

# The Psychological Realism in Antony Tudor's *Jardin Aux Lilas* (The Lilac Garden)

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## Abstract

Psychological realism is a narrative genre that emphasizes interior characterization and motivation to explore and probe the characters' spiritual, emotional, and mental lives. Antony Tudor, ballet dancer and choreographer, established and developed the psychological ballet. His masterpiece, *Jardin aux Lilas*, demonstrates his mastery of conveying profound, psychologically delicate emotions through ballet vocabulary and movements. *Jardin aux Lilas* is a romantic story that explores the conventions of marriage during the Victorian era through the story of Caroline, who is drawn to marry a man of fortune whom she does not love. Among the wedding ceremony guests are her lover and her fiancé's former mistress. Tudor's choreography is lyrical and dramatic and brilliantly captures the characters' moods and emotions. The ballet reflects the development of the psychological complex of the principal character, Caroline. As she steals moments of encounters with her lover, her movements are light and agile, portraying her joy and carefree mood. Her movements become more introspective, heavy, and somber as she realizes the inevitable separation from her lover and leaves in the arms of her betrothed. In conclusion, *Jardin Aux Lilas* is a complex and multifaceted ballet that offers a glimpse into the human psyche. It is a testament to the power of art to communicate complex ideas and emotions.

**Keywords:** psychological realism, psychology of ballet, Antony Tudor, Jardin aux Lilas, Victorian women

Antony Tudor (William Cook) was born on April 04, 1908, in London and died on April 20, 1987, in New York City. A British-born American dancer, choreographer, and teacher who established and developed the psychological ballet.

At nineteen years old, Tudor started his dance career with Marie Rambert and designed his first

ballet choreography for her company, *Cross-Gartered*, 1931, based on one incident in *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare. Seven years later, in 1938, he founded his own company, The London Ballet, but left after a year and joined the Ballet Theatre, later called the American Ballet Theatre, in the United States. He spent ten years with the company as a dancer and choreographer. In 1950, he joined the ballet school of the Metropolitan Opera, and in 1952, he became a faculty member of the Juilliard School of Music dance department. In 1963 & 1964, he worked as an artistic director for the Royal Swedish Ballet.

While he spent the rest of his life in the United States, he became known for his dramatic psychological ballet where he composed most of them. *Jardin Aux Lilas* was created for England's *Ballet Rambert* in 1936. Other ballet performances such as *Pillar of Fire* 1942, *Romeo and Juliet* 1943, *Undertow* 1945, *Nimbus* 1950, *Knight Errant* 1968, *The Leaves are Fading* 1975, and *Tiller in the Fields* 1978 all explored and dealt with themes of grief, jealousy, rejection, and frustration.

It is argued that although he limited himself to classical techniques, he attempted to convey states of emotional conflict and aspects of character and motivation by such means as the elimination of purely decorative choreography, a subtle and painstaking use of gesture, and the symbolic as well as narrative use of the corps de ballet.

*Jardin Aux Lilas* is an enduring masterpiece and one of the greatest in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was created by the choreographer Antony Tudor, and the music was composed by Ernest Chausson, *Poème*, first premiered at Ballet Rambert, Mercury Theatre (London) on January 26, 1936. It is considered to be the first genre of psychological ballets, where Tudor demonstrates his mastery of conveying profound, psychologically delicate emotions through ballet vocabulary and movements.

Antony Tudor is a titan of the twentieth century. In 1939, he became a founding choreographer and dancer upon invitation from American Ballet Theatre where he stayed for 50 years. In 1950, Tudor gave up performing to become head of the faculty of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet School. He joined the Juilliard School Dance Division as a founding faculty member in 1951 and was appointed Associate Director of the American Ballet Theatre in 1974. In 1980, he became a choreographer *eritus* and then a choreographer *Emeritus* until his death in 1987.

In 1986, Tudor received the Capezio Award, and in May of the same year, he was awarded the Handel Medallion, New York City's highest cultural honor, and a Kennedy Center Honor in December of the same year. Mikhail Baryshnikov, Artistic Director of American Ballet Theatre stated, "We do his ballets because we must. Tudor's work is our conscience". Tudor himself argued that "A true teacher doesn't teach, he shows you how to learn". Furthermore, a former American actress, Sally Bliss, explained "If Tudor ballets were not danced by the dancers of today, there would be a very valuable artistry lost both to the dancers and audiences around the world" ([www.antonytudor.org](http://www.antonytudor.org)).

