

Humanities Seminars, 2015  
University of Arizona

## *Dance and the Human Image*

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Lecture-discussion: Mondays, 10:00 am to noon, Jan. 26 - Apr. 6

### **Syllabus:**

#### **I. Jan. 26 ~ How this course came to be.**

Statement of the question: How is the art of the dance affected by the body image and the self image and how does it reflect the human image?

Definitions/descriptions of body image, self image, and human image.

Some statements about dance from Homer to Bausch.

Discussion: Dance and cultural values.

Viewing stills: a quick survey of “iconic” dancing figures, from rock art to Michael Jackson.

Viewing video clips: Nijinski’s *Afternoon of a Faun*; Balanchine’s *Agon*.

Readings (in course packet):

Wilson’s introduction to the course.

Sorell, Walter. Ch. 1; *The Dancer’s Image: points & counterpoints*.

#### **II. Feb. 2 ~ The Human Image in Cultural Context.**

The seven forms: view illustration (in packet).

What are their functions in society?

What are their characteristics?

How do they evolve?

What is *cultural congruence*? What is the  $\alpha$  (*alpha*) factor?

Viewing video clips:

Trance and ecstasy ~ N’Tum of the !Kung Bushmen;

Transition to classical form~ Sarpam Thullal of the Pullavas, India;

Classical forms ~ Bedoyo of Java; Bugaku of Japan;

Classical form re-constructed ~ Hula

Reading for class III: Wilson, “How Dance Became an Art Form.”

### **III. Feb. 9 ~ Classical dance forms in Western Culture.**

Early to classical Greece: From the Maenads to the choric dancers.

Viewing stills ~ Pan to Dionysus; masks and robes, archetypes

Vernacular forms:

Kordax and its successors ~ entertainers and pick-pockets; Commedia dell'Arte, stereotypes

Why no Western classical form?

Rome, the Church, the Dance of Death, ergotism, and the plague

Viewing stills ~ Medieval depictions of Dance of Death at Lübeck; Jewish illustrated manuscripts

Folk forms:

Viewing stills ~ Dürer; Bruegel

Folk to Social forms:

Viewing video clip ~ *Dancetime!: 500 years of social dancing*, reconstructions of late Medieval, Renaissance, and baroque dancing.

Readings for class IV: Lester, Toby, *Da Vinci's Ghost*, excerpts.

### **IV. Feb. 16 ~ The Human Image from God to Man.**

Vitruvian Man ~

Viewing stills ~

Architecture and ideal proportions.

Medieval maps of God and Christ; from Lambeth Palace; Hildegard's vision.

Leonardo and the Renaissance; the 1517 pen sketch that everybody knows.

Enlightenment, Louis XIV, science and baroque art.

Viewing stills ~

Global Man; Carlos Dyer's manual for ballet technique.

Viewing video clips ~

*Le Académie Royale de Danse* reconstructions; *Le Roi Soleil*

*Bournonville's enchaînements*, Danish Royal Ballet

Reading for class V: Wilson, "The Articulate Species."

## **V. Feb. 23 ~ Art and the Articulate Species.**

Discussion: the “embodied” meaning of the article, “The Articulate Species.”

This is a “catch-up” class. We review and discuss the topics of the first classes and preview the remaining classes: techniques, dance aesthetics, and the human image.

Viewing video clip ~ Jiri Kylian’s *The Stamping Ground*, opening and first movement.

Readings for class VI: Marie Scott Brown, “Normal Development of Body Image”

Paul Schilder, *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body*,” excerpts.

## **VI. Mar. 2 ~ Dance Technique: What it does and what it means.**

Ballet technique ~

Viewing video clips ~

Ballet basics; Vaganova class at the Maryinski Theatre.

Modern dance techniques ~

Viewing video clips ~ *Dancer’s World*, Graham technique; Cunningham intermediate class; Humphrey-Limón company class.

Discussion ~ What are the contrasting uses of the body’s “center?” Visual and kinesthetic perception - their contrasts and fusion.

Reading for class VII: Sally Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*; Deborah Jowitt, *Time and the Dancing Image*,” excerpts.

## **VII. Mar. 9 ~ Improvisation: The Ultimate Technique.**

Demonstration ~ University of Arizona dance students improvise.

Discussion with the dancers and choreographer/professor Doug Nielsen.

Viewing video clips ~ two surprises!

Reading for class VIII: Weiss and Haber, eds., *Perspectives on Embodiment*; Gelsey Kirkland, *Dancing on my Grave*, excerpts.

## **I. Mar. 23 ~ The Self Image.**

Somatic techniques: discussion with David Taylor, M.D., Feldenkrais clinician.

Discussion: the range of movement techniques and how they relate to the body and self images.

Viewing video clips: *Seven Post-Modern Choreographers*; *The Black Swan*; *Everybody Dance Now*, MTV.

Discussion

Readings for class IX: Susanne Langer, *Problems of Art*; Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Phenomenology of Dance*. excerpts

**IX. Apr. 6 ~ Dance Aesthetics.**

How to view dance - the fundamentals: technical alacrity, compositional integrity, evocative quality.

Viewing video clips: “White Christmas” with Danny Kaye and Vera-Ellen; Merce Cunningham’s *Summerspace*; Jerome Robbins’s *Dances at a Gathering*; Nijinski’s *Rite of Spring*.

Discussion.

**X. Mar. 30 ~ Dance and The Human Image.**

Viewing video clips: Kurt Jooss’s *The Green Table*; Paul Taylor’s *Brandenburgs*; Pina Bausch by Wim Wenders, *Pina*.

Closing discussion.

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Note: Some of the choreographic works included in the viewings might not be available on the dates indicated; but appropriate substitutes will be shown.

Some additional references:

Bermúdez, José Luis and Anthony Marcel and Naomi Eilan (eds.); *The Body and the Self*

Burkitt, Ian; *Bodies of Thought: embodiment, identity and modernity*

Eufusia, Lindsay and Elena Beina and Paola Ugolini (eds.); *About Face: depicting the self in the written and isual arts*

Jaynes, Julian; *The Origin of Consciousness in the Break-down of the Bicameral Mind*

Morris, Brian; *Anthropology of the Self; the individual in cultural perspective*

Novak, Barbara; *Voyages of the Self: pairs, parallels, and patterns in American art*

Penfield, Wilder; illustration of the “sensori-motor homunculus”

Robinson, George; “A New Theory of Empathy and its Relation to Identification”

John M. Wilson, 2014-15