution," instructing:

... Say, "Blessed be, thou creature made by art. By art made, by art changed. Thou art not wax (cloth, wood, etc.) but flesh and blood. I name thee ______ (name the person you wish to heal). [In Coppelius' case, the person he wishes to create.] Thou are s/he, between the worlds, in all the worlds. Blessed be."\(^{18}\)

Her spell continues, telling the reader to breathe on the doll and charge it with energy. The performer of the spell must visualize the desired result (healing, or for Coppélia, humanness).\(^{19}\) Even so, one wonders what would happen to Franz had Coppelius been successful. He thinks he has the power of life and death over his doll and Franz.

In response to the burgomaster's question, Swanilda employs magical divination in trying to forecast whether or not she will marry Franz. She takes an ear of wheat (some versions say an ear of corn), and shakes it near her ear. If she hears something, her lover is true and his love real, but if it is silent, his love is false. Old magical herbal lore is revealing regarding the inclusion of this ancient witch custom. For example, corn is associated with the feminine gender. All plants are either male or female, according to witches. The planet, Venus, and the element, earth, are also feminine and are associated with corn. Corn's powers rest in protection (from Coppelius?), luck (in love?), and divination. Corn also enjoys a connection with fertility through the "Corn Mother, or Goddess ... a deity of plenty and of fertility, long worshipped throughout the East and North America."\(^{20}\)
Similarly, wheat is associated with the same gender, planet, and element as corn. Like corn, it is associated with fertility; it is a symbol of fruitfulness. According to Cunningham, wheat is sometimes eaten or carried to promote fertility and conception. Wheat is also associated with money. Carrying sheaves of wheat or placing them in the home is supposed to attract money.\textsuperscript{21} Swanilda did attract money in the form of a dowry. Also, the wheat did rattle, forcasting Franz's eventual true love.

The motif of eyes remains important in both Hoffmann's story and the ballet's libretto. Hoffmann speaks of the Sandman throwing sand into the eyes of naughty children. Their eyes fall out, only to be gathered up and taken to his children to eat as treats. The eyes of doll, Olimpia, are fixed and lifeless. When she is torn apart by Coppola and Spalanzani during their violent argument, her eyes fall out and roll into Spalanzani's blood on the floor. Coppola sells Nathanael a telescope so he can view the beautiful Olimpia. The motif of seeing/eyes remains highlighted in the ballet's title: \textit{Coppélia, Or The Girl with the Enamel Eyes}. Here again, the fickle male lover has unseeing eyes, like the doll's, because he cannot distinguish between life and imitation of life. Hence, both Nathanael and Franz share the same problem.

Thus, approximately fifty-five years after \textit{Der Sandmann}, two ballet librettists gave Hoffmann's dark story a lighter touch. Their \textit{Coppélia} retained the mystery, motif, and magic, and became the best-known comic ballet of the Romantic era.
Seven years later, in 1877, a different ballet, *Swan Lake*, found its way to the stage, this time at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. Unlike the ballets examined thus far, this well-known work has enjoyed quite a number of variations. The original libretto was co-authored by Vladimir Petrovich Begichev and Vasily Fedorovich Geltser. The former was an author of comedies and vaudeville stage shows, an actor, and court official responsible for many useful theatre regulations. The second was a leading ballet dancer and mime at the Bolshoi Theatre and *régisseur général* to the Moscow ballet company. A paraphrased summary of their original scenario, taken from *Teatral'naya gazeta*, c, dated October 19, 1876, appears in Appendix E of this study. A Moscow printer, I.I. Smirnov, issued a second edition of 1,200 copies in time for performances. Cyril W. Beaumont, dance historian/scholar and author of *The Ballet Called Swan Lake*, finds the "whole tone of the [original] libretto" to be "inconsistent with what would be expected of the authors," being "almost crude in its artless dialogue." He believes some of its ironically flavored speeches and incidents are incompatible with "the accepted demeanour of an important State official at this period." Yet, Beaumont believes that the idea of the ballet itself is charming and shows a cultured familiarity with swan-maiden myths in world literature. Since the ballet's scenario was printed and available for the general public before the ballet was performed, Beaumont surmises the extant account of the scenario was not truly the writing of Begichev and Geltser. Rather, it was probably written by a "hack engaged by an astute publisher for the purely commercial purpose of writing up the story of a ballet--whose
rehearsals he had been permitted to attend—which had received an unusual degree of advance publicity. . . .”

For this reason, it is difficult to establish the original libretto's date, but history records that Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky was invited to compose the ballet's music during June, 1875. In a letter to composer Rimsky Korsakov, he said he accepted the work "partly because I need the money and partly because I have long cherished a desire to try my hand at this type of music." Prior to Tchaikovsky's involvement, ballet music in Russia had been of poor quality due to strict guidelines imposed on official ballet composers, further strangled by imperial bureaucracy. The thirty-five year old composer poured himself into the work, creating some of ballet's most famous music.

The first production run of Swan Lake in 1877 failed. Tchaikovsky blamed his own work, but other factors played a decided part. The conductor considered the music revolutionary and pronounced it impossible to execute. The costumes and set decorations were disappointing; the choreography was indifferent; and the lead ballerina insisted on substituting part of Tchaikovsky's score with music from some of her past dancing successes. Balanchine quoted Anatole Chujoy from the April 1952 issue of Dance News:

The choreographer assigned to the ballet was Julius Reisinger, a hack ballet master who possessed neither the talent nor the taste to choreograph a work to the music of a major composer.

The ballerina, Pauline Karpakova, was a run-of-the-mill dancer past her bloom, who insisted upon interpolating sure-fire 'numbers' from other ballets in her repertoire to replace some of Tchaikovsky's music which she could not appreciate, understand or even count. The premiere of the ballet was to be a testimonial gala in her honor and she was not going to take any chances.
The ballet was revived three years later in 1880, this time with a different choreographer. Again, it was unsuccessful. Another mediocre attempt followed in 1882 with the same choreographer and managed to continue for a time, but this second try is hardly mentioned by historians.

Finally, Swan Lake was an immediate success at the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg in January, 1895, during the revival phase of Romantic ballet. With the magical touch of both choreographer Marius Ivanovich Petipa and especially his talented assistant, Leo Ivanvich Ivanov, the re-done ballet, although no longer a new story, drew favor and became the version now seen in the United States and Western Europe.31

Despite the ballet's eventual success in 1895, later librettists continued to toy with the plot. Their good intentions have not always been successful. For example, in 1920, the Bolshoi Theatre employed Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko, the directors of the Moscow Art Theatre, to work on a new production of Swan Lake. New movements in the theatre and the need for fresh ideas prompted the invitation. Several changes were introduced, and the original tragic ending as conceived by Tchaikovsky was restored. The new production failed to please the public, despite the high hopes placed on it, and it was withdrawn a year later. Its failure was attributed to a "lack of unity of conception between maître de ballet and decorative artist."32

Later, a different version of Swan Lake appeared in Russia. Choreographed by Agrippina Vaganova in 1933 (some sources say 1935),
this version was born out of a Soviet desire for reform and change in general. Based on the 1895 version, the Vaganova scenario provided some noteworthy changes. The action was no longer set in the days of chivalry, but moved forward in time to the 1830s at the suggestion of V.V. Dimitrev, the painter and set designer with whom she collaborated. The ballet was, after all, a product of the Romantic period, and the duo probably wanted to set it in a more recent past to help modernize it. Prince Siegfried remained German, but became a count who lives in an ancient castle. The whole plot was revised to correspond with the modernized concept. A dead swan brought in by some of Siegfried's friends prompts the young count and some uninvited friends to go hunting with muskets instead of crossbows. Later in the second act, the count gives a fancy-dress ball to which the guests come in medieval fashions. Von Rothbart is now Duke Rothbart who has brought his daughter, Odile, to meet the count. He is without money and hopes to marry his daughter off into a wealthy family. During the evening, Siegfried spots a mysterious girl in a swan outfit; she disappears upon his approach. Later, while he is dancing with Odile, he spots the swan girl again and leaves the ball to search for her . . . much to the amazement of his guests. In the third act, a wounded swan enters the lake area. She has been wounded by Rothbart, who had been hunting. Siegfried enters and takes the swan into his arms to tend her, but she dies. Distressed, the young man stabs himself and jumps off a cliff. His ball guests later find his body.\textsuperscript{33}

Although many other versions of \textit{Swan Lake}'s plot exist, the 1895 Petipa/Ivanov libretto is the best known. Often only Act II is
presented, which is complete in itself. The 1895 libretto was an attempt to improve upon the original story by tightening the plot and uncomplicating the main evil enchanter by making his gender consistent throughout. Instead of four acts, Petipa divided the action into three, and he altered details, such as having Odette and her friends the victims of an evil geni, bewitched and doomed to appear as swans during the day. Only at night near the ruins are they allowed to resume human form. The geni keeps watch over them by turning himself into an owl. Only the true and lasting love of a man will break the spell, but the man must never have proposed love previously to any woman. As Odette tells Siegfried her story, the owl flies nearby, changes into an evil geni, eavesdrops, and flies away. When the young man vows to kill the geni, she tells him the only way to undo the geni is to sacrifice his own life for hers. Siegfried agrees to give his life. As in the original libretto, the lovers agree to meet at the ball the following night, and Odette warns him of the evil tricks the geni might try, not to mention all the beautiful young women who may turn Siegfried's head even without magic. The prince, of course, swears his faithfulness. They bid each other farewell until the morrow, and Odette and her friends vanish into the ruins. With the approach of dawn, a flock of swans followed by an owl glides across the sky.

The second act opens and proceeds much like the original's Act III, with Siegfried's being tricked at the ball by Von Rothbart and Odile. The difference rests in the dramatic treatment of the enchanter characters, who simply vanish after revealing their deception in the 1895 version. The 1877 version featured a climactic on-the-spot
transformation of Von Rothbart into a demon, complete with the stage darkening and an owl hooting in the distance as the baron's ball clothes drop off to reveal demon's togs. By present-day evaluation, such spectacle seems rather humorous, but originally, the effect sought was one of horror and revulsion. Old photographs of Von Rothbart show a moustachioed villain in tights, cape, and horns.

The Petipa/Ivanov 1895 libretto opens Act III in the same way as the 1877 Begichev/Geltser libretto's Act IV, but the 1895 version softens the lovers at the end of the story. It is night and the swans await Odette's return to the ruins. When she returns with the distressing news about the deception at the ball, she tells her friends she would rather drown herself in the lake while still in human form than to go on living without Siegfried. The latter runs in and begs Odette's forgiveness. The geni disturbs this tender scene, but vanishes upon learning the prince swears to die with Odette, a double suicide. Odette, now more forgiving than in the 1877 version, embraces her lover one last time and rushes toward the cliff to jump into the lake. The evil geni, now an owl, flies around her in an attempt to change her back into a swan, but Siegfried hurries to her side, and together they cast themselves into the lake below. Thus, in the 1895 version, Siegfried does not "murder" Odette because they agree to end their lives together. With this ultimate, albeit sad, triumph of love over evil, the owl falls instantly dead. An apotheosis follows the final act, in which Odette and Siegfried voyage to eternal happiness in a small golden boat drawn by a swan wearing a golden crown on its head. 34
In the original 1877 libretto, Swan Lake's magic workers include Odette, Von Rothbart, and Odile. In that libretto (see Appendix E), Odette is the victim of her evil stepmother witch, who disguises herself as the owl, and later as the demon, Von Rothbart. It was a telling Victorian portrayal of a powerful woman. Feminine power that did not somehow help a male was distrusted, so even in the guise of a man, she was evil. Also, even though Odette's grandfather protects her, he is absent from the action onstage. Similarly, in the 1895 version, Odette, Von Rothbart (alias the evil geni), and Odile remain the main enchanter characters. The three characters in both libretti have striking similarities, with Odette and Odile basically unchanged from 1877 to 1895. Both women are young, beautiful, and swanlike, and both want the same young man. The similarity ends there, because their personalities are polar opposites. Odette is a victim, an innocent and powerless creature who inspires protection and love in Siegfried. Odile, on the other hand, is an evil cohort in Von Rothbart's wickedness, a deceptive but alluring creature who inspires false trust by knowingly assuming a crafted aura of innocence to lure Siegfried. Odette is passive, letting others act upon her, accepting the hopelessness of her situation. Odile is active, taking part in evil tasks designed to fatally darken Odette's chances for a brighter future. Odette's love for Siegfried is cautious but genuine. Odile's love is only an act. She toys with the facade of love because Odette and Siegfried are like playthings to be discarded once the amusement they provide becomes old. The contrast between Odette and Odile is an intriguing reflection of the Romantic notion of the feminine ideal. A
passive nature was valued more highly than an active one for a woman in real life, but her sensuality and innocence were traits men found absorbing. Nevertheless, traditionally, one ballerina assumed both roles when performing, a demanding feat both physically and mentally! Balanchine underlined the need for consummate dancing and acting skill: "To succeed in *Swan Lake* is to become overnight a ballerina."^35

In both versions of the plot, Von Rothbart possesses dual personalities: a demon and evil stepmother witch in the original 1877 libretto, and an evil magician/witch and geni in the 1895 libretto. To add to the confusion, the wicked enchanter sometimes assumed a third form, a huge owl, in both libretti. The transformation/treatment of this particular character is intriguing because the librettists never make it clear in either libretto just who Von Rothbart *really* is. Beaumont simply calls him an "evil enchanter . . . with the . . . power to assume diverse forms."^36 The confusion surrounding Von Rothbart's multiple forms could very well have contributed to the frequent failure of *Swan Lake*.

These considerations provoke yet another question: Who is the owl, and how does it fit into Von Rothbart's evil? Two answers are possible. First, the 1877 libretto refers to the evil stepmother witch as changing herself into the owl. The 1895 libretto also refers to the geni's doing likewise. A second possibility exists, however. *Odile* could also be the owl, for Beaumont writes:

> Odile, we are told, is the daughter of Rothbart the magician, but since he makes her assume the likeness of Odette, the expression "daughter" is more a convenient figure of speech for what is clearly a familiar spirit. That such was the authors' intention is corroborated by the fact
that Skalkovsky [a well-known critic of the time], describing a performance of *Swan Lake* at the Maryinsky Theatre in 1899, records that immediately after Siegfried asked Odile—believing her to be Odette—for her hand in marriage, the great hall went dark and Odile changed into an owl.

Odile, then, like the wraith of Giselle, when admitted to the evil sisterhood of wilis, is not a living woman, but a phantom, a chimera fashioned by black arts of which [Von Rothbart] is master. . . .

Witches have long kept familiars, or spirits in animal form, that acted as servants. Probably the best known witch's familiar or companion spirit was the cat, although the hare, snake, toad, and crow were other historical favorites. Since the owl was traditionally associated with evil and misfortune, as well as with wisdom, it would also seem a likely form for a familiar. Ancient Greeks considered it a bird of bad luck. In Persia, Great Britain, and Alsace, the owl was a messenger or bringer of death. While a few cultures had a kinder impression, many did not, and in Africa the owl was commonly associated with sorcery. In Madagascar, people called the souls of sorcerers "owls," and the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria believed owls were sent by wizards to kill people. Among American Indians, the views were mixed, but the Ojibwas believed evil spirits often took owl form. The Scottish thought seeing an owl during the day signified bad fortune and, according to Welsh tradition, an owl's hooting near houses predicted the loss of a maiden's virginity.

The notion of Odile as Von Rothbart's familiar is quite workable and not at all far-fetched. This writer remembers seeing a television performance of *Swan Lake* in which the ballet's choreography furthered the idea of Odile as a familiar: During the ballroom scene, Odile did not dance continuously with Siegfried, but seemed compelled
periodically to return to Von Rothbart as if trying to maintain and reinforce the strength of the enchantment over the young man. The choreography showed a mutual sort of control over Siegfried, a dual effort of magician/witch and his familiar.

The juxtaposition of owl to swan in the libretto is appropriate because their magical associations parallel the struggle between evil and good characters. While the owl has been regarded as a bird of evil, the swan has assumed a more benevolent role. People have long believed humans could be changed into swans. Aeschylus, the Greek playwright, was probably the first to mention swan maidens. In Ireland's County Mayo, natives believed that the souls of virtuous maidens actually inhabited swans, and to kill a swan would cause misfortune or even death. Yet, in neighboring Scotland, many believed if three swans flew together across the sky, disaster was sure to follow.⁴⁰ The Dakota Indians considered the swan a sacred bird that should never be killed. To them, seeing a single swan was an indication of coming death, because swans were always seen in pairs. If seen singly, the swan's mate had most likely died, and the bad luck would be transferred to the person who saw the swan. Further, in the animal kingdom, swans live a long time and remain strictly monogamous throughout their lives. According to superstition, swans always sing before they die. This has prompted reference to the "swan song," a term generally given to the last work of a composer or poet.⁴¹

Cyril Beaumont writes that the swan-maiden myth is "one of the oldest and most beautiful legends in the world, and it reappears in slightly different forms in the literatures of almost all countries, both
Occidental and Oriental." He cites several legends from which elements of Swan Lake seemed to have been taken. For example, he says both Russian and South German folklore contain numerous stories of huntsmen about to shoot a swan that suddenly changes into a beautiful maiden. Other familiar elements in the ballet's libretto, such as the lake's being formed from someone's tears and the wicked stepmother's jealousy of her child or children come from various legends. Beaumont writes, "... while no single one of them provides inspiration for the whole ballet, it can hardly be pure coincidence that so many dramatic scenes in the ballet are counterpart of similar episodes" in international folklore and literature.

The true roots of the exact story of Swan Lake will probably always remain a mystery. Some historians suspect the ballet's composer, Tchaikovsky, may have had some part in putting together the libretto. For his sister's children, he composed a simple little ballet entitled The Lake of the Swans during an 1871 summer holiday. Even though their adult memories revealed a discrepancy regarding dates, the children remembered their uncle's ballet and the huge wooden swans on which they rocked indoors. Also, the composer was a close family friend of Begichev, one of the librettists, and he even accompanied him and his stepson in 1868 on a trip through western Europe that included an excursion down the Rhine. Tchaikovsky and his artistic friends were probably all familiar with the swan legends. Johann Musaus' story about a lake of swans in an eighteenth century collection of fairy tales and Hans Christian Andersen's The Wild Swans could have also inspired the young composer. Andersen's story, for
example, is an interesting variation of the swan maiden story because instead of maidens held captive, eleven men suffer captivity in forced swan form under the watchful eye of their wicked stepmother.\textsuperscript{44}

George Balanchine recognized \textit{Swan Lake} as the most popular ballet of its genre, but he cited \textit{Coppélia}, also a Romantic decline ballet, as one of its chief rivals.\textsuperscript{45} When considering the storyline and character elements of both ballets, noteworthy points of contrast and comparison come to light. For example, \textit{Coppélia} contained three acts, while \textit{Swan Lake} in its original form had four. The Petipa/Ivanov version of 1895 reduced \textit{Swan Lake}'s acts to three before the ballet enjoyed real success. The zenith ballets, \textit{La Sylphide} and \textit{Giselle}, both contained only two acts. During the decline phase, \textit{Coppélia} and \textit{Swan Lake} required at least one more act to tell their stories. Perhaps having a fourth act was somehow too ponderous for a ballet and contributed to its failure prior to the intervention of Petipa and Ivanov. Their dual efforts succeeded where others had failed, for they compacted the plot so successfully that often only its Act II, complete in itself, was and still is presented. In addition, \textit{Swan Lake} contained more magic than \textit{Coppélia}. \textit{Coppélia}'s magic occurred in Act II only, while \textit{Swan Lake}'s magic ran throughout, from beginning to end (Act I-III in the 1895 version, and Act II-IV in the 1877 version).

Both are love stories that involve magic and the supernatural, but their similarities almost stop there. \textit{Coppélia}'s heroine is a peasant girl who falls in love with a peasant boy. The human lovers happily overcome the complications provided by a rather bumbling magic worker and marry at the ballet's end. \textit{Swan Lake}'s heroine is not
human, but the daughter of a good fairy. She is the magical Queen of the Swans who is allowed to assume human form only at certain hours of the night. Although she loves a human man, the relationship is hopelessly complicated by an evil magic worker and his familiar. The lovers die at the ballet's end, undoing the wicked magic, and achieve the freedom to love each other. Further, Coppélia's magic worker, Dr. Coppélius, is unsuccessful in his magical endeavors, and though embarrassed, remains alive at the ballet's close. The happy young lovers look forward to married life, and Coppélia ends on a lighthearted note. Swan Lake's magic workers force the young lovers to take their own lives, but in doing so, seal their own demise. The ballet's sad ending, however, does show the final triumph of love over evil as the dead lovers happily voyage in a small golden boat drawn by a swan wearing a golden crown on its head to eternal happiness in an apotheosis following the final act in the 1895 version. The unsuccessful 1877 Swan Lake lacks the triumphant apotheosis, and ends with the last sad song of a swan lingering in the heavy air as the lovers drown beneath the stormy waves. The evil magic worker, still alive, flies away. The final tableau shows a band of white swans gliding on a peaceful lake as the curtain closes. While both Swan Lake libretti end sadly, only the latter one provides a single ray of hope in the final, albeit posthumous, triumph of love over evil.

