

# Influence of dance on culture research paper sample

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## **Introduction to dance as a form of art**

Dance is not just an art. It is not limited to a group of people who have been trained in the art and only they are eligible to perform. Dance is universal; it is the ultimate form of expression that anyone can undertake. People can randomly break into a small dance to express that they are happy and overjoyed. In a similar manner, one can use dance as a form to express anger, sadness, love or any of the other emotions. Dance is the only form of art that can be performed by any person who chooses to do so. It is also the only form of art that allows the dancer to express all emotions in one performance simultaneously. Many artists, poets and sculptors have used dance as a theme of interest and gave the world spectacular specimens of art. It has been rightly said that dance is a universal language of expression. Some of the eminent artists of their age like Pablo Picasso and Edgar Degas have also expressed their interpretations of dance and translated that onto paper by using the fine strokes of their brush. Degas, in particular, has produced many paintings on this topic that shows figures dancing.

Interestingly many of these paintings have been about the ballet form of dance. Instruments that are used to give music during a performance are also considered as fine specimens of art and collectible items. One can also find many ceramic pots, ewers and urns that have been decorated by painting or sculpting dancing figures on their body. In a similar manner, sculptors have also broached the topic of dance in their own fashion. One can find very fine reproductions of dance forms that have been carved on stone or marble throughout the world. For that reason, this paper seeks to study this in detail and also compare various forms of art that have broached

this theme and how different artists have expressed their opinion in different manners.

### **Study of dance as a topic or theme for other forms of art**

As already mentioned above, dance is essentially a type of expression as well as an art form. This means that it is a type of art, which generally involves the movement of body, frequently rhythmic as well as to the music. In fact, dance has been a fundamental part of rituals, ceremony, entertainment, and celebrations ever since before birth of the first human civilizations. This implies that dance is an imperative theme for the other art forms. Archaeology delivers the traces of dance from the historic times like the Egyptian tomb paintings portraying the dancing figures and 9000-year-old Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka paintings. In the 1920s, the study of dance as a theme or topic for other art forms began to be regarded as an academic discipline (Getlein 78). At present, these studies have become an essential part of many learning institutions arts. Therefore, dance has actually been studied as a theme or a topic for the other forms of arts.

### **Dance in sculpture**

There exists a profound interrelationship between dance and sculpture. This means that dance has been used in the construction of sculptors. The affinity between sculpture and dance is a well-recognized truth. Dance is demonstrated in many ancient sculptures. In reality, the interrelationship between for instance, all the Indian forms of art besides the identity of the purpose they share is a deep-rooted fact. In the past, great similarities existed between the form and content of dance and sculpture. It is worth

mentioning that during this period, the moment of the balance, which a dancer achieved after a sequence of movements was what the early sculptures captured so successfully in marble, stone, and bronze. For example, the technique of the ancient Indian sculpture is based on linear measurements or Mana, Sutra, measurement of space or Tala, and of course on posture or Bhanga. Indian dancing is composed of Brahmasutra or vertical line, Tala-time, Sama – point of balance, Cari the movement, Sphanaka of Bhanga- the pose and Karana- the unit of dance. On the same Indian sculptures, the dancing figures are at all times shown ‘on stage’ as it were (Little 73). The figures are essentially sculptured dancers embodying their specific roles with using all the Indian dance resources.

## **Dance in paintings**

The American choreographer and dancer Martha Graham once stated that dance “is the hidden language of the soul.” Bearing in mind that the artists also paint from the soul, a dance painting is therefore an exceptional invitation to share the inspiration of an artist. The statement by Graham clearly shows the connection between dance and paintings that is, the role of dance in paintings. There exists a collection of dance and music paintings by the artists from all over the world. The compositions of these artists manifest dance traditions of their nation resulting in pictorial testament of the tradition. For example, the artists from Ghana adapt styles of the abstract painting to depict the tribal dances to djembedrums beat and from Peru, the Varayocpriests dance to melodies of quena in colorful. Catrina dances are performed during the Day of Dead celebrations in Mexico. Finally yet

importantly, the neighbors in Brazil dance on streets during festas juninas. The artists in both past and present have been keen to detail the dance paintings. What's more, they dress in costumes that are colorful, dancers sway, swirl and stomp to tunes of the regional musical instruments.