Tudor's exploration and examination of emotional expression, verbal and nonverbal, facial movements, and complex behaviors through movement allowed him to change the technique of classical ballet for good. Recognizing the evolving capacity of emotions, Tudor relied on

face and body, as traditional tools of ballet, for human communication. For him, though cultural norms and traditions vary from one country to another, emotional expressions are universal and widely accepted.

Poème by Chausson was inspired by a novella by the Russian writer Ivan Turgenev, known in French as *Le Chant de l'amour triomphant* and in English as *The Song of Triumphant Love*, which deals with intertwined relationships. His ballet about unrequited love is as much about the necessity of people of the British upper classes to suppress their emotions and yield helplessly to the constraints of social convention. As a psychological study, the performance is but a mirror of the interior monologue of its heroine, Caroline.

Psychological realism is a narrative genre that emphasizes interior characterization and motivation to explore and probe the characters' spiritual, emotional, and mental lives. The mode of narration scrutinizes the reasons and the motivations for the behaviors of the character, which propel the plot and explain the story. Psychological realism is achieved with profound and succinct diagnosis of the mental states of the character's inner self, usually through narrative modes such as stream of consciousness and flashbacks ("Psychological Fiction").

There is often a larger theme behind a psychologically realistic work of art (ballet), the choreographer expresses an opinion on a societal or political issue through the choices of the storyline and characters. Psychological realism is an artistic expression. Similar to Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, *Le Jardin Aux Lilas* criticizes the social convention and the economic conditions of the age. It entails a social and psychological crime in which Caroline's parents plan to force their daughter to marry a man of fortune who can secure their future. The story explores family relationships, though not manifestly displayed on stage yet sensed through Caroline's inner torment, her longing for her lover and her deep desire not to get separated. Till the last moment of the wedding ceremony, her hope for a miracle to happen and the couple remaining inseparable are clearly demonstrated in their intermittent meetings all through the ceremony.

Caroline, the hostess, on the eve of her marriage to the man she does not love tries to bid farewell to her lover at a garden reception. In the end, she departs with her groom with hopelessness in her eyes.

The play is set in England's Edwardian era and is plunged into the conventions of the beginning 20<sup>th</sup> century. As materialism rises to overwhelm life aspects, the play slams the inherited conventions of appearances and the neglect of human emotions. *Jardin Aux Lilas* was first created in 1936 at a time when young ladies descended from good families bearing good manners of refinement and decorum, followed the right social graces, and maintained their virginity and chastity until their marriage.

Women in the Victorian era were viewed as housewives, caregivers, nurturers, and mothers to their children. However, poor women were forced to work outside of the household to help their husbands and make a living. Kara L. Barrett clarified that "When the women entered the workplaces they were not made to feel welcome in the workplace (outside of the household) or in society" ("Victorian Women and Their Working Roles", p.3). Therefore, marriage was a

protection for upper-middle-class women. Due to her emotional and reproductive nature, women were seen as unstable, incapable of logical thinking and thereby making rational decisions. Once married, they become under the patronage of their husbands and lose their existence. All of their patrimonial possessions are transferred to their husbands, even a woman as soul and body turns to be under the full possession of her husband. She is suited more for emotions, submission, passivity, dependence, selfishness, and mostly an object of pleasure. Hence, marriage deprives women of their identity.

The play is a quartet, comprising four principal characters: Caroline, the only character with a name, her lover, her fiancé or The Man She Must Marry, and An Episode in His Past or her fiancé's former mistress. The setting is a pre-wedding party in a moonlit garden hedged by lilacs. Caroline is getting married to a man she does not love. She must marry him because her parents' fortune has been lessened, and are no longer as wealthy as before. So, they have arranged a marriage for their daughter with a man of fortune and considerable means to save their reputation and to avert a potential financial strait and a bleak future. Her fiancé is portrayed as of great ambition, successful, and manages to obtain what he wants deftly. Thus, their marriage "will open doors to many of the old families who wield enormous influence" ("*Jardin aux Lilas*", *Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre*). During that era, power and position had the upper hand.