Coppélia's male love interest, Franz, and Swan Lake's Siegfried share many common traits and a few differences. Both are approximately the same age and, presumably, handsome. Both suffer, to different degrees, from a peculiar lack of perception: Franz falls in
love with a doll, Siegfried, a familiar spirit. Both men share an "I-can-conquer-anything" attitude that nearly undoes one and does undo the other. Finally, both men enjoy the devoted love of their romantic partners. The similarity ends there. Franz is happy-go-lucky; Siegfried grows increasingly serious. They differ in social class as well, probably an indication of the influence of Naturalism and the increasing importance of the lower classes. Franz is a peasant; Siegfried is a prince. Franz wavers from Swanilda because of momentary infatuation, while Siegfried wavers from Odette because of momentary mistaken identity. Thus, a possible difference in the depth of devotion of each young man toward his lover emerges. At the ballet's end, Franz lives and looks forward to married life with his loved one. Siegfried and his lover commit suicide.

Similarly, Coppélia's Swanilda and Swan Lake's Odette are both beautiful young maidens of approximately the same age. They share the same sharpness of perception and see the depth of their individual situations. Their methods of coping with circumstances, however, differ greatly. Swanilda is a spunky young woman who takes action and does not mind risk if it means getting Franz's love. Odette is a passive figure who fears the evil magic worker and hesitates to actively oppose her status as victim. In short, Swanilda is active in making sure she gets her man, while Odette is a passive victim of circumstances who depends on her man to rescue her. But Swanilda's personality and actions in the plot are not without a patriarchal slant. Because she is wise and insightful, her role becomes that of helper to a man, as have other knowledgeable women in literature. Having
rescued her lover, Swanilda looks forward to being rescued herself from spinsterhood, a most unfortunate fate by Romantic standards. Further, Swanilda is human; Odette is a magical creature, the daughter of a good fairy. She is also enchanted by a stronger magical force. Her world is vastly different from Swanilda's, and she definitely has more obstacles to overcome in all aspects of her brief life. She is magical, but ironically powerless.

A comparison of the magic workers in both ballets reveals that Dr. Coppélius is a human who practices magic, although not always successfully. Working alone with only the wonderful mechanical lifelike dolls he has created, the sour old man never embraces the evil of Swan Lake's sinister Von Rothbart. An evil magic worker whose accomplice was a wicked familiar spirit, Von Rothbart's magic is scarier than Dr. Coppélius' because it works. Von Rothbart is accomplished in his magic; Dr. Coppélius remains bumbling. The only thing they share is the likelihood that death will cancel their magical abilities.

Hence, Coppélia and Swan Lake are both love stories involving irresponsible, likeable young men in love with beautiful, devoted young maidens whose action in the plots reflects a patriarchal Romantic view of femininity. Their personalities, social positions, and circumstances are different, as are the magical influences in their lives. The happy ballet, Coppélia, succeeded during the decline period of the Romantic era. The sad ballet, Swan Lake, failed in its original (1877) form. But the unsuccessful ballet would not die completely and persisted into the revival phase of the Romantic period to enjoy the success it deserved. Apparently, the 1877 Swan Lake contained a good plot and absorbing
characters which Romantic audiences, because of their fascination with magic and the supernatural, would not abandon. Ironically, Swan Lake presently enjoys immense popularity internationally, albeit in various versions; and Coppelia, one of its chief rival ballets, remains today a delightful ballet solidly in the repertory of prestigious ballet companies.

ENDNOTES


2 Giuseppina Bozacchi's story is a sad one. Hailed as the next Carlotta Grisi and having enjoyed ovations from the audiences and huge success in her portrayal of Swanilda, the unfortunate sixteen year old died of fever, according to Balanchine, on the morning of her seventeenth birthday, only six months after her triumph in Coppélia. She was able to dance eighteen performances of the ballet before national emergency forced the theatre to close during the Franco-Prussian War. With Paris under siege, the young ballerina was one of thousands who perished from lack of food and warmth. Some sources say she died of small pox. Delibes, the composer of Coppélia's music, played the organ at her funeral.

3 Balanchine 95.


6 Kirstein 170.


8 Saint-Léon, letter 58, 111.

10 Saint-Léon, letter 60, 114-115.


12 Hoffmann 3.


14 Lady Sheba 19.


16 Lady Sheba 6.

17 Lady Sheba 7.


19 Starhawk 125-126.

20 Scott Cunningham, Cunningham's Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1985) 82-83.

21 Cunningham, Encyclopedia 220-222.


24 Beaumont 12.

25 Beaumont 12.


30 Balanchine 374-375.

31 Wilson 478-479.


33 Beaumont 144-145.

34 Beaumont 47-50.

35 Balanchine 361.

36 Beaumont 73.

37 Beaumont 70-71.


40 Zolar 344-345.


42 Beaumont 36-40.


44 Nugent 12-15.

45 Balanchine 362.
CHAPTER THREE
THE REVIVAL BALLET

In the 1850s, Romantic ballet went into decline, and stories about supernatural creatures had gone out of vogue. Public attention seemed pulled away from ballet and toward ballroom and polka dancing, the newly invented sewing machine, Paris fashion design, and the California gold rush. Innovative approaches in art and theatre also helped create a new artistic climate. Moreover, many of the ballet's brilliant creators and established ballerinas went into retirement or died. This situation was made worse by a lack of fresh creative talent. Many promising young ballerinas met their deaths early. Though Paris remained the cultural center of Europe, it no longer reigned as the ballet capital of the world. The spark of innovation seemed to have revived in Russia, ironically through the contributions of a traveling Frenchman. The genius and prodigious choreographic output of Frenchman Marius Petipa, who arrived in Russia in 1847, and his assistant, Lev Ivanov, caused Romantic ballet to find once again public favor, especially in St. Petersburg at the Maryinsky Theatre. A revival phase of Romantic ballet was born.

Both Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker epitomize that revival phase of the 1890s, prior to Diaghilev. The two ballets come from stories already known: La Belle au Bois Dormant, or The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood (1697) and E.T.A. Hoffmann's Nussknacker und Mausekönig, or Nutcracker and Mouse King (1816). Both ballets continue the focus on romantic love, but the latter does not do so quite as blatantly as its famous predecessors. Further, The Nutcracker's motif of a person falling in love with an inanimate doll or
toy seems to parallel Coppélia, which is also based on an E.T.A. Hoffmann story. The Nutcracker departs from other ballets treated in this study because the female love interest is prepubescent. But both Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker involve young females coming of age, a topic which suggests deeper, more subtle sexual undercurrents not seen in earlier ballets.

Most sources cite choreographer Marius Petipa and Ivan Aleksandrovich Vsevolozhsky as Sleeping Beauty's librettists. Vsevolozhsky (1835-1909) was a Russian diplomat, author, painter, and the director of the Russian Imperial Theatres from 1881 to 1909 (or to 1899, notes one source). G.B.L. Wilson, in his A Dictionary of Ballet (3rd edition), wrote that Vsevolozsky (Wilson's spelling variation of the name) not only "suggested the idea to Petipa that they should make The Sleeping Beauty ballet," inviting Tchaikovsky to write the music, but also "greatly influenced Petipa in his choice of subjects of ballets," adding that his costume designs were used in twenty-five ballets, including Sleeping Beauty. The ballet debuted in St. Petersburg at the Maryinsky Theatre on January 15, 1890. Sleeping Beauty remains, in the words of George Balanchine, "the highest achievement of the Russian Ballet." Unlike Swan Lake, Sleeping Beauty was neither restaged nor renewed for a long time after its initial run, even though its librettists took the risk of giving it four acts instead of three, the typical format of the time.

The ballet's libretto was taken from the French writer, Charles Perrault, who in 1697 published the story of the sleeping beauty as a part of his collection, Stories of Times Past, or Mother Goose Tales.
Some noteworthy differences, however, exist between Perrault's fairy tale and the ballet's libretto. The two stories begin in the same way, save for a few changes. The Lilac Fairy in the ballet is only a young nameless fairy in the tale. Similarly, Aurora is a nameless young princess who pricks her finger at age fifteen or sixteen in Perrault's story, not an Aurora at age twenty as in the ballet. Further, Perrault’s princess meets her unfortunate fate by climbing up to a little room at the top of a tower where a kindly old woman, who had never heard of the king’s anti-spindle proclamation, attempts, at the request of the young girl, to show her how to spin. The inevitable happens, then, in solitude with the old woman, not at a well-populated birthday party during a dance, as in the ballet.

The fairy tale continues with the arrival of the prince, also nameless, who awakens the girl seemingly with his mere presence. The story does not mention a kiss. The ballet's libretto ends there, with the immediately following wedding celebration. Only about half of the fairy tale is told. The Frenchman's story also contains amusing details, such as descriptions of everyone's gargantuan one hundred year hunger at a huge meal cooked immediately upon their awakening. In addition, just after the couple's wedding, they retire to the bedroom: "They had but very little sleep--the princess had no need of it." The next morning, the prince returns to the city and his parents, whom he keeps from knowing about his marriage. The prince continues to go hunting almost everyday as an excuse for going to see the princess. The prince's mother, however, suspects that he is married and begins to question him. By this time, the prince has been married
longer than two years and has fathered two children. The older, a
daughter, is called Morning, and the younger, a son who is better
looking than his sister, is named Day. The prince keeps his marriage
and fatherhood secret because his mother's ancestors had been ogres
who liked to eat children. When his father dies two years later, the
prince inherits his father's kingdom, making it necessary for him to
declare his marriage. The prince then brings his beautiful wife and
two children to live with him.

Not long afterward, the prince, hereafter referred to as the king,
has to go to war with the Emperor Contalabutte, his neighbor. He is
forced to leave the kingdom and the well-being of his wife and
children in the hands of his mother. Upon his departure, the ogress
queen sends the beautiful wife to a country house in the woods. She
keeps the children at the palace. When she requests her royal chef to
kill the children, now ages three and four, and prepare them as a meal
for her, the horrified man is able to fool the queen by preparing a
little lamb and a young kid instead. He hides the children with his
wife in a lodging in the courtyard. When the ogress queen next asks
the chef to kill and prepare the wife, the despairing chef confides in
the latter. Thinking her children have already been murdered and
eaten, the wife accepts her horrible fate anxiously. Instead, the chef
takes her to her children in the secret lodging and prepares a
substitute meat for the ogress queen who is again fooled.

By and by, the ogress queen grows hungry for fresh meat.
Walking in the courtyard one day, she hears the voices of the little
children she thought she had eaten. Enraged, she is determined to
execute everyone who has fooled her by throwing them into a large
tub filled with snakes, toads, and vipers. Fortunately, the absent king
arrives just in time to save everyone except his mother, who throws
herself into the tub instead, as she is afraid to explain her cruelty.
She is instantly devoured. The son is sorry because she is his
mother, but he finds comfort that his wife and two children remain
living. Presumably, they live happily ever after.11

One can readily see the differences between Perrault's fairy tale
and the Petipa/Vsevolozhsky libretto; however, stories of cradle curses
and sleeping through the ages date back to ancient Egypt. A story
written on Egyptian papyrus of the Twentieth Dynasty concerns a
childless king and queen who appeal to the gods. Their prayers
answered, the queen gives birth to a little boy. The Hathors (Egyptian
fairies), however, predict at his cradle that he would be killed by
either a serpent, crocodile, or a dog.12

_Anciennes Chroniques de Perceforest_, a fourteenth century story
printed in France in 1528, tells of three goddesses invited to the birth
celebration of the infant, Zellandine. One becomes angry because there
is no knife beside her plate. Her resulting curse on the infant is
much like _Sleeping Beauty_'s: Zellandine would push a distaff through
her finger while spinning, and she would sleep until it was pulled out.
The third goddess arranges for a rescue.13 Other stories, such as
_Little Briar Rose_ by the Brothers Grimm, continue the motif of the
protective wall of thorns and briars around the girl. This story
enjoys reference as the "closest companion" to Perrault's tale.14
The magic workers of Perrault's fairy tale include the uninvited evil old fairy, the young fairy who amends the curse, and six other benevolent fairies who present to the princess such gifts as beauty, the wit of an angel, grace, perfect dancing ability, a voice to sing like a nightingale, and perfect musical talent to play instruments. The gifts were valued female skills in the 19th century. A reflection of the times, they remained gifts of beauty because gifts of power could be used against men. Also, the ballet's libretto includes the evil Carabosse and the benevolent Lilac Fairy, as well as fairies Candide, Fleur de Farine, Violente, Canaries, and Breadcrumb. Their gifts, again nonthreatening to males, are: tenderness, playfulness, serenity, cleverness, and energy.15 The libretto adds the subordinate fairies, Diamond, Gold, Silver, and Sapphire, to dance at the wedding.

The two major fairies are Carabosse and the Lilac Fairy. Carabosse's troublesome curse initiates the story and gives it purpose. Her lack of an invitation only provides reason for her to exercise the evil for which she is already feared. Why she is evil in the first place is unclear because her past remains cloaked in mystery. Perhaps she is a member of the most tragic group of tutelary fairies (fairy guardians of one particular family or clan) who predict death, most often by screaming and/or wailing. The banshee, meaning "fairy woman," is the most famous example.16 Carabosse does not fit into the above group. More likely, she is a member of the "supernatural hag" family, a dangerous collection of fairies who enjoy doing evil at the slightest provocation. Carabosse's wickedness seems intrinsic, but a little jealousy of the beautiful infant loved by all would not be
unfathomable. After all, it is commonly accepted that evil is accompanied by some deep and basic unhappiness. Carabosse is not pretty, or even mediocre in appearance; her name further suggests it. Carabiné means "violent" in colloquial French, and bosse suggests "bump," "bruise," or "protuberance." Her name translated, "violent bump," hints broadly at Pimple, although the exact French word for the eruption is avoided. Her ugly facade reflects an ugly personality which manifests itself in ugly deeds. Surrounded by six ugly rats, the picture of horror and disgust becomes complete.

The Lilac Fairy, on the other hand, is the supreme fairy godmother, beautiful, wise, and protective. Named after the lilac plant, which is said to "drive away evil where it is planted or strewn," she, like the other gift-bearing fairies, is a tutelary fairy who watches over the infant princess and her family. As the rescuer and bringer of hope, she is the very opposite of Carabosse, who seeks to condemn and destroy. The Lilac Fairy redefines the evil prophesy, protects the family during their slumber, and later guides the prince to Aurora's bedside to break the evil spell once and for all.

Ted Andrews, author of Enchantment of the Faerie Realm: Communicate with Nature Spirits & Elementals, writes that much of our knowledge of the fairy realm comes from poetry, tales, stories, and song, with mystics, seers, and clairvoyants as additional sources. Regardless of the form taken, such accounts of fairies reflect "greater truths and awarenesses." Long ago, he says, humans and fairies worked together. Fairies in many different forms, often equal to humans in strength, power, and cunning, taught humans about such
things as lunar and solar cycles of planting crops. Eventually, humans began to tame the natural world, and the wilderness diminished as the land grew more populated. Humans stopped listening, and the fairies began to withdraw. This occurred especially with the rise of Christianity, which discouraged belief and recognition in other forms of life. Andrews writes that "many doors have closed:"

Some in the faerie realm have withdrawn entirely. They left with the woods. Some have adapted to human life. Others are to be found wherever nature is alive and active. Still others have gone deep underground. [Many fairies also live just under the ground's surface in "fairy mounds." ] There are still house sprites and brownies, and dark elves are often found in basements and attics. . . . Trolls can be seen occasionally in ditches and hanging from metal gratings and the underside of bridges. Where nature is freest and most wild, faeries and elves are most numerous.20

Andrews also writes that fairies have the power to make people see them as they want to be seen, as people expect them to look, or to be invisible. Fairies can also appear as animals, flowers, jewels, even humans.21 And like humans, fairies can be either good, evil, or somewhere in between. The origins of the word, fairy, are revealing. The original word for fairy was fay, which is believed to have derived from the Latin fata. The Fates, or Fata, were personified as supernatural women prophesying at the cradles of the newly-born. Used as both a noun and as an adjective, fay meant enchanted or bewitched. Fayerie referred to both an enchanted realm and a state of enchantment. Fays became fairies, because people confused the condition with the person.22 According to Katharine Briggs in her An Encyclopedia of Fairies, fairies can have children, reach old age, and eventually die. Some people believe they are elementals who return to
their source of fire, water, air, or earth when they die. Some fairies, such as Carabosse, spin and weave, often gaining fame for their work. Others are skilled in music and dance. According to Briggs, despite their paganism, fairies' appearance at Christian christenings seemed perfectly natural to the writers of fairytales. Perhaps they were recording old tales that had been handed down from generation to generation. After all, those earlier people had witnessed the blending and transformation of old pagan holidays and customs into Christian ones.

Both Carabosse and the Lilac Fairy use a wand to perform their magic. Modern witches also use wands which they make themselves. Their fairy wands are probably much like the wands of witches, constructed of various types of wood such as willow, hazel, oak, or elder. Regardless of the type of wood used, the wand is a rod endowed with magical abilities, a rod that helps focus the user's powers. Wands can be elaborate or simple in construction, but they always have some sort of magical symbols painted or carved on them to personalize and empower them.

The libretto's fairies enjoy the accompaniment of attendants or subordinate spirits. Some have genies; however, Carabosse's attendants are six large rats who also function as her pages and pullers of the wheelbarrow type wagon in which she travels. According to superstition, rats entering a house foretell the death of a family member. Appropriately, then, Carabosse's rats enter the palace, and the child's death is predicted through a curse. Further, after sadistically pulling out the hair of Catalabutte, the major-domo
responsible for forgetting to send her an invitation, the evil fairy feeds it to her rats. Aside from being cruel, this act is symbolic, for hair has, since ancient times, been believed to possess magical properties of its own. Delilah's cutting of Samson's hair in the Old Testament, causing him to lose his great strength, is a prime example of this tradition. Carabosse's painful de-hairing of the forgetful master of ceremonies is a type of castration and a public humiliation of the unfortunate man. She symbolically strips him of any latent magical abilities, as she strips him of male power.

In his *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, Bruno Bettelheim acknowledges the general agreement that myths and fairy tales "speak to us in the language of symbols representing unconscious content," and that in the tales' content, "inner psychological phenomena are given body in symbolic form." The *Sleeping Beauty*, and later *The Nutcracker*, contain sexually symbolic elements. In the former ballet, the long slumber of the young princess is symbolic of the time necessary before her sexual awakening. Nothing can rouse her sleep until the proper maturing has occurred. Another related motif suggests that waiting for sexual fulfillment does not lessen its beauty. Bettelheim further notes a pedagogical message in Perrault's story useful for contemporary youth: "The Sleeping Beauty' tells that a long period of quiescence, of contemplation, of concentration on the self, can and often does lead to highest achievement." Long ago, fifteen was frequently the age when menstruation began, and Perrault's princess enters her one hundred year sleep at
that very age. Even though the ballet libretto changed her age to twenty, the symbolism remained intact, for we must assume Aurora is still a virgin. Perrault’s princess enters puberty with the blood on her hand caused by the distaff, symbolic of the onset of the menses. Other elements of the story were also Freudian. The princess climbs a spiral staircase in the tower to reach the old spinning woman. Spiral staircases in dreams typically represent sexual experiences. When she reaches the top, she turns a key in a lock, symbolizing intercourse, and enters a small room where the old woman spins. A small locked room in dreams is often symbolic of female sexual organs. Phallic in appearance, the sexual connotations of the distaff are obvious; as soon as she touches it, her finger bleeds, and she falls asleep. Concerning the significance of female menstruation, Bettelheim writes:

In common language, referring also to its Biblical origin, menstruation is often called the "curse;" and it is a female's—-the fairy's—-curse that causes the bleeding. . . . Finally, the bleeding comes about through an encounter with an old woman, not a man; and according to the Bible, the curse is inherited by woman from woman.  

The ballet’s Aurora arrives at the same conclusion through a different set of circumstances. She, too, bleeds from pricking herself with a spinning instrument. But the rich symbolism of the spiral staircase, the small locked room, and the lock and key is missing. She falls asleep on the dance floor during her birthday celebration. Many people, including four suitors, witness the incident. Many suitors flee in fear, but probably fall victim to slumber as well, since they are not ready for sexual matters either. No one can reach the sleeping princess until her time of maturing is over. Bettelheim notes that it is
"a warning to child and parents that sexual arousal before mind and body are ready for it is very destructive." Upon gaining physical and emotional maturity, the child is ready for love and the accompanying sex and marriage. Only then does "that which had seemed impenetrable" (literally, the wall of thorns, or figuratively, the hymen tissue of the virgin) give way to allow the prince to enter. Naturally, proceeding onto the next stage of development requires that the young person no longer withdraw from the world. He or she must embrace life and its lessons instead. Thus, in both the fairy tale and the libretto, the prince awakens both the princess and her undeveloped womanhood. After all, as Bettelheim puts it, "Only if the maiden grows into a woman can life go on."

