Study Guide:

*meSSeS*

created/performed by *janoah…anygoodjokes?*

**Questions about the Show:**

*meSSeS* is a teaching show. You might learn to physically juggle and you might also learn other information. What is taught? What forms of delivering information are used?

*meSSeS* is a mixture of mediums, primary circus (juggling and unicycle). Circus is built from “tricks.” What is the role of the trick/skill/challenge here? What does the trick accomplish? What are the roles of tension, suspense, challenge, etc.?

What role do the other mediums play? Consider: storytelling, dance, puppetry, performance art, etc. What is the result of having so many forms next to and overlapping each other?

What shapes/patterns are present on stage? Where and to what effect?

What was funny? What made it funny? What role did the humor play, i.e. did the comedy accomplish anything outside of itself?

What was your experience of actively participating in the show? How is that mode of participation different from your general, more passive role as an audience member?

What metaphors are present in the show? Consider the food substances used, the actions performed, etc.

What is "juggling?" What does the metaphor of "juggling" mean in English? When is it used? (If you speak another language, does "juggling" evoke something different?) How does your experience of learning to juggle and watching juggling compare to your preconceptions of the act? How does your experience compare to the linguistic metaphor of juggling? How might you apply these questions to the concept of “circus?” What about “balance?”

What is the relationship between the performer and objects/props. Do the props become more than they are? How are they transformed? What is built/generated during this show?

How is this show messy? What’s the effect of that mess? What is the result of having so much going on at once? How is the show ordered?

Is there a narrative or multiple narratives? What stories did you create watching the show?

What are the soundscapes? What other senses are engaged?

How does the show engage with time?

What is the relationship of the performer to work/labor/effort?

How does the show comment on the Right and Left halves of your body? Do you feel any differently about your right and left hands after the show?

**Texts in the Show**

1) The soundtrack to the coffee segment of *meSSeS* was pieced together from this interview with Sarah Nicolozzo (literary scholar) on *Who Makes Cents? A History of Capitalism Podcast*, Episode 3: https://whomakescentspodcast.com/2014/07/02/sarah-nicolazzo-on-18th-century-vagrancy/

Direct Link:

<http://hwcdn.libsyn.com/p/a/1/4/a145f6f3f15913a7/SarahNicolazzoFINAL.m4a?c_id=7346116&cs_id=7346116&destination_id=195421&expiration=1585504662&hwt=d4e62247572e627c001a9b5fb47c4f2f>

How does this interview see economic logic, as opposed to other forms of knowledge? How does this discussion on ways of knowing connect to *meSSeS*?

How does this interview see narrative and its role in shaping opinion?

How does this interview see labor/work, especially in terms of efficiency? How does labor relate to wandering/vagrancy/freedom? Connect these concepts to *meSSeS*.

What does this interview say about bodies in public space, especially queer and POC bodies? Why might circus be an appropriate medium for exploring the politics of the body?

What was the effect of having this interview played over juggling? How do they connect, detract from or illuminate each other?

2) The text read during the tea segment of *meSSeS* comes from *The Metaphors We Live By* (George Lakoff and Mark Johnson), pg. 67.

**Other Resources**

*Disappearing Acts*

part 1: <http://circusnow.org/disappearing-acts-updating-the-contemporary-circus/>

part 2: <http://circusnow.org/part-2-disappearing-acts-updating-the-contemporary-circus/>

*Hidden Brain*

<https://www.npr.org/2019/02/01/690656459/one-head-two-brains-how-the-brains-hemispheres-shape-the-world-we-see>