

PROCEEDINGS
DANCE HISTORY SCHOLARS

Fifth Annual Conference
Harvard University
13-15 February 1982

PROCEEDINGS

DANCE HISTORY SCHOLARS

Fifth Annual Conference
Harvard University
13-15 February 1982

DANCE HISTORY SCHOLARS
 CONFERENCE PAPERS, AVAILABLE AS A PROCEEDINGS
 Fifth Annual Conference, Harvard University
 13-15 February 1982

Table of Content

1. Carter, Curtis. <i>Two Views of Dance: Aesthetic Theory and Performance</i>	1
2. Chazin-Bennahum, Judith. <i>Three Faces of Psyche</i>	7
3. Harris-Warrick, Rebecca. <i>The Tempo of French Baroque Dances: Evidence from 18th-century Metronome Devices</i>	14
4. Schlundt, Christena L. <i>The Computer as an Ally for the Novice</i>	24
5. Keller, Kate Van Winkle. <i>Playford, Feuillet, and Apple II: New Techniques of Indexing Music</i>	28
6. Doughty, Heather. <i>The Choreographer in the Courtroom: Loie Fuller and Léonide Massine</i>	35
7. Barker, Barbara. <i>Lydia Thompson or The Charge of the Leg Brigade</i>	40
8. Nelson, Karen. <i>The Years 1875-1929: Dance Arrives in New York</i>	47
9. Sowell, Debra H. <i>Jean Bérain and Costume Design in 'Le Triomphe de l'Amour'</i>	57
10. Brin Ingber, Judith. <i>Jewish Wedding Dances of Europe during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance</i>	69
11. Ruyter, Nancy Lee Chalfa and Ruyter, Hans C. <i>Nineteenth-Century Sources for the Study of Yugoslav Dance</i>	78
12. Ivancich Dunin, Elsie. <i>Dance Change in Context of the Gypsy St. George's Day, Skopje, Yugoslavia, 1967-1977</i>	86
13. Prevots, Naima. <i>Norma Gould: Forgotten Pioneer</i>	87
14. Genné, Beth. P.J.S. <i>Richardson and the Birth of British Ballet</i>	94
15. Becker, Svea and Roberts, Joenine. <i>A Reaffirmation of the Humphrey-Weidman Quality</i>	102
16. Schlundt, Christena L. <i>The Still Point of Perfection</i>	103
17. Adelman, Katie M. <i>The English School of Dance Criticism, c. 1930-1950</i>	111
18. Holmes, Olive. <i>The Dance Criticism of H.T. Parker</i>	119
19. Smigel, Libby. <i>The Case Against Cheironomia in the Fifth-century B.C. Greek Theatre</i>	125
20. Dixon-Stowell, Brenda. <i>Dancing in the Dark: The Life and Times of Margot Webb in AfroAmerican Vaudeville of the Swing Era</i>	132
21. Hardy, Camille. <i>Ballet Comique De La Reine: A Primer On Subtext and Symbol</i>	137
22. Hammond, Sandra Noll. <i>'La Sténochorégraphie' by Saint-Leon: A Link in Ballet's Technical History</i>	148
23. Program	155

Note: This collection of papers has been compiled from camera-ready copies from the individual authors who wished to contribute their papers as a record of this 1982 Conference of Dance History Scholars. In order to achieve a volume immediately available to the group, no editing, a time-consuming process, has been done. Christena L. Schlundt, Compiler.

The problem of my paper concerns the role of the philosopher-aesthetician with respect to two particular groups: the arts public and the creative/performing artists, in particular with respect to the art of dance. The discussion necessarily concerns the goals and the methods for aesthetics, a subject recently addressed by John Fisher and Monroe Beardsley's editorial in the Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism (John Fisher and Monroe Beardsley, "Editorial," The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, XXXVIII, no. 3, Spring, 1980, 235-237).

My interest in this problem arose from practical considerations. Recently I was asked to develop a format to relate aesthetics to dance for a tour of performances with a dance company in the U.S.A. My task was to prepare a program for the general public that would apply aesthetics, a humanities discipline, to the understanding of dance performances. The touring project had two aspects: symposia and performances. It was necessary to include the aesthetics presentation in the actual performances. In my mind the unusual aspect of the project was the challenge of how to present aesthetics to a public audience in the context of a performance. The sponsors were open as to how the task might be accomplished. The project required reflecting on the questions of this paper: What is the role of the aesthetician with respect to the public and to the performing artists?