Caroline's lover, whom she fondly loves, is a guest at the wedding party. They have been friends and loved each other since childhood and arranged to get married as they grow up. She frequently goes through the party and spends fleeting romantic moments with him. The fourth principal character is a fashionable, about-town woman who used to conduct a long-standing relationship with Caroline's fiancé or the groom. She appears unexpectedly at the party.

It is argued in the article "*Jardin aux Lilas*" published on the web page *Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre* that the "ballet portrays private feelings submerged in public decorum, though throughout the course of the evening, brief and tempestuous moments of true emotion – of longing and regret break through the artifice", the artificial surface of custom "as members of the luckless quartet weave a web of risk, frustration, and vain regret in the over-scented garden".

Unlike classical ballet episodes, *Jardin Aux Lilas* departed from the convention of using fanciful characters or settings in ballets, presenting instead a situation emanating from life experience.

*Jardin Aux Lilas* is Tudor's most significant work. Donald Mahler, a répétiteur, expounds that Tudor's ballets rest on real people who depict real motivations and honest sentiments. Tudor has a sense of devotion, sincerity, and honesty in his works.

Deeply influenced by and immersed in pure classical dance, Mahler adds that Tudor:

has always been characterized as honest, with no extraneous steps or movements. Each movement is critical to the work: each gesture must have intention and the dancer must be able to convey that intention. The result is a ballet is dense with detail and meaning, which may not always be seen on an initial viewing. The first movement of the ballet,

for instance, is Caroline's quiet intake of breath. It's mirrored in the last, as she exhales.

Mahler further describes movement in the ballet performance "as perfectly mated to the music" and Tudor's intense musicality as "a hallmark" of all of his works. (*Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre*).

Tudor has chosen Ernest Chausson's *Poème* for Violin and Orchestra, a music that goes back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century that is rather identified as "rhapsodic and moody" which reflects the very typical nature of Chausson's tendency toward melancholy and introspection. The ballet is so musically constructed to an extent that it would seem that Chausson advertently wrote it for the ballet.

The music has not been very appealing to the taste of the audience when first published and was received as "bizarre" and difficult to play. Nonetheless, when first premiered in Paris, 1897, it was widely acclaimed.

Dame Marie Rambert, *Jardin Aux Lilas*, was first created in her ballet company, states: "The interplay of feelings between these characters was revealed in beautiful dance movements and groupings, with subtle changes of expression, which made each situation clear without any recourse to mime or gesture" ("*Lilac Garden*", *Tudor Trust*).

Joseph Houseal explains in his article "*Jardin Aux Lilas, the First Zen Ballet*":

Tudor focused on physical and psychological details to strip away the ego, pushing the dancers beyond their artistic habits and extending their mental and artistic potential, which to him were joined. Ballet is an art form of tradition and cliché. Even in the iconoclastic light of Sergei Diaghilev's *Ballet Russes*, . . . , and the larger than-life impression of Freud's new psychology . . . , Tudor was educated but not overwhelmed. Instead, he created a ballet in *Jardin Aux Lilas* that refused to let the dancers' personal mannerisms triumph, and instead laid out the magnitude of the moment experienced by the ballet's protagonist, Caroline, in unflinching terms: a plain encounter of reality as it is more real than the sum of its attributes.

*Jardin Aux Lilas* is often called the first psychological ballet that is quite romantic and is about Caroline's reality, her impending marriage and her departure from her lover. The emotions are intense in the play as it highlights a specific dramatic situation. The let-go struggle is dramatically employed through the dance and the accompanying pantomime expressions, in addition, it entails a grounding in a future of lost love. In the end, her lover secretly drops her a bouquet of sweet-smelling lilacs at the very last moment and departs for good. The music and dance depict the inability for any future fleeting romantic moment as The Man She Must Marry takes her on his arm to their betrothal convenience. Caroline and her lover's farewell is halted. A few moments earlier before his departure, they had intermittent moments of intimacy. The setting at a garden party is characterized by brief encounters and hasty partings.

