


5-1-1994

# Dance: Challenging Physical and Mental Boundaries

Jennifer McDowell

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/dance\\_theses](http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/dance_theses)

 Part of the [Dance Commons](#), [Other Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#), and the [Performance Studies Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

McDowell, Jennifer, "Dance: Challenging Physical and Mental Boundaries" (1994). *Dance Undergraduate Theses*. 15.  
[http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/dance\\_theses/15](http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/dance_theses/15)

This Campus Access only theses is brought to you for free and open access by the Dance at Digital Commons @ Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dance Undergraduate Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@lmu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@lmu.edu).

# DANCE



Jennifer McDowell '94

Challenging  
Physical and mental boundaries

## Towards a Dance Aesthetic

As the title of this piece suggests, I do not consider this to be a definitive statement of my dance aesthetic. I don't believe that is possible, because my conception of dance and of aesthetic principals is continuously changing. It develops dimensionally as I gain new insights, history and self knowledge, and it is transformed by introduction to new works.

When I first fell in love with dance, I was probably about 5 years old. I would turn on PBS ballet specials, and I would prance around the room in my nightgown. I would leap through the hall, balance precariously (and I was sure quite gracefully) on the entryway step, and I would beat my legs furiously in the air trying to capture some of the magic that I knew had to be behind such movement. Dance to me then was light and air. It was about an ethereal beauty which emanated from the dancers. I tried ballet class at this point in my life, but I hated it. I thought the teacher was stupid. Why was she showing us stupid feet positions? That had nothing to do with air or beauty!! So I made my mother buy me a tutu instead of classes, so that I could prance better, and look more beautiful. Who needs feet positions?. I liked my way better.

The next time I discovered true movement was in high school. I enrolled in a community yoga class through the adult education program. I did it to help me release some of

the tension I was accumulating from my accelerated classes, but I experienced so much more. My teacher had a very even tone and rhythm to her voice and instruction and in between our poses and stretches, I discovered my breath. It was an empowering discovery, for while I was in that class I didn't feel like such a cerebral clod. I moved smoothly from asana to asana, my breath initiating each transition. I felt a power and grace that was both relaxing and stimulating.

My senior year our honors class did a project which involved extensive research on an artist, and eventual role-playing exercises. I didn't want to be any of the conventional painters or sculptors, so I researched and found an interesting subject -- Isadora Duncan. The more I researched Isadora, the more I connected with her, and the more connected I became to dance. It was still a mostly cerebral connection, of course, but it was an honest connection. I knew what Isadora meant when she said that all movement is centered at the solar plexus, and I admired her earthy yet air-filled style. She was a rebel, and she exhibited little fear. I envied that energy and spirit, and I felt I'd discovered a personal saint.

My visceral journey through dance didn't begin until I came to Loyola. Here I was challenged to embody what I envisioned. It wasn't easy for me at all. I had to overcome many barriers within myself, and I found that the more I experienced dance, the more I learned about dance's origins, history, applications, and variations, my conception of dance was transformed.

Dance, I discovered, is not always beautiful. It is not always graceful, and it is not always light. In fact, dance is not necessarily always movement. It can be found in stillness. It can be grand or base, social, political or just plain movement for the sake of moving. The scope of dance is wide, ranging from the primitive animal imitations, to the codified ballet, to performance art where the movement may be limited to sitting down, standing up, and pouring ketchup down your pants. In fact, after all this time studying dance I find that I am farther away from a clear definition than I was when I began.

I think that the essence of dance is not easily captured in just a few words or sentences. Dance may be called many things and many things may be called dance depending on where and how it is being performed. I use the word perform lightly here because dance need not always be a formal stage performance. Dance is ritual to some, therapy to others, and a way of life for many. But whether it is staged or impulsive, dance is always an expression, a physical manifestation, a human symbol. Dance speaks to us through our kinesthetic sense and evokes a response -- be it emotional, intellectual or aesthetic. The one constant in dance is expression.

When Sigmund Freud proclaimed that "you can not not communicate" he was referring to minute movements of the eyes and digits, as well as grosser movements known as body language. Indeed movement is the most basic form of

language. When dance is performed, it is the most primal, and therefore, I believe, most discretely effective form of communication. We perceive this expression through our kinesthetic sense. The message may be overt and pivotal, such as a dance commentary on AIDS or homosexuality. Or it may be a more discrete message, communicating a feeling or simply the choreographer's own aesthetic.

My own preference is toward lyrically expressive pieces. By that I mean pieces that do not necessarily get in your face (although there certainly is a place for those types as well). Rather, I prefer a lyrical expressiveness, one that is connected to the earth in a way that binds you to it through this common connection, and expresses through very visceral and easily perceived movements. Movement should touch people very deeply. I am a big believer in connection. When the dancers are connected to their bodies, honest and deep in their movements, and connected to the other dancers, than the audience cannot help but be connected as well.

Movement appeals to me when it is really raw. This is why I am so drawn to Black Dance. It is raw, visceral and real. This is also why I am so attracted to improvisation, and in particular to contact improvisation. Choreographed work sometimes ties up my brain, and I lose touch with the physicality of the movement. With improvisation, however, there is only the moment, only the life within the movement of now to sustain you. Isadora understood about the real.

That is why she spent so many hours standing in one spot, trying to locate the origin of movement. She knew that to call herself a dancer she must find the true connection within herself, the impetus, the real.

Conversely, this is why I am not drawn to more mental forms of dance such as ballet, or even the connected yet, for me at least, the too abstracted technique of Graham. When I watch the masters of these techniques, I know that they have found the connection, that this is real to them. But arabesques and chaines simply do not resonate as deeply in me as does the previous mentioned forms.