One problem that such a project faces derives from the history and tradition of the discipline of aesthetics. As it has been practiced over the centuries, aesthetics has been addressed primarily to its own practitioners. Aesthetics is written in the language of abstract generalizations and uses technical vocabulary uncommon to the public and to the practitioners of dance who necessarily give priority to developing languages of the body. Fisher and Beardsley have asserted that the major goal of writing in aesthetics is "theory," consisting of general statements about the arts (Fisher & Beardsley, p. 236). Corresponding to that goal are two principal methods, empirical-inductive and critical-analytic. The empirical-inductive method bases theoretical generalizations in aesthetics on detailed observations and analyses of the arts, while the critical-analytic method is concerned with such matters as examining and clarifying linguistic concepts and principles that constitute aesthetic theory. Various combinations of these methodological elements are used by those of us who write on aesthetic theory.

Since aesthetics, in recent times at least, has been written almost exclusively with the small circle of aestheticians in mind, the problem is, how to get out of the circle of aestheticians speaking to each other in ways that are essentially inaccessible to the public or to artists.

In order to prepare for the dance project referred to earlier, it was necessary to accommodate two distinct views of dance: those of theory and performance. Theory based on the results of the aestheticians' explorations had to be presented in language that would interest a

2

public audience, and be understood. It was equally important to adapt the aesthetics presentation to the format of the performers so that it would not appear to be merely "tacked on". The solution was that the choreographer and I worked together. I produced a script outlining the themes, and he choreographed a piece for the dancers and me to do jointly, in which the aesthetician's words and the dancers' movements were coordinated.

The intent was to make the verbal aesthetics as much a part of the performance as possible. The process included rehearsals, during which I kept the same stage rules as the performers, and opportunities for informal interaction. This process enabled me to get a feel for the rhythm of preparing a performance and subsequently helped me to adapt the aesthetic ideas to the format of a performance. The result was to show how the insights of a philosopher-aesthetician can be presented in a theatrical context. (At that time I was at work on a source book of philosophical writings on dance. This background provided an overview of the various approaches that philosophers have taken to dance over the centuries.)

During the course of the presentation I spoke of the "humanities," and their relation to the arts. I said, for example, "In the broadest sense a humanities scholar, for example the philosopher-aesthetician, is a student of human culture. His tools are primarily critical reasoning, verbal analysis, and description, and he frequently finds that aesthetic values are his subject matter." I went on to explain that philosophers from Plato to the present have written about dance, and noted the growing interest of contemporary philosophers in the dance. I explained that philosophy allows one to put in abstract terms the things that are seen and provides categories of thought for understanding dance as an art, for seeing its relations to other human endeavors.

The term "choreography," which is a combination of two Greek words meaning "dance" and "writing," enabled me to suggest a link between two areas of dance performances and aesthetics. I noted, for example, that a choreographer who makes dances and a dancer who performs provide the subject matter for the aesthetician who then theorizes about the activity.

The concept of style which is a subject of considerable interest to aestheticians and to choreographers, suggested itself as a common ground for relating aesthetics to the dance. Style is not an unproblematic or simple concept, as recent writings and symposia in aesthetics have shown. Two prevalent notions of dance style are based on national and personal embellishments. There exists a tradition of dividing dances according to characteristics established by the practices originating in the different countries. In this respect Russian, English, Danish, and American dance companies are said to each have a different look.

Two conflicting views emerge with respect to national styles. The "look" of a particular "national" company suggests an overall quality that can be associated with the performance style of the company. On the other hand, Anna Kisselgoff, dance critic for the New York Times, argues that dancers from the same national companies, who have essentially the same training and cultural backgrounds exhibit considerable personal variation or "personal style" in their dancing. (New York Times, March 5, 1978)