Two years later on December 17, 1892, at the Maryinsky Theatre, another ballet, The Nutcracker, premiéred, which also concerned a young girl's coming of age. The creative artists of The Sleeping Beauty (Vsevolozhsky, Petipa, and Tchaikovsky) again collaborated on the new ballet. Because The Sleeping Beauty had been so popular, Vsevolozhsky picked another fairytale to fashion into a ballet. He had received as a gift in 1882 a new Russian translation of E.T.A. Hoffmann's 1816 Nussknacker und Mausekönig (Nutcracker and Mouse King). He notified Petipa of his choice, but he instructed the choreographer to write the libretto (see Appendix G). Based on Alexandre Dumas, père's 1844 L'Histoire d'un Casse-Noisette (The History of a Nutcracker), a popular French version of the story, Petipa's first draft of the libretto was unsatisfactory, for it concluded with Clara's wandering in a dream into a large snow-covered forest.
Petipa later re-wrote the libretto rejected by Vsevolozhsky and ended it in the Kingdom of the Sweets with a series of *divertissements*. It was an ending reflecting the latest rage in Paris: the *feerie*, a showy and varied string of *divertissements*, or little dances unrelated to the main plotline. Nearly one hundred years later, Maurice Sendak, illustrator of Hoffmann's original Nutcracker story as translated by Ralph Manheim, pondered the reasoning behind using the Dumas version:

> When Vsevolojsky [a spelling variation] simplified the Dumas even further for the stage, it emerged at a dangerous distance from Hoffmann. Why, one wonders, did these men ever choose such an unlikely candidate in the first place? The original is too long and full of complicated digressions to have made a coherent ballet. But their version, familiar to audiences today, is smoothed out, bland, and utterly devoid not only of difficulties but of the weird, dark qualities that make it something of a masterpiece.

Tchaikovsky, understandably disappointed in the scenario, proceeded to compose a score that in overtone and erotic suggestion is happily closer to Hoffmann than Dumas.

The problem rests in the ballet's omission of Hoffmann's fantastic subplot, "The Story of the Hard Nut" (see Appendix H). The ballet's libretto opens and proceeds much like Hoffmann's story, but with such changes as Marie and Fritz Stahlbaum's being re-named Clara and Fritz Silberhaus in the ballet. The spelling of Drosselmeier in the story becomes Drosselmayer in the ballet. Both scenarios begin on Christmas eve with all the guests, their party preparations, and the appearance of the mysterious godfather. Hoffmann, however, sets the stage for "The Hard Nut Story" by having Marie accidentally break a window in the large toy cabinet during the Nutcracker's battle with the evil
seven-headed Mouse King (not always portrayed with seven heads in the ballet). As in the ballet's libretto, she saves the Nutcracker's life, but in the story, she has to stay in bed almost a week to recover from her cut and loss of blood from breaking the glass. During her recovery, Drosselmeier comes everyday to tell her "The Story of the Hard Nut," which the girl eventually realizes has been the story of Nutcracker and his battle with Madam Mouserinks and her son, the seven-headed Mouse King. Further, she realizes that her Nutcracker "could be none other than young Drosselmeier from Nuremberg, Godfather Drosselmeier's charming nephew, who unfortunately, had been transformed by Madam Mouserinks' magic."36 She also understands that the clockmaker in Pirlipat's father's court is none other than Judge Drosselmeier himself.

Unlike the ballet, which ends in the Kingdom of the Sweets, Hoffmann's dénouement begins with Marie awaking from her dream while pounding rock candy in the Land of the Sweets. She begins to rise up into silvery mists before she feels herself fall from an immense height into her bed. She imagines that she had fallen asleep in Marzipan Castle where the pages or princesses had carried her home and put her to bed. Marie's family insists she has had a beautiful dream, but the girl remains steadfast that her experiences have been real. When she shows them the seven crowns of the defeated Mouse King which Nutcracker had given to her, they gape in amazement. Still disbelieving, her father scolds her severely. During her tears of protest, Drosselmeier enters and explains that he had given her the little crowns that he used to wear on his watch chain for her second
birthday. Neither Dr. nor Mrs. Stahlbaum remembers a thing, but she is, nevertheless, forbidden to speak of the adventure again. One day, however, Judge Drosselmeier's nephew from Nuremberg comes to visit. He is a handsome young man who wears a magnificent red coat trimmed with gold, white silk stockings and slippers, and carries a jeweled little sword at his side. He is curled and powdered with a pigtail hanging down his back, and he presents Marie with all sorts of lovely toys and marzipan "including those that the King of the Mice had bitten to pieces." At the table, he even cracks nuts; the hardest ones give him no trouble. He cracks them by putting each into his mouth, then pulling his pigtail! After dinner, Marie blushes when the young Drosselmeier asks her to go with him to the glass cabinet in the parlor where he goes down on one knee and thanks her for saving his life on that very spot. He speaks of Pirlipat and of being a wooden nutcracker, and asks her to share his crown and kingdom where he reigns as king in Marzipan Castle. Marie agrees to the betrothal and engagement. In a year and a day, he calls for her in a golden carriage drawn by silver horses, and they wed. Hoffmann concludes his story with a brief description of the wedding, adding that "Marie is believed to be still the queen of a country where sparkling Christmas woods, transparent marzipan castles, in short, the most wonderful things, can be seen if you have the right sort of eyes for it."  

Judge Drosselmeier, the godfather of Clara/Marie and Fritz, is the main enchanter character in the ballet. The mysterious old clockmaker and inventor accomplishes the most wondrous things, such
as replacing the owl on the parlor wall clock and flapping his caftan as an owl would its wings. The allusion is appropriate since various cultures associate owls with sorcerers. In this case, however, the owl image suggests a benevolent sorcerer, rather than an evil one, as in *Swan Lake*. Drosselmeier's age remains a mystery as well. He tells his "Story of the Hard Nut" as if it had happened a long time ago and had pre-dated his own birth, but the time frame remains fuzzy. Perhaps he is older than a normal human being, and he may indeed possess a sorcerer's powers. His main method of enchanting his goddaughter, however, is his storytelling skill and his extraordinary ability to make fantasy indistinguishable from reality. This holds true in both Hoffmann's story and the ballet's libretto.

Magical associations regarding mice and rats exist. One superstition holds that if mice or rats enter one's home, a family member will die. If a mouse runs over a person, or if a mouse squeaks behind the bed of an invalid, death approaches. Rats, said to be governed by a "king rat," presage a building's collapse if they leave it. If a rat chews one's bedroom furniture, it is a sure sign of death. These beliefs possibly stem from the role of rats in the spread of the bubonic plague, which usually resulted in death. Rats' presence in a dwelling can also indicate unsanitary conditions conducive to other diseases. It is a well-known superstition that if mice or rats leave a ship or boat, the vessel will soon sink. One possible explanation for this mysterious behavior is rats, like other members of the animal kingdom, probably react instinctively to changing weather conditions.
Nuts are also associated with magic and a good deal of fertility lore and superstition. These dry, often edible, hard-shelled fruits were familiar gifts to newlyweds in ancient Roman times, and in France, wedding guests often threw nuts instead of rice at the bride and groom to insure fruitfulness. One old superstition holds that if one finds a nut with two kernels in a single shell, it is a very good omen. If one makes a wish while eating one of the kernels and tossing the other over the left shoulder, the wish will be granted. A definite parallel appears between the hard Krakatuk nut in Hoffmann's Hard Nut Story and the two-kernel nut superstition: Finding a two-kernel nut is extremely difficult, just as finding the Krakatuk nut in the story is nearly impossible . . . and eating the nut is instrumental to both the granting of the wish and the breaking of the evil spell on Princess Pirlipat.

Like The Sleeping Beauty, the story of the Nutcracker possesses sexual undertones, although they are fewer and more subtle. Hoffmann's Marie is seven years old at the beginning of his story, but by the end she becomes betrothed and subsequently marries the Nutcracker prince a year and a day later. Obviously, an undisclosed period of time covering the adolescent and puberty years transpires, and Marie grows up a bit in order to marry. Since the ballet's libretto amends the story's passage of time, Marie/Clara is portrayed as an older girl because the role necessitates the skill of an accomplished ballerina. A real child can not handle the dancing demands, so she is traditionally cast as a young girl coming of age. When the Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle re-vamped their old Nutcracker in 1983, the
artists involved decided on a more Hoffmannlike approach in storyline and design. Their Clara became a "prepubescent twelve-year-old, all nerves and curiosity devouring the world with her eyes and imagination, just awaking to her first wonderful, fearful, erotic sensations."\(^{43}\)

Both Hoffmann's story and the libretto contain subtly symbolic elements. The little Marie/Clara wants innocently to take the Nutcracker to bed with her after Fritz had broken his jaw and teeth. It is a protective request of a child, a request surprisingly denied by her father. Later, when she crashes her arm through the glass window of the cabinet in the parlor, she loses blood (a foreshadowing of menses to come later?) and has to recover in bed. During that time, she listens to "The Story of the Hard Nut," and she learns about the delights of the Land of the Sweets. The girl loves the Nutcracker, who is later transformed back into a handsome young prince who likes to crack nuts. At the end of the story, he marries her and takes her to the Land of the Sweets to live with him happily ever after. Could the Land of the Sweets be a synonym for sexual intercourse? One could, after all, construe both sweets and sex as a type of indulgence, and in some cases, even a taboo. The symbolism grows deeper when considering that the expression, "going a-nutting," indicated lovemaking in the genteel wording of years past.\(^{44}\)

The story of the Nutcracker remains very much alive to date, especially as a Christmas favorite. Even in the relatively isolated southern town of Natchez, Mississippi (where this writer currently lives), the Nutcracker story holds a particular fascination for its
residents. A local dancing school annually presents The Nutcracker, and local merchants find it profitable to sell Nutcracker souvenirs in their stores. The ballet has become a traditional Christmas offering all over the world, and it is not unusual to hear about various cities or companies giving the old standard a new twist. Cincinnati's Nutcracker is set in Old World Germany, but New Orleans' Nutcracker has a definite creole flavor. Some companies have entirely re-vamped the ballet. Ballet Chicago, for example, has a version of the Nutcracker for those who are only indifferent to the traditional ballet. Renamed In a Nutshell, it has a score by Duke Ellington. Even ABT (American Ballet Theatre) in New York City has a new production of Nutcracker which features a libretto by playwright Wendy Wasserstein and "an approach that emphasizes the power of a little girl's imagination and the journey she takes, rather than a dream she falls into." The company's artistic director and choreographer of the new Nutcracker, Kevin McKenzie, seeks, along with Wasserstein, more character development and attention to subtext, an actual (not dream) journey to the Land of the Sweets, and action set in Edwardian times. The new Nutcracker will even have a few performances at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City during the company's spring season, a departure from the ballet's Christmas ties.

Perhaps the most radical re-vamping of the Nutcracker ballet rests in the Mark Morris Dance Group's The Hard Nut. In an article entitled "Cracking Up" in December 1992's Vogue, The Hard Nut (which opened at Brussels' Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in January 1991) still uses the basic story, but furnishes a bizarre transformation. Although
Morris changed Clara's name back to Hoffmann's original Marie, the action is now set in a tacky and loud 1960s suburban house "where everything seems to have been bought at Kmart" and the party guests, "dressed in hip-huggers and push-'em-up bras, drink, fight, molest the maid, burst into tears, pass out, and do dirty dances to Tchaikovsky's beautiful 'Grandfather Dance.'" The family members have their problems, too: Marie's mother has a pill problem, Fritz is bratty to the point of being loathsome, and Louise, Marie's older sister (a "Morris addition, again from the Hoffmann tale"), is a teenager preoccupied with sex. Even the battle between the mice and the toy soldiers becomes a fight between some big hairy rats and a platoon of GI Joes. The "Waltz of the Snowflakes" sports men dancing in pointe shoes in what is normally an all-female corps. This radical Nutcracker by a sixteen-member modern dance troupe seeks to destroy the ballet's charm for the purpose of showing that there is "real terror in life, that to find love, you often have to love something ugly, and that when you do, you discover that the world, however ugly on its surface, is actually full of love."

Both The Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker have lived well beyond their creators' wildest dreams, and both love stories share similarities and differences. The Sleeping Beauty contains three acts and a prologue, sometimes construed as having four acts, while The Nutcracker contains only two acts. Both ballets involve young girls coming of age, and both possess subtle sexual undertones and symbolism. Ironically, both Aurora and Clara lose blood through accidents, are confined to their beds for awhile, and both are
"rescued" by a handsome young prince. Also, the quality of being inanimate figures in both scenarios with the sleeping Aurora and the wooden Nutcracker.

While The Sleeping Beauty's main enchanters are female fairies, The Nutcracker's magical figure is a mysterious male clockmaker/inventor/sorcerer. Although the Lilac Fairy is young and beautiful, Carabosse is old and ugly, as is Judge Drosselmeier (or Drosselmayer). Both Carabosse and Drosselmeier assume disguises, but in different ways. Carabosse becomes an old spinning woman, and Drosselmeier becomes the court clockmaker/inventor in a story he tells to Marie/Clara. Good triumphs over evil at the end of both stories. Carabosse's wicked magic is finally foiled, and the Nutcracker is restored to human form as Drosselmeier enjoys Clara's continued love.

The Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker, created by the same librettists and artists, were both drawn from master storytellers of previous times. Presented only two years apart, both ballets reflect the changing perspective of a world influenced by Queen Victoria and Sigmund Freud.

ENDNOTES

1 Carol Lee, An Introduction to Classical Ballet (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1983) 119-121.

2 In his Four Centuries of Ballet: Fifty Masterworks (New York: Dover, 1984, p. 174), Lincoln Kirstein notes that French playwright Eugène Scribe (1791-1861) wrote the book for a Sleeping Beauty ballet that was produced in Paris in 1829. This early version of Perrault's tale had choreography by Aumer and music by Ilhérol.


10 The ballet's original libretto used a variation of the name, Catalabutte, for the head master of ceremonies. But yet another variation, Cantalbutte, sometimes appears. Lincoln Kirstein included an interesting bit of trivia in his *Four Centuries of Ballet: Fifty Masterworks* (New York: Dover, 1984, p. 175), writing that the "pompous Grand Master of Ceremonies" in the ballet "served as an 'in' joke" because he "caricatured a well-known court servant" of the time.


14 Lang liii.


20 Andrews 7.

21 Andrews 22-23.

22 Cavendish 897.


26 Bettelheim, 36.

27 Bettelheim 226-231.

28 Bettelheim 232-233.

29 Bettelheim 233.

30 Bettelheim 233.

31 Bettelheim 234.


35 Hoffmann 41-59.

36 Hoffmann 60.
37 Hoffmann 98.
38 Hoffmann 99.
39 Zolar 281.
40 Zolar 248–249.
41 Zolar 304–305.
42 Zolar 274.
43 Maurice Sendak, illus., *E.T.A. Hoffmann: Nutcracker*, xii.
44 Zolar 274.
46 Reiter 28–29.
48 Acocella 266.
49 Acocella 266.
CHAPTER FOUR
SOCIOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Once the rising middle class embraced ballet and succeeded in pushing the worn-out mythological deities off the stage in the late 1700s, the Romantic movement gained strength. It seemed of all the arts, however, ballet had been left behind in its development and had an urgent need to catch up. Ballet had long had a close association with opera in France after composer Jean Baptiste Lully (1632-1687) developed a "native form of opera from court spectacle, of which ballet was an essential ingredient."1 Paris was the world's music capital during most of the 1800s, and many operas, such as Giacomo Meyerbeer's Robert Le Diable (1831), incorporated lengthy ballet scenes into their productions. Since opera also felt Romanticism's nudge, new stories about magical/supernatural creatures involved dancers as well as singers. The unearthly and supernatural combined successfully with the long overlooked ballet, whetting public appetite for something new and "began the cult of balletic supernaturalism."2

A number of elements coincided to strengthen the Romantic movement and finally nudge ballet to its zenith. For example, ballet training became "scientific," with classes that started with simple and controlled exercises and progressed to more complex and vigorous ones. This produced stronger dancers with better technique. A freer, lighter style of dancing called ballonée was thus born. This new strength encouraged choreographic advances and provoked experimentation that resulted both in the invention of new steps and pointe work, or dancing "on one's toes." Actually, pointe work existed prior to 1820, but did not find its full function until ballerina Marie
Taglioni danced in darned-toe slippers her teacher/choreographer father, Filippo, had prepared for her performance in the opera, *Robert le Diable*. So convincing was the effect of weightlessness, her next role as the Sylph in *La Sylphide* sealed her triumph in the ballet world and secured the longevity of dancing on *p*ointe, a practice now entrenched in ballet training.³ In Clive Barnes' article "The Point of Pointes," he wonders what ballet would be like if the *pointe* shoe had never been invented. Although men were technically able to dance on *pointe*, the shoe's effect produced such a feminine quality of lightness to the dancing that its emergence forced the male dancer into the shadows. For the first time, supernatural and magical creatures could move "weightlessly" across the stage and in much different ways from how normal human beings would move. Calling Romanticism and *pointe* work a "marriage made in Nirvana," Barnes views the innovation as the essence of Romanticism, because as the elusive ideal chased by a "clod-hopping male," a mobile woman on tiptoe becomes the "very paradigm of nineteenth-century romantic love."⁴ Those elusive feminine creatures on tiptoe were real women who had merely stuffed a bit of wadding into the toe of a ballet slipper with a little darning outside to improve the grip on the floor. They danced on *pointe* without any other support, writes Jack Anderson, dance historian and critic for the *New York Times*, "as any well-schooled dancer should be able to do."⁵ The irony is that the reinforced toe was no "magic gimmick," but "merely an aid to dancing."⁶ Anderson points out, "The real secret of toe dancing lies not in the shoe, but in the ballerina's properly trained body."⁷
Although some good male dancers, such as Jules Perrot, graced the stage, most spent their talent merely portering ballerinas around the floor. Sometimes the unfortunate danseurs were even scorned and ignored by critics of the period. The journalist, poet, and primary promoter of Romantic ballet, Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), said, "... a male dancer is something monstrous and indecent which we cannot conceive," and added, "Strength is the only grace permissible to men." Thus, fewer males entered the professional ballet schools, and many "established" male performers were forced to expand into other facets of the profession, becoming teachers and choreographers. Just as actresses of the period performed in breeches roles, ballerinas danced en travesti, filling in vacant male roles because the audiences idolized female dancers. But, male dancers were not completely squashed; their genius provided the ballerina new teaching methods and innovative choreography. According to Barnes, the male has "learned to fight back," but not with "complete success" because the speed and ethereality the pointe shoe offers the ballerina has become indispensable.

Other important costume innovations occurred during the period. With La Sylphide, a new costume for female dancers, the Romantic tutu, replaced the Neoclassical tunics previously worn. It had a billowy long white diaphanous skirt that hung like a great bell. The tight bodice molded the bosom and left the arms, neck, and shoulders bare. The white costume became so prevalent in Romantic ballets, the term, ballet-blanc, originated to describe those ballets typical of the period in which the stage appeared white due to so many white-clad
ballets. Further, Maillot, the designer at the Paris Opéra, invented the first tights, or coverings which dancers wore on the legs.

In addition to costume innovations and "balletic plots [that stressed] magic," writes Anderson, "the theatre itself became a magical place thanks to new developments in stagecraft." The introduction of gas lighting in the theatres made possible more scenic effects because the intensity of the light could be varied. Lights could be darkened in the house for the first time during performances. In the previous century, both the stage and house had been lit by hundreds of candles. Moreover, during this time, drawing the house curtain to hide scene changes became standard practice. This added an element of surprise and mystery to the production. Other production techniques popular in the theatre found their way to ballet's stage, such as traps (used, when Giselle rises from her grave) and flying (which enabled the sylphs to appear even more ethereal). New rules forced boisterous audience members off the stage and into seating in the house. The practice helped to distance, literally, real life from fantasy, paradoxically furthering spectators' acceptance of the fantasy, or willing suspension of disbelief.