Still, each dance has its place, for each dance form represents not only the choreographer's aesthetic or the dancer's connection, but each conveys a different sense of consciousness. Art is not simply beauty, of course. It is a symbol. It is the key to understanding ourselves and our human condition. How are we to know what man is? By examining his products, his pragmata, his art. Though dance is more of a temporal art form, and thus not as available to philosophical analysis, the history and development of dance coincides with the development of the human consciousness. Thus, by studying dance forms, and even specific dance pieces, we may come to understand the consciousness which begat it. Ballet, for instance, represents man's realization of space and his emergence into a mental mode of consciousness. That is why ballet is so heavily based on directions, performed on a procenium, arch stage, and why it

is such a precise and codified art form. The mental consciousness of the day could not have produced any other type of dance. Court dances reflect this attention to line and perspective, as well as patterned movement. Even the peasants incorporated this consciousness into their dances.

This philosophical insight has transformed the way that I look at art and dance. I now perceive dance kinesthetically, connectively, and symbolically. But while my aesthetic may change, the reason I dance has not changed in over 15 years. I dance because I love the feeling of it.

I am not the most beautiful dancer to watch, in fact I'm often not nice to watch at all, but I've come back to the realization that dance isn't about how technically perfect I am. I want to be expressive, of course, but for me the best way to express is to feel fully. To let go of my fears and technical worries and just give in to the movement. When I do this, I feel the light radiating from my solar plexus, I experience the primal contraction of my pelvis, and I feel the world spinning and breathing beneath me. This may sound like an overdramatization, but I assure you it is not. This state is not a common one, but its frequency and intensity is enough to keep me dancing.

In a way, I think I've gone back to being that little girl in the nightgown. The difference is that now I can call myself a dancer.



## Lisa's Aesthetic

Much like myself, Lisa's aesthetic focuses very little on how the dance should look. Rather, Lisa is concerned with how dance feels, and the developmental possibilities inherent in dance and dance movement. "Dance," Lisa proclaims, "is a remarkable experience."

This experience, she believes, is a completely natural and healthy exertion of energy. By dancing, energy is expended in positive outburst, leaving the mind and body more fit to perform, freer to focus, and more released. Once movement has been engaged in, she contends, people are more open to outside factors. To her this is particularly important with regards to children in the classroom. They can much more fully absorb information they are receiving, she claims, when they have moved and expended some of their excess energy.


Furthermore, the physiological benefits of dance should be available to everyone. Dance helps develop coordination, a sense of balance, it increases sensitivity and the ability to use speed. Dance allows us to move experiment with "moving freely with abandon" as well as "steady with care" and we discover our sense of balance in stillness.

Lisa recognizes, of course, that dance is an art and a form of communication and expression. Still, she seems more interested in what dance can give the dancer than what the choreographer can create from manipulations of the dance.

She believes that dance may energize and empower the individual, and yet also foster a communality.


I can envision Lisa moving with children in her future classroom. She will foster in them a sense of self-esteem, control, and release which they might not have discovered so early on their own. This will bond her students to her, and help her gain their admiration as well as their attention.

I am glad that Lisa is following through with her ideals. She did not decide to make dance a career, but it has touched her to the point that she feels the need to reach out to other people, to children, and share the gift of movement with them.




## Flashbacks

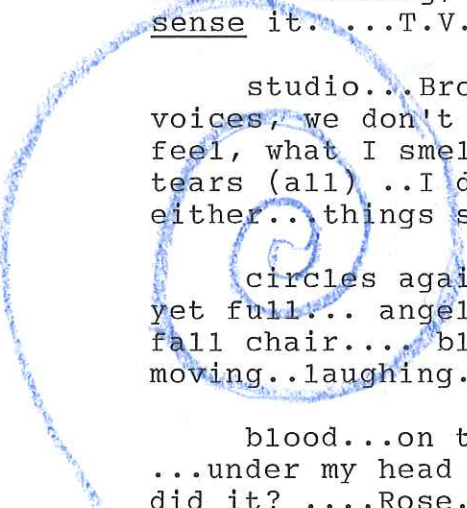
Freshman year...fund of comp...fear and anxiety...soft hands on my shoulders and whispers in my ear...soft flesh (Annie or Bridget)...encouraging...I'll keep trying



Rappas wrapped around long black legs...bare feet, stomp flat on the ground...watch the hips, the hips are the key...rhythm, deep and thick...my face is beet red from exertion, yet I don't stop...the rhythm, the spirit takes over..want to stop? Sing instead, or contract harder, or breathe, breathe, breathe, breathe...Africans dance for days at a time..they dance in the womb..they are the dance





Fear..anxiety..questions...WHY..smoke fills the air and we sit on the grass and count the fires...six? seven...we can't sleep.. we can't get drunk (though we try)...we're sick of talking, don't want to see it, hear it, smell it, sense it. ....T.V. 24 hour live coverage...what is happening?



studio...Bronica... circle, talking, crying, raised voices, we don't know...we can't understand..tell me what I feel, what I smell....circle...soft flesh (Bronica), warm tears (all) ..I don't get it, at least you don't either... things shouldn't be like this...viol

