
The Choreographic Language in the Paralympic Open Ceremonies. Historical Evolution of Stereotypes, Inclusion and Identity Concept through Artistic Performance

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Résumé

This study examines the historical evolution of Paralympic opening ceremonies and how visual codes, based on aesthetics and stereotypes in relation to sports for persons with disabilities, have diversified since the mid-20th century. The focus is centred on the choreographic components, which are regarded as a world-making codified aesthetic language that operates within a mass communicative framework. The research project develops the analysis and comparison of three soloist choreographies: Simona Atzori at Turin 2006, David Toole at London 2012, and Amy Purdy at Rio 2016, along with three inclusive group choreography performances, including London 2012, Sochi 2014, and Paris 2024. The analysis is based on images, videos, archives, and International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and International Olympic Committee (IOC) documents. These cases establish a preliminary documentation to recognise historical variations in stereotypes linked to disability and its fluctuations between normalisation, diversity and exceptionality, particularly in the para sport. Choreographic language is an effective medium through which stereotypes could be revisited, redefined and communicated. Performers present and represent, through bodies in movement, the evolution of the main concepts of the Paralympic movement and the political frame of the host nation and the socio-historic periods involved.

Mots-Clés: Paralympic Open Ceremonies, Choreography, Disability Representation, Cultural History, Inclusion.

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