Composers of ballet music took it to higher levels of complexity. Prior to the Romantic period, few great composers had interest in ballet. Composer Adolphe Adam's Giselle contains recurring themes so linked with movement motifs that choreography was permitted to become for the first time the primary means of telling the story, without the use of formal pantomime. Lee explains:
Rather a compositional device, termed the *leitmotiv*, was introduced whereby various ballet steps and gestural motifs uniquely associated with each role corresponded to matching musical themes. As the ballet progressed, these movement motifs and musical themes accumulated and served to act as aural and visual reminders of the characters passing from one situation to the next. In this way, *Giselle* perfectly expressed a story through the dancing itself while its musical structure underscored and reflected the meaning inherent in the choreography.¹⁶

The period brought forth an exceptional number of talented composers, choreographers, librettists, dancers, and other artists who helped shape Romantic ballet. Never before had the extraordinary contributions of so many creative and innovative geniuses come together at one time. They were promoted with gusto and flourish by the articulate and respected dramatic critic, Théophile Gautier. Walter Sorell, author of *Dance in Its Time: The Emergence of an Art Form*, calls him a "feuilletonist who jotted down thoughts and impressions, vignettes of life, literary evaluations, and critical reactions," but he also notes that while Gautier wrote "journalistic trifles" in haste, he did produce "some outstanding criticism of literary significance."¹⁷ Although credited with establishing the prominence of the ballerina, Gautier wrote critiques on burlesque, opera, circus, pantomime, fairy plays, comedy, and drama for two years before writing about ballet. At first, he possessed little knowledge of dance technique, calling the turned-out legs and feet of dancers an "abominable" position, and poked fun at basic positions and figures.¹⁸ But Gautier came to love ballet, even creating libretti and scenarios to be dramatized and danced. His knowledge of music was limited, as was his knowledge of set design and decor, although he wrote descriptions of ballerinas'
costumes in vivid detail. He often gushed with enthusiasm over a starring ballerina, passing over the main male dance lead. Called the "leading Romantic escapist," Gautier realized the "irrational" ballet could never recreate life because it required one's imagination and dreams to project an *image of life* on the stage; if art were ever to successfully reproduce *true* reality, art would disappear. Gautier wrote, "'[Romanticism] was a movement akin to the Renaissance. A sap of new life circulated impetuously. Everything sprouted, blossomed, burst out all at once. The air was intoxicating. We were mad with lyricism and art.'" He even fell in love with a famous Italian ballerina, Carlotta Grisi (1819-1899), who first danced the part of Giselle, which Gautier had created for her. She did not return his love, for she became the lover of the dancer/teacher, Perrot. Ironically, like the typical Romantic hero, Gautier sought the unattainable. He married her sister instead, but he died with Carlotta's name on his lips.

One can imagine the colorful Gautier wearing his bright rose-colored waistcoat while sitting in the audience. His looks were distinctively maverick for the period, for he sported long flowing hair in a time when men wore shorter styles. Gautier was, in Sorell's words, "always conscious of the desirability of mystery plus flesh, the esoteric and the realistic," and when he saw the beautiful Carlotta Grisi, both mystery and flesh were unified and reconciled. Like others, he recognized ballet's latent eroticism. When he visited Russia around 1856, he found an explosion of ballet enthusiasts, or *balletomanes*, who idolized the ballerina and shunned the *danseur*. 
In Russia, ballet had been an entertainment of the aristocracy, from Peter the Great to Catherine the Great in the 1700s. Those in power had long embraced ballet, often pulling the pretty daughters of serfs to dance for guests. The serf dancers were rarely paid, and sometimes a landowner would sell or donate the dancer to the government's imperial theatre. Influential gentlemen of the aristocracy were known for their interest in girls from the ballet. So, ballet was an established feudal institution in Russia, an entertainment for the elite. But even after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, no one considered the ballet an aristocratic art form, since dancers had always come from the lower social classes. People took great interest in the dancers' identities, however. The theatres in St. Petersburg and Moscow were sold out long in advance, with most of the seats occupied by the balletomanes who never missed a single performance of a favorite ballerina. The Russian balletomane was "quite a special species" of the Romantic period because of his "crazed" love of the dance. "Basically, he was a balletophile with maniacal propensities," Sorell writes, adding that the "latent erotic qualities" of the dance itself "cannot be erased from the balletomane's picture." Some devotees, Anderson writes, "candidly admitted that they attended performances to ogle the ladies of the ensemble." At the Paris Opéra, "fashionable men-about-town whose interest in ballet was something other than purely aesthetic" often occupied the loge infernal, a box so nicknamed for obvious reasons.

The balletomanes were capable of the astounding. Some of ballerina Fanny Elssler's fans drank champagne from her slipper, and
one admirer in Havana gave her a cigar box full of solid gold "cigars." Another balletomane bought a pair of Marie Taglioni's ballet slippers for two hundred rubles, only to have them cooked and served with a special sauce. They were the main dish at a gala dinner celebrating the ballerina's departure for France in March 1842.

Vladimir Telyakovskiy, the last director of the Imperial Theatre before the Revolution wrote in his 1924 *Vospominania (Reminiscences)*:

> New dancers were treated with special attention. . . . When one appeared on the stage, the balletomanes analyzed in detail her legs and feet (for size and form), shoulders, waist, her whole figure, her face, smile, manner of holding her arms, balance at the end of a pas [step], self-control, confidence. In short, everything was analyzed, evaluated in detail, and an oral record was made, on the basis of which the further career of the debutant was decided. . . . One can imagine what motives guided the selection of this or that girl. . . .

By 1880, balletomanes wielded ultra-conservative influences on politics and the arts (although the word, balletomania, was not introduced into the English language until 1934). They believed they controlled the ballet and resisted many artistic reforms.

An undeniable connection existed between balletomanes' lust for ballet/ballerinas and the sexual problems of the Romantic man. Romantic ballet made theatrical his passion to suffer for love. Thus, it demonstrated the male was willing to die for an "unattainable dream figure," but was hesitant to do so for the woman with whom he could go to bed. Sorell calls the Romantic male's "desire for the unattainable" hardly more than "a narcissistic dream that attempted to spiritualize his phallic pride." Women were idealized on the stage, and because men were willing to die for them, the women in the plots
were fatally attractive. Quite appropriately, the term, *femme fatale*, came into use during this period. Women in real life did not, however, enjoy this exalted status. Those seamstresses, laundresses, milliners, shopgirls, lacemakers, housekeepers, and nannies who wished to add a fantasy to their lives often found their way into the *corps de ballet*. There they could be adored on the stage by Romantic males whose tastes inclined toward the delicate and/or helpless type of woman because they desired to protect and patronize her. The pale, anemic woman who would probably die young was morbidly exciting. Her allure was greater if she could be identified as a loose woman, such as Marguerite Gautier, the courtesan in Alexandre Dumas fils' *Dame aux Camélias*.36

To the Romantics, it was fashionable to suffer from disease, to slowly waste away with consumption or chlorosis (iron-deficiency anemia). Consumption produced weakness and paleness, while chlorosis, which attacked mainly poor young women in the cities, caused the skin to become greenish or grayish-yellow. Weakness and menstrual disorders accompanied chlorosis. The Romantics equated a pale complexion with purity in love, and in his *Ars amatoria*, Ovid viewed it as a symbol of sexual passion. A severe heart condition often accompanied the illness, placing *Giselle*’s heroine among those fashionably doomed.37

Romantic men wanted simultaneously to protect and exploit women. The small salary earned by the young dancers in the *corps de ballet* was often augmented by a lover, paramour, or protector. In Paris, *Le Jockey-Club*, a well-known gentlemen’s establishment whose
members often attended the ballet, was a favorite rendezvous place for
dancers of the Paris Opéra Ballet and the men to whom they gave
sexual favors. During the second half of the 1800s, the suffragette
movement dedicated to the emancipation of women gained strength in
spite of Queen Victoria's adamant position against it. The Romantic
ballerina played a part in freeing women. Sorell, citing the Willis in
*Giselle*, wrote, "Is not the female, in whatever shape, who fights the
male or takes revenge upon him a natural reversion of Romanticism in
extremis?" In addition to *Giselle*’s Myrtha, at least one female
character in each ballet examined in this study also flexed her muscles
or attempted revenge against some male character(s): Old Madge in *La
Sylphide*, Swanilda in *Coppélia*, Odile in *Swan Lake*, Carabosse in
*Sleeping Beauty*, and Clara in *The Nutcracker*.

Years passed before female performers enjoyed some of the same
rights as their performing brothers, but the Romantic ballerina did
help reverse their status. The price they paid included notoriety and
intrusions of privacy, albeit some ballerinas enjoyed the fame.
Manipulated by balletomanes, male choreographers, and critics, the
Romantic ballerina eventually found both fulfillment as a creative artist
and artistic freedom at the turn of the century. Years later, George
Balanchine, a Russian dancer who has been hailed as the most
influential ballet choreographer of the twentieth century, wrote, "In
ballet, woman is first. Everywhere else man is first. But in ballet, it's
the woman. All my life I have dedicated my art to her."

Beauty was a quality assigned to women, and all females strove
to fit that ideal. Males, however, dictated the perimeters of ideal
beauty in the press, from the pulpit, and in the writings of philosophers and poets. "It is a woman's business to be beautiful," an 1852 issue of *Godey's Lady's Book* declared, adding, "Beauty of some kind is so much the attribute of the sex, that a woman can hardly be said to feel herself a woman who has not, at one time of her life, at all events, felt herself to be fair." Dancing on the toes furthered an aura of beauty and helped create an "essence of fragile feminity [sic]."

Ballerinas of that time were not victims of severe dieting, anorexia, and bulimia as many present-day dancers are. Actually, the thin ballerina body was not sought until ballet came under Balanchine's influence. Balanchine came to the United States in 1933, co-founded with Lincoln Kirstein the School of American Ballet in 1934, and co-founded the New York City Ballet in 1948. During that time, he considered the ideal ballerina body to be long-legged, thin, and sleek. Ballerinas of the Romantic period, in contrast, were often heavy and curvaceous. Photography became a reality after 1837, and after 1840, ballet souvenir programs featured voluptuous ballerinas on their covers. Even Marie Taglioni, often called fragile and thin with arms too long for her body, was recorded as being "rounded to the very last degree of perfection."

The Romantics regarded women as closer to nature because of their recurring menstrual cycles and their feminine intuition. Long ago, Francis Bacon proposed that, "Intellect was masculine and Nature was feminine." Nature was full of mystery; women were full of mystery. It is only natural, then, that most of the enchanter
characters in the period's major ballets are women. In the six ballets examined in this study, only three major enchanter characters are men: Von Rothbart, Dr. Coppélius, and Drosselmayer. It is worth noting that their appearance comes during the decline and revival phases identified in this study, well after the heyday of Romantic ballet. In contrast, eight major enchanter characters are women: the Sylphide, Old Madge, Giselle, Myrtha, Odette, Odile, the Lilac Fairy, and Carabosse. Of those eight, all are beautiful, except for Old Madge and Carabosse, who are depicted as mean and ugly hags. The male magicians, Dr. Coppélius and Drosselmayer, do not display masculine beauty. Both are eccentric in appearance, with the first bumbling and caricatured, and the second sporting an owl-like face. Von Rothbart comes the closest to being handsome, but tends to be scary and demonic. The male enchanters, like the female hag enchanters are either parodied or portrayed as extremely evil. The treatment/depiction of the major enchanter characters above suggests that those six major Romantic ballets did encourage the notion in their libretti that women were the true possessors of beauty.

A dichotomy of woman as seductive versus virginal/motherly perplexed the Romantic male, who stood fascinated by both her sexual and spiritual sides. Gautier, too, noticed this, and in his writings called Marie Taglioni a "Christian dancer," deeming her a "dancer for women," while calling her rival, Fanny Elssler, a "pagan dancer," a "dancer for men." It seemed that by the late 1800s, the seductress view gained momentum and became dominant as Western art increasingly displayed women as sensual. Victorian prudery was on
the decline, and feminism was emerging. The idea of woman as innately
good gave way to the notion of woman using her physical beauty to
attract men, that having beauty meant having power.\textsuperscript{49} The most
powerful female enchanter characters who seek to attract men in the
ballets examined, Myrtha and Odile, are also beautiful, if coldly so.
And they are both set in direct contrast to other beautiful, but
relatively powerless female enchanter characters, Giselle and Odette.
The battle between the "good girl" and the "bad girl" image of women
found its way into Romantic ballet, with some intriguing possibilities.
The powerless "good girls," Giselle and Odette, both die and find
eternal peace in their respective plots. Both are rewarded in heavenly
terms. The powerful "bad girls," Myrtha and Odile, are left to carry
on their evil, without heavenly reward or peace. In other words, they
pay a price for having power. It must also be noted that Myrtha, who
had been jilted just before her wedding day, operates out of a general
hatred of men; Odile operates under the direction of a man, Von
Rothbart. Further, Myrtha and Odile appear in two different phases of
the Romantic period, the zenith and decline phases, respectively, which
colors their methods of doing their evil. The cold, uncompromising,
almost asexual Myrtha simply dances men into exhaustion and dumps
them into a lake to drown. Odile, on the other hand, resembles more
the Salome-type woman, the seductress, popular in the latter 1800s.
Odile, unlike the pristine Myrtha, toys and flirts seductively with her
victim. The ballets' libretti were written by men, and the treatment of
those four female enchanters reflects the stance of a Romantic society
in which not beautiful women, but men, held the real power. The
notion that women could be powerful, whether through beauty or otherwise, was only a facade because laws often viewed women as "property" of fathers and husbands. The rigid morality of a patriarchal society created a double standard and made Victorian women chattel, "powerless—personally, politically, sexually, and financially."50

In real life, women pursued beauty as a means to acquire power. In other words, they used beauty to attract wealthy suitors/husbands who already possessed power. Lois W. Banner, author of American Beauty: A Social History . . . Through Two Centuries . . . Of the American Idea, Ideal, and Image of the Beautiful Woman, calls it a "Cinderella mythology" and writes, "Young men in business dreamed of rising to the top through entrepreneurial skill. Young working women dreamed of marrying the boss's son."51

Women suffered torment in an effort to be appealing to men. Dieting became the norm because it was not stylish for a woman to eat as if she had an appetite. Many doctors of the period believed the woman's digestive system was too delicate to accept anything but toast, a bit of chicken or bouillon, and tea. The hellish corset gripped women's middles, helping females not only appear, but also be frail, as the contraption often caused headaches, fainting spells, uterine disorders, and spinal problems. To appear even more delicate, women dressed in light dresses and short sleeves with only a shawl for covering, even in bad weather. They shunned rubber boots and waterproof cloaks for kid slippers and thin silk, even in snowy northern winters. To dress in heavier woolens or flannels was to be
unladylike. As if all of those prescriptions for beauty were not enough, precise instructions told women to move and gesture slowly, gracefully, and in curves, for to walk across a room in a straight line instead of a curve was against the dictates of beauty. Nor were women allowed to hold their mouths in a relaxed, normal position because the "bee-stung" mouth was the correct position for proper young ladies. The beautiful woman, therefore, was supposed to look as if she had just finished saying a string of words beginning with the letter, p. Photographers instructed their feminine subjects to say words such as peas, prunes, and prisms, instead of cheese. On a humorous note, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a suffragist leader of the day, "commented that she did not bother to give feminist literature to any woman who had the 'prunes and prisms' expression on her face."52

Doctors and other members of the scientific community believed women were the weaker sex, based on their shorter height, lighter weight, and smaller cranial measurements. Because their physiological processes of puberty, menstruation, childbirth, and menopause were considered draining, only rest could restore the gender's delicate energy level. All of those mistaken medical assumptions did indeed keep women the weaker sex. Banner writes that American women were "prey to gynecological ailments that doctors could not treat, to emotional disorders that were brought on by boring, powerless lives, to illnesses accentuated by a lack of exercise and physically damaging dress."53 European women suffered similarly from the patriarchal protection and dictates of men.
Romantic women had few options for gaining personal freedom and autonomy. With spiritualism came the associations with otherworldliness and spirits, which ballerinas depicted onstage. And like ballet, it provided a certain measure of power, equality, and freedom. After all, a woman who could summon spirits not only had power, but also "an attractive aura of mystery and drama that offered escape from the drab routine that might have been her lot." Female mediums earned the same scant pay as did male mediums, and a few found wealth and fame in spiritualism. Some men like writer Henry James linked spiritualism with feminism, condemning them both as threatening to the family and the natural order. Because many spiritualists believed in spiritual relationships as occupying a higher plane than earthly ones, they were often called home wreckers or worse. In truth, countless women were locked into burdensome or abusive marriages because divorce was socially unacceptable. Adultery for women was just a synonym for harlotry. Nevertheless, some female mediums were able to lecture on women's rights without too much offense because they, like Cora Richmond, possessed a virginal prettiness that men found captivating.

Nevertheless, the zenith phase gave way to the decline phase of Romantic ballet. According to Sorell, "Between 1848 and 1872 Gautier began to think there was something foul in the state of Romanticism." Cohen writes, "By around 1850 the romantic ballet had run its course in both Europe and America. The fashion for sylphs had faded, leaving ballerinas with pointe work and male dancers with nothing much to do." The Black Crook premièred in New York in 1866,
establishing the popularity of extravaganzas. Coppélia, a surviving ballet of that phase, incorporated dancing en travesti and portrayal of a doll come to life, for example.58

The decline phase witnessed changes happening everywhere, and though Paris was still the cultural center of Europe, public attention seemed pulled away from ballet. Napoleon III (1808-1873) was emperor of France from 1852 to 1870, and during that time, Paris witnessed a number of innovations. French fashion designs became "inhibiting and oppressive" due to wide pagoda sleeves and bone or metal crinolines and hoops that made skirts "almost grotesque in their width."59 When American inventor Isaac Merrit Singer patented his sewing machine in 1851, clothes soon became excessively decorated, pleated, puffed, braided, and tucked in a fashion symbolic of the period's mentality. Other innovations included the introduction of the immensely popular polka and the renewed interest in ballroom dancing in general. The piano became the favorite instrument of the nineteenth century, and slightly past mid-century, Impressionism and post-Impressionism found favor in the visual arts. In America, the California gold rush lured many Europeans to seek their fortunes, as bridges, tunnels, and miles of railroad tracks were moving across the young country.60

The decline of Romanticism and the advent of Realism in the theatre was represented by Norway's Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) who began publishing his dramas in 1850, writing twenty-five plays by 1899. In France, Naturalism, a new movement in theatre, was given voice through its primary spokesman, Émile Zola (1840-1902). In 1887, André Antoine (1858-1943) started his Théâtre Libre ("Free Theatre")
which was exempt from censorship because it was open only to members. There, he staged new, often naturalistic and controversial plays. In his aims for authenticity on the stage, Antoine "sought to reproduce environment in every detail" and was noted for his use of natural articles in set designs, such as the real beef carcasses displayed for The Butchers (1888). Theatre historian Oscar G. Brockett notes that Germany repeated the pattern that emerged in France. The Freie Bühne ("Free Stage") formed in Berlin in 1889 and took its inspiration from the Théâtre Libre. The Freie Bühne "stimulated the formation of several other stage societies in Germany" which helped "pave the way for a new drama." Modeled on both the Théâtre Libre and the Freie Bühne, England's Independent Theatre followed in 1891. Theatre was undergoing changes that pushed the arts, including ballet, away from the excesses of Romanticism and toward a reality that accorded with the natural world.

Several factors played a role in the demise of the zenith phase of Romantic ballet. Many of the ballet's brilliant creators went into retirement or died. A lack of fresh creative talent worsened their loss. No new ballets premiered to equal the quality of La Sylphide or Giselle. No new ballerinas could match the bravura of Taglioni, Elssler, Cerrito, Grisi, or Grahn. Lee notes the alarming number of promising young dancers, such as Coppélia's brilliant seventeen year old Giuseppina Bozzachi, who died in their prime from war, malnutrition, and/or disease. Fire, too, was a constant threat, because of the gas lighting in theatres; the hazard to performers was even greater for ballerinas wearing long Romantic tutus. Anderson writes that the tutus were
"dangerously flammable and many instances are recorded of dancers
dying in horrible stage accidents." Lee acknowledges that dancing
too near the gas jet at the edge of the stage "often played a part in
the paucity of stellar talent". Such was the fate of the gifted Clara
Webster (1821-1844) who was "destined to become a leading ballerina of
the Romantic era." Emma Livry (1842-1863), the protégé of Taglioni,
also died from her burns. Editors of The Encyclopedia of Dance &
Ballet, Mary Clarke and David Vaughan, write that her death "ended
the great days of romantic ballet; there was no ballerina of comparable
gifts to succeed her." Dance historian Selma Jeanne Cohen writes,
"Ballet in Western Europe went into a state of decline." Ivor Guest
seconds that opinion, writing that Livry's death signaled the collapse
of a great phase of ballet. At Livry's funeral, Gautier noticed white
butterflies fluttering above her coffin on its final journey, an
occurrence seemingly symbolic of the fragile, ethereal quality of
Romantic ballet and its preoccupation with the supernatural.

Other factors played a part in the demise of Romanticism. The
appearance of a new tantalizing talent, singer Jenny Lind, shifted
attention away from the flagging ballet. Box office receipts dwindled,
the ballerina cult no longer provided an impetus to attend the ballet,
and in overlooking the male danseur, ballet had severely limited itself.
This was, according to Lee, Romantic ballet's greatest flaw because the
"possibilities for developing and expanding the technical and creative
range of the dance" were ignored.

When Gautier visited Russia around 1856, he was impressed with
the quality of ballet at the Maryinsky Opera House. Noting that it
surpassed French ballet of the time, he found Russian balletomanes sophisticated, demanding ballets of several acts which involved dramatic plots with much dancing. He also found Russian dancers lacked the coquettishness, amorous glances, and giggling so prevalent in later French dancers. Gautier, whose passion for ballet's glory days never waned, died in 1872, before the revival of Romantic ballet.