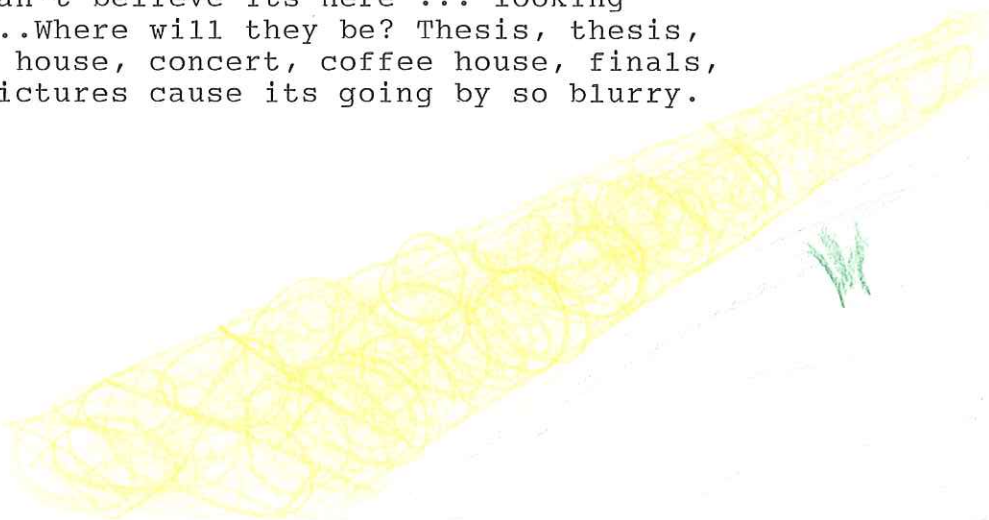
circles again, this time calm.... concert stage, bare yet full... angels with bows... for me? ... please don't fall chair.... blue dress and women... moving..laughing..moving..touching..moving..grace

blood...on the sheets, blood...in the corner, blood ...under my head as I sleep...only I can't sleep, what if he did it? ....Rose..loathe, I can't do it...I don't want to try... Nothing left...ridicule.... what can I do ... sleep ....sleep... die



circle again, concert....I'm a devil, I'm a witch, I'm a fairy...I feel comfortable on the stage for the first time. Warming up in the hall with the girls, can I borrow some make-up? ....this is the butterfly concert.... and I discover my performance

senior year...I can't believe its here ... looking around Dance thesis ....Where will they be? Thesis, thesis, thesis, thesis, coffee house, concert, coffee house, finals, its too fast. I snap pictures cause its going by so blurry. Now...



## Career Plot

For the past four years, dance has been an integral part of my life. I have devoted countless hours to creating, rehearsing and performing dance works. Dance has become a tremendous outlet for me, and it has brought me to a whole new understanding of both my body and my inner self. My journey into the world of dance is an irreversible one, I can never leave dance all together. But, while I plan to never stop moving, performing and living through dance, I can not see myself making a career out of dance performance or choreography. For me, dance is a passion, and yet it is not a lifestyle.

There are two other passions that I've also been developing over the past years which I believe do hold some promise for my future. These two passions are writing and production. In the next few years I plan to stay involved with both of these areas of interest. Each allows me to stay involved with the arts, and each will allow me the creative freedom and possibilities that I need to sustain interest.

Writing has always been something I enjoy doing, and most people enjoy reading what I write. I have been getting practice with writing at Loyola, and yet academic style is much different than the kind of voice writers use in magazines and non-fiction works. Therefore, I need more training and experience in popular writing. I've been

getting this kind of experience at Whole Life Times. I started there in March as an editorial intern, and I gained experience and knowledge as to how pieces are submitted, chosen, edited, transcribed, edited more, proofread and published. Since its such a small office, I also learned about different aspects of publishing a paper, such as sales, distribution and layout. Now I've been hired there as an office assistant. I am basically the magazines Girl Friday so I am learning more and more about the magazine publishing business everyday. In fact, I have been assigned to write a review for the July issue on a dance seminar conducted by Gabrielle Roth! Though I am learning from and enjoying my time at Whole Life Times, I will leave it in July to travel. My job may or may not be waiting for me when I come back.

Besides my Whole Life Times position, I am going to follow several job leads when I return from travelling in late August/early September. A friend has connected me with an executive of Donnelly Publishing, which publishes The Donnelly Directory as well as other publications such as Sports Illustrated and many others. I am going to be sending him my resume, which he has offered to circulate and endorse to different people in his company. Perhaps I could get some kind of editing or entry level writing position through them. Another avenue is the Auto Club of So. Cal. My father works for this company, and so I have access to information about open positions. Presently there are positions open

which involve writing for the company newsletter, these pay well but would be rather unfulfilling for me. I would prefer working in the companies travel-writing dept, in which writers review different travel accommodations and destinations. I know I must take what I can get, but the idea of working in such a large, impersonal company really seems stifling to me.

My real fantasy would be to work for Dance Magazine. With my double degree, I think I would really be a great asset to them, and I couldn't imagine a more exciting and stimulating job and environment (except, of course, National Geographic). Since I don't know anyone there, and my experience is still pretty limited, I don't know what kind of chance I have of getting a position there. Still, I plan to send a letter and resume to them in the next couple of weeks. Since I will be going through New York on my cross-country trip, I will try to persuade them to interview me while I'm there. It feels like a fantasy to me, but who knows? I'm going to try at least. I have nothing really to lose.

As for my other passion, production, there aren't very clear paths set out as to how to learn that business. My experience has been in the three coffee house/theaters that John and I put on. In all those cases we had to fight for our right to do it, and create our own avenues of opportunity and support. I assume, then that this will also be the case outside of Loyola. I will surely not make much

money off of this at first, even if I am successful. The point is that I really love the excitement and I even thrive off of the stress of bringing different people and art forms together. There are so many artists and so little venues and opportunities. I want to help create more opportunities, more space, more impetus to create and to perform. There was some indications that John and I might be given a chance to help manage and shape a cafe in Oregon next year. But, of course, this situation was too good to be true and feel through because of some legal complications with the deed of the property. Still, the few weeks that this was an actual possibility planted a seed in me, and just the idea that it almost happened has inspired me to keep trying. I don't know yet how this energy of mine will be directed in the real world. I know that I will help continue the LMU coffe/theater for as long as I am in the LA area, but my ambitions are far greater than that now. I wish I could provide more of a plot in this area, but I can't. I am, however, ready to grab hold of an possibile opportunities I can seek out.