Applying the term "style" to dance, Roderyk Lange remarks that a style results from the choices of the dancer in stressing some of the components of dance to a greater or lesser degree, and in arranging their proportional display accordingly. (Roderyk Lange, The Nature of Dance. London: Macdonald and Evans, 1975, p. 80) Arnold Berleant suggests a similar view of style: "In a dancer, style...represents... the distinctive grace, flair, or individual adaptation by which the dancer imbues the movement with his or her personality." (Arnold Berleant, unpublished correspondence, January 19, 1978) I call this approach to dance style the personal embellishment thesis. A variation of this thesis applies also to choreographers. A choreographer's style, says Berleant, consists in utilizing an already existing dance genre "in ways that reflect a distinct vision and personal sensibility, as expressed through typical combinations and patterns of movement." (Berleant, 1978)

Given the existence of national traditions and personal variations among individual choreographers and performers, it is necessary to consider further the matter of dance style. A third approach to style has been suggested by Pitrim Sorokin who proposed that style includes both an ideational element, which is only implicit in the visual appearance, and a visual sensate element which can be seen. (Pitrim Sorokin, Fluctuation of Forms of Art: Social and Cultural Dynamics I, New York: Bedminster Press, 1962, pp. 247, 248) These two aspects are intended to establish the conceptual and the attitudinal approaches to dancing. In theory Sorokin's view is sufficiently broad to encompass both national and individual variations that emerge within the traditions of Western ballet.

An adequate theory of style must encompass for example, the perceived uniformity of style in the performances of a national company such as Bournonville's Danish Ballet or The Royal Ballet, and, at the same time it must recognize the contributions of personal embellishment of choreographers and performers.

The problem of dance style is not simply a question of national or personal aspects, however. The New York City Ballet under the direction of George Balanchine has become a national ballet for the U.S.A., but its overall style is due primarily to the personal vision of a foreign-born choreographer. Moreover Martha Graham, a native American choreographer, has developed her personal vision into a style of dancing that transcends all national considerations. In each of these cases the personal embellishment thesis correctly points to a truth: creative individuals are frequently the dominant force in shaping the variations of dancing styles. But the primary consideration in understanding a style must be upon the images that are seen and the ideas and attitudes concerning dance that underlie these visible elements.

It is appropriate, therefore, to represent Bournonville's, Bejart's, Balanchine's, and Graham's contributions to the dance as distinct styles. Their respective repertoires of dances, collectively speaking, are different because they represent different ideas and attitudes toward the elements of movement--steps, gestures, structure and process, (See Suzanne Farrell's remarks on structure and process in David Daniel, "A Conversation with Suzanne Farrell," Ballet Review, vol. VII, no. 1, 1978-79, pp. 1-15) expression and dynamics, and subject matter. The style consists of the approach to these elements in conjunction with the choice of music, costume, and theater design. The choreographer's

work in creating dances out of these elements is sometimes referred to as a matter of "coping with constraints" and selecting from ever-changing positive resources. (For an extended treatment of style in dance see Selma Jeanne Cohen's excellent discussion in Next Week Swan Lake. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1982) Dancers Natalia Makarova and Paul Taylor have both suggested that dance style requires a knowledge of what not to do. (Cited in Cohen, Next Week Swan Lake) For each choreographer the result is something like a language of movement that is more than the personal embellishments of individual dancers or national influences.

The above remarks represent the beginnings of how an aesthetician might approach the analysis of style in dance. But already it seems clear that such an approach, however oversimplified, would be difficult to present to a public unfamiliar with aesthetics. The solution that was adopted was to reduce the discussion to a single aspect of style, to speak of it along this line: Style is a concept that aestheticians use to designate different approaches to dance. A style of dance represents the movement language of the choreographer and dancers--steps and gestures--processes and structure together with the choice of music and set and costume design. Within the ballet it is possible to identify different styles: romantic (Bournonville), formalist (Balanchine), and jazz (Ailey). (The style labels, "romantic," "formalist," and "jazz," are themselves general categories allowing for variations and change when applied to different choreographers or to different phases within the overall work of a single choreographer.) The sections of the piece in which I appeared included elements of each of these styles. Then the other pieces in the concert following exemplified the various styles. During the course of the discussion it was possible to include various other aspects of style by reference to individual variations among the dancers and to refer to the national qualities of the various dances, thereby showing the complexities of the concept. The project was a very modest one to be sure. It does suggest a beginning by which to make a bridge out of the circle to a public.

