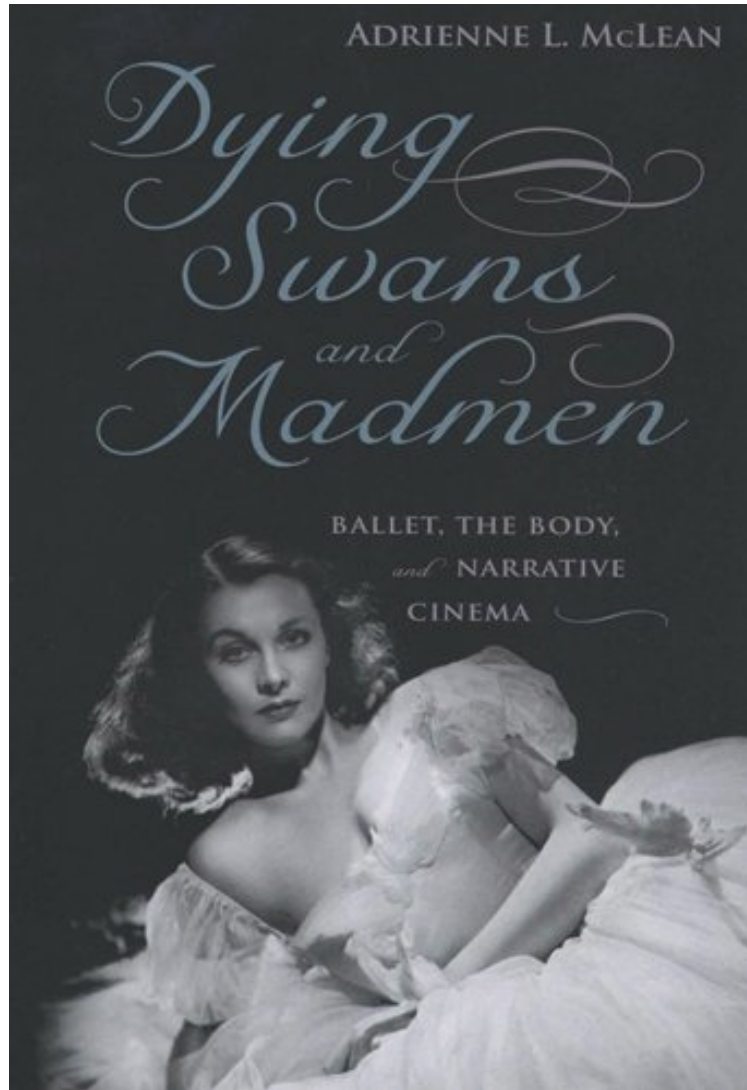


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## Dying Swans and Madmen: Ballet, the Body, and Narrative Cinema

Adrienne L. McLean

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**Adrienne L. McLean : Dying Swans and Madmen: Ballet, the Body, and Narrative Cinema** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dying Swans and Madmen: Ballet, the Body, and Narrative Cinema:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Why don't Madmen dance?By tamiiiRelatively free of jargon, and sometimes refreshingly chatty, McLean, a dancer, knows a lot about ballet and film. So, as one might expect, she does quite a bit to clean up the messy garden which is the meaning of ballet in American culture. In the process, one learns how film shaped American ballet and how ballet changed its representation in film: no more debates of low vs. high

culture, swing vs. ballet--and, no longer do women die because they choose dancing, now an acceptable career, perhaps compatible with having a family. Yet many things remain to be clarified, especially, why modern ballet films say so little about ballet--and why male dancers remain so threatening. Would the book were longer. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Scholarly book on ballet as the subject of film By Laura Prichard Recommended for film buffs. A thorough discussion of the idea of the "ballerina" in modern film, but not a detailed analysis of filmed balletic choreography.

From mid-twentieth-century films such as *Grand Hotel*, *Waterloo Bridge*, and *The Red Shoes* to recent box-office hits including *Billy Elliot*, *Save the Last Dance*, and *The Company*, ballet has found its way, time and again, onto the silver screen and into the hearts of many otherwise unlikely audiences. In *Dying Swans and Madmen*, Adrienne L. McLean explores the curious pairing of classical and contemporary, art and entertainment, high culture and popular culture to reveal the ambivalent place that this art form occupies in American life. Drawing on examples that range from musicals to tragic melodramas, she shows how commercial films have produced an image of ballet and its artists that is associated both with joy, fulfillment, fame, and power and with sexual and mental perversity, melancholy, and death. Although ballet is still received by many with a lack of interest or outright suspicion, McLean argues that these attitudes as well as ballet's popularity and its acceptability as a way of life and a profession have often depended on what audiences first learned about it from the movies.

Aside from cataloguing, describing, and closely reading the plethora of films that comprise the group with which she is concerned, McLean surfaces interesting theoretical issues concerning the genre. This is a unique and original project.