Although Denmark continued Romantic ballet's lyrical quality with the work of the talented Danish dancer/choreographer/ballet master, August Bournonville, it was in Russia that Romanticism's revival phase became centered. In Italy, the operas of Rossini and Verdi were gaining favor over the repetitious ballet extravaganzas produced at La Scala. In London's music halls, the public sought titillation and amusement rather than elevation. In Russia, where ballet had originally existed as a court entertainment, it had received Imperial protection and support since 1738. Guest writes that because both the Maryinsky and Bolshoi Theatres were state theatres, unlimited funds were spent on ballet in Russia. In St. Petersburg, ballet enjoyed equal status with opera, and important ballets occupied a whole evening's programme. Guest observes that, "Elsewhere in Europe, what we now call the full-length ballet did not exist. Even if a ballet were divided into two or three acts, such as Giselle or Coppélia, it was always given with an opera." Thus, a benevolent artistic climate and state funding nurtured the developing Russian ballet. Also, foreign artists from Europe's dance centers were often employed as choreographers in Russia. Frenchman Marius Petipa was one of those, arriving in St. Petersburg in 1847 as premier danseur.
Under his eventual leadership, the Maryinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg became a "vital dance center while the rest of Europe witnessed a decline in the ballet." According to Lee, Petipa did not "[compromise] his artistic vision" in creating ballets which satisfied "the general theatrical taste of the times and still met the hearty approval of the keenest balletomanes." Petipa's works, in collaboration with his talented assistant, Lev Ivanov (1834–1901), are still revered in the present day. His magic-filled ballets continue to draw big audiences, and many companies consider his works sure-fire moneymakers.

Anderson acknowledges that Romantic ballets were "filled with magic." He writes that supernatural beings in ballets were "not necessarily treated only as quaint figures out of legend; they could also symbolize irrational psychic forces." When considering Romantics' preoccupations, he notes, "Certain works of this era could give psychologists and sociologists much to ponder." Carl Jung (1875–1961), a Swiss psychiatrist and founder of analytical psychology, acknowledged the existence of the paranormal and admitted his own belief in the unexplainable:

I know from my own experience, and that of other investigators, magic as practiced in the Middle Ages and much remoter times has by no means died out, but still flourishes. The life of the centuries lives on, and things that have accompanied human life from time immemorial continue to happen: premonitions, fore-knowledge, second sight, hauntings, ghosts, return of the dead, bewitchings, sorcery, magic spells. One doesn't speak of these things, however. They simply happen, and the intellectuals know nothing of them—for intellectuals know neither themselves nor people as they really are.
Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), an Austrian physician, neurologist, and founder of psychoanalysis, had previously rejected the entire subject, but later reconsidered and finally acknowledged the "factuality of occult phenomena." According to Scott Cunningham, magic, "the oldest science," comes "from the Earth itself, from the stars and celestial bodies and winds and rocks and trees; from flame and droplet of water and our own bodies, and to use the energies in all those things, to give them direction is "the 'science' of magic." People have practiced magic from time immemorial; they still do. Perhaps after a seemingly endless spell of cold logic and worn-out mythological deities, Romantics longed to find the inner child—as do many people in the present day:

In our search for the modern life, we no longer see with a child's eyes, and we scoff and laugh at those who do. In a world of technology and modern conveniences, we have grown insensitive to the nuances of nature. We build boundaries around our lives and shield ourselves from that which we do not understand. Though our lives may seem more safe and secure, they have also lost much wonder and joy.

More than any of the other performing arts, Romantic ballet was, for three primary reasons, a major vehicle for showing magic and the supernatural on the stage. First, since Romantics viewed women as mysterious creatures in themselves, close to nature and simultaneously sensual and spiritual, they were considered more delicately suited to portray magical and unearthly creatures. Second, with the invention of dancing on pointe, otherworldly creatures could, for the first time, be more clearly and definitely delineated from humans through movement alone. Ballet was the ideal vehicle to employ this technical
achievement because, unlike opera which used singing, or theatre which used the spoken word, ballets' stories were told primarily through movement. Third, since the lengthy ballets within operas used the period's finest dancers and choreographers, ballet was able to use opera as a spring board to boost its own previously lagging development. Ballet was, essentially, in the right place at the right time. All six of the ballets in this study utilize enchantment/magic as an impetus for the action, and their plots depend upon the enchanter characters to further the action.

The attitudes and influences of a changing society caused Romantic ballet to evolve. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution and advances in technology and science, new knowledge overwhelmed people in a relatively short period of time. The three phases of Romantic ballet reflect differing attempts to come to terms with those changes. People desired to return to nature and became fascinated with the mysterious. Those things were closely associated with femininity. The political and/or economic climate in Europe and Russia also affected sexual roles. With the Industrial Revolution, many European women found jobs in dreary sweatshops, a grim irony to the portrayal of women on the stage as glamorous or magical creatures. Russian women, especially the past victims of feudal serfdom, enjoyed a certain beauty that dancing on the stage offered, that working in the fields could not. Romantic ballet's phases seemed to move more toward Realism, with an increasing lack of reliance on the unattainable female. Unlike the sylphs and Wilis of the zenith phase, the young heroines of the revival ballets were human, neither ethereal nor magical. Perhaps
through women's increased numbers in the workplace, the suffragist movement, the theories of Freud, and the tension leading to the eventual breakdown of the Tsarist regime in Russia, women's humanity finally found its place on the stage. Studying the enchanters, their associated magic, and their treatment in the plots helps to illuminate the changes in each phase of Romantic ballet.

ENDNOTES


2 Clarke and Vaughan 261.


6 Anderson 66.

7 Anderson 66.


10 Barnes 146.


12 Lee 85.
13 Anderson 61-67.
14 Lee 92.
15 Cohen 67.
16 Lee 93.
17 Sorell 279.
18 Sorell 279.
19 Sorell 278-280.
20 Sorell 280.
21 Clarke and Vaughan 167.
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24 Sorell 211-215.
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39 Sorell 248-249.


43 Banner 63-64.

44 Sorell 287-288.

45 Banner 64.

46 Banner 11.


49 Banner 12-13.


51 Banner 14.

52 Banner 47-50.

53 Banner 50-51.

54 Constable 30.
55 Constable 30-31.

56 Sorell 280.

57 Cohen 70.

58 Cohen 70.


60 Sorell 280-284.


62 Brockett 546-552.

63 Brockett 546-554.

64 Anderson 70-71.

65 Lee 109-111.

66 Clarke and Vaughan 359.

67 Clarke and Vaughan 217-218.

68 Cohen 70.


70 Lee 109-110.

71 Lee 96.

72 Lee 113-119.


74 Lee 119-121.

75 Lee 121.
76 Anderson 61.

77 Anderson 61.

78 Anderson 61.


80 Myers 279.


CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION: TRANSITIONS AND TRENDS

Having analyzed the six major Romantic ballets and their enchanter characters, the historical and social climate surrounding them, and reasons why ballet was a major vehicle for satisfying the public's hunger for magic and the supernatural, this study concludes with an assessment of the trends and transitions of the zenith, decline, and revival phases. This final chapter will examine further how the Romantics' perceptions of magic, love, and women were closely tied, as illustrated by the treatment of the female magic workers and leading characters in the six ballets studied. Definite patterns emerged over time that reflected changes in the Romantic psyche.

One transition involved a change of location. Since Russia had always been behind the times in comparison to Europe and especially France, the flowering of Romantic ballet in Russia after almost everyone else had tired of it was not surprising. For example, both La Sylphide and Giselle in the zenith phase premièred at the Paris Opéra. During the decline phase, the move away from Paris and toward Russia became more apparent through the geographical locations of Coppélia's librettists. Nuitter wrote in Paris, but Saint-Léon collaborated from St. Petersburg. By the time the first unsuccessful Swan Lake appeared on the stage, the move to Russia was complete; the ballet premièred at Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre. The major Romantic ballets following, Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker, also originated in Russia, as products of St. Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre.

The sources of inspiration for the ballets' stories also changed over time, with adaptations gradually gaining preference over original
stories. *La Sylphide*'s inspiration in the zenith phase stemmed from both existing literature and an interest in witches and elementals, especially sylphs. *Giselle*, too, took its story from existing literature and old legends about vampires and ghosts. Steeped in magic and the supernatural, both ballets were original stories. The decline phase ballets' librettists continued to take their inspiration from existing literature, with a growing interest in adaptations. Despite the librettists' changes of making a dark story into a comedy, *Coppélia* was an adaptation of E.T.A. Hoffmann's 1815 *Der Sandmann*. Romantics were not ready, however, to embrace the adaptation, and *Swan Lake*, an original story, was inspired by swan maiden myths, folklore, fairy tales, and other existing literature. By the time the revival phase took hold, adaptations were popular. Both *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker* were adaptations of, respectively, Charles Perrault's well-known 1697 fairy tale and Alexandre Dumas, père's 1844 *L'Histoire d'un Casse-Noisette*, which was itself an adaptation of E.T.A. Hoffmann's 1816 *Nussknacker und Mausekönig*.

Another transition in the ballets involved the number of acts used to tell the story. Both zenith ballets had two acts, with the magic concentrated in the second. Both decline ballets added to the two-act form. *Coppélia* had three, and the original *Swan Lake* (1877) had four, later reduced to three in the successful 1895 version. The experimentation continued into the revival phase. *Sleeping Beauty* had three acts, including a prologue and an apotheosis; sometimes it was construed as having four acts. *The Nutcracker* had two acts and an apotheosis. Adaptations of existing stories, which began in the decline
phase, most likely necessitated using more than two acts to tell the stories. Petipa's abundant use of *divertissements* made necessary more acts in his ballets and simultaneously renewed the eighteenth century emphasis on form by watering down the "richly narrative and emotional Romantic style of ballet" that was previously popular.¹

The ballets' settings also became relevant communicators of cultural influence. At least one major ballet in all three phases of the Romantic period had its setting in Germany. All six of the ballets in the present study were set in Europe, including *Sleeping Beauty*'s action, which happened in the vaguely European mythical kingdom of King Florestan XIV. But German locations figured prominently in *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Nutcracker*. Romanticism first originated in Germany as a literary movement. The *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) movement, which peaked in the 1770s, emerged as a reaction to Neoclassicism. By 1800, Germany dominated European theatre. Germany's greatest playwrights, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) and Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) later introduced "Weimar Classicism" (which embraced idealism and sought to "transform ordinary experience rather than create an illusion of real life") out of which they forged their Romantic masterpieces.² Also important were the earlier plays of August Friedrich von Kotzebue (1761-1819), who popularized the form of melodrama. As the most popular playwright in the world until his death, he contributed to the vitality of German drama and influenced drama worldwide by 1800.³ During the latter 1800s, composer Richard Wagner (1813-1883) believed drama should be "'dipped in the magic fountain of music,'" and rejected trends toward
realism because he felt the dramatist should be "a myth-maker rather
than a recorder of domestic affairs." Germany's influence continued
around the world during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The librettists' choices of magical tools and use of animal
symbolism illustrated their dependence on traditional lore to
communicate with their audiences. Enchanters' favorite method of
performing magic typically involved the use of a magical tool.
Although it appeared in various forms from ballet to ballet, the magic
wand, accompanied by (pantomimed) incantations, dominated. Whether it
took the form of a crone's crooked walking stick, a branch of myrtle,
or a fairy's magical rod, many enchanters wielded a powerful wand
because wands have long been symbols of magic which direct and
magnify the user's energy and will. The magical association of animal
symbolism in ballet plots gained favor during the decline phase, with
Swan Lake's swans, owl, and the familiar spirit figure of the black
swan, Odile. The trend continued into the revival phase with Sleeping
Beauty's rats, and The Nutcracker's mice. These were theatrically
effective devices because witches, since time immemorial, have used
wands and familiars. After witchcraft went underground during times
of great persecution, their magical traditions remained, later providing
inspiration for dramatists, librettists, and authors the world over. The
magical associations and superstitions regarding certain animals, fish,
and fowl are so old, their origins are nearly impossible to pinpoint.

Other trends worked theatrically because they reflected the
period's view of femininity and the expected roles of women in society.
Of the six ballets studied herein, eight enchanters were female, while
only three were male. Those three were enchanters of the material world, or humans who possessed nonhuman powers, and included Swan Lake's Von Rothbart, Coppélia's Dr. Coppélius, and The Nutcracker's Drosselmayer. None of the young, attractive female enchanters was of the material world. After all, the Romantic male character was constantly pursuing and pining over the unattainable, ethereal female. Coppélia's Swanilda, however, was the first major female character in those six main Romantic ballets not to be an enchanter figure. She appeared well into the decline period, setting the stage for Sleeping Beauty's Aurora and The Nutcracker's Clara to follow her in the revival period. When the leading feminine characters became inhabitants of the material, rather than nonmaterial world, the stories' endings changed from sad to happy ones. Since the male characters no longer persisted in going after the unattainable, instead finding their fulfillment in human women, the ballets concluded on a happy note of promise for the future because no one died at the end.

In the zenith phase the typical scenario involved a human male who first loved a human female, but later cast aside her love to pursue a romantic relationship with a nonhuman female. The relationship generally ended in heartache for the human partner. In the decline period, Coppélia's male lead began loving a human, then a nonhuman, but finally returned to the human partner. The ballet ended happily. Swan Lake's prince rejected a bevy of potential human partners, choosing instead to love a nonhuman creature. Like the earlier zenith male lovers, his relationship ended sadly, but with one important change: The lovers got together in the end at death. In the revival
phase, all of the lovers were human, with one partner in each couple having been enchanted by another character. When the enchantment was lifted, the ballets ended happily with no one dying at the end. Thus, the ultimate message of the Romantic age regarding love relationships and magic was that it is better to find love in one's own human realm because to pursue the unearthly, while at times blissful, would only prove unhappy in the end.

Upon closer scrutiny, a pattern took shape. La Sylphide's James wanted Effie again after the Sylphide died, but he remained alone and grieving at the ballet's end. Giselle's Albrecht wanted the ghostly Giselle, but had to settle instead for the human Bathilde in the end. While he was not left alone at the ballet's close, as was James, he did not get his first choice of love partners, and was left with the grief of painful memories of the girl he had loved and lost. Swan Lake's Siegfried was not left alone or grieving at the ballet's end, but he had to die to achieve that status, simply committing suicide with his nonhuman lover. Thus, one ending was about as sad as the next, and the human male lovers suffered in the end as victims of their own fickleness and lack of perception.

The human female lovers, on the other hand, fared better, but not necessarily from a psychological/feminist point of view. Portrayed as relatively powerless to better their situations by themselves, Sleeping Beauty's Aurora and The Nutcracker's Clara were each "rescued" by their male partners. Coppélia's spunky Swanilda, in contrast, "rescued" her man from the unhappy fate suffered by other Romantic male lovers, but perhaps paid a price herself. As an
intriguing blend of assertiveness and playfulness, Swanilda did not seem to aspire toward any future goal other than marriage. In Romantic society, a proper wife was expected to love, honor, and obey her husband. As a proper wife, she would have to relinquish a good amount of her independence in order to become appropriately submissive to a man whose roving eye had earlier gotten him into trouble.

In both the zenith and decline ballets studied, the female partners in the love relationships were sincere and insightful, while the male partners were fickle and lacking in perception. Each of the female love interests in those ballets died a victim in one way or another of her male partner, the only exception being Swanilda in Coppélia. But she, unlike the others, was human and not a victim of enchantment.

The Romantic view of women in society becomes even more apparent when analyzing the female enchanter characters in the six major ballets of the period. Of the eight female magic workers, three (the Sylphide, Giselle, and Odette) died as victims of men. Four (Old Madge, Myrtha, Odile, and Carabosse) took revenge upon and/or tormented men, and were subsequently portrayed as uncompromisingly and totally evil. Miriam F. Polster, a leading teacher of Gestalt therapy, associate clinical professor in the Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, at the University of California, San Diego, and author of Eve's Daughters: The Forbidden Heroism of Women, writes:

Just as heroes typified the values a society wanted in its men, villainous women exemplified the behaviors a society would not condone in its women. In myths and
folklore, unmanageable women, painted as villains who came to bad ends, outnumber disobedient men.

These legends tell of the pain that women courted, whether victims or villains, when they even considered moving beyond the confines to which society limited them. When women dared to investigate or inquire into restricted knowledge, they were pictured as unruly, duplicitous, and untrustworthy.\(^5\)

If the four evil enchanter were not killed or punished at the end of their respective ballets, each was foiled. Perhaps scariness and/or ugliness might also be construed as punishment. The remaining enchanter, the Lilac Fairy, assumed the role of helper to a man. Giselle also occupied this category for, even as a victim of her lover, she helped him from beyond the grave. Again, Polster observes:

> When the woman was seen as wise or expert, she might be cast as an invaluable source of aid or information for the male hero. The knowledgeable woman served acceptably as a helper to the heroic man, pointing out directions, helping him acquire certain talismans or amulets, and instructing him in specific skills that would prove useful to him along his way.\(^6\)

Never were females given equal status without penalty. Even those human females in the plots who eventually got their man in the end through marriage, did so under the slant of having been "rescued" by him, whether it was from spinsterhood and poverty, eternal sleep, or a rigid father. Polster's summation of women's status is disquieting:

> Repeatedly these myths [one could substitute libretti here] suggest that a woman is never equal to the man she assists and that she should not aspire to heroic status. Woman's main role in the heroic saga is limited to that of helpful informant, evil villain, innocent victim, unblemished sacrifice, or victor's prize.

> . . . . The conflict between knowledge and innocence began with Eve, and it has been worrisome for women ever since. Women's personal ambition and influence have been distrusted. In the past, women who acknowledged the wish to influence others were seen as witches, enchantresses, or villains. Nowadays they are labeled as bossy or bitchy.\(^7\)
The decline phase ballets began to use male enchanters. Of all of the male enchanters, however, *Swan Lake*’s Von Rothbart remained a curiosity because in the unsuccessful 1877 version of the ballet, he was really the evil *stepmother* of Odette, only disguised as a male. When the ballet was finally successful in 1895, however, Von Rothbart had been transformed into an evil male. Romanticism was, by that time, on its way out. Nevertheless, the other two male enchanters, Coppélia and Drosselmayer, were old and eccentric, with limited power, and not presented as evil or as any real threat.

Both revival ballets revealed another possible trend regarding sexual undertones. While each were adaptations of earlier stories, both ballets concerned young girls coming of age. *Sleeping Beauty* was especially rich in its sexual symbolism. *The Nutcracker*’s more subtle sexual allusions were pervasive. Polster observes that throughout time, sexual experience has been equated symbolically with worldly knowledge or intellectual maturity. Virginity cancels a woman’s womanliness, and canceling out her womanliness "obviously implies that whatever personal authority the young woman might exert would also be canceled." Even so, a possible explanation for the trend rests in the simultaneous work of Sigmund Freud, his new theories of psychoanalysis, and ideas that much of human behavior is rooted in one’s deeper sexual psyche.

Further, of the six ballets studied, none of the enchanter roles was originally transvestic until the revival period’s Carabosse in *Sleeping Beauty*. Even Old Madge, another hag type character, was originally played by a woman. One might postulate that a man playing
a woman helps show the ghastliness of femininity gone wrong, but why did males start portraying female roles when earlier in the period, females had taken even young male romantic leads? Probably, male danseurs were edging their way back onto the stage. The age of impresario Serge Diaghilev was close at hand, when males once again enjoyed praise and fame as dancers. The homosexual Diaghilev promoted many a promising young male talent, such as Michael Fokine, Vaslav Nijinsky, Leonide Massine, Serge Lifar, and George Balanchine.

Under Diaghilev's leadership, ballet enjoyed a fresh revival because he was able to wed Russian technical advancements in production and dance to modern, innovative approaches of new artists, dancers, and musicians who collaborated to give ballet a new format for the new century. His famous company, the Ballets Russes (born in 1909), traveled extensively, bringing a fresh revival of ballet everywhere except, ironically, in Russia where Petipa's influence was still strong. The Ballets Russes was a fresh breath that descended upon Paris in 1909, creating (until 1929 when Diaghilev died and the company disbanded) a dance renaissance there that helped the city resume its earlier distinction as the world's most important artistic center.

Although change through Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes was on the horizon, Romantic librettists' treatment of women in the stories unconsciously reflected what the male segment of that society staunchly believed: women were not worthy of the status and privilege afforded to men in societal terms. To challenge the authority of men was to risk death, loss of reputation, or at the least, a sacrifice
of material comforts. Independence or assertiveness had to be repressed if a woman wished to succeed in a man's world. She would somehow have to accept a subordinate role in her relationship with a man. She had two choices: to be protected or exploited. This study has shown that the treatment of female characters associated with magic and the supernatural in those six major ballet plots reflected the general Romantic male attitude toward women and relationships with them.

This study has also shown that each libretto found its roots in legends, myths, folk tales, and fairy tales. And each reflected the Romantic desire for the unattainable. George Balanchine observed, "'To be Romantic about something is to see what you are and to wish for something entirely different. This requires magic.'" Magic was woven into each story, surrounding each enchanter figure. That magic still touches something primal within us. In the six libretti, many nuances that people nowadays take for granted were rooted in the supernatural. This study has revealed the foundation/groundwork for the magic portrayed on the stage in those major ballets by examining how it was based on actual magical theories and practices. It all had meaning, from the treatment of the enchanters in the plots and their magical methods, tools, and associations, to the deeper symbolic and psychological meanings that reflected Romantic society of the day. All six of the Romantic ballets still remain in the dance world's repertories. Understanding the magical elements and characters in the libretti helps one grasp the deeper levels of the stories and comprehend the patriarchal society that produced them.
This study has also identified zenith, decline, and revival phases of Romantic ballet and analyzed trends and transitions of each in the art's ongoing evolution. According to Robert Greskovic, the author of "Petipa Preserved?" in the October 1994 issue of Dance Magazine, "Art can exist only in the process of constant change. Any attempt to keep everything as it was results in the death of art. ... It is not submissive disciples but bold innovators who have always been the best custodians of the classics." Romantic ballet, as exemplified by the six major ballets examined in the present study, was born of bold theatre-minded innovators who embraced the supernatural. Its creators, devotees, and critics alike helped to shape that magical form of theatre known as ballet.

