

Gymnastics and dance brought people closer to the unconscious identity of life itself, to blood, breath, pulse, rhythm.

We feel the breath directly. It vibrates with every feature of our body, the expansion of the chest puts all muscles of the body into play. When we free the breath from constraining will and muscles and submit to it, we feel with all our senses the rhythm of life itself, the 'id' within us.

...the sensual turbulent ecstasy of movement in the frenzied lunge toward the Immeasurable that is our life"18

'The expression of individuality requires the disclosure of a "unique rhythm".

'The "thousand-fold play of muscles" disclosed by her [Leistikow] nudity made her body a radical sign of power and freedom, contradicting traditional inclinations to inscribe female bodily strength in theosophic, exotic, and spiritual terms.'

Nacktkulture was too mysterious to project any clear political identity. Far from being anti-intellectual, it spawned a considerable philosophical discourse that ascribed deep metaphysical significance to the human body.

The urge to be naked lies dormant within us, yet it is as strong as the urge to feel the light of the sun.

Open nudity is a sign of health, strength, and beauty.

Suren reminded his readers that in earlier, Teutonic times, men and women bathed together and indeed explored opportunities to live naked together. He even introduced the possibility that labor of all sorts could become more efficient and productive by being performed naked. But this naked utopia would emerge only after the entire sphere of education itself collaborated with nudity to shape the will of every citizen from a very early age. Consequently, Suren advocated allowing children under twelve to play naked together in the streets of big cities.

'Nudity is the projection of human identity uncontaminated by capitalism and socialism, the two forces most responsible for the corruption of Aryan racial beauty.'

Nudity is fundamental in enhancing women's body consciousness, which motivates all activity that makes the female body strong, healthy, and beautiful.

Nietzsche: "Beauty is not a mere accident.... [A] mere discipline of the senses and of the thoughts alone amounts to almost nothing. Therein lies the great mistake of German teaching, which is entirely illusory. One must first discipline the body....It is important for the destiny of nations and of humanity, that one should start culture from the right point--not the soul, as was the fatal superstition of priests and half-priests, but the body."

The "principle of reserved strength": a woman signified bodily power not through demonstrations of strength or muscle-flexing but through economy of movement.

Photos showed a woman performing the same task incorrectly, correctly, and then (sometimes) wearing clothes. Her English-language book, *It's Up to You* (1931), provided a good example.

[Mensendieck] did not associate nudity much, if at all, with nature or outdoor activity; indeed, she displayed a very confined, or perhaps excessively immediate, perception of the relation between movement and space.

Body culture pursued "work whose aim is not the most perfect or painfully exact performance of exercises, but the development of a person to his purest and freest form."

Giese asserted that the purpose of nude gymnastics was not to produce a woman who embodied a state ideal or communal will but rather to develop in each woman a distinct personality, a highly unique identity that could adapt well to the complexities and instabilities of a modern reality driven above all by technology.

Giese was a rationalist for whom nudity was an element of technological mastery over the construction of identity at a historical moment in which differences between humans and machines were growing increasingly blurred. He therefore regarded the body not as a machine but rather as a mysterious organism needing constant exposure in order to find a distinct identity in the world.

Peculiar to the whole Mensendieck cult was the perception of nudity as a sign of difference rather than unity between bodies.

The true nude dance, however, was "not a matter for just anyone."

Anyone can learn social dances. But the rhythmic personal dance must come from an inner drive and therefore only from those who experience life. That is frequent in children. With them, the desire to for life pulses in leaping and spinning, bending and stretching, and play becomes rhythm, then dance.”

[Suhr] contended that nude dancing “works most strongly in open nature” and that in its strongest form nude dancing signified an intense critique of the modern mechanization of human identity.

“The faith in light is pure German religion” (Lichtglaube). This author proposed that movements of the nude body in nature signified the recovery of a primeval, pre-Christian, and supremely redemptive mode of Nordic “sun worship,” the opposite of the death-darkened anxiety about the body inherent in Christian ideology.