II

The project also opened up possibilities for establishing contact with the performer's point of view. This effort is again beset with problems. Dancers are highly gifted persons, but the demands of their program of movement training to prepare their minds and bodies for performance, does not necessarily allow for a comparable training in verbal, and, particularly, in philosophical discourse. (There are of course exceptions such as the choreographer-dancer Kenneth King, a former philosophy major and a writer who has contributed to such publications as Ballet Review and The Paris Review.) Consequently, dancers and aestheticians may have difficulty communicating.

There are various reasons for this fact, some of which result from the circumstances of a dancer's life style. Dancers in a company work very closely with each other. They depend upon each other for mutual success and even for physical safety, as well as for emotional security and companionship. Some dancers actually believe that dancers exist in a world apart from other persons. Fortunately it is possible to break through. The close contact with the touring company led to an unexpected

opportunity. Two principal dancers, John Meehan of American Ballet Theater and Ann Marie DeAngelo formerly of the Joffrey Ballet approached me and made inquiries about philosophy and its relation to dance. I expressed a corresponding interest in their views of dance as performers.

The discussions began with the question of the relative adequacy of words and dancing as means of communication. The dancers were convinced of the superiority of steps, gestures and the expressive elements in dancing for communication, and I felt obliged to ask for equality of words. These discussions led to an analysis of the various components in dancing: steps, gestures, technique, concentration, the expressive element or "presence," and a search for the comparable elements in verbal language. Questions arose: For example, are words and sentences comparable to steps and phrases? Are the rules of technique comparable to the rules of grammar? What is the role of the mind in dancing? What are the respective roles of ideas and feelings in dance and philosophy? A similar question applies to the body: dancers obviously use the body in their work. So do philosophers, but in a different sense. How do the performer's and the philosopher's views of dance differ? One dancer asked with full seriousness why anyone would want to watch a performance. She stated that it was very satisfying to do the dancing, because this performance brought together her own powers, physical, technical, and expressive, and provided a challenge. But she didn't enjoy watching dances by others. From this dancer's perspective the performance was an action done for a purpose: to master a discipline, to gain control, to achieve satisfaction, to achieve what she described as a "certain moment," when the movement, inner concentration, feeling and idea all come together. This is a performer's point of view.

What is the aesthetician's point of view? Plato (Plato, Laws, Books II, VII) and Aristotle (Aristotle, Poetics, 1455-1458; Politics, 1337-1342) saw dancing as a contribution to physical and intellectual culture. Plutarch (Plutarch, "Table Talk," in Moralia, Vol. IX) addresses the specific elements that constitute a dance. Adam Smith, (Adam Smith, "Of the Imitative Arts," The Works of Adam Smith, Vol. V. London: Strahan & Preston, 1811) Batteux (Charles Batteux, Les Beaux Arts: Reduits Un Meme Principe. Paris: Chez Durand) and others discuss the relation of dance to the other fine arts, such as music, poetry, and the visual arts. Bergson (Henri Bergson, Time and Free Will. New York: Harper and Row, 1960, pp. 11-13, 110-112) and Spencer (Herbert Spencer, "Gracefulness," in Essays Scientific, Political, and Speculative, Vol. II. New York: Appleton & Co., 1897) use particular aesthetic concepts such as grace to designate the essential, ambient or expressive quality of dance. More recently, philosophers have turned to questions involving the epistemological and ontological status of the dance work.

In their discussions of dance, aestheticians are inclined to look for general characteristics of the art rather than to specific characteristics of individual works. Aestheticians thus reflect a more general point of view than that of the performer. Yet such generalizations are useful only if they are faithful to characteristics of particulars. The aesthetician looking to dance performances might ask such questions as, what is the dance work of the performances? The search for answers has led philosophers to consider ways to designate the "dance work." A performance exists only for a finite duration in a particular space. It

Lacks the relatively permanent status of a painting or sculpture. Hence it is not possible to point to the physical event, except for particular moments. In what form does the dance exist "in between performances"? Does it reside in the mind/body of the dancer, or in the choreographer's memory? On video tape or film? Or can it be preserved through notations? (Or does it exist at all?) Philosophers in search of a fixed object for their study turn to notation. Goodman's remarks on the possibility for dance notation suggest a way of using notation to identify particular dance works, but Goodman would agree that the notation, apart from performances, does not adequately constitute a full account of the dance work. (Nelson Goodman, Languages of Art. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967, pp. 64, 65, 121, 122, 211-218) Others, such as Dufrenne, emphasize the importance of the performer's contribution to the identity of the work. (Mikel Dufrenne, The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience, tr. Edward Casey and others. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1973, pp. 20-25, 74-78)

In any case it is clear that the philosopher's visual or conceptual view of the dance is much broader than the dancer's participatory view. It is an external as opposed to an internal view and is perhaps subject to emendation by insights gained from the insider's point of view.

