Homework Assignment: Observing, Writing, and Moving

Reading

Read Iris Marion Young’s “Throwing Like a Girl” and answer the following questions:

What is problematic about the notion of a “feminine essence”?
Why does Young exclude dancing from her argument?
How do Young (and de Beauvoir) define “femininity”?
According to Young, what are common features of feminine comportment?
How does Young use the terms “immanence” and “transcendence”?
How do the feminine modes of comportment and motility identified by Young affect a person’s use of space?

Observing

After reading Iris Marion Young's "Throwing Like a Girl," observe the “comportment, motility, and spatiality” of people on campus or in town for a minimum of one hour.

Writing

Thirty-four years after the publication of Young’s article and in a local culture that supports a range of masculinities and femininities, do you see any remnants of the kind of gender differences that Young described? Write about your observations. (1-2 pages)

Moving

Study your own comportment, motility and spatiality. How are your physical habits similar to or different from people of other genders? Make a sequence of four simple daily actions (e.g. sitting down in a chair, taking a sip of coffee, etc.). First perform them as YOU normally would. Then find a more feminine way to perform the movements and a more masculine way. Use this process to research your own internalized ideas of feminine and masculine. Be prepared to demonstrate all three versions in class.