

INSUBORDINATE LOOKING: CONSUMERISM, POWER AND IDENTITY AND THE ART OF POPULAR (MUSIC) DANCE MOVIES

Institutional Repository at the University of Pittsburgh



My Account

Login

Search

Search

[Advanced Search](#)

Browse

[by School](#)

[by Research Center](#)

[by Year](#)

[by Document Type](#)

[Latest Additions](#)

Information

[Main Page](#)

[Getting Started](#)

[Submitting Your ETD](#)

[Repository Policies](#)

[About](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Help](#)

“INSUBORDINATE” LOOKING: CONSUMERISM, POWER AND IDENTITY AND THE ART OF POPULAR (MUSIC) DANCE MOVIES

Trenz, John (2014) *“INSUBORDINATE” LOOKING: CONSUMERISM, POWER AND IDENTITY AND THE ART OF POPULAR (MUSIC) DANCE MOVIES*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh. (Unpublished)



PDF

Primary Text

[Download \(561kB\)](#) | [Preview](#)

Abstract

The dissertation distinguishes the cultural and historical significance of dance films produced after Saturday Night Fever (1977). The study begins by examining the formation of social dancing into a specific brand of commercial entertainment in association with the popularity of Vernon and Irene Castle as social dancing entertainers around 1914. The Castles branded social dancing as a modern form of leisure through their exhibitions of social dancing in public, through products that were marketed with their name, in a book of illustrations for “Modern Dancing” (1914), and through Whirl of Life (1915), a film they produced about the origination of their romance and popularity as dancing entertainers. The chapter emphasizes the way in which the Castles represent their success in romance and entertainment as validated by pleasures reflected back to them by their audiences. The chapter concludes with an analysis of The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle (1939) in which Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers commemorate the Castles’ influence upon audiences to symbolically participate in popular social dancing through consumption of their products. The second chapter looks at the way in which representations of youth dancing in musical entertainment produced in the late 1950s and early 1960s similarly mythologized their power through dominant discourses of the folk musical, surveillance, deviance, and instruction in Blackboard Jungle, West Side Story, and Bye Bye Birdie.

The last chapter performs a close reading of dance movies produced after 1977. Dancing styles originating from disco and hip hop subcultures in the 1970s are signified in dance movies as a source for representing renewal of community, popular art, and public space by their proximity to audiences, popular song, and artifice. Modern innovations in media technology accommodate these transformations.

The dissertation argues that dance movies mimic folk musical rhetoric to validate popular culture as a source of renewal for traditional arts. The dissertation concludes that dance movies are a paradoxical modern genre of folk film musicals that reconstruct traditional relations of folk performance and reception as a consumer process that commemorates cultural progress and social change through symbolic participation in social dancing to popular song.

Share

Citation/Export:

Social
Networking: [Share](#) |

Details

Item Type: University of Pittsburgh ETD

Status: Unpublished

Creators/Authors:

Creators	Email	Pitt Username	ORCID 
Trenz, John	jjt14@pitt.edu	JJT14	

Title	Member	Email Address	Pitt Username	ORCID
Committee Chair	Feuer, Jane	scorpio@pitt.edu	SCORPIO	
Committee Member	Halle, Randall	rhalle@pitt.edu	RHALLE	
Committee Member	Fischer, Lucy	lfischer@pitt.edu	LFISCHER	
Committee Member	Anderson, Mark Lynn	andersml@pitt.edu	ANDERSML	

Date: 25 September 2014

Date Type: Publication

Defense Date: 8 August 2014

Approval Date: 25 September 2014

Submission Date: 13 August 2014

Access Restriction: No restriction; Release the ETD for access worldwide immediately.

Number of Pages: 160

Institution: University of Pittsburgh

Schools and Programs: [Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences > English](#)

Degree: PhD - Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis Type: Doctoral Dissertation

Refereed: Yes

Uncontrolled Keywords: Dance, Dance Film, Vernon and Irene Castle, Film Genre, Film Musical, Popular Music, Footloose, Queer

Date Deposited: 25 Sep 2014 16:29

Last Modified: 15 Nov 2016 14:23

URI: <http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/id/eprint/22714>

Metrics

Monthly Views for the past 3 years



Plum Analytics

Actions (login required)



View
Item

ULS



This site is hosted by the [University Library System](#) of the [University of Pittsburgh](#) as part of its [D-Scribe Digital Publishing Program](#)



The ULS Office of Scholarly Communication and Publishing fosters and supports new modes of publishing and information-sharing among researchers.



The University of Pittsburgh and D-Scholarship@Pitt support [Open Access](#) to research.

Connect with us

[Follow @OSCP_Pitt](#)

Send Comments or Questions



Feeds



[Atom](#)



[RSS 1.0](#)



[RSS 2.0](#)