

Ballet, the Body, and Narrative Cinema



Dying Swans and Madmen: Ballet, the Body, and Narrative Cinema by Adrienne L. McLean

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Screen Reader: Supported

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Ballet, with its highly codified movement vocabulary and expressive potential, has had a significant impact on the development of narrative cinema. From the silent era to the present day, ballet has been used in film to create meaning, convey emotion, and tell stories.

In the early days of cinema, ballet was often used as a spectacle, a way to showcase the beauty and athleticism of the human body. In films such as *The Red Shoes* (1948) and *Black Swan* (2010), ballet is used to create a sense of wonder and awe, as well as to explore the dark side of human nature.

In more recent years, ballet has been used in film to create more nuanced and complex narratives. In films such as *The Turning Point* (1977) and *Center Stage* (2000), ballet is used to explore the themes of ambition, sacrifice, and the search for identity.

The Body in Ballet

The human body is the primary instrument of expression in ballet. Dancers use their bodies to create a wide range of movements, from the delicate and graceful to the powerful and athletic. The body in ballet is a site of both beauty and vulnerability, and it is through the body that dancers are able to communicate their emotions and tell their stories.

In film, the body in ballet can be used to create a variety of effects. For example, in the film *Black Swan*, the body of Natalie Portman's character is used to create a sense of unease and discomfort. Her body is constantly being pushed to its limits, and her physical exhaustion mirrors her emotional turmoil.

In contrast, in the film *The Turning Point*, the body of Anne Bancroft's character is used to create a sense of grace and beauty. Her body is a symbol of her strength and resilience, and her ability to dance despite her age and injuries is a testament to her indomitable spirit.

Narrative Cinema

Narrative cinema is a form of filmmaking that tells a story through a sequence of events. Ballet can be used in narrative cinema in a variety of ways, from creating a backdrop for the story to being a central part of the plot.

In films such as *The Red Shoes* and *Black Swan*, ballet is used to create a sense of atmosphere and to set the mood for the story. The ballet sequences in these films are often dreamlike and surreal, and they help to create a sense of isolation and alienation.

In other films, such as *The Turning Point* and *Center Stage*, ballet is used to drive the plot forward. The characters in these films are often dancers, and their struggles and triumphs on stage mirror their struggles and triumphs in life.

Ballet has been a major influence on the development of narrative cinema. Its highly codified movement vocabulary and expressive potential make it a powerful tool for creating meaning, conveying emotion, and telling stories. Whether it is used to create a sense of wonder and awe, or to explore the dark side of human nature, ballet is a unique and versatile art form that has had a profound impact on the world of cinema.



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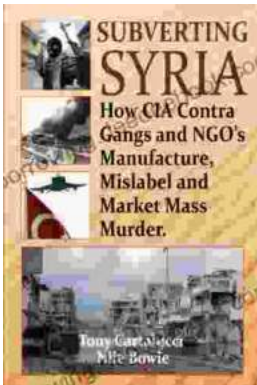
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