Maude Lloyd or Maude Gosling, a South African ballerina, who played Caroline in the original production in 1936 outlines that it is "the first ballet about real people. All the romantic swoon of a lilac garden in full bloom sits in" irony "against the complete conformity of Edwardian culture and its repressive requirements. It is supposed to challenge rationality; to break reason"

it is rather a riddle ("Jardin Aux Lilas, the First Zen Ballet").

She elaborates that neither of these is Caroline's reality, instead it is the very moment embodying the mental and physical actions of everyone correlated in Caroline. "It was stripped of balletic expectation". The small details of the show compel the narrative,

especially when the entire cast remains frozen, save for one of the four main characters dancing their story . . . but it wasn't their story. It belonged to no one; it affected everyone. It was Caroline's perception, her insight, as tragic as it is, but it is not Caroline's nor any character's story. The story is 'just this'. Everyone is in it, caught. This was a ballet about perceptive insight, dispersing habitual behavior in expression, the naked reality of being.

The various facets of social conventions have afflicted Caroline and overwhelmed her with sweeping emotions. In Gosling's view this definite moment "was ripe with power and truth, more than lilac in bloom, more than an oppressive society . . . more than ballet technique" ("Jardin Aux Lilas, the First Zen Ballet").

The performance as a case in point ideally suited to be staged in a small theater. The cast comprises only the four principal characters. Thus, the audience can have a clear view of the "subtle, emotionally wrought exchanges" among the dancers ("Jardin-aux Lilas Legacy"). It is stated that Tudor himself played the role of The Man She Must Marry in the play's first performance.

Fay Shen illustrated in her thesis *Finding Psychology in Ballet* that:

Tudor was known for his very distinctive psychological ballets that conveyed obvious emotion through very influential and also subtle movements and gestures . . . What set his ballets apart from classical and romantic ballets,. . . , was that there was no 'decorative choreography'. Every turn and every leap in Tudor's ballets enhanced the storytelling and his works became labeled as psychological ballets because they left audiences thinking about the story rather than just the dancing. However, from a psychologist's point of view, the term 'psychological' actually may not be representative of what Tudor's ballets really are. (1)

In the 1920s and 30s before Tudor had started his psychological ballets, the cinema became involved in both forensic and abnormal psychology like horror or thriller movies. "At that time, people believed that anything that was meant to purely entertain but instead got the audience to think was psychological. Movies, plays, and ballets with darker themes were also seen as psychological" (Shen, 2). Realism in art and dance is also considered psychological. Tudor was in favor of presenting real people and not dancers through his choreography. Unlike *Swan Lake* and *Nut Crackers* which are pure fantasy, Tudor's ballets carry logical concepts that allow audiences to relate what they are watching to reality.

Alastair Macaulay of the *New York Times* wrote, "Nobody played a psychiatrist in it, but its steps, gestures, and phrases flickering aspects of repression, denial, private longing, heartbreak, personal conflict, and hypocrisy . . ." ("Under Analysis: The Psychology of Tudor's Ballet").



Shen further elucidated:

Those who dubbed these ballets as "Psychological" did not mean psychological in the sense that it is related to the study of psychology, they meant it in the sense that these ballets did something other than purely entertain. Tudor's ballets cause his audience to feel strong emotions which is why those who watch describe them as psychological . . . A better word to describe his ballets may be "therapeutic" or "cathartic" or simply "thought-provoking. (8)

Tudor principally designs his ballet around his characters' psychological needs and desires. The show opens with a background photo of a chapel building surrounded by lilac trees. A long path with short decorated trees on the sides leads to the chapel entrance and the moon appears from above shedding its light all over. The photo suggests a wedding ceremony is expected to start soon.

On stage, the performance narrates the event. The bride and the groom appear on stage, both seem unhappy. The tension between them is apparent. At the entr e, Caroline turns her back to the audience and walks with heavy steps with her fianc e. They move around and their steps are strictly marshal similar to funeral steps. A primitive funeral ritual, sensitivity, ingenuity of movement, and simplicity of pattern are displayed. Then her fianc e disappears and she walks alone. Her lover comes from her back and raises her hands which symbolizes that he is her supporter. Her comfort lies in his presence. Both look happy, they fly like birds and sit on their knees in the representation of their love chat, he kisses her hands and she blushes in shyness. Her body language shows her yearnings during her first encounter with her lover before they leap in rejoicing. The gloomy mood is dispersed and is replaced by alarming happiness.