ENDNOTES

1 Carol Lee, An Introduction to Classical Ballet (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1983) 123.


3 Brockett 408.

4 Brockett 541.


6 Polster 76.

7 Polster 77-85.

8 Polster 71-72.

9 Lee 129-155.

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Neidish, Juliet. "Whose Habitation is the Air." *Dance Perspectives* 61 16 (Spring 1975): 4-17.


ACT I:

The curtain opens, revealing a spacious room in a Scottish farmhouse. There are a door and a staircase upstage, with a window on the right. A high fireplace occupies the left. It is now dawn.

James is asleep in a large armchair downstage. A beautiful airy creature kneels at his feet. Her arm rests on the seat of the chair. She gazes lovingly at the young man and hovers around him, fluttering her wings in order to cool the air he breathes.

His sleep is restless, however, because he is dreaming of the Sylphide. When she lightly kisses his brow, he suddenly wakens, reaches for her, and chases her to the fireplace where she vanishes.

James has had similar dreams of the enchanting creature before, but this is the first time she has stood alive before his eyes. James awakens and questions the farmhands, who are sleeping in the same room. Confused and sleepy, they do not understand his questions. When James rushes out the door to find the Sylphide, he runs into Gurn, who has been out hunting. Upon hearing James' fantastic story, Gurn and the other farmhands break into laughter and try to convince the young man it was just a dream.

James comes to himself again and remembers that this very day he is to be betrothed to his cousin, Effy. The vexed Gurn leaves, bemoaning the injustice of Effy's preference for such a daydreamer over himself.
As the preparations for the celebration are completed, James dresses quickly to please his bride. He nears the fireplace and falls into deep thought as Effy is brought in by her aunt. He takes no notice of her, but Gurn, on the other hand, is immediately at her service with a bouquet of fresh wild flowers. She accepts them absent-mindedly and goes over to ask James his thoughts. He begs her to forgive him for being so distracted and assures her he is especially happy today. When Effy gives him her hand to kiss, Gurn also tries to take her other hand, but she quickly withdraws it. James threateningly steps between Effy and Gurn. Ashamed and distraught, Gurn departs to hide the tears he can no longer hold back, especially when he sees James’ mother, Anna, give her blessings to the young couple kneeling before her.

Several of Effy’s friends enter with presents for the bride: a plaid, a scarf, a wreath, a veil, and a bouquet. When Gurn begs them to put in a good word for him, they offer him their love, along with a bit of laughter and teasing. Totally distraught, the weeping Gurn retires to sit in a corner.

Meanwhile, James has become lost in thought and approaches the fireplace where he meets Old Madge, the fortune-teller. During their confrontation, James tells the old woman (who has been warming herself near the fire) that her presence is an evil omen, and he calls her a witch. The girls suddenly gather around the old witch to have their palms read. Old Madge tells Effy she will be happy in marriage, but when the bride asks if her bridegroom loves her sincerely, the answer is a strong no. James begs Effy not to believe the hateful old woman.
Next, Gurn asks Old Madge a question, to which the old woman replies (in Effy's direction) that *this man* loves her with all his heart; she will soon regret spurning his love. Furious, James seizes the fortune-teller and hurls her to the door. When Gurn seconds her words, everyone laughs scornfully and calms James by reassuring him that they do not believe in the prophecy.

Effy, Anna, and the girls make their way upstairs to dress for the festivities. Gurns sadly departs, and James wishes to follow her upstairs, but the girls hold him back while his lovely young bride blows him a kiss.

Alone, James begins to think about the Sylphide. Suddenly, the window opens, and the ethereal creature appears, sitting in the corner. She is sad and hides her face in her hands. At James' bidding, she glides down from the wall, but refuses to answer when he asks her why she looks so melancholy. Finally, she confesses she loves him and has ever since the first moment she saw him. Her fate is joined to his, but now he is about to marry another. The hearth, she reveals, is her favorite place of refuge. Further, she tells him she is always with him, whether or not he can see her; she even sends him gentle dreams at night. Touched, James does not dare return the creature's love. As he is promised to another, the Sylphide rushes desperately away because she has nothing for which to hope. She desires only death. James calls her back. Despite his love for Effy, he is enraptured by the Sylphide and does not understand what magic is controlling him. In an attempt to lure the confused young man away with her, the Sylphide flutters her transparent wings, hovers about him, capitalizing
on his agitated state of mind. But James cannot stand the thought of leaving Effy, and manages to spurn the beautiful creature. When the Sylphide wraps herself in Effy's plaid, however, James softens. Unable to resist anymore, James presses her to his heart and enthusiastically kisses her.

Meanwhile, Gurn has witnessed a part of the previous tender scene and hurries to tell Effy everything he has just seen. When James hears a noise, he hides the Sylphide in the armchair and covers her with the plaid. Gurn, Effy, and her friends return shortly, but instead of taking the unfaithful bridegroom by surprise, they see nothing at all out of order. Suspicion soon falls on the covered armchair, but when they lift the plaid aside, the Sylphide has vanished. The girls laugh, and Effy becomes angry with the ashamed and surprised Gurn.

The villagers begin to arrive to celebrate the betrothal of James and Effy. During the festivities, James is so distracted that he forgets to ask his bride to dance, prompting her to ask him instead. As they dance, he sees the Sylphide, who is visible only to him, but she immediately disappears. The young man forgets everything in trying to reach her, and the guests think his strange behavior is just near loss of reason due to sheer affectionate longing for his bride. When the dancing ceases and the ceremony begins, James is melancholy and stands apart from the others with the betrothal ring in his hand. Suddenly, the Sylphide emerges from the fireplace, snatches the ring from him, and gives him a look of utter despair that she must die if he marries Effy.
After giving her girlhood friends a parting embrace, Effy turns to find James has gone. Everyone is astonished. Gurn announces he has seen him flee to the hills with a woman. Effy is griefstricken; Anna is indignant. Anger and disapproval fill the room. Gurn then triumphantly reminds the guests of what Madge had predicted for him, and his words of love find support among the young girls. Gurn kneels at the despairing Effy's feet as everyone expresses sympathy.

ACT II:

It is night, and a dense fog enshrouds the forest. Near the entrance to a cave on the left, Madge prepares for a meeting with other witches. They enter from all around, and each witch, accompanied by her familiar, carries a lamp and broomstick. They dance about the fire in a circle, hail Madge, and drink a cup of the glowing brew she has prepared to welcome them. Madge calls them to work. Some of them spin, wind, and weave a rose-colored drapery, while others dance and fence with broomsticks. When the spell is complete, they drink a farewell and all disappear into the cave.

The fog disperses and the sunrise bathes the landscape in cheerful light as the Sylphide leads James down from a steep mountain path. The fearful young man follows the nimble creature who hardly seems to touch the cliff with her feet. This is her kingdom where she will love him and hide him from the world. He is delighted with her as she brings him flowers, fruits, and spring water. He is enraptured with the Sylphide, but is frustrated because everytime he tries to
ardently embrace her, she eludes him and flits away. He follows her in easy flight, though, and they dance together in harmony.

But James remembers his Effy and the injustice he has inflicted upon her. When he becomes melancholy and drained, the Sylphide calls her sister sylphides to come and cheer her beloved. The creatures appear through the bushes, on the boughs, and over the cliffs. They have blue and rose-colored wings, and some swing in airy draperies which they hang between the trees, while others stand on the tip of a bough and bend it to the ground with their weight, to have it raised into the air again by a puff of wind. James' spirits lighten. He tries to catch his Sylphide again, but she continues to elude him. When he questions the other sylphides, they fly away one after another without answering. Anxious and full of grief, James rushing after the Sylphide.

Suddenly, Gurn and James' friends appear on the hill. Gurn discovers a hat that belongs to James, but when he is about to call the others, Old Madge steps out of the cave, seizes the hat, and flings it away. The old woman calms the startled Gurn and advises him to be silent and clever. She points to the hill where Effy and some of her friends are approaching. The witch tells the searchers about James' unfaithfulness, but says her prophecy will be fulfilled because Gurn is a fine, good-hearted young fellow who is destined by fate to be Effy's husband. By now, everyone is outraged at James' behavior, and they support Gurn's pleas. Effy, though still distressed, is moved by Gurn's affection and allows him to escort her home. Madge remains alone.
James returns without the Sylphide. Filled with guilt and regret, he realizes he is not strong enough to tear himself loose from her. Old Madge, who has been secretly watching him, approaches with feigned compassion. The despairing young man tells the hag everything and offers her all his possessions if she can help him capture the Sylphide. When Madge reminds him of his austere rejection of her at the celebration, he kneels before her, begging her forgiveness. The witch appears to be moved and hands him the rose-colored scarf, telling him if he succeeds in entwining the Sylphide in it, her wings will fall off and make her his forever. James joyfully kisses the scarf and follows the witch to her cave, thanking her again and again.

Soon the young man notices the Sylphide sitting on a bough with a bird's nest in her hand. When he waves the scarf, she climbs down and offers him her catch. James reproaches her for her hardness toward innocent creatures. Deeply moved, she hastens to replace the nest, regretting what she has done. Next, she pleads for the pretty scarf, but he purposely refuses to give it to her. She begs him and promises not to fly away from him when he pursues her. When she greedily reaches for the scarf, however, James twists it about her so tightly that she cannot move her arms. The captured Sylphide asks for mercy, but James does not release her before her wings have fallen off. The Sylphide puts her hand to her heart as if mortally wounded, and when James presses her to him, she pushes him away. He throws himself at her feet, but a deathlike pallor covers her brow. Horrified, he realizes that in taking away her freedom, he has robbed her of life.
The dying Sylphide tells him not to weep; she could not belong to him or give him the happiness he wanted. She must die. She gives him back his betrothal ring and bids him to quickly return it to Effy, whom he can still marry. The Sylphide wishes for his future happiness.

At this moment, Madge returns to rejoice at James' despair. With the icy laughter of revenge, she points to the background where Gurn appears, leading Effy to the altar. The Sylphide, who has been growing weaker and weaker, is now near death. James lies at her feet. As she breathes her last, her sisters surround her and gather her up in their arms. The sylphs and sylphides veil the beloved body and carry it away through the air. James looks one last time at his airy mistress, and swoons to the ground in overwhelming grief.
APPENDIX B:
GISELLE OU LES WILIS, 1841
(ZENITH)

ACT I:

Dawn is breaking on a pleasant village in Germany, a rural community flanked by the Thuringion Hills. Giselle’s cottage is at stage right, and a smaller rustic cottage is at stage left. Hilarion, the gamekeeper enters. He is in love with Giselle and is jealous of Loys, her peasant lover, who is in reality a disguised duke named Albrecht. The door of the rustic cottage opens, and Hilarion, hidden, watches as the Duke of Silesia, dressed in humble clothes, comes from his cottage in the company of his squire, Wilfrid. Loys asks Wilfrid to leave him alone. Hilarion grows suspicious when he sees Wilfrid in such fine dress and keeping company with a peasant lad. Hilarion watches as Loys knocks on Giselle’s door. She exits the cottage and falls into the arms of her lover where she confides she has had a terrible dream of a beautiful lady who is in love with him. He reassures her it is not true, and he will never love another. She gathers daises, and picks the petals to be convinced of his love for her. Hilarion comes forward and tells Giselle she is making a mistake, but Loys pushes him aside, and Giselle ignores his pleas.

Some girlfriends come to take Giselle to the vintage celebration. Giselle dances and engages the girls in a dance also, and all merrily celebrate the grape harvest. Birthe, Giselle’s mother, enters and chastises her daughter for dancing so strenuously instead of doing her chores. She reminds Giselle of the Wilis who dance alone after death.
Then Birthe reminds Giselle of her poor health, and dancing may harm her.

Suddenly, a hunting call is heard in the distance, and an uneasy Loys gives the signal for everyone to depart to the vineyards. Giselle goes into the cottage with her mother to rest, leaving Hilarion alone to enter Loys' cottage to find out his secret. At this time, the hunting call sounds nearer, and the royal hunting party appears on stage. Among them is Prince of Courland and his daughter, Bathilde. The party needs a place to rest, so they knock on Giselle's door. She and her mother welcome them for refreshments. Bathilde notices the lovely and charming Giselle when she is offered fruit and milk. She takes a gold chain from her neck and gives it to Giselle who is busily admiring the lady's clothes. Bathilde puts the chain around the delighted Giselle's neck. As the girls chat, the conversation turns to romance. Giselle tells Bathilde she is in love, and Bathilde reveals she herself will soon marry. Bathilde tells Giselle she would like to meet Loys, and while Giselle looks for him, Bathilde and the prince enter Giselle's cottage to rest. Meanwhile, Hilarion has entered Loys' cottage and excitedly comes out carrying a sword and a royal cloak belonging to the duke. He hides his findings in a bush, waiting until the vintage celebration begins.

Loys appears in the distance and is joined by Giselle. A march begins, and a decorated wagon is rolled out into view, with the boys and girls of the village following. They are dressed for a celebration and carry baskets of grapes. A figure of Bacchus astride a cask appears, and the merrymaking begins. Soon Giselle is crowned Queen
of the Vintage, and she leads Loys aside and dances with him, after which they kiss. On seeing the last, the jealous Hilarion leaps into the dancing crowd and informs Giselle her lover is a nobleman in disguise, and that she is a victim of deceit. The peasant girl retorts that Hilarion has been dreaming. She does not believe him. With these words, he shows her the sword and cloak. Suddenly, Albrecht (Loys) dashes toward the gamekeeper who takes shelter behind the villagers. Albrecht tries to console Giselle while Hilarion grabs a royal hunting horn and blows it loudly. Bathilde and her father come out of the cottage, and the hunting party joins them. The prince questions Albrecht about his costume and strange behavior. Albrecht is stupefied by his exposure. Bathilde tells Giselle that Albrecht is the man to whom she is engaged, showing her a ring on her finger. Giselle is horrified, and as her brain reels, delirium seizes her. She grabs the sword and begins to draw a desperate cabalistic circle on the ground around her. In her anguish, she pierces herself with the sword. She then imagines she hears the love theme melody, and tries to dance again, but her strength is failing. She falls to the ground in death. Both her mother and Albrecht are grief-stricken and desperately try to revive her. Their attempts are unsuccessful, though, and Albrecht is simply horrified at what has happened. He grabs the sword to kill himself, but the prince stops him. The villagers and hunting party gather around the dead girl as the curtain closes.
ACT II:

The curtain rises to reveal a dark forest late at night. A moonlit lake is just beyond. The tomb of Giselle is stage right. It is a monument with a large white cross at the head, and on the cross hangs a wreath of vine leaves, her crown heralding her as Queen of the Vintage.

Hilarion and some gamekeepers enter the misty damp forest that is penetrated by little twinkling lights. The eerie atmosphere frightens the men who know of the Wilis. In the distance, they hear the striking of the midnight hour, and they become even more apprehensive. It is the hour the dreaded Wilis appear. They are will-o'-the-wisps, or ghosts of women who have been rejected by their suitors. The terror-stricken men then hear the fantastic music noting their presence. They try to flee in all directions, but the evil spirits appear everywhere in the forest.

Myrtha, the queen of the Wilis, materializes, her radiance filling the dark forest. She dances a lovely solo, then plucks a branch of myrtle and draws circles in the air to summon the Wilis to her from the four winds. Myrtha makes another sign, and announces the arrival of yet another Wili, Giselle. Only the cross over Giselle's grave can break Myrtha's spell. Summoned, Giselle arises from her grave, wearing a veil of white, and a white gown. Myrtha touches her with the myrtle branch, causing the dead girl's veil to drop. She is transformed into a Wili with little silver wings. Myrtha places a silver star on Giselle's brow, and the new initiate begins to dance to the tunes she remembers while alive and in love with Loys.
After her dance is over, the scene becomes quiet. Albrecht enters the forest with Wilfrid. He goes to Giselle's grave while Wilfrid pleads with him to leave the unholy spot, but the duke bids him to go away and leave him alone. Albrecht grieves over the new grave, and suddenly he sees the likeness of Giselle before him. He tries to touch her, but she darts away. She makes gestures of love and throws flowers at him only to disappear again. He kneels before the grave, and Giselle bounds to his side as she is still filled with love for him. Albrecht tries to grasp her, but she vanishes from him. Deciding to leave, the duke rises to behold a fascinating group of white-clad Wilis before him. A strange scene then unfolds: Hilarion has been caught, and Myrtha and the Wilis force him to dance. He is under a spell of magic, and he must dance in spite of himself. Each Wili takes a turn with him until he is near collapse. They encircle him and drive him into the lake to drown.

Once they have finished off their victim, they discover Albrecht. Just as Myrtha is about to touch him with her myrtle branch, Giselle appears and restrains the queen's arm. The dead girl reveals to her lover that his fate will be the same as Hilarion's if he does not run. Albrecht is horrified at such a thought. Giselle takes his hand and leads him to the protection of the cross. He embraces the cross before Myrtha can touch him, and to her surprise, her magic wand breaks in her hand. The Wilis encircle him, and the queen is ready for revenge. Myrtha points her wand to Giselle, and Giselle's wings open, upon which the girl dances as if carried away by madness. Albrecht leaves the protection of the cross as Giselle pleads for him to return to the
sacred talisman. Giselle continues to dance while Albrecht is consumed with love. Wanting to die and join her, he begins to dance with Giselle. The Wilis join them in a frenzied dance. The duke loses strength and becomes exhausted. Giselle notices his fatigue and pleads for his life, but Myrtha refuses. Finally, dawn appears to release the nearly dead duke from their spell. The Wilis begin to slow their dancing, wilting and staggering to collapse finally into the vegetation nearby. Giselle also feels the influence of the light, and she slowly frees herself from the arms of her lover as she is drawn toward her grave. Albrecht tries to restrain her, but she tells him she must submit to her fate, and return to her coffin.

Wilfrid, the prince, and Bathilde enter the forest. As Giselle begins to sink into her grave, she tells Albrecht to go to Bathilde and love her, for she can no longer love in the human world. She gestures farewell, and vanishes into the ground. Albrecht places some flowers on her grave. He stretches out his hand to Bathilde, and falls from exhaustion into the arms of his friends.
Nathanael, a young European university student, begins the story with his letter to his friend, Lothair. In it, he tells an anguished story of a frightening childhood experience he had when he was ten years old. Prior to the event, each evening he and his siblings would be quickly whisked upstairs to bed upon the nightly visits of the Sandman. The nocturnal visits of the mysterious figure to see his father consumed the young Nathanael (who had never seen the Sandman) with morbid curiosity for he had been told by his sister's nurse the Sandman was a wicked man who comes to throw sand in the eyes of naughty little children who will not go to bed. The sand causes their eyeballs to jump out of their heads, whereupon the fiend collects the bloody articles in a bag and takes them to the half-moon for his own children to eat as treats. The horrible images imprinted themselves on the ten year old who could never understand why his loving father was secretly visited by such a mysterious and evil person. One night the boy could stand the curiosity no longer and hid behind a curtain in his father's room. When the Sandman entered, Nathanael saw it was the old advocate, Coppélius, who had often dined with the family in times past. Coppélius was a hideous figure, an extremely ugly monster of a man with a malicious smile and huge hairy hands. As the boy watched, his father and the ugly visitor donned black smock-frocks and began to work with strange utensils over a hearth. Coppélius ordered, "Eyes here! Eyes here!," through thick smoke as they hammered hot glowing masses from the
fire. The horrified boy screamed and was promptly discovered, brutishly snatched up by Coppélius who intended to put out his young eyes with red-hot grains from the fire. Only Nathanael's father's begging the evil man to spare his son's eyes saved the boy's sight. But Coppélius was not finished tormenting the child, twisting his joints the wrong way until the boy fainted. He awoke the next day to his mother's soothing words of comfort and love as she bent over him.

Coppélius disappeared afterward, but about a year later, he visited the family one last time. During the night, the family was awakened by a loud explosion and rushed in to find their beloved father burned to death in front of a smoking hearth. Nathanael verbally accused Coppélius of murdering his father.

In his letter to Lothair, the grown Nathanael refers to recently being confronted by a glass merchant named Giuseppe Coppola, a man he strongly suspects is, in reality, the old evil Coppélius. He ends his letter with words of his beloved Clara, Lothair's sister.

Upset, Nathanael sends his letter to Clara by mistake. She writes back and lovingly explains his fears and dread as only products of his imagination. She reasons the nocturnal experiments of his father and Coppélius were based in alchemy. Alchemy, she says, could produce a fatal explosion if not handled carefully. She consoles him that Coppola could not be Coppélius, and any concentration on his vulnerability to evil will create just that.