My goal in the current projects is to produce an account of dance aesthetics that will include elements of both the performer's point of view and the broader aesthetician's views. Whether these projects will produce any significant results for aesthetic theory I cannot say; at the very least they will have provided a better informed aesthetician. It is important, however, for such projects to aim toward advancing the public's understanding of aesthetics, and to explore the relation of aesthetics to the creation and performance of dance. From my point of view the primary goal of aesthetics is to produce understanding of the art forms on a variety of levels. Theory in aesthetics can be appreciated for its own interest to aestheticians, but such theory is also a means to a fuller understanding of the art for creators and spectators of the arts. (An earlier version of this paper was read at the conference on Art in Culture, Ghent, Belgium, 1980.)

BY

JUDITH CHAZIN-BENNAHUM

This paper deals with the importance of mythological themes in ballet at the time of the French Revolution, and notably the myth of Cupid and Psyche as recreated in the ballets of Jean Georges Noverre¹ (Jean Georges Noverre. Psyche et l'Amour. Ballet Heroi-Pantomime, Revived with new music by Mazzinghi, January 29, 1788, at the King's Theatre in London, Printed by H. Keynell, 1788. One act.) Dauberval² (Dauberval. Psyche. Ballet Pantomime, Music by Gluck, Hayden, Sacchini, etc., and arranged by Dauberval, February 16, 1788, Bordeaux, Chez les Freres Labottiere, 1788. Three acts.) and Pierre Gardel³ (Pierre Gardel. Psyche. Ballet Pantomime, Music by Ernest Miller, December 14, 1790, Academie Royale de Musique, Paris, Chez Ballard, 1804. Three acts.) Gardel was ballet master at the Paris Opera for more than 30 years and I give particular emphasis to Gardel's livret for Psyche. In this discussion, I shall focus upon the significance of the late 18th c. ballet livret, go on to examine the prologues to the Psyche livret by our three eminent choreographers, and finally consider Gardel's scenario noting dissimilarities from the earlier Noverre and Dauberval interpretations.

Psyche, the word for soul in Greek, was also the name of a mythological heroine frequently used in ballets during the 17th and 18th centuries. It received tremendous acclaim when Pierre Gardel first offered his version at the Paris Opera. Gardel tells us in his livret that both Noverre and Dauberval made ballets based upon Psyche and I wanted to look at their livrets and remark upon the changes. The livrets, sold at each performance, were booklets written by the choreographer in order to recount the story of his ballet in a concise manner. A ballet can be restaged with the crucial aid of a livret as occurred when Pierre Gardel revived his brother Maximilien's works, or when Hus fils revised Pierre Gardel's Psyche in Rouen in 1797⁴ (Eugene Hus or Pierre Staupleton restaged Gardel's Psyche in 1797 in Rouen. He makes some changes which he excuses in his prologue entitled: "Le Citoyen Hus au Public de Rouen" -- 15, Juillet 1797.) or when Jean Aumer redid Dauberval's ballets. In order to test this hypothesis, I myself staged a version of the Psyche myth to music by Rodolphe at the University of New Mexico last spring. The word restaged has several connotations. In the case of Maximilien's ballets, Pierre knew and danced the choreography. However, without notation, an intelligent approach to the music, movement style, and technical vocabulary of the period as well as the scene and costume design, etc., must suffice the choreographer.

The livret may also have acted as an early copyright complete with act and scene changes, cast of characters, composers, dates, the censor's signature, etc. In the late 18th c. Greek and Roman myth ballets were revived and restaged with a new vitality and expressive energy that reflected the dramatic ideas that were being experimented within England by David Garrick and that were asked for by writers in the French language suggesting reforms in ballet such as the Encyclopedists -- Louis de Cahusac, Baron Grimm, Rousseau, Diderot, and the great choreographer Noverre.