Her following solo dance depicts her story. Her love for him, her torture and torment over their separation, her desperation about the future, her outlook on the unknown, and finally she is torn. Her lover reappears and they reunite to resume their exchange of love, though they spend their love conversation stealthily. They look around them fearing to be caught. The moment of her departure from the stage coincides with the appearance of her fianc e who meets stealthily with his former mistress. It is quite clear that the pompous fianc e is not sentimental and his relationship with his former mistress is rather based on an affair than true love. They stand in juxtaposition to Caroline and her lover. It is materialism versus moralism. Her fianc e is a wealthy man of high social rank and is more concerned with appearances. He is ready to slip into an affair for pleasure in darkness while he keeps his image as a good man as he gets married to a lady from a good family.

The passionate lovers appear once again, their innocent true love is apparent to the audience who sympathize with their sad separation. Both are in harmony yet their discord is on the edge. Their meeting is but the last sip of their cup of love. They give their all to each other before they are separated for good. Their longing and torture are tearing them into pieces as portrayed by their moves. Agile moves are danced to make a distinction between the rejoicing lovers, innocence versus appearances, and vice. Finally, she bids her lover farewell and leaves with her fianc e in desperation. Once Caroline holds to her fianc e's arms, the movements turn to be stiff, calculated and reckoned like a tableau.

Caroline's movements as well as her facial and physical expressions reflect a depth of human experience and sufferings, passions, unfulfilled desires, torment, moaning, repressed cry, and desperation. Her heart is lodged with sorrow over her buried dreams and emotions. The embodied sense of her limitations, shackles of familial and social conventions, the unbearable hefty weight she carries, and her uncertainties about what is awaiting her are perfectly performed on stage.

The show proves Tudor's genius and his choreographic talent. Creativity and craftiness are manifested in the patterns, turns and pirouettes, jumps, pas de deux (a dance duet in which two dancers, typically a male and a female, perform ballet steps together), and arabesque in the dramatic duets between Caroline and her lover and which reflect their rejoice and happiness.

The duets share a common symbolic theme of a romantic love story, affectionate feelings, and inherent relationships. The adagio (the danseuse performs elegant, often slow and sustained movements while the danseur supports her) marvelously expresses his affirmative support. He lifts her and steadily holds her arms to give her balance that would be impossible to be stricken without assistance i.e. his presence is indispensable and their separation would cause her imbalance and devastation.

The other couple, Caroline's fiancé and his mistress (An Episode in His Past), juxtaposes Caroline and her lover. The mistress first enters in a slate blue dress that signifies sadness. She desperately attempts to thwart the marriage and to catch hold of Caroline's lover to separate them.

In her pas de deux with Caroline's fiancé, her arabesque signifies distress in contrast to Caroline's which signifies hope. Their pirouette and bourrees denote confusion. The couple's automatic and mechanic movements portray coldness and void emotions except for an inferred sensual affair. Despite her relentless efforts to regain him, he is determined to marry Caroline. Her sudden turns on the arms of the two men suggest that tomorrow is another day for her and that their affair (with Caroline's fiancé) will be sustained. It is an open-ended story in which the audience acts as an extension of the performance. As the story unfolds and becomes more intricate with the interaction of the quartet (the four principal characters), the ballet shares with the audience the nature of grief and the magnitude of struggle besides psychological suffering.

In his article "Ballet: 'Jardin Aux Lilas'" Jack Anderson says that in contrast to her lover, her fiancé seems complacent, rich, well-bred gentlemen of high school rank. He is also by no means unpleasant and is expected to be a boring man. ". . . his elegant former mistress did not think so". "The way she rushed towards" him suggests her willingness "to defy all canons of propriety to be in his presence".

He comments on the performance stating that all dancers danced with commitment and tended to dance stiffly at times. A mere tightening of shoulders should not be sufficient to indicate Caroline's frustration. They dance swiftly and lightly. An undue effort is avoided even in brisk sequences. "Their duet therefore has become a vision of young love rather than a portrait of any actual young lovers".

