



Assignment C: Study Questions and Answers for *Appalachian Spring*

Before viewing the film, read through these questions, so you know what to observe during the screening.

Feel free to take notes.

- Describe your take on the four female Followers — their group personality and the purposes they serve in the development of the choreography.
 - Be prepared to backup you position with specific examples

Encourage students to note the Followers' group mentality and devotion to the Revivalist.

- What particular aspects of frontier life is the Husbandman looking forward to?
 - How does he reveal his anticipation?
 - Give particular attention to the nature of his body movements.

Students should note the plowing, shooting distance-gazing gestures.

- What are some of the Bride's anticipated joys, anxieties and fears?
 - Describe specific ways she projects them. Note the tenderness in the couple's relationship.

The Bride dances joyfully at the prospect of married life in the new frontier. But she also shows anxiety about being in such solitude and vast open space.

Remind students to note the birthing and baby images.

- What is the message of the Revivalist's dance sermon?
 - Explain how his forecasts are in opposition to Quaker-type Inner Sprit beliefs.
 - Clarify how the Revivalist and his Calvinist-type message mirror the historical profile of the Second Great Awakening and frontier religion in America in 1830.

- How would you describe the reaction of the girls to the dance text of the Revivalist's sermon?

Encourage students to review accounts of the wildly frenzied, roll on the floor-type, twitching behavior of congregations at evangelical Revival meetings of the Second Great Awakening. These movements were displayed when they felt they had been infused with the Holy Spirit.

- What role does the Pioneer Woman play in the development of the choreography?

Suggest that the Pioneer Woman is one of Graham's archetypal figures – an all-knowing prophet of sorts. Within her consciousness, she recognizes the hardships, joy and challenges of what a pioneer future holds for the couple.

She is also an affirming figure of the frontier myth, the beauty and worthiness — representing the independence, freedom and satisfaction of conquering the untamed American wilderness.

- What is the choreography's denouement — how is the narrative thread brought together at the end?
 - In what specific ways does the denouement affirm the myth of America frontier life and the pioneer spirit?

The couple is left alone with reaffirmations of their love and stalwart visions of their ability to cope with whatever their future holds.

Mention the optimism of Shelly's line, "If winter comes, can spring be far behind."