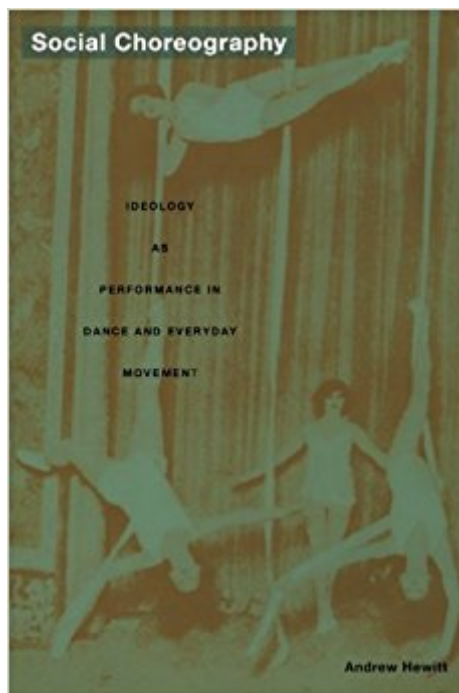




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Social Choreography: Ideology As Performance In Dance And Everyday Movement (Post-Contemporary Interventions)



Synopsis

Through the concept of “social choreography” Andrew Hewitt demonstrates how choreography has served not only as metaphor for modernity but also as a structuring blueprint for thinking about and shaping modern social organization. Bringing dance history and critical theory together, he shows that ideology needs to be understood as something embodied and practiced, not just as an abstract form of consciousness. Linking dance and the aesthetics of everyday movement—such as walking, stumbling, and laughter—to historical ideals of social order, he provides a powerful exposition of Marxist debates about the relation of ideology and aesthetics. Hewitt focuses on the period between the mid-nineteenth century and the early twentieth and considers dancers and social theorists in Germany, Britain, France, and the United States. Analyzing the arguments of writers including Friedrich Schiller, Theodor Adorno, Hans Brandenburg, Ernst Bloch, and Siegfried Kracauer, he reveals in their thinking about the movement of bodies a shift from an understanding of play as the condition of human freedom to one prioritizing labor as either the realization or alienation of embodied human potential. Whether considering understandings of the Charleston, Isadora Duncan, Nijinsky, or the famous British chorus line the Tiller Girls, Hewitt foregrounds gender as he uses dance and everyday movement to rethink the relationship of aesthetics and social order.

Book Information

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“Social Choreography is an intelligent, precisely argued new take on longstanding issues regarding the relationship of ideologies and aesthetics, one which invigorates those debates through its encounter with the visual and kinesthetic materiality of dance forms.”

•Jane Desmond, editor of *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance*

“A work of stunning originality and relentless intelligence, *Social Choreography* restores the performing body to its central place in the narrative of aesthetic modernism and its vexed relationship to politics. Taking his examples from the history of dance, popular as well as elite, and the discourses surrounding it in Europe and America, Andrew Hewitt conducts a master class in non-reductive ideology critique.”

•Martin Jay, author of *Songs of Experience: Modern European and American Variations on a Universal Theme*

“Innovative and groundbreaking, *Social Choreography* is a major contribution to intellectual history and in particular to the history of social theory. It is also a very important contribution to aesthetics where the reemergence of dance significantly reorders the hierarchy of the arts and of the tradition of theorizing the arts.”

•Fredric Jameson, Duke University

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