During the Revolution, Greek and Roman gods were familiar to the elite audiences as well as the growing middle class.⁵ (Alfred Cobban. A History of Modern France. Vol. II. (Middlesex: Penguin, 1957), p. 179) The myths persisted and no matter how much trouble Cupid or any other god caused in Paris, a happy ending was traditional, just as a happy ending was wished for the Revolution. Dr. Selma Jeanne Cohen noted in her study of Italian librettos (1766-1865): "For most of the ballets have happy endings. The audience expected a joyous dance to close the evening's entertainment and what better occasion could there be than a wedding, the hero and heroine happily united after all their harrowing adventures."⁶ (Selma Jeanne Cohen, Freude de Gelosia! Italian Ballet Librettos, (1765-1865), New York: Bulletin of the New York Public Library, Vol. 6, No. 9, November 1963) p. 556.) Italian or French, the proverbial relief of a happy ending was not always appreciated. For example, a thoughtful 18th c. choreographer, Gaspare Angiolini, critically exclaimed: "But I cannot stop myself from saying that there is nothing less suitable for ballet-pantomimes than the plans for the French Opera; one finds oneself in the land of enchantment and there is nothing less interesting today. The episodes are often unrelated and worse, brought on by a wave of a want."⁷ (Gaspare Angiolini, Dissertation sur les Ballets-Pantomimes des Anciens, Programme au 'Semiramis' (Vienne: le 31 Janvier 1765) n.p.) I am informed by Dr. Ingrid Brainard that Angiolini also produced a Psyche ballet in April of 1789.

A thoughtful critic of the time, Baron Grimm, calls Gardel's Psyche the "most magical spectacle that has yet appeared in any theatre."⁸ (Baron Grimm. Correspondance Litteraire, Vol. XVI. (Paris: Garnier freres. 1880) p. 135.) Grimm also praises the impressive dancing by Mlle Miller (Gardel's wife) as Psyche, Vestris as Cupid (he also danced l'Amour in Noverre's London Psyche), M. Laborie as Zephyr, etc. with the able assistance of a large corps de ballet."

In his prologue to Psyche Gardel's style reads as if he were whispering or confessing his private thoughts to friends at a dinner party. His manner tends towards 18th c. over-politeness and rhetorical flourishes.⁹ (The Biographie Universelle emphasizes Gardel's erudition; he spoke Latin and played a fine violin. Bournonville also mentions Gardel's

talents in My Theatre Life (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press 1979) p. 452.) The reason for his prologue emerges as a clear self-defense against stealing others' ideas in order to avoid disturbing gossip. He concludes these brief comments with the philosophic statement that a career in the Arts, as in the Military, is burdened with obstacles, but that these difficult experiences "often assure success". Gardel need not have worried. The receipts at the Opera grew from 5,600 pounds on opening night to 9,300 pounds per night the next month. This was remarkable in a time of such economic strain and when, for comparison, an average evening's receipts were 2,000 pounds.¹⁰ (These figures, found at the Opera Library in Paris, come from a handwritten manuscript, Le Journal de l'Opéra.)

Noverre's original Psyche ballet was performed in Stuttgart in 1762 with music by Jean Joseph Rodolphe. He revived it in London in 1788 with new music by Mazzinghi. In his Avant-Propos to the London livret, Noverre assumes that the reader is informed about ballet in general and the Psyche myth in particular. However, he still gives us a quick run-down of the plot, "in order to correct and instruct myself in case I stray from the subject." He defends certain departures from the myth for which he presents sensible reasons. For example, he removed Cupid's wings because Cupid, in his ballet, ceases to be a child, and wants rather to please Psyche as a real man. Noverre, with a true "esprit gaulois" didn't believe that one needed wings in order to make love. Psyche's wings must also go, as they interfere with "different group effects", a practical stage director's decision. Perhaps the single most significant statement Noverre makes, one that is suggested in his Letters, encompasses his credo as a major thinker in the dance world of the late 18th c., i.e., that one correct and inspired gesture is worth a thousand words. "Il faudrait beaucoup de mots pour exprimer un sentiment ou une pensée et il ne faut qu'un geste pour peindre l'un et l'autre. La pantomime est une langue universelle, qui, articule avec la rapidité de l'éclair."¹¹ (Jean Georges Noverre. Lettres sur la Danse et les Arts Imitateurs, (Paris: Ed. Lieutier, 1807), p. 38. "Car la pantomime a ses accents et son sublime ainsi que l'éloquence; son langage est plus bref et plus concis que le discours; c'est un trait vivement lancé par le sentiment; il va droit au coeur.") In short, Noverre describes a form of dance whereby quickly and dramatically the plot unfolds and comes to life with specific gestures, the flash of human movement that touches everyone in the audience.