So, that is my career plot, admittedly sketchy and somewhat vague, but honest. I don't know where I'll be in five years, and thats okay. I am approaching the future with excitement and energy. I am not totally naive, I have been paying my own rent for several years now, and there have been months that I've had to roll quarters and nickels to do so. I still have two waitress jobs that can support me if

worse comes to worse. But I hope it won't. I hope that my energy, openness and perserverance will take me toward my passions -- writing, producing, and always moving with rhythm to the dance of life.



**Jennifer McDowell**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

**EDUCATION: Loyola Marymount University** May 1994  
Los Angeles, CA

Received Dean's Scholarship to complete a double degree in Communication Studies and Dance.

**Mission Viejo High School** May 1990  
Mission Viejo, CA

Graduated with honors and in the top 15% of class. Received an International Baccalaureate Diploma for accelerated study.

**EXPERIENCE: Office Assistant** May 1994 -  
Whole Life Times Malibu, CA

Assisted sales staff and performed various duties including billing, personals, inputting articles and answering phones.

**Editorial Intern** March - April 1994  
Whole Life Times Malibu, CA

Gained experience working with the editor, transcribing articles and advertisements, editing and proofreading.

**Director/ Productions Coordinator** 1993 - 1994  
La Luna Luminosa Cafe Los Angeles, CA

Co-conceived, directed, produced and publicized a coffee house/theater on LMU campus featuring visual and performing artists of all mediums.

**Public Relations Intern** 1993  
U.S. Peace Corps Los Angeles, CA

Gained experience targeting specific audiences, culminating in the creation of a scarce-skills database.

**English Tutor** 1990 - 1992  
Loyola Marymount Univ. Los Angeles, CA

Tutored freshman students who had scored poorly on english placement tests.

**SKILLS:** Experience with Wordperfect, Filemaker Pro, Microsoft Word, knowledge of Spanish and typing.

**REFERENCES:** Available upon request

**JENNIFER McDOWELL**

Height: 5'6"      Hair: Blonde  
Weight: 120      Eyes: Blue/Green

**Training: Loyola Marymount University, B.A. 1994**  
Los Angeles, CA

Ballet: Caprice Walker, Scott Heinzerling  
Modern: Suzee Goldman, Tony Balcena, Nan Friedman,  
Dawn Stopiello  
Dunham: Lady Walquer Vereen  
Improv: Nita Little  
Ethnic: Peter Abigolu (African), Alice Lo (Chinese),  
Viji Prakash (Indian), Dulce Capadocia  
(Phillipine)

**Experience: Director/Productions Coordinator**

La Luna Luminosa Cafe/Theater      Feb, April 1994  
Buddha's Bathtub Coffee House      Oct. 1993

**Creative Movement Teacher**

Sammy Davis Jr. Performing Arts School      1992

**Sound Technician**

LMU Dance Tour      1991  
Beyond Therapy      1990

**Performance: Danubian Themes**

Hungarian, choreographed by Don Sparks

**On the 14th Floor**

Jazz, choreographed by John West

**Liturgical Dance**

Sacred pieces choreographed by John West, and  
student choreographers.

**Student Choreography**

Various pieces of student works, emphasizing  
modern dance, but including African and Jazz.

**Special Skills:** Review writing, acting, percussion and  
singing.

FEMINIST PEDAGOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY  
AN ANALYSIS OF THE LMU DANCE DEPARTMENT

"Dance at Loyola Marymount is about discovery of self as well as mastery of skill and craft. We recognize that mature artistic power emerges as a result of experiences which require exercise of the inner-being - contemplation, intuition, emotion--as well as exercise of the physical body so that while training the body the dancer we will not forget the mind nor ignore the spirit" (Department Brochure)

To those in the dance world this statement, written for a brochure of the Loyola Marymount University Dance Department, will seem right in keeping with the goals of dance education. In light of traditional education and the larger academic world, however, this emphasis on "self," "experience," and "emotion" constitutes a significant departure from the traditional teacher-centered, objective education model which is the norm for most academic institutions. Educational environments which emphasize relationship, experiential learning, and subjectivity, reflect the alternative teaching models espoused by recent feminist researchers (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Gabriel & Smithson, 1990; Howe, 1984; Pearson, Shalvlik & Touchton, 1989). In fact, the predominance of female students, the rich legacy of female performers, the interdependency of dance students, and the experientiality which is inherent in dance education, may place dance students in a unique position to experience aspects of a feminist education. While there has been extensive research on both the necessity of

a feminist education model (Belenky et al, 1986; Farley, 1991; Gabriel & Smithson, 1990; Gilligan, 1982; Howe, 1984; Rich, 1979; Young, 1990) as well as the success of such models in women's colleges (Belenky et al, 1986; Chamberlain, 1988; Pearson et al, 1989; NWSA, 1991) there has been little or no investigation into the instance of feminist models in university dance departments. This study will focus on one particular set of dance students, the LMU Dance Department. The educational environment which pervades this department is examined through the lens of feminist theory and its pedagogical models. The focus is on the student's felt experiences with regard to the subject, other students, the classroom and the university as a whole.

#### FEMINIST THEORY

The idea of a feministic education model was made possible by the work of researchers such as Chodrow (1978), Gilligan (1986), and Grimshaw (1992), who dared put forth the notion that women and men think differently. When this notion of a separate "feminine nature" or "feminine perspective" was first introduced in the eighteenth century (Grimshaw, 1992, p. 221) it was used to subordinate women. The supposed virtues of the feminine nature, though positive, were presented as mere shadow of masculine virtues (p. 222) for they were considered under the bias of a male ideal.