Nathanael is a bit put off by her well-intended but cold reasoning. He writes to Lothair, her brother, and describes his physics professor at the university, a man named Spalanzani who
claims to know Coppola, defending his integrity. Meanwhile, Nathanael has caught a glimpse of Spalanzani's daughter, Olimpia, sitting quietly in a room. Her eyes seem strangely fixed and lifeless.

Another friend of Nathanael's tells the rest of the story. In time, Nathanael and Clara grow more estranged emotionally, separated by the young man's obsession with Coppola/Coppélius and the evil powers over him. In an effort to rekindle their romance, Nathanael composes a fantastic love poem full of gloomy atmosphere and demonic overtones. In it, he and Clara are lovers separated by Coppélius, who causes her lovely eyes to leap like bloody hissing sparks into her lover's chest. Clara rejects the poem, angering Nathanael, who next angers Lothair. The two men agree to duel with blades; however, Clara brings them to their senses by asking them to kill her first. They all make up, and Nathanael seems cured of his obsession with the evil character.

A fire causes Nathanael to take a room directly across from Spalanzani's apartment. He again notices Olimpia sitting unoccupied hour after hour by the window. He is unaffected by her beauty, though, for Clara remains in his heart.

One day, Coppola appears and succeeds in selling Nathanael a telescope of sorts which he tries out by looking at Olimpia through the window. After that, the young man is mesmerized, unable to look away for any length of time. He gazes at her for hours, growing more and more in love. When Spalanzani gives a ball and invites Nathanael, he goes in order to meet the professor's daughter. At the ball, he falls deeply in love with the young woman everyone else considers stiff and
mechanical. But Nathanael can do nothing but sing her praises. Forgetting Clara, he determines to marry Olimpia.

When he goes to the professor's apartment to ask for her hand in marriage, he is horrified to see Spalanzani and Coppola/Coppélius (we learn they really are the same person) in bloody fisticuffs over who made what part of the doll, Olimpia, and who should possess her. During the fight, Coppola knocks Spalanzani down. Olimpia's eyes fall out, leaving two black holes, and roll into his blood on the floor. The professor grabs them and throws the orbs, hitting the stupified Nathanael in the chest. With this, the young man snaps mentally for he realizes he has been in love with a doll.

Afterward, Spalanzani recovers and leaves town. Nathanael finds Clara again and resumes their wedding plans after a brief rest in the hospital. One day while walking through town, however, Clara and Nathanael go to the top of a high tower to look down at the distant hills. The lovers gaze over the countryside, and all seems well until Clara says something that triggers a memory in Nathanael. He pulls Coppola's perspective from his pocket and gazes at Clara. The unfortunate man again snaps and attempts to push Clara off the tower because he fancies she is a doll just like Olimpia. Ironically, Coppélius is below in the crowd of people gathered to watch the horror above. Clara is rescued at the last moment by her brother, Lothair. When the unbalanced Nathanael falls from the tower, Coppélius disappears in the confusion.

The story's ending is not totally dark, though, for Clara later marries a nice gentleman and has two bright sons.
APPENDIX D:
COPPETJA, OR THE GIRL WITH ENAMEL EYES, 1870
(DECLINE)

ACT I:

The scene opens in the square of a small unnamed European town of several hundred years ago. Of all the pleasant buildings clustered about, one with a second storey balcony stands out. The square is deserted, except for a bent old man who hobbles out of the door. He is Dr. Coppelius, a mysterious alchemist and magician. On the balcony sits a beautiful young girl reading a book. Coppelius looks up at her and rubs his hands with satisfaction before going back into the house.

Suddenly, the door of a nearby house opens, and Swanilda, a pretty young village girl, appears. She looks around to make sure she is alone when she spots the girl on the balcony. Swanilda waves to her but sees no response; she feels snubbed. A twinge of jealousy pokes her for she has noticed her fiancé, Franz, secretly wave to the strange girl on occasion in the past.

The balcony girl's name is Coppélia, and she is said to be the daughter of old Dr. Coppelius, though he has never appeared with her in public. As Swanilda pauses below, she decides to mimic her, reading an imaginary book. The girl does not even notice her when she mockingly bows to her. Swanilda's annoyance is peaked, especially when she wonders if Coppélia might also be waiting for Franz to appear! Suddenly, she hears Franz's approach and hides to secretly observe him.
The spirited young peasant is carefree and happy to accept adoration from other pretty village girls if they offer it. His handsome devil-may-care attitude is both conceited and appealing at the same time.

Of course, Franz does not go directly to Swanilda's door, but strides over to see Coppélia. He waves to her casually and then looks over toward Swanilda's as if trying to decide which girl to love. Next, he clutches his heart and blows a kiss to Coppélia. Swanilda now sees how fickle her lover really is. Coppélia looks up from her book and waves back to him, but neither Franz nor Swanilda can see that Coppélius stands in back of his daughter. With obvious disapproval, the old doctor steps forward and quickly closes the curtains in Coppélia's face. Franz is so upset, he does not notice Swanilda who has now come to stand behind him. Distressed when he will not even turn away from the balcony, she walks off.

Franz now remembers his rendezvous with Swanilda, but before he reaches her door, she returns and shows him a lovely butterfly she has just caught. The young man takes it from her and pins it to his shirt. Swanilda breaks into tears because she feels his gesture shows he is unfeeling to her broken heart. She accuses him of being unfaithful to her and gains no comfort from his easy answers of denial. Only when he realizes her seriousness, does Franz sincerely profess his love to her and to her only. Swanilda, however, is thoroughly convinced of his guilt and refuses to listen, even when Franz begins to anger. The pretty young girl leaves the square.
Suddenly, a group of friends arrives, and Franz greets them. A lively mazurka follows and Swanilda even returns to join in, but she avoids her lover and accepts no explanations from him. When the burgomaster enters the scene, the dancing stops as everyone stands aside to make room for him. He announces that there will be a big celebration the next day because the village will receive a new bell for the town clock as a gift from the lord of the manor. During their excitement over the unexpected festival, the peasants do not notice strange noises coming from Coppélius' house. The burgomaster continues, saying that the lord will award handsome dowries to the girls who marry on the festival day. Franz eyes Swanilda closely, but she gives no response. When the burgomaster asks her directly if she will wed, she takes the ear of wheat he offers her. Swanilda shakes it near her ear, employing a custom that holds if she hears anything, her lover truly loves her, but if it is silent, his love is false.

Swanilda hears nothing and offers it to Franz who also hears nothing. She lets a friend shake the wheat, and the friend claims to hear something. Swanilda does not believe the good news, though, and throws the stalk to the ground, announcing she and Franz are no longer engaged. She puts on a merry front and joins some friends in a czardas, while the rejected Franz walks away in disgust with the silly old custom and the moods of women. Soon it grows dark and the dancers disperse, leaving an empty stage.

Slowly, Dr. Coppélius opens the door and totters out. After he locks his door carefully with a large old key, he puts it safely in his pocket and makes his way across the square with the aid of an old
cane. Some young people approach and tease him, jostling him as they try to make the frightened old man join in a dance with them. When he loses his temper, they become even more boisterous and push him about. In the shuffle, Coppélius drops his precious key, but no one notices. The pranksters depart and he continues across the street.

Swanilda and her friends pass the old man on their way to supper. She discovers the lost key, and her friends persuade her to try Coppélius' door. She does, and first terrified at her own audacity, she backs out of the door. Her friends accompany her into the house, though, everyone trembling with fear in the dark interior.

Meanwhile, Franz now enters the square, and he is carrying a ladder with which to climb to Coppélia's balcony. Now that Swanilda has rejected him, the young man decides to try his luck with a new girl. Just as he is climbing, Dr. Coppélius (who has by now discovered he is missing his key) catches him and attacks him with his cane. Franz runs away, and the old man discovers with horror that his door is open! When Coppélius runs into the house, Franz reappears and resumes climbing the ladder toward Coppélia.

ACT II:

The second act opens in a big dark room in Coppélius' house. A huge window dominates the upstage wall, and a curtained area occupies the left. Swanilda and her trembling friends enter cautiously to find statue-like figures posing in various positions all around the room. The life-sized dolls look almost human and include a tall Chinaman, a one-man-band with a big drum, an astronomer, a juggler, a Harlequin,
and a king holding a jeweled septer. [Balanchine notes that the dolls may vary in some productions: A Chinaman, a Crusader, Pierrot, an astrologer, and an oriental dancer.] The young people are afraid of the dark, and their bodies cast eerie shadows on the walls. Swanilda, after a few attempts to control her fear, succeeds in finding Coppélia behind the curtainedalcove. Coppélia is a doll! Just then, one of her friends accidently knocks the Chinaman, setting him into jerky automation. When the friends look for his hidden mechanism, they find nothing, and the doll suddenly stops. Next, they move to inspect Coppélia, and Swanilda listens to the wax figure's heart just to make sure she is lifeless. Satisfied she is not real, everyone laughs heartily at the thought of Franz's flirtation with a doll. To complete their amusement, the girls wind up all the dolls, setting the whole room in a menagerie of mechanical motion. They do not hear the very angry Coppélius fly in. He shakes his stick at them and rushes around in an attempt to catch them as they run toward the door. Everyone escapes except Swanilda who sneaks behind Coppélia's curtain and quickly changes clothes with the doll.

Just then, the old alchemist/magician discovers Franz entering the room from the balcony and pounces on the young man. When Franz pleads that he means no harm, that he is only sneaking in to see the girl he loves, Coppélius relents and actually becomes quite friendly. He even invites the young man to sit and have a drink, which Franz accepts gladly. But the old man secretly slips a potion into the drink and serves Franz one libation after another until the young man is quite intoxicated. Finally, Franz dozes off in his chair.
Coppélius then takes out a huge old book bound in leather and quickly hunts for the page containing a recipe for a secret formula he has never before used. Finding it, the happy old man goes to the curtained alcove and wheels out the now disguised Swanilda who looks exactly like Coppélia. The alchemist/magician begins to make magical gestures in Swanilda's face as he occasionally glances down at the old grimoire. Next, he runs over to the sleeping Franz and attempts to pull the youth's life force from his body through more magical gesticulation, after which he runs back to his doll and tries to shower her with the stolen humanness he clasps so tightly in his weathered hands. Coppélius repeats this weird ritual according to the book's recipe.

To the old man's happy surprise, Swanilda throws down the book and begins to move stiffly, still seated. Coppélius excitedly stands his Coppélia up, and when she attempts a wooden walk, the old man repeats more incantations and encourages her every step. Swanilda cannot believe she has successfully deceived Coppélius and continues to let the delighted old man teach her to walk and then to dance. She soon performs a lovely waltz, dancing more and more like a human than a doll. Then she begins to have a mind of her own, and much to his exasperation, she goes over to Franz, shakes him, and begins to take a little drink from his mug. Coppélius quickly snatches it from her before she can taste any. He soon learns that even a doll can be as trying as any young girl as she continues her mischief. Coppélius tries to distract her by placing a black mantilla about her shoulders, and she instantly begins to dance a bolero. When he similarly
experiments with a Scottish tartan, she breaks into a lively fling. Finally, Swanilda tires of Coppélius, kicks his huge book, and runs wild around the room before trying to awaken her lover. The anxious old man fears she will harm herself and the other dolls. He grabs her, sits her back down in her chair, shakes his finger at her, and wheels her back into the curtained alcove.

Franz now opens his eyes, stretches, and looks around. Coppélius immediately tells him to leave, and Franz exits via the ladder. No longer Coppélia, Swanilda makes a hasty retreat after her lover, knocking over every doll except the king, who remains standing regally surrounded by chaos. She runs out the door after Franz.

ACT III:

It is now the festival day, and the square is filled with happy villagers. The priest has blessed the town's new bell, and the young couples are lined up ready to receive their dowries from the lord of the manor. Swanilda and Franz are among them, and Franz gazes at his love in honest devotion. Swanilda has taught him a valuable lesson; she is to him all women, possessing more warmth, spunk, and love than any doll could ever represent. Everyone congratulates the happy couple.

Suddenly, the irate Coppélius hobbles in and demands compensation for all the damage he has suffered. He seems more focused on the monetary aspect than on explanations or apologies. The villagers still look at him suspiciously, but Swanilda sympathetically offers him her new dowry. When Coppélius is about to accept, the lord
of the manor gives him a bag of gold instead. The old alchemist/magician leaves, wondering if he could ever again create a doll as lovable as his Coppélia.

Worries over, the villagers break into happy dancing and perform the famous "Dance of the Hours," in which the participants' positions on the stage imitate the movement of the hands on a huge imaginary clock. More dancing follows, and finally Franz and Swanilda perform a happy wedding dance, later joined by the celebrating villagers as the curtain falls.
ACT I:

The curtain rises to reveal a magnificent park in Germany. A castle dominates the background, and nearby a little bridge crosses a stream. Prince Siegfried and his friends sit at some small tables and drink wine. They are celebrating his coming of age. The prince's tutor, old Wolfgang, is present and slightly tipsy, and when some peasant townsfolk enter, the old tutor orders them to entertain the prince with dances. Siegfried orders more wine, the young people dance, and Wolfgang gives the women flowers and ribbons.

The dances become more lively, but when a messenger arrives and tells the prince his mother, the princess, will be coming shortly to talk with him, the dances stop and the merriment becomes confusion as servants quickly remove the tables and hide the bottles. Old Wolfgang tries to appear sober.

When the princess does appear with her attendants, everyone bows to her respectfully while the young prince and his drunken tutor (staggering behind him) go to meet her. Siegfried's mother notices her son's embarrassment and assures him she did not come to break up the party but to talk with him, instead, about marriage. She tells him she wants him to marry while she is still alive so she can die knowing he married well regarding the solid and successful continuation of their famous bloodline. Siegfried, not yet ready to think about marriage (and a little annoyed with his mother's not so subtle nudge), asks
respectfully whom she has chosen for his lifetime companion. She replies she has not yet made a choice because she wants him to choose for himself... from the young ladies who will be present at a grand ball she has planned for the following night. After she departs, the prince sadly tells his friends their freedom and good times will soon end. His knight, Benno, reassures him, saying they should enjoy the present good times while they can, to put the future aside for now. The prince agrees and laughs, and everyone resumes their merrymaking. Even Wolfgang joins in the dancing, and being a little more intoxicated than before, provokes even more laughter with his awkwardness. After dancing, the old tutor becomes amorous and tries to court the peasant girls, but they just laugh and run away from him. When he singles out one girl, his favorite, and tries to kiss her, she dodges him, causing him to kiss her suitor by mistake. Wolfgang loses his balance, falls, and everyone laughs.

Because it is getting dark quickly, one of the guests proposes to dance a last dance with cups in hand. Everyone agrees. In the distant sky, a band of flying swans appears. Benno and the prince notice this and decide to grab their crossbows to hunt them. Wolfgang tries to dissuade them, saying it is time to sleep. The prince pretends to agree, but when the old man leaves, the two young men and a servant take off with their weapons after the swans.

ACT II:

Moonlight floods a mountainous forest. There is a lake in the distance, and some ruins of a building occupy stage left. The swans
are swimming on the lake; a swan wearing a crown leads them in the
direction of the ruins. The tired Siegfried and Benno enter and
consider spending the night there when the prince notices the swans.
Just as Siegfried aims his crossbow, the swans mysteriously disappear!
Simultaneously, the interior of the ruins is illuminated by some
unearthly light. The two young men decide to explore the enchanted
ruins, and just as they approach, a beautiful young girl appears on
the staircase. She wears a white dress and a crown of precious
stones. She is Odette. As Siegfried and Benno back away, she shakes
her head sadly and asks why they are pursuing her when she has
done nothing to them. She descends the steps when the prince
attempts a confused answer, and she puts her hand on his shoulder as
she gently reproaches him, telling him that she is the swan they
wanted to kill. When they are reluctant to believe, Odette unfolds the
mystery of her condition: Her mother, a good fairy, fell in love with
and married a noble knight against her father's will. The knight
destroyed her, though, and remarried a witch who, as her wicked
stepmother, hated and nearly killed her. Odette's grandfather came to
the rescue of the girl, taking her in. His tears over the death of her
mother formed the present lake. The grandfather took Odette to live
in the deepest part of the lake. Long concealed from people, Odette
recently persuaded the old man to give her a little freedom to make
merry. By day, she and her friends transform themselves into swans
and fly, soaring nearly to Heaven. At night, they assume human form,
playing and dancing near the dear old man. She ends, saying
regretfully even now her stepmother gives them little peace.
Suddenly, an owl hoots in the distance. They immediately spot in the ruins a huge owl with mysteriously glowing eyes. Alarmed, Odette says it is her stepmother is disguise who would have killed her long ago if her grandfather did not keep tabs on the witch. Odette is presently under the protection of her grandfather who gave her a magical crown to wear that wards off evil and harm from the witch. When Odette marries, the stepmother will lose her chance to injure the young girl, but until then, she must wear the crown for protection.

Her story finished, Siegfried falls on his knees and asks forgiveness. Then, young girls and children run in rows out of the ruins and reproach the young hunter for attempting to kill them for the sake of empty amusement. The two young men despair and sorrowfully realize their folly. Odette sends the "swans" away, and the prince breaks his crossbow in two, swearing never again to kill another bird of any kind. Odette wishes to forget and forgive and suggests they make merry.

Dancing begins, Siegfried and Benno take part, and soon the prince discovers he is madly in love with Odette. She laughs, though, and does not believe him because she is cautious. She knows he will see many beautiful young women the following night; he will surely forget her. He, of course, swears he will not. Odette then admits she loves him, too, but she cannot help feeling a terrible foreboding that the witch will put him to some kind of a test to ruin their happiness. Undaunted, the prince fears no one and challenges the world to battle. Odette says tomorrow will decide the outcome: He will either never see her again, or she will place her crown obediently at his feet.
As dawn approaches, she bids farewell, and she and her friends disappear back into the ruins. The prince and his friend look up to see a huge owl in the air following the band of swans swimming away on the lake.

ACT III:

The festival at the princess's castle is about to begin, and old Wolfgang gives last minute orders to the servants as the guests begin to arrive, met by the Master of Ceremonies who shows them to their places. Siegfried and his mother arrive, along with their attendants, and they, too, take their places of honor. The dances begin, and soon new guests arrive, announced by a trumpet flourish. They are an old count and his wife and young daughter. The daughter joins the dancing. Periodically, trumpets sound the arrival of still more guests, and after a while, the princess calls her son aside and asks him if he has found any young woman who pleases him in particular yet. No, he says, and the vexed mother calls Wolfgang over to tell him her son's words. Suddenly, the trumpets announce the arrival of more latecomers, and Von Rothbart enters with his daughter, Odile. Siegfried is struck by her likeness to the beautiful Odette. When he questions his friend, Benno, if he also sees the resemblance, the knight misses the likeness and tells Siegfried because he looks through the eyes of love, he sees his Odette everywhere. Siegfried admires Odile for awhile before deciding to join in the dancing. When he does, his mother notices and hopefully questions Wolfgang about the young woman who seems to have stirred her son's fancy. The tutor tells the
princess to be patient, that her son is not a stone, that he will fall in love shortly.

As the dancing continues, Odile flirts with Siegfried, and in a moment of passion he kisses her hand. With this, the princess and the old baron leave their places and approach the young couple in the center of the floor. Siegfried's mother tells him he may kiss the hand of only his bride. He responds happily that he is ready. Von Rothbart then triumphantly takes his daughter's hand and gives it to the prince.

Instantly, the stage darkens, an owl's cry is heard, and the clothes fall from Von Rothbart to reveal a demon. Odile bursts out laughing as a window suddenly flies open in the distance to reveal a white swan wearing a crown. The horrified prince throws down the arm of his new bride-to-be, clutches his heart, and runs out of the castle.

ACT IV:

The scene is the same as that of Act II; it is night. Odette has been away, and her friends are wondering where she is. Awaiting her return, they amuse themselves by dancing and teaching the cygnets to dance. When she does return, her hair is tousled and down around her shoulders. She still wears her crown, but she is crying. The others group around her questioningly as she laments that her Siegfried neither kept his vow nor passed the test. Odette's friends urge her to think of him no more, but she protests that she still loves him. They sympathize, but suddenly notice his approach, upon which
they try to persuade her to fly away with them. She refuses, saying she wants to see him one last time. They should hurry away, she says, and wait for her to meet them elsewhere. They worriedly warn her she will be destroyed, but they hurry off to the ruins as thunder rumbles in the distance, growing louder and louder. The stage darkens even more, periodically illuminated by lightning. The lake becomes stormy.

Siegfried runs onto the stage toward Odette, begging her forgiveness over and over. Sadly, she tells him it is not within her power to forgive him; it is over. When she tells him they are seeing each other for the last time, he desperately entreats her. But Odette is immovable. She timidly looks at the churning lake, frees herself from his embrace, and runs toward the ruins. Siegfried runs after her, takes her hand, and in despair says he cannot let it end this way, that even if she is unwilling, she will always remain with him. Quickly, he takes the crown off her head and throws it into the lake. The owl suddenly appears, and with a cry, catches up the discarded crown in its claws, flying away. The horrified Odette questions his actions, saying he has destroyed them both. She falls dying into his arms. Amidst the sound of crashing waves and thunder, the sad last song of a swan cuts through the air.