Dauberval does not repeat this particular Noverrean precept in his 1788 prologue to Psyche although he does introduce another dramatic notion -- that character motivation makes for a more realistic and believable ballet. This he feels

he accomplishes with his novel portrayal of Venus whose fury was never properly explained in Noverre's Psyche. He boasts that he made his first Psyche as early as 1756 (he was born in 1742) for the opera house in Turin, Italy, and that Noverre followed him with his original Psyche in 1757. The earliest I can find is 1762. Dauberval disclaims knowing Noverre's 1788 Psyche and challenges his critics to find a more unique Psyche than his own, especially in light of his interesting characterization of Venus. "Let the public compare our two programs." However, he bows to his mentor Noverre by gracefully adding: "If I could now meet with this famous choreographer, I'd consider myself all the more fortunate to have been inspired by the same ideas." Dauberval (like Gardel) makes a plea for a magical success. Even Noverre pays lip service to previous artists who utilized the Psyche theme, although Noverre seems more concerned with painters and visual artists than writers.

Let me begin with Pierre Gardel's version of Psyche.

Gardel sets his first scene in a vast countryside dominated by the Temple of Venus that flanks the palace of Psyche's father. In the background is a painted sea scene with a high rock. These design elements will all play a part in the course of Gardel's ballet. Psyche enters this scene, at the beginning of the ballet, accompanied by her sisters and parents. Gardel makes frequent references to Psyche's family. As Psyche kneels to pray to Venus, the statue miraculously disappears. We remember that Psyche is a beauty, but she is also a mortal. Trouble begins when Psyche climbs on to the altar and assumes the same majestic position as Venus. People admire Psyche and give offerings to her. This arouses Venus' anger. In a coup de théâtre, the Temple of Venus disintegrates and Psyche faints. She is destined to suffer many torments alone. By way of further punishment Venus insists that Cupid, smitten with love for Psyche, participate in her destruction. This ends the first act. In the next act, we see lavish 18th c. painted backdrops worthy of Boucher or Fragonard depicting cherubim and cupids who flaunt their conquests and voluptuous delights. Here, Cupid masked as a monster lustfully courts Psyche. As she leans over to kiss him, a spark from Psyche's lamp burns Cupid and sends him into a brutal fury. The palace disappears and Psyche is seen lying in a desert where Venus swoops down and carries her off to Hell.¹² (Marie-Francoise Christout makes the interesting point that Kings of Hell and Devils were not easily believed by the turn-of-the-century audiences. In her Le Merveilleux et le Théâtre de Silence, p. 234: "Les Diableries sont froidement accueillies à l'Opéra. Sous l'Empire on juge celles de l'Acte III de Psyche de Pierre Gardel fort démodées.") The stage is split in two and a deep chasm forms in the center. "A

thousand tortures are invented to overcome the miserable Psyche." She begs for grace and release. Venomous serpents send deathly bites at her heart. She is beaten and watches her nuptial dress, a last vestige of her love for Cupid, thrown into the depths of Hades. "The horrible Furies rejoice with 'dances infernales'," while Venus gloatingly has Psyche chained to a huge rock, like Prometheus, where her agony will intensify. Psyche awakens and in a painful gesture of submission asks Venus to forgive her. At this moment Psyche's life-line is severed by the Parques and Cupid rushes in, too late to save her. He sets upon the women of Hell and throws them into the abyss. Crying bitterly at the sight of Psyche's crumpled body he unchains her hands and drops down to embrace her. Venus observes this pathetic scene and her heart weakens. She relents and awards Psyche immortality, calling upon the supreme power of her father Jupiter. The heavens open to reveal Mr. Olympus and a joyous dance celebrates the wedding of Cupid and Psyche. This leads to the final tableau on Olympus where Jupiter continues to reign over a peaceful dominion.