Today the debate has had a resurgence and researchers are again making claims about the nature of women (Chodrow, 1978;

Davis, 1992; Gilligan, 1982; Morse, 1992; Shield & Dervin, 1993; Steiner, 1989). Now, however, the focus is on difference rather than deficiency. In fact, if we strip away the image of an ideal, and view women's reasoning in a neutral context, we find what may be termed a feminine perspective.

According to many feminists (eg. Gilligan, 1992; Chodrow, 1978) social development is the root of many of the personality differences between men and women. A male's identity and sense of self is defined by separation from his mother. As boys begin to establish their masculinity, "the male develops a need to deny the power of women and to repress the early infantile experience of close relatedness to a woman" (Chodrow, p. 227). Girls, on the other hand, have no need to deny their connection with their mothers and may continue this relationship. Thus, females have a "basis for empathy built into their primary definition of self in a way that boys do not" (Gilligan, p. 8). In short, the male sense of self is defined through separation and threatened by intimacy while the female is defined by a sense of relationship and interconnectedness.

The feminine voice is also shaped by a particular sense of morality and consideration of rules. In observing children's games, Donovan (1985) concluded that "girls are more tolerant of intruding realities, more accommodating to the contingencies of play, more willing to innovate, and less concerned with abstract codification" (p. 177). Gilligan (1982) found boys, however, to be "fascinated with the legal elaboration of rules, and the

development of fair procedures for adjudication conflicts" (p. 8). These differing perspectives are further exemplified in children's strategies for solving moral problems. Gilligan noted that boys and girls approach a given moral problem in very distinct ways. She claims that both children recognize the need for agreement, but see it as mediated in different ways -- he impersonally through systems of logic and law, she personally through communication in relationships (p. 32).

Other feminists view the feminine perspective as a product of shared historical experiences and physical attributes. This theory is based on the belief that there are a number of experiences which are nearly universal for women, such as political oppression and assignment to a domestic sphere. Considering these experiences, feminists claim, it seems only natural that women have developed a perspective which is environmentally oriented. As Josephine Donovan (1985) points out, "the primary condition of powerlessness necessarily meant that women have had to be aware of their environment to survive" (p. 173).

Furthermore, the experience of a unique set of physical events, namely menstruation, child-birth, and motherhood is thought to contribute to a different set of values and a distinct orientation to the world. According to Sara Ruddick (1984), the maternal responsibilities of women invoke "maternal thinking" and "maternal virtues." Others also embrace the mother-child relationship as a useful paradigm for understanding the feminine

perspective. In this capacity mothering is not limited to biological parenting, but refers to the caretaker role that women traditionally assume. It is this orientation which causes the feminine voice to consider "morality more in terms of having responsibilities for taking care of others, and place a high priority upon preserving the network of relationships which makes this possible (Devine, p. 82).

Thus, while there are many ways to arrive at and define the feminine perspective, recent research suggests that there is in fact a difference between the way women and men orient themselves with their world. The feminine perspective is characterized by an environmentally aware, or holistic vision. It emphasizes attachment and interconnectedness and is thus concerned with the caring of others as well as the preservation of relationships. It is not tied to a particular set of beliefs or values, but rather constitutes a perspective which is distinct from the traditional masculine voice which stresses rules, impartiality and linear thinking.

There are problems, of course, with this theory. As Steiner (1989) implies, feminists must be careful not to sabotage themselves by creating a perspective which is based completely on a dichotomy. By creating a paradigm of opposites such as linear/cyclical and specific/contextual, feminists set the stage for the view of superior/inferior. Furthermore, it would be simplistic to assume that every woman has the same experiences, the same ideals and the same values. As Grimshaw (1992) points

out, "even if one is always a man or a woman, one is never just a man or a woman. One is young or old, sick or healthy, married or unmarried" (p. 232). Nevertheless, the fact remains that there are alternative ways of viewing and interacting with the world. For the purpose of this research, these two will be defined as a masculine perspective and a feminine perspective but will not be assumed to follow exclusively the sex of those who hold them. What is important to note, however, is that our society has traditionally only recognized and been directed toward one of these alternatives: the masculine perspective.

The fact that women are forced to exist in a patriarchal and male ordered society is lamented by many writers (Altman & Nakayama, 1991; Cotterill, 1992; Davis, 1992; Grimshaw, 1992; Howe, 1984; Klimenkova, 1992; Morse, 1992; Shields & Dervin, 1993; Steiner, 1989; Stephiants, 1992; Young, 1990). Howe points out that our Western culture is ordered around the base of myths about the creation of woman by man. Stephiants (1992) demonstrates that religions around the world all tend to subordinate women to men. "Religion, it would seem, is not sexless; it is a man" (p. 239). The male voice, reiterates Toufexis (1990) "has become the human voice" (p. 64). In fact, some feminists believe that this ordering of society around male perspectives has stolen women's humanity from them. By not living up to the standards that were set by men, women become "deviants." "Woman doesn't exist," claims one psychoanalyst, because she is not "a legitimate constituent of the contemporary



Western world" (Kliminkova, 1992, p. 282).

The effects of this male orientation can be seen in religion (Stephians, 1992), art (Morse, 1992), medicine (Toufexis, 1990), sports (Young, 1990), and literature (Koppelman, 1993). But perhaps one of the most harmful areas in which we see the problem of a limited masculine perspective is the world of education.

#### FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

If women think differently than men, as these researchers suggest, then it would only follow that they learn differently as well. Unfortunately, universities have only recently begun to come to realize not only the existence but the repercussions of these differences. While universities may claim to be "coeducational," both sexes are not necessarily being equally educated. The bias against women in the educational system is now being noted everywhere from the amount and type of opportunities available to elementary school students (Howe, 1984) all the way through to affecting the highering, tenuring, and scholarship of professors in higher institutions (Farley, 1981). Women once fought for the right to study in the universities, but now they are becoming critical of its educational value for women. "Today," claims Adrienne Rich, "the question is no longer whether women are intellectually and by nature equipped for higher education, but whether this male-created male dominated structure is really capable of serving the humanism and freedom it professes" (Rich, p. 134). The importance of this question

becomes more evident when we consider the fact that women's academic and career aspirations actually decline during their college years (Gabriel & Smithson, 1990, p. 1). Indeed, feminists today charge that the traditional education system is not equipped to serve the needs of female students for it is ridden with inequalities and bias (AAUW, 1992; Farley, 1981; Gabriel & Smithson, 1990; Howe, 1984; Pearson et al, 1989; Rich, 1979).

Though women are no longer barred from universities, they still encounter obstacles to receiving an equal education. First of all, low SAT scores are often a factor which keeps women out of schools, even though these scores have been shown to have no significant correlation to women's academic performance (AAUW; Chamberlain, p. 18; Gabriel & Smithson, p. 2). Furthermore, once women do get accepted they are less likely to receive financial aid. Female students receive 28% less in grants than their male counterparts, and 16% less in loans (Gabriel & Smithson, p. 1). Those women who overcome these obstacles usually receive less attention and acknowledgement from their professors (AAUW, Belenky, Gabriel & Smithson, Rich). When attention does come, it is often in the form of sexual harassment. In fact, a full 61% of female students at Cornell University claim to have received unwanted sexual attention and over 12% of these women have avoided specific courses or teachers in an effort to avoid such harassment (Gabriel & Smithson).

As the public becomes more and more aware of such instances of sexual discrimination in our universities, it is slowly being

eradicated. The increased enrollment of women in graduate schools is evidence of this trend (Chamberlain, p. 18). Furthermore, most universities are making efforts to both offer child care and to create more efficient grievance procedures for sex discrimination complaints (Chamberlain). Groups such as the Association of American University Women (AAUW), and Women's Equity Action League (WEAL), are working to ensure that these trends toward eradicating sexual discrimination and bias continues (AAUW, Chamberlain).

Possibly even more detrimental to women's education, however, are the subtle ways in which the educational environment negates the feminine perspective in favor of masculine perspective models. By putting forth a curriculum and environment dominantly defined by male models such as objectivity, separation and specificity, the traditional university undermines women's achievements and devalues their experiences (AAUW, Belenky, Chamberlain, Gabriel & Smithson, Rich, Gray). By neglecting the feminine perspective, traditional education is limited, and limiting, especially to women.

While sexism may not be publicly acceptable, we still find it pervading the university classrooms. A prime example of this is university textbooks which, articulates Gabriel and Smithson (1990) "have sexism as their subtext." The use of masculine terms such as "mankind" or "he" to symbolize the generic is a widely accepted practice, and yet research shows that these terms are not generic at all (AAUW, Belenky et al, Flynn, Gabriel &

Smithson, Sadker, Thorne). A 1974 study revealed that students who are studying topics such as "primitive man" visualize just that, a primitive man (Gabriel & Smithson). In fact, the conception of man as the generic has lasting impact on our conception of what a person is. A recent study revealed that the qualities identified by students as desirable in males were also the qualities they associated with normal people. The qualities identified as female, however, fell into the realm of abnormal (Howe, pp. 41-42, 69). Thus the male has become the standard to which we judge ourselves. This sends a subtle yet powerful message to students about the importance and place of women in the academic world.

This message is reinforced by the conspicuous absence of women in the curriculum. In history, art, english, science and philosophy, the subject matter focuses on the achievements of males, ignoring the contributions of women to those fields (AAUW, Flynn, Gabriel & Smithson, Howe, Sadker, Thorne). "Women of all social classes...are relatively absent from traditional bodies of knowledge" (Thorne, p. 311). When classes and textbooks do make an effort to include women in their discussions, references tend to be scarce and refer to a few specific famous women. "Rarely," reports AAUW, "is there a dual and balanced treatment of women and men, and seldom are women's perspectives and cultures presented on their own terms" (p. 62). This failure to represent women sends a message to students that "women's lives count less" (AAUW, p. 67). Furthermore, claims Adrienne Rich, without "an

awareness of the creative work of women of the past, the skill and crafts of women" female students must "live without context" (240). Finally, with few female role models to look up to, women often find that they must adopt a male perspective in their approach to academics. "All women who have ever read a classic," asserts Heilbrun (1990), "have imagined themselves as men" (p. 31).

If the pages of their textbooks look bleak for women, the halls of their universities offer little consolation. There are few role models today to look up to. Not only do male professors greatly outnumber female professors, but "the higher the rank and position, the more dramatic the imbalance" (Sadker, p. 177). In fact, a mere 10% of college and university presidents are women (Gabriel & Smithson, p. 2). This is a concrete reflection of the subtle bias against women in academia.

The result of this perspective is a rather discouraging and uncomfortable environment for female students. It risks alienating women because they have no role models, and seemingly no place in the curriculum. The message women receive is that they must "deny our female selves" (Harris, Silverstein & Andrews, 1989, p. 301) in order to become full participants in the academic world. This can be extremely harmful to the young female students for, as Adrienne Rich asks, "how does a woman gain a sense of herself in a system...which devalues work by women" (p. 201).

On the contrary, when women are placed in environments in

which they are included in the curriculum, they experience a sense of privilege and entitlement (Belenky et al, Thorne). For instance, when the pronoun "she" was substituted for the generic in a classroom experiment, women students felt a sense of pride and self-importance from this inclusion. One woman claimed it gave her "a sense of equality--power even" (Thorne, 312). Rather than feeling alienated from the academic world, women experienced an inflated sense of presence and pride (Thorne).