He further argued that "As changing moods demanded" the duet are "sometimes lyrical and



sometimes hearty. But, always, they emphasized the choreography sweetness”.

Lionel Bradley noted Tudor’s craft as a storyteller and choreographer saying: “*Jardin aux Lilas* rouses all my romantic feelings. I continue to admire the apparently fortuitous but effective way in which the characters cross and recross” (Topaz).

Christine Knoblauch details Tudor’s focus on capturing the interrelationships of his characters; “Caroline moves and gestures to him as if to plead with him; he moves as if to possess her, yet unwilling to fully consider her presence” (Knoblauch, xxxv).

She expounds that “Tudor began his narratives with an idea of how his characters moved or the private and social corporeality of his characters” (xxxvi).

Marina Harss elucidated in her article “Jardin Aux Lilas, Fancy-Free” that it is the ability to tell stories through dance that is superbly and craftily cast. Tudor presents an “economy of means and the fluidity between gesture and dance” that “surprises us with fleeting un-emphatic moments pregnant with meaning”.

One of the outstanding merits of Tudor is his imagery to depict the character as a part of the dance which helps the dancers create their roles.

The ardent violin melody narrates the story of the four unhappy lovers. “His keening lament seemed to bind the characters together in their tragic destiny. There was no way out for any of them. Each character was keenly etched”: the fiancé or groom is an “upright gentleman, haunted by regret but determined to do the right thing, and above all, to keep up appearances”. The lover is “the impossibly handsome, passion-filled young officer”. The former mistress is “clingy and tragic, a woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown [Caroline] limpid and understated . . . , the woman about to marry a man she does not love. As she simply waved goodbye to each guest, her discouragement and acceptance almost took one’s breath away” (Harss).

It is a quite romantic experience and anyone who has lived a big romantic story will have experienced at some point what Caroline and her Lover are experiencing in the story of “Jardin Aux Lilas”, the effect of their separation on the audience is explained as:

the last time you will be with this particular person with whom you have shared an intimate relationship. Blessedly, we are usually unaware that a particular encounter is to be the last time we’ll be with that person, though it has – a few times – happened that I’ve been aware of an impending separation even though nothing’s been said. Thus the final moments of JARDIN AUX LILAS, when– knowing full well that it’s to be forever – always gives me a frisson. (“JARDIN AUX LILAS @ NY Theatre Ballet”)

It is further elaborated that “Conspiring with the narrative and the choreography, the Ernest Chausson” Poème “completes this assault on our romantic sensibilities. JARDIN AUX LILAS is a ballet that is painful to watch, however beautiful all the elements may be. That

last vision of the Lover, standing alone with his back to the audience and inclining his head in silent grief, is like a dagger in the heart”.

The photo utilizes a backdrop of lilac trees on a spring evening with the moon on high. The costumes are elegant, simple, and authentic and apart from the lack of spaciousness owing to the size of the stage, the ballet looked expressionist in the simplest manner. Caroline is “a wistfully radiant, . . . ever casting her gaze about for a passing glance at her beloved but always drawn back to the social obligations of the soiree by her well-meaning friends”. The Lover “ideally caught the swirling emotions that propel the Lover to his eventual despairing destiny. Elegant, furtive, hopeful and – in the end – lost”, (Jardin Aux Lilas@ NY Theatre Ballet).

The portrayal of the Man She Must Marry is filled with minute details that bespeak his natural sense of drama. The Man’s former Lover radiates the shining beauty of movement. Their relationship is sensed by the audience to be continued as well as Caroline and her Lover, despite their painful separation, the cord between them is never to be disconnected. Nonetheless, the show ends with the two couples’ separation, it is gleaned that the story has not yet ended. The audience may deduce that Caroline would experience a failed marriage and her man would not find satisfaction in their marital relationship and would resume his affair with his former mistress. This deduction is derived from the dances’ facial and physical expressions and movements. This is the unspoken part of the story. Actual wedding ceremonies are not presented on the stage to give room for the audience’s imagination to thrive and each finds or imagines a completion of the story that has not decisively ended. A glimpse of hope is rayed despite some relationship failures that the couples might have. Their reunion is quite possible.

