



Ballet Body Narratives: Pain, Pleasure and Perfection in Embodied Identity

Angela Pickard

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Ballet Body Narratives is an ethnographic exploration of the social world of classical ballet and the embodiment of young ballet dancers as they engage in «becoming a dancer» in ballet school in England. In contrast to the largely disembodied sociological literature of the body, this book places the corporeal body as central to the examination and reveals significant relationships between body, society and identity. Drawing on academic scholarship as well as rich ballet body narratives from young dancers, this book investigates how young ballet dancers' bodies are lived, experienced and constructed through their desire to become performing ballet dancers as well as the seductive appeal of the ballet aesthetic. Pierre Bourdieu's critique of the perpetuating social order and his theoretical framework of field, habitus and capital are applied as a way of understanding the social world of ballet but also of relating the ballet habitus and belief in the body to broader social structures. This book examines the distinctiveness of ballet culture and aspects of young ballet dancers' embodied identity through a central focus on the ballet body.

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