An even more subtle element of traditional education which may serve to alienate certain students, and particularly women, is the recurring theme of separation. Chodrow (1978) has characterized men as "selves in separation." Our traditional educational system reflects this perspective for it is based on the ideal of separation. First of all, the subject matter is separated from the student. Just as matter is given more importance than energy (Harris et al, p. 305) so objectivity is valued above relationship. In fact, the student is required to distance oneself from the subject as much as possible. Personal relationship and emotional considerations are not only discouraged, but are considered in most cases to be unprofessional and unacademic (Harris et al, p. 305). This means then, that the student is to respond not to their experience of the subject, but to its empirical nature. The subject is further removed from the student through the process of specificity and specialization. This is described as a "divide and conquer policy" by Gray (1989). "You name it and we have a compartment

for it, and usually a specialist to go with the compartment. This creates a kind of tunnel vision where we each become experts of less and less" (p. 340).

The traditional models for education also encourages separation of students from one another. For the most part, work is to be totally individual--a solitary experience. The tone for this is set by the presence of rows of separated desks. "No communication from desk to desk, "talking", is allowed," (Gray, p. 338). There is little opportunity in the classroom for "interchange between peers" (Kramarae, 1990, p. 336) in fact, "cheating is defined as helping each other" (p. 336). Where there is relationship and active interchange, it most often take the form of competition. Our current models encourage "confrontation not collaboration" (Kramarae, p. 336).

Finally, this theme of separation lends itself to creating a gap between the students and their faculty. The model for this relationship becomes a hierarchy. The professor sits at the top of this hierarchy and serves as the embodiment of knowledge (Belenky et al). The student is viewed as lacking knowledge, and thus sits at the bottom of the hierarchy. A "jug/mug" relationship is created between the two in which the goal, from the professor's point of view is to "get what is inside of me -- inside you" (Belenky) The result, then, is a relationship based not only on separation but on domination (Belenky et al, Harris et al). This relationship is reinforced by both the layout of the classroom, in which the lectern is at the front (Gray), and the

traditional style of teaching in outline-lecture form (Harris et al). In a setting such as this, there is little room for equal dialogue between the student and teacher, and even less room for the students' personal interpretations.

There are, of course, exceptional professors and programs which may defy these modes of separation, but the above have been noted by educators and researchers as the dominant traditional education models (AAUW, Chamberlain, Farley, Gabriel & Smithson, Gray, Harris et al, Howe, Pearson et al, Rich). When these separation models are imposed on students, it can be limiting to their education because it focuses on only one perspective. Women are particularly prone to such limitations because the feminine perspective is entirely lost in a system such as the one described above. In fact, feminist pedagogists claim that, rather than a system based on separation, women benefit from an educational environment characterized by connection, community, and confirmation.

In contrast to the male perspective of separation, women are seen as "selves in connection" (Chodrow). Thus, a learning environment which considers the feminine perspective would be one in which students are encouraged to form a personal connection to their subject. This connection is given many names by different feminists. Some refer to experientiality (Belenky et al), others describe this connection as empathy (Harris et al) or relational and contextual learning (Gray). Each different term refers to the same deep relationship to the subject, through which may be



gained greater understanding and insight. This process is epitomized in the work of plant-geneticist Barbara McClintock (Gray, Harris, Keller). Who was able to make pioneering insights into her field by getting "a feel for the organism" (Keller, 1983, p. 198). This process involves, according to McClintock, having "the time to look, the patience to hear what the material has to say to you and the openness to let it come to you" (Keller, p. 198). Emphasis on "sympathetic understanding" (Keller, p. 198), based on relationship to the subject, rather than detached objectivity reflect the feminist perspective of thinking and learning. In fact, according to Belenky, although most institutions emphasize "abstract, out-of-context learning" her studies suggest that most "women are drawn to the sort of knowledge that emerges from first-hand observation" (p. 200). As a result, women engaged in this type of learning typically gain not only a better grasp of the material, but a more positive attitude toward both the material and their own abilities (Belenky et al, Chodrow, Harris et al).

In addition to forming a relationship with the subject, the feminist perspective calls for a relationship between the students themselves. Whereas the masculine perspective emphasizes autonomy and individuation, a feministic model would be characterized by community. Community is not valued in most classrooms, yet it is a more natural environment for many students. In fact, the behavior of women students in particular in traditional academic settings indicates a desire for such a

community. Educators found that women are "more likely to build upon than to contest one another's comments, to share personal experiences and, in general, to regard conversation as a cooperative enterprise, as a mutually constructed product for common interest" (Thorne, p. 319). Indeed, this community is not only regarded as beneficial to students, but has been cited as "necessary for development" by at least one group of pedagogists (Belenky et al).

Finally, the feminist perspective calls for a confirmation of students as thinkers. Traditionally, students are considered to be like empty mugs waiting to be filled by the professors jug of knowledge, and are confirmed as scholars only after they complete their studies (Belenky et al). This rift between the professor and student, however, is often discouraging to women (Belenky et al). Instead, these students desire to be confirmed and valued as thinkers while they are still engaged in the education process. According to Belenky's studies (1986), students need "confirmation that they could be trusted to know and to learn, they want to know that they already know something" (p. 195). This involves allowing the students some individual interpretation of the material, dialogue between student and professor, and a valid place in the curriculum for personal experience (Belenky et al, Harris et al, Gray). The dynamic is active vs. passive, and claiming vs. receiving knowledge. When students are acted upon rather than acting, claims Adrienne Rich, it cultivates a "passive reciprocity" and "women want to think

actively" (p. 232).