How the Paris audiences must have longed for such a salvation in 1790! Gardel's Psyche played to very good houses. Perhaps the spectacle of Psyche's suffering mirrored the resonant violence in the streets of Paris where people were becoming accustomed to bloody tortures both on and off the stage.

In Noverre's 1788 livret for Psyche, we notice several interesting aspects which differ from Gardel. For example, he calls his piece a Ballet Heroic Pantomime, rather than a ballet pantomime. It is much shorter (only 8 pp. as compared to Gardel's 15 pp.) and divided into 'parties' rather than Actes -- perhaps in order to distinguish it from a literary work. Instead of beginning with the palace of Psyche's father (her parents are not listed in the cast of characters), he cuts immediately to Cupid's sumptuous palace where it is evident that Psyche has already been seduced by Cupid, the god of love, in the guise of a mortal man. There are fewer scene changes and less complex action. Cupid resembles a traditional hero, especially in the long Hades scene where he fights off the demons and Parques. A fascinating last "partie" where we meet the stunning future mother-in-law, Venus, is devoted to a real confrontation between Cupid and his mother. Cupid manages to convince Venus that she must accept Psyche or he'll leave her forever. In this act, Venus is accompanied by Adonis, played by Didelot, her "amant cheri;" this character does not appear in Gardel's ballet. If Venus already has a devoted lover, Noverre suggests, then why should she exploit her son as dutiful worshipper? The impact of these singularly intense moments brings a clarity and simplicity to Noverre's story line. The last scene in Noverre's Psyche finishes cheerfully with dances and the marriage of Cupid and Psyche.

We are left with the sentiment that each one of Noverre's characters has learned something which justifies the happy ending to this myth.

Dauberval's February 16, 1788 *Psyche* livret also sounds a different note and tone from Gardel's. Like Noverre, Dauberval writes more economically (8pp.) He commences his ballet by depicting the rage of passion that Cupid sees *Psyche*, he repeats one hundred times that he adores her. It is curious how melodramatic Dauberval's descriptions tend to be. But then, melodrama as a genre, as well as an exaggerated style of presenting drama becomes common at the time of the Revolution.¹³ (My dissertation dealt with melodrama in ballet and pantomime from the year 1787-1801 using the livrets as source material.) If Cupid strikes the reader as more emotional than the Cupids of Noverre or Gardel, then his *Psyche* really fulfills our notion of the typical Romantic heroine, a damsel in distress. She sits on Venus' sensational beauty. One unusual quality motivates *Psyche*; her every step is guided by a profound hatred for Venus. And Venus' despicable actions confirm *Psyche*'s dislike. Dauberval directs Cupid to appeal to grandfather Jupiter for help (in other livrets it is Venus who requests his powers). Venus is magically appeased; this conversion seems all the more remarkable in light of her Medea-like rage throughout the ballet. An exotic touch ends Dauberval's livret when the Nations enter with all the other nymphs, in the costumes of Americans as portrayed by Huron Indians, Asians as Chinese, Europeans dressed as Spaniards, and Africans dressed as Moroccans.

Thus we have seen three versions of the same myth. Pierre Gardel tells a longer, more complicated story with numerous scene changes that tend to emphasize dazzling visual transformations. Magic abounds and disguises are often used, hinting that things and people are not what they seem to be. The courting of *Psyche* in a long sensuous boudoir scene stresses the open sensuality of the drama and helps to underline Cupid's distress at having to choose between his mother and the tempting *Psyche*. Paralleling Cupid and Venus as a family is *Psyche*'s family who are intrinsic to the works of Apuleius, La Fontaine and Moliere. They are not mentioned by Noverre or Dauberval.

The French populace followed the activities of the Royal Family anxiously and very closely, from the time of the storming of the Bastille, through their escape to Varennes in 1791, to their imprisonment and finally to the beheading of the King and Marie-Antoinette in 1793. Gardel must have seen the importance of the family as a character both on and off the stage during the Revolution.