

## Dance with God or the Devil? Interreligious and Intercultural Debates about Dance and Religion(s)

*International interdisciplinary Conference*  
1<sup>nd</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> of March 2020

»I would only believe in a God that knows to dance« Friedrich Nietzsche wrote in his famous book »Thus Spoke Zarathustra«. However, dance is a highly disputed issue in the history of many religious traditions. A religion's attitude toward the body, especially emotionality and sexuality, affects its use of dance in religion. Ecstatic bodily movements connected with erotic mystical spiritual experiences have been viewed in an ambivalent way, especially in European Christianity.

Silent and static devotion, singing hymns and listening to church music have been preferred throughout history there. However, dance revivals have been part of the postcolonial turn in Non-European Christianity. Dancing in the spirit has occurred spontaneously in many Pentecostal and Charismatic movements since the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Ritual dance has always played an important role in some religious traditions such as indigenous Shamanism, Indian Hindu religion, African Traditional Religions, Afro-Brazilian Religions, Islamic Sufism or Chassidic Judaism. Nowadays, due to the globalization processes, dancing has even become an element of interreligious and intercultural encounters. However, dance does not figure prominently in Religious and Theological Studies, despite of the cultural, esthetic and performative turns.

The Conference seeks to explore the potential and the limits of dancing as a way to be religious: What makes dancing »religious«? What are the arguments and reasons for the controversies about dancing in different religious and cultural traditions? What are the preconditions that dance can embody the Divine and serve as a medium for religious and spiritual experiences? Can dance promote cross-cultural and interreligious encounters? How can we think about philosophies and theologies of dance from different cultural and religious backgrounds?

The Conference brings together international experts on dance in Religious Studies, Intercultural Theology, Islamic Studies, African Studies, History and Dance Studies. Theoretical reflections on dance will be intertwined with practical dance workshops in the afternoon.

The Conference is credited with 3 Credits for Students in Protestant Theology in the Module »Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology«, and it is also open for Students of other careers.

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Interreligious and Intercultural Debates on Dance and Religion(s) (1<sup>nd</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> of March 2020)

	Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup>	Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup>	Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	Friday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup>
9:00-10:30		Prof. Dr. Heike Walz, Neuendettelsau Short Introduction <b>»Dance in Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology: Challenges and Questions«</b>	Prof. Dr. Martin Leutzsch, Paderborn <b>»The Dances of the Virgin Mary, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries«</b>	Camille Lepeigneux, Paris <b>»Dance in Western Christianity during the First Centuries«</b>	Dr. Saju George SJ, Kolkata <b>»Dance in Indian Hindu Tradition«</b>	Prof. Dr. Amélie Ekué, Geneva <b>»Moving with the Sound of the Story. Dance and Religion in West Africa with Special Consideration of the Epe-Ekpe Dances in Togo«</b>	Departure
10:30-11:00		<i>Coffee</i>	<i>Coffee</i>	<i>Coffee</i>	<i>Coffee</i>	<i>Coffee</i>	
11:00-12:30		PD Dr. Stephanie Schroedter, Heidelberg <b>»What is Dance? Introduction to Dance Theory in Dance Studies«</b>	Dr. Philip Knäble, Göttingen <b>»A Dancing Church? Dance, Ritual and Liturgy in the Late Middle Age«</b>	<b>Trip to Nuremberg (by Bus)</b>	Dr. Saju George SJ, Kolkata <b>»Interreligious Dance Workshop«</b>	Prof. Dr. Susanne Talabardon, Bamberg <b>»Dance in Hasidic Judaism«</b>	
13:00		<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<b>About 12:00: Sight-Seeing/Free Time (Lunch Self-Organized)</b>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:30-16:00		Prof. Dr. Kimerer L. Lamothe, Granville/NY, USA <b>»Nietzsche's Dancers: Religion, Dance, Philosophy«</b>	<b>Discussion Groups</b>		Dr. Tatjana K. Schnütgen, Regensburg <b>»Spirituality, Dance and Gender«</b>	Inga Scharf da Silva, Berlin <b>»Beyond the Gaps of Archives. Transfer and Transformation of knowledge in Ritual Dance in Afro-Brazilian Religions«</b>	
16:00-16:30		<i>Coffee</i>	<i>Coffee</i>	<b>16.00 Meeting at »Weißer Turm« Walk to Brücke-Köprü, Leonhardstr. 13</b>	<i>Coffee</i>	<i>Coffee &amp; Cakes</i>	
16:30-18:00	Arrival	<b>Discussion Groups</b>	Prof. Dr. Ángel Mendez Montoya, Mexico City <b>»Dance and Body Theology«</b>	Dr. Thomas Amberg / Güslan Çiçek, Nuremberg, Brücke-Köprü (Christian-Islamic Encounters) <b>»Women's Interreligious Dance Project« Nuremberg</b>	Schnütgen / Walz <b>»Workshop Argentinian Tango &amp; Worship«</b>	<i>Closing Panel</i> <b>»Participants' Questions Responses by Experts«</b>	
18:00		<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Sharing Turkish Dinner at Brücke-Köprü</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	18:00–19:30 Elliot Mohlamme & Samuel Odai Mensah, Munich <b>»African Dance Workshop«</b>	
19:00		<b>Free</b>	Prof. Dr. Ángel Mendez Montoya, Mexico City <b>»Dance Workshop«</b>	19:00-22:00 Süleyman W. Bahn, Mevlana Verein e.V. Nürnberg <b>»Encounter with Dervishes« (Arrival at Neuendettelsau: about 23:00)</b>	<b>Discussion Groups</b>	19:30 – Open End <b>»Franconian Dinner« Party with Programme (Augi Bar)</b>	
19:30	Dinner						