Feminist pedagogy, then, seeks a fresh perspective on education. It does not intend to entirely do away with universities or their traditions, but to adapt them to better suit the women it is supposed to educate. "We need to consciously and critically select," articulates Rich, "what is genuinely viable and what we can use from the masculine intellectual tradition, as we possess ourselves of the knowledge, skills and perspectives that can refine our goal of self-determination with discipline and wisdom" (p. 134). For women students, this involves creating programs in which they can connect with their subject, find community with each other, and participate actively in their education. When these things are not granted, claims Gray, "human curiosity and talent and interest and personhood is trampled beneath the constant naming of the right answer or the correct way to do things" (p. 338).

#### UNIVERSITY DANCE

University dance is a relatively new and absolutely unique area of study. The first college level dance program began in 1926 at the University of Wisconsin under the guidance of Margaret H'Doubler (Jacobs, 1981; NDA, 1987). It started humbly, as a modest concentration of study within the Physical Education Department. Here, it was used to train P.E. teachers, and to

provide a quick, perfunctory introduction to dance for other students (NDA). At this point in its history, dance was considered by academia to be purely a physical activity-- something akin to golf or soccer (NDA). This classification lasted for over three decades. Not until 1962, at UCLA, was dance moved out of the P.E. Dept. and recognized as one of the "fine arts" (NDA). Still, dance remained a fringe study, with little support from high school curriculum or state funding (Hilsendager, 1989).

As collegiate dance evolved, educators banded together in such groups as National Dance Association (NDA), Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) and Council of Dance Administrators (CODA), to articulate their common goals in education. Along with technique, the studies incorporated dance theory classes such as history, philosophy, notation, therapy, and kinesiology. They wanted to prepare students to perform, to teach, and to critically understand "their own form of art expression" (NDA, p. 5). The writings of Margaret H'Doubler, founder of the first dance program, provided an underlying context for future programs. "Dance education," she instructed, "must be emotional, intellectual, and spiritual, as well as physical, if dance is to contribute to the larger aims of education -- the developing of personality through conscious experiencing. It should capitalize every possible resource, selecting and integrating the contributions into a totality" (p. 56). Furthermore, in their conferences, dance educators worked to create a framework for

their burgeoning field. Some expressed a desire to "take a holistic approach to creating sound dance majors consistent with that total framework...with a view toward new knowledge, personalized curricula, and individualized integrative experience" (NDA, p. 32). Others, like Alma Hawkins, were concerned with the power of creativity, and specifically the moving/creating experience as a means to "allow each individual to discover his/her personal vision and to understand dance as a vital human experience" (CODA, p. 25).

The above mission statements reflect the kind of experiential and integrated education experiences espoused by feminist pedagogists. While these educators probably did not have feminism specifically in mind, it was nonetheless a part of the dance movement. Indeed, dance historian Joseph Mazo (1977) notes that "the development of modern dance parallels in many ways the development of the idea that women are real human beings" (p. 16). Though they were dancers first and foremost, "the first artists of American modern dance were feminists in that they believed themselves to be independent, capable, functioning human beings" (p. 16). Of course, not all of the modern dance innovators were women, and yet they were predominately so. "From the beginning of the modern dance epoch ours has been a matriarchal society," admits choreographer Alwin Nicholas in an address to CODA, "you needed "women's lib" like Martha Graham needed toe shoes" (CODA, p. 1). In fact, his audience at CODA, as well as the audience of NDA are their own proof for this claim.

The dance educators represented in these organizations, and thus those primarily responsible for the founding framework of dance programs at the university level were predominately female (CODA, NDA). University dance is unique, then, because it involves a program created largely by women and addresses a subject which has only recently, and somewhat marginally, become a recognized academic endeavor.

It is precisely this unique orientation which calls for an examination of university dance. For if we accept the premise of dance as a feministic study, and of universities as masculine structures, than the existence of dance departments within traditional universities opens up many avenues of inquiry. Do dance students experience an education modeled in feminist pedagogy? What kind of educational environment do the students find themselves in? What are the dynamics of the relationship between the dance department and the university as a whole?

#### METHOD

Data for this study was primarily collected during a four month period of interviews and participant observation. Additional data included personal experiences and documents collected from over three years of involvement with the dance department as a full participant.

Interviews were conducted with eight members of the

department, seven students and one faculty member. The structure of the interviews was loose and, in keeping with feministic social research (Shields & Dervin, 1993; Klein, 1983), focused on the felt social and personal experiences of the interviewees. Two of the interviews involved two people at once. While this is too small to be considered a focus group (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990), it did offer the opportunity to witness interaction and gave the students an opportunity to both question each other and complement each others stories.

Field notes were gathered from observations of dance classes, rehearsal sessions and departmental meetings. Although a large majority of dance students were aware of my ongoing research, I was considered to be a full participant in most of these instances. During observations of classes I would usually feign illness, and proceed to take notes on the class from the "sick corner" of the studio. On several occasions, however, I was a full participant, and wrote out notes after the class was over. Similarly, during departmental or senior meetings, I was considered a full participant. The only difference between my classmates and I was that I had a notebook in front of me. Additional notes were taken of particularly interesting locker room conversations, or events of importance to the dancers.

Finally, I have drawn upon my own personal experience in this department over the past three and a half years. As I have kept all class notes and handouts, these documents were considered as part of my data, and complemented that which was

collected specifically for research purposes.

#### ANALYSIS

The dance department at Loyola Marymount University is in many ways a classic representation of dance programs as described above. Here, too, dance started in the Physical Education Dept., then was moved to a basement, and is now housed in a new fine arts building. The program uses Margaret H'Doubler as its theoretical base, and in fact each freshman student is required to read her text Dance and the Art Experience (1957). The head of this department