## **Dance in ceramics and wood masks**

Ceramics and wood masks were used by the ancient civilizations during certain types of dances. In particular, the dancers wore these wooden masks during these types of dances that were performed in certain occasions. This means that certain wood masks and ceramics were used for special occasions in different communities. In most cases, these ceramics and wood masks were used in the rituals to thank God. For instance, in China, Shigong wooden dance masks were used in the shamanic rituals to give thanks to the gods, while nuo dance masks protected people from the bad spirits. The Korean masks were used during the ritual dance. In Indonesia, mask dance predates the Hindu-Buddhist influences. People believe that wooden masks use is related to ancestors' cult that considered dancers as gods' interpreters. The native Indonesian tribes like Dayak have masked the Hudoq dance, which represents the nature spirits (Little 85).

## **Dance in photography**

The connection between dance and photography is portrayed by a wealth of the pictorial evidence that is used to document a variety of dance forms. These dance forms include imitative, gymnastic, grotesque, and even lyrical in nature and that evolved over long span of the history of many civilizations. For instance, music in Egypt was a lucrative career that was open to both

women and men (Getlein 78). A number of most beautiful tomb scenes in Egypt are of banquets with young girls dancing, specifically dating to New Kingdom tombs as shown in the picture below. In addition, the other scenes portrayed throughout the Egyptian dancing history are all fascinating, mainly given the early Egyptian artists' approach to portraying their actions. There are numerous depictions within the Egyptian tombs of dancing, which accompanied the feasts, celebrations, funeral rites, and religious services. Beyond these, there existed specialized dances of a dramatic, military, grotesque, or lyrical character. Thus, just like the photography, dance was and is essentially a beautiful art that as already mentioned has been pursued by the humans from the ancient times.

### **Three eminent artists and their work on the topic of dance**

Among the ancient eminent artists, include Pablo Picasso, Edgar Degas, and Samuel Joshua Beckett. In fact, these artists through their different art works have expressed their interpretations of dance. Through their interpretations of dance, we clearly understand the influence that dance have on culture. Edgar Degas was famous for his prints, paintings, drawings, and paintings. His work had an influence on the topic of dance. Pablo Picasso was a Spanish sculptor, painter, ceramist, stage designer, and a printmaker. He demonstrated his unique artistic talent since his childhood days. On his contributions to the music and dance, he created ' The Old Guitarist' that is a paint depicting a blind old, haggard man wearing threadbare clothing as shown below. His painting demonstrates that dancing or music is actually a natural mean that people use to express their emotions.

## **The Old Guitarist painting by Pablo Picasso**

Edgar Degas on dance

Edgar Degas had a unique style of manifesting culture; he felt that Parisian culture should be expressed through his creative work of arts. He concentrated on ballet dancers, historical subjects' portraits of his family and friends and the merry eccentricities of the life in Paris. More than half of his artistic features portrayed different dance styles. Through his dance paintings, he manifested the movement of human body exploring the physical aspect and the discipline of the dancers using twisted postures and unanticipated vantage points. Degas painted of different dance styles manifested how different communities danced. He portrayed different styles and postures from different communities. It served as a platform for expressing cultural beliefs.

## **Samuel Joshua Beckett on dance**

Beckett expressed his interpretations of dance and translated that onto paper through his photographs. These photographs clearly depict the influence that dance has on the culture of individuals.

## **Comparison of paintings by Edgar Degas and photographs by Samuel Joshua Beckett**

Degas painting style reflects his profound respect for old masters. As a Japanese prints collector, his compositional principles had a great influence on his work, just like the vigorous realism of the popular illustrations like Gavani and Daumier. In his ancient paintings, he already evidenced a mature style, which he would later advance more fully through cropping the subjects

awkwardly and through choosing the unusual viewpoints. In many of his subsequent paintings, the dancers were shown in rehearsal or in the backstage, emphasizing their situation as experts doing their jobs. The photographs by Becket also depicted the dancers as professionals. However, the style he used in his photographs were not influential as the styles used by Degas in his paintings to represent dance as a theme of interest.

Conclusion

## **Works cited**

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