Gradually, the waves engulf the prince and Odette, and they disappear under the water. The storm abates, the thunder dies down, and a pale moon peeks around dispersing storm clouds. The final tableau includes a band of white swans swimming on the lake as the curtain closes.
PROLOGUE (Scene 1):

The ballet opens in a banquet hall of the king's palace. The vacant thrones of the king and queen are situated to the right on a platform, as are seats for the group of fairies who are godmothers of the infant, Princess Aurora. Ladies and cavaliers chat in groups around the stage as they anxiously await the arrival of the royal new parents. It is the baptismal feast of the new princess, and the masters of ceremonies circulate to tell the guests where to sit. Surrounded by courtiers, Catalabutte eyes the list of invitations to make sure everything is in order.

A trumpet flourish announces the arrival of the king and queen, preceded by pages. Following the royal couple, nannies and wet-nurses of the new princess bring in the cradle and baby. When all are seated, the masters of ceremonies announce the arrival of the fairies: Candide, Fleur de Farine, Violente, Canaries, and Breadcrumb. After the king and queen meet them and show them to their places on the platform, the Lilac Fairy, Aurora's principal godmother, enters, surrounded by her subordinate spirits who carry large fans, censers, and their sovereign's mantle. After the royal parents present the fairies with gifts, the fairies leave the platform to present gifts to their goddaughter.

Just as the Lilac Fairy approaches the cradle to present her gift, a loud noise is heard at the entrance. Catalabutte is horrified to
learn that the evil fairy, Carabosse, has arrived. He trembles at the thought of having forgotten to invite the most powerful and evil fairy in the entire land. Everyone is most upset.

Carabosse appears in a wheelbarrow that is drawn by six huge rats who always accompany her and act as her pages. The king and queen beg forgiveness, as does the prostrate Catalabutte at her feet. The evil fairy laughs mockingly and pulls out tufts of the poor master of ceremonies' hair, throwing the bits of hair to the rats who devour them. Soon Catalabutte is completely bald. Finally, she announces that although she is not Aurora's godmother, she nevertheless wants to give her something. The good fairies entreat her not to poison everyone's happiness, but Carabosse only laughs along with her ugly rats. The evil fairy continues, saying that Aurora will be the most beautiful, seductive, and clever of all the princesses in the world, thanks to the gifts of her six godmothers, but the first time she pricks her finger or hand, she will fall asleep forever. The king, queen, and court are dumbfounded.

Carabosse waves her wand over the cradle, murmurs some magic words, then cackles aloud, echoed by her dirty rats. The Lilac Fairy, however, has not yet been able to present her gift due to the interruption of Carabosse's arrival. Stepping forward, she leans over the cradle and modifies the evil pronouncement: Aurora will fall asleep, but not forever because a handsome prince will come along, kiss her on the brow, awaken her, and make her his bride for a life of happiness and contentment. Enraged, Carabosse plops down in her
wheelbarrow and disappears as the good fairies group protectively around the cradle.

ACT I (Scene 2):

The curtains open to reveal a lovely park in the castle of King Florestan XIV. At the right is the castle's entrance, and farther upstage, water trickles in a marble fountain. Time has passed: Aurora is now twenty. Florestan is happy Carabosse's prediction has not come true. Catalabutte, still bald, wears a comical nightcap and scolds some villagers who have been caught using needles (because the king has a declaration forbidding the use of needles and pins within a hundred-mile radius of the castle), promptly sending them to prison under guard.

The king and queen, accompanied by four princes (suitors of Aurora) on a terrace of the castle, learn of the arrest. After the young princes plea for the pardon of the guilty villagers, the royal parents finally agree, saying no one should shed a tear on the twentieth birthday of their daughter. General rejoicing follows, and the eager young men, who have not yet seen the princess, express their individual wishes to her parents that they want to be her favorite. The princes each have a medallion with her portrait. The king and queen assure them they have given complete freedom of choice to their daughter; the man she loves will be their son-in-law and successor to the kingdom.

Suddenly, Aurora runs in accompanied by her maids of honor who carry bouquets and wreaths. The four young princes are taken
aback at her beauty and try to gain her favor, but she dances between them, giving preference to none. The men begin to compete for her attention, but the princess remains coquetish. When her parents urge her to make a choice for the continuation of the state and the producing of a successor to the throne, she argues that she is still so young. Aurora wants to enjoy her freedom a bit longer. When reminded of Carabosse's prediction, she discounts the matter, saying she never holds spindles or needles. With this, the eager young men encircle and ask her to dance. She does, and everyone admires her beauty and grace. Everyone dances.

Soon, Aurora notices an old woman who is beating time with a spindle. She takes the spindle from her and continues to dance, holding it as a sceptre and imitating spinners at work. Suddenly, she looks in horror at her hand which she has pricked. Upon the sight of her bloody hand, Aurora sways from side to side and falls unconscious to the floor. Her worried parents rush to her, realizing the implications. With this, the old woman throws off her cloak, revealing herself as Carabosse. The four princes run toward her with their swords, but the crone laughs diabolically and disappears in a cloud of smoke and fire. The frightened princes run away. At this moment, the fountain upstage becomes illuminated with magic light, and the Lilac Fairy appears in the spray of water. Offering consolation, the good fairy tells the grieving parents their daughter will sleep for one hundred years ... and that they, too, will fall asleep to protect her happiness upon awakening. Her awakening will prompt their awakening. The Lilac Fairy then tells them to return quickly to the
castle where she will watch over them. They then place the sleeping
girl on a sedan chair and carry her out, accompanied by the king and
queen and the highest dignitaries of the court. The fairy waves her
wand, causing the remaining cavaliers, pages, guards, and guests to
fall asleep. Even the vegetation around the palace goes to sleep, with
the exception of the trees and large lilac bushes that grow up
magically to transform the royal garden into an impenetrable forest.
The Lilac Fairy orders her subordinates to guard the castle so no one
will disturb the tranquility of those under her protection.

ACT II (Scene 3):

The blast of hunting horns pierces the air. The stage is empty
of people, but a broad river flows upstage, and a thick forest
stretches into the far distance. Bright sunlight illuminates cliffs to
the right. Soon hunters appear and sit on the grass to eat lunch.
Prince Désiré enters with his tutor, Galifron, and several courtiers of
the king, his father. During the lunch, other members of the party
dance, shoot archery, and play games. Galifron urges his student to
join in the fun and be amiable with the ladies because he will soon
have to choose a wife. Several young women dance to please the
prince, but Désiré's interest is not sparked. Hunters approach to
report that a bear has been trapped and is ready for the prince to
kill if he so wishes. Désiré is tired, though, and tells the others to
hunt without him. He lies down to rest as the others leave. Galifron,
who is by now sleepy from drink, joins him, falling asleep nearby.
Upon the departure of the hunting party, a beautiful boat of mother-of-pearl, decorated with gold and precious stones, appears on the river. The Lilac Fairy steps ashore and the prince bows before her. She is also his godmother. "Are you not yet in love?" "No," he replies to her question, adding that he would rather remain a bachelor since no one has captured his heart. He does not want to marry for reasons of state alone. The Lilac Fairy then promises to show him his future wife, the most enchanting, beautiful, and intelligent of all other princesses. She waves her magic wand toward the side of the cliffs, which open and reveal Aurora sleeping, her friends nearby. The fairy waves her wand again, this time showing the princess rising with her friends to appear on the stage. The rising sun's rays illuminate her with a rose-colored light. The entranced prince tries to catch Aurora, but she keeps evading him by appearing and disappearing just out of reach, finally disappearing in the cleft in the rocks.

Désiré, totally in love, begs the fairy to let him see the young princess, to hold her. They climb into her boat; Galifron continues to sleep.

As the boat moves, the landscape becomes more and more wild. Evening falls, and the moon illuminates the castle in the distance. When they arrive at the palace gates, the fairy waves her wand to make them open. On the way to the sleeping princess, Désiré notices everyone there is asleep. The stage is obscured by dense clouds, and peaceful music drifts through the air.

Scene 4 opens after a musical entr'acte, showing Aurora asleep on a large canopied bed. Her royal parents sleep opposite her in two
armchairs. Court ladies, cavaliers, and pages sleep standing up, leaning against each other in groups. Everyone and everything is covered with dust and cobwebs, and a phosphorous light illuminates the scene. The Lilac Fairy and Désiré enter through a door to the left of the bed. He vainly tries to rouse the young woman. His attempts only raise clouds of dust, but the fairy seems unconcerned. Unsuccessful in his attempts to awaken anyone, the prince rushes to the sleeping beauty and kisses her on the forehead. Aurora awakens, followed by all the others, and all the cobwebs and dust disappear. The fire in the fireplace lights up again, as do the candles. The prince happily asks the king for his daughter's hand in marriage, and the father agrees, joining the hands of the two young people.

ACT III (Scene 5):

It is the wedding day of Aurora and Désiré. The king and queen, the newlyweds, and the fairies known as Diamond, Gold, Silver, and Sapphire enter the esplanade of the castle. A polonaise follows, and a procession of fairy tales honors: Bluebeard and his wife, Puss in Boots, Marquis de Carabas and his lackeys, Goldilocks and Prince Avenant, Donkey-skin and Prince Charming, Beauty and the Beast, Cinderella and Prince Florine, the White Cat on a pillow, Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, Ricky of the Tuft and Princess Aimée, Tom Thumb and his brothers, the Ogre and Ogress, the evil Carabosse in her wheelbarrow drawn by rats, Fairy Candide and her genies, Fairy Violente and her genies, the chariot of Fairy Canaries and her suite, and the Lilac Fairy in her chariot drawn by four large genies. A
*divertissement* (a short ballet performed between acts or sections) and a *pas de quatre* (a dance performed by four dancers) follow with the Diamond, Gold, Silver, and Sapphire fairies performing. More dancing and an apotheosis end the ballet.
ACT I (Scene 1):

Relatives are busy decorating the Christmas tree in the Silberhaus's home. Guests are arriving and chatting happily as servants distribute refreshments. After the tree is decorated and aglow, Mr. Silberhaus asks his niece, Marianne, to fetch the children. She exits, but soon returns with the children who enter in pairs. Delighted, the children run toward the tree to inspect the trinkets and goodies hanging from its branches. The Silberhaus children thank their parents, and the guests smile as the little ones open their presents and dance to the accompaniment of a relative playing the piano.

Shortly, more guests arrive, the adults dance, and the children sit around the tree and watch. Suddenly, the wall clock begins to strike. The clock is odd: an owl pops out of it and flaps its wings. On the last stroke, Drosselmayer appears in the doorway, causing the children to scatter to the sides of the room. The old man cheerfully greets Silberhaus and his wife and apologizes for his lateness. He is anxious to see the children, especially Clara, his goddaughter, and upon greeting them, he orders the servants to bring their gifts. Footmen roll in two large dolls wrapped in paper, a sutler and a recruit in the French army. He winds them up with a key, and they dance while everyone admires. Next, he takes a Harlequin and Columbine out of the papers. The children cannot tear themselves
away from the dolls, and Silberhaus fears for the safety of the expensive toys. He orders the footmen to put them away in the study. Clara and her brother, Fritz, cry. To console them, Drosselmayer takes out of his pocket a Nutcracker and proceeds to crack nuts. This new toy absorbs them, and soon they begin to quarrel over it. Drosselmayer then announces that the Nutcracker belongs to all and must crack nuts for all. Unwillingly, Clara gives the Nutcracker to her brother who makes it crack the largest nuts he can find. When Fritz finally breaks its jaws, he throws the toy to the floor where Clara rescues it and cradles it in her arms, rocking it gently. In the meantime, Fritz has gathered some of the other children to form an orchestra. The frightful noise alarms Clara who entreats them to be quiet so the broken Nutcracker can get some sleep. They observe her wish only momentarily, and soon they resume their previous energy. Clara puts the Nutcracker in the bed of her favorite doll and wraps him in a blanket.

The adults move the furniture and dance, after which the children go to bed. Clara wants to take the Nutcracker to bed with her, but her father will not let her. The guests and their children say goodnight and disperse. Finally, the hall is empty, illuminated only by moonlight filtering in through a window.

Clara cannot sleep, and when she is convinced everyone is asleep, decides to check on her dear injured one. She goes to the bed and tenderly looks at the Nutcracker, but suddenly is startled by the scratching of mice behind the chairs and cupboard. She wants to run, but the wall clock begins to strike. She looks up, but sees Godfather
Drosselmayer, not the owl, looking down on her with a sardonic smile on his face. On the clock, Drosselmayer has spread out the flaps of his caftan and waves them as an owl would its wings. Suddenly, noise of the mice increases, and bright little eyes look out at her from every crack and crevice. The room is full of mice. Frightened terribly, Clara runs to the bed of her injured Nutcracker, seeking protection.

Previously hidden by clouds, the moon shines through the window. The Christmas tree begins to grow to enormous height. The dolls begin to stir, toy rabbits sound an alarm, and sentries salute before firing their rifles. The dolls all scatter in alarm while some gingerbread soldiers form into ranks. An enemy detachment of mice is especially enthusiastic. The battle begins. The mice emerge victorious, and they return with pieces of the gingerbread soldiers, which they devour on the spot. Upon this sight, the Nutcracker rises quickly from his bed, and disregarding his own wound, orders the toy rabbits to sound the alarm again. The wounded are put on stretchers, the injuries bandaged, and boxes of tin soldiers open to form Nutcracker's army, assembled in a square. The Mouse King appears and orders his honour guard to attack the enemy, but they fall back with many casualties.

Next, the Mouse King enters into single combat with the Nutcracker. Just when the evil mouse is about to kill Nutcracker, Clara instinctively removes her slipper and throws it with all her strength at the Mouse King's back, which quickly reverses the situation. Nutcracker wounds the Mouse King who runs off with other mice. Victorious, Nutcracker goes to Clara, falls on his knees, and is
transformed into a beautiful prince. He asks her to follow him; Clara
gives him her hand, and he leads her to the Christmas tree where they
disappear in its branches.

Scene 2 opens with the hall transformed into a forest of fir trees
in winter. Wind causes the falling snow to become a blizzard, but the
storm gradually grows quiet, and soft moonlight makes the new snow
look like diamonds.

ACT II:

In the Palace of Sweets, the Sugar Plum Fairy and Prince
Colqueluche stand in a sugar kiosk that is decorated with dolphins
whose mouths spew fountains of various types of sweet drinks, such as
lemonade and currant syrup. They await the arrival of Clara and
Prince Nutcracker; a celebration will follow. The Sugar Plum Fairy and
the Prince step down from the kiosk, and the fairies, candies, and
silver soldiers bow and salute her as she bids them to entertain
splendidly the intelligent and dutiful Clara. The major-domo spots the
arriving guests and assembles the little moors and pages whose heads
are made of pearl, their legs of pure gold, and their bodies of rubies
and emeralds. They hold in their hands flaming torches.

Clara and the Nutcracker step ashore from the gilded nutshell in
which they have been riding, and the silver soldiers salute them. The
little moors dressed in costumes made of iridescent hummingbird
feathers take Clara by the hand and carefully help her step to land,
just as the sun's heat causes the sugar kiosk on the rose-colored
river to melt. The fountains stop gushing, and the kiosk disappears.
The couple is received most graciously there at the palace of Confiturembourg. While Clara admires the richness of the city, Nutcracker's sisters, the princesses, run to him and embrace him in welcome. He promptly introduces Clara to them and credits her with his miraculous rescue. They and the Sugar Plum Fairy embrace her.

The celebration begins, and the moors carry in a table covered with all kinds of confections and fruits. Prince Coqueluche and the Sugar Plum Fairy with her suite of fairies withdraw in order not to interfere with the couple's unrestrained merriment. The major-domo entertains the guests with a lovely divertissement composed of dances according to a program devised earlier by the Sugar Plum Fairy.

By and by, the Sugar Plum Fairy and her retinue, along with Prince Coqueluche return and take part in the celebration. Clara looks about in delight, thinking she is dreaming and feeling how terrible it would be to wake up now. Prince Nutcracker is pleased that she is pleased, and he joyfully tells her of the fairy-tale wonders and the unusual customs of the Kingdom of the Sweets.

An apotheosis follows, representing a large beehive with flying bees, closely guarding their riches.
APPENDIX H:
DROSSELMEIER'S "STORY OF THE HARD NUT"

Long ago in a little country near Germany, a king and queen had a beautiful baby daughter with golden hair and pretty white teeth. They named her Pirlipat. She was an extremely lovely little baby, and the king and queen were very proud.

Some months before the little princess was born, though, the queen was in the royal kitchen where she, at the request of her husband, the king, was busily preparing his favorite dish for dinner. No one else but the queen was permitted this royal privilege of cooking the very special dish. All the kitchen cooks and helpers had left the queen alone there to complete her secret task. During her work, the mouse queen, Madam Mouserinks, appeared and asked the queen for a piece of fat. The queen obliged, not wishing to invite trouble. Madam Mouserinks became bolder, begging for more and more pieces of fat. The queen became concerned because fat was an essential ingredient in the dish; the king craved the taste of fat. Eventually, the queen salvaged what fat was left and finished the recipe, hoping her husband would not notice the smaller portion. But when the dish was served to him, the king noticed and had a fit. One thing led to another, a big argument ensued with Madam Mouserinks, and the rodent monarch angrily cast an evil spell on the royal couple's dear little Pirlipat.

To protect their daughter from Madam Mouserinks and her revengeful magic, the king and queen had Pirlipat's cradle guarded twenty-four hours a day by six nursemaids, each one with a big cat on
her lap. The moment Madam Mouserinks had been waiting for finally arrived: one night all six nursemaids and all six cats fell asleep. The evil mouse queen sneaked into the baby's room and promptly turned her into a horrible dwarf whose head became much too large for her body and whose mouth stretched from one ear to the other. On her once delicate little chin now sprouted a little white beard. She was truly ugly, and the king and queen were most horrified.

In desperation, they employed the court inventor and clockmaker, Drosselmeier of Nuremberg, who, after much searching and collaboration with his friend, the court astrologer, discovered the antidote. Pirlipat's beauty would be restored if she ate the kernel of the Krakatuk nut. A simple sounding solution, indeed, but where could such a nut be found? Drosselmeier searched for fifteen years before giving up in despair and returning to Nuremberg. Miraculously, Drosselmeier discovered that his own brother possessed one of the Krakatuks.

Merely eating the kernel of the nut was not enough to resolve the ugly problem because the nut was so hard that even a cannon would not smash it. Further, a charm was involved in which certain rules applied. First, the nut must be cracked in front of the princess by a young man who had never worn boots and had never shaved. Second, the young man must crack the nut and then present it to Pirlipat with his eyes closed. Third, after giving it to the princess, he must take seven steps backward with his eyes closed, and without a misstep.
Many young men came to attempt the feat, for the reward for success was the hand in marriage of the princess with her restored beauty, not to mention a rich dowry. Unfortunately, many young men had to be carried out on stretchers with broken jaws and missing teeth.

Ironically, the nephew of the inventor/clockmaker, a Nathaniel Drosselmeier, emerged as the right young man to crack the Krakatuk. He had never worn boots, never shaved, and his favorite pastime was cracking nuts for the ladies. Nathaniel was immediately brought before the ugly princess where he easily cracked the nut. Pirlipat ate the kernel and once again became breathlessly beautiful. Just as the nephew was taking his seventh step backward, however, the evil Madam Mouserinks ran between his feet, causing him to stumble. The mouse queen promptly turned him into an ugly wooden Nutcracker!

Nathaniel's Uncle Drosselmeier was horrified and asked the court astrologer if he knew how to restore his unfortunate nephew. The astrologer read the stars and discovered the young man could be freed if he killed the seven-headed Mouse King, who was the son of the evil Madam Mouserinks, and if he won the love of a lady who would give him her heart in spite of his ugliness. If Nathaniel could accomplish these two things, he would again become human and rule as Prince of the Kingdom of Sweets.

[This is the story Drosselmeier told Marie during her recovery. It is contained in E.T.A. Hoffmann's Nussknacker und Mausekönig (1816), but is omitted from the ballet's libretto. It concludes with Hoffmann's]
blend of fantasy with reality when Drosselmeier's real-life nephew, Nathaniel, visits, courts, and marries an older Marie some years later. He had supposedly fulfilled the spell's requirements, and his new wife becomes the queen of a wonderful unnamed country.]
VITA

Tamara Lee Gebelt has received the following degrees: B.A. in Speech and Theatre at Northern Kentucky University (1978); B.F.A. in Theatre also at Northern Kentucky University (1980); M.A. in Theatre at the University of South Carolina (1984); and Ph.D. in Theatre at Louisiana State University (1995). For three years, she directed shows and taught theatre and oral communication at Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi. Presently, she serves as Assistant Professor of Dance and Theatre at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. As a professional dance instructor, she has choreographed and danced in, as well as directed and acted in many academic, community, and professional theatre productions.
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Date of Examination: May 3, 1995