*Chloe Angyal explains in her article “The Toll of Perfectionism: On the Physical and Mental Health of Ballet Dancers”:*

*If ballet breaks your spirit, this logic says, it’s not because there’s something wrong with ballet – there’s something wrong with you. You were not resilient enough, hardworking enough, competitive enough, focused enough. You didn’t want it enough. You weren’t willing to do what it takes to achieve perfection”.*

She further adds “Failure was unacceptable, but so was the appearance of trying to succeed. The researchers dubbed this set of absurd and gendered expectations ‘effortless perfection’ . . . (in which the goal is the appearance of smooth, effortless gliding that’s only made possible by frantic, unseen paddling)”.

In her description of how to be athlete-strong but artist-unruffled, she mentions “There is a thrill in the perfectionist discipline that ballet cultivates, a satisfaction to be found in relentlessly asking more of yourself; in practicing until your muscles don’t just remember the right way to do the steps – they can’t forget”.

She also argues “Ballet inculcates a sense of discipline and grooming. It brings a structure to an otherwise careless outlook towards dance. Words like poise, position, grace, and stance become permanent – and these aspects of ballet remain a part of the dancer’s mind and body for

the rest of his/ her life”.

In a further elaboration on the ballet technique, she illuminates “. . . ballet encourages a union between mind, body, and soul while the brain is trained to take instruction, the body performs the steps, and a dancer’s soul is visible through the expressions and joy that can be seen in every moment that is successfully executed”, principles of psychology you can use to improve your ballet.

Romantic desires and inner struggles with all its painstaking detail are portrayed in the pantomime ballet. The audience becomes aware of the unfulfilled yearnings of the inner lives of the seemingly prosperous characters. Though the performance does not probe the causes of the marriage, however, the characters’ sufferings as a consequence of the crime of the arranged marriage is the main focus of the show and it is employed to great effect. An unflattering picture of their lives is intensely expressed by the dancers’ movements. “It’s an example of ‘stream of consciousness’ . . . as the narrator describes . . . frustration with missed opportunities and lost love (Patrick Kennedy, “Characters Thoughts”).

The type of crime at that point is emotional abuse. Caroline’s emotional security is threatened, her hopes are deliberately dashed, her valuable being is ruined, and her fair right to love, marry a person of her choice, and make a family is equally impaired. Caroline’s inborn dreams of a romantic life are aborted. She is exploited to save her family’s reputation without consideration for her dignity and is treated as a non-human with no choice. Eventually, she is very much prone to psychological trauma and emotional damage as a result of one-sided power and influence. Nonetheless, Caroline’s reaction of desperation is manifested in her resistless, soft, and yielding physical movements, and weakly succumbs to her fate.

The article “Victorian Era Women’s Rights” makes clear that “This was particularly true for middle and upper-class women. For these women, not only was marriage an expected duty but society prevented them from earning their living. This meant they were condemned to a life inescapably dependent on a man’s income”. Getting married and having children “was a sacred and honored position”.

The choreography is lyrical and graceful and captures the themes of love, sacrifice, and self-denial. The music is highly expressive, reflecting the emotions of the characters. Caroline’s love for her lover is expressed through her dancing. She is graceful, agile, and fluid. As she separates from her lover and departs with her husband, her broken heart and desperation are expressed as well through her dancing, her moves are slow, deliberate, and heavy, and seems to be mourning.

In conclusion, *Jardin Aux Lilas* is a complex and multifaceted ballet that offers a glimpse into the human psyche. It is a testament to the power of art to communicate complex ideas and emotions. The nine-minute and three-second show recapitulates the journey of Caroline’s life, love, joy, hopefulness, agony, and distress. The universality and the timelessness of the theme are behind its popularity and success for it entails an indefinite human dilemma across ages. The emotions are dense and the variations (Caroline’s solo dances) are spectacular and showcase her overwhelmed happiness following her intermittent encounters with her lover.

Tudor adds nuance to ballet vocabulary by adding and conveying psychological depth. The subtle, emotionally-wrought exchanges among the lovers unveil the genial diversity of Tudor's choreographic talent and his in-depth indulgence in psychological realism.

The music implies a dramatic tone that supports the soft undulation of the animated movements like waves of the dancers, their near and far, their togetherness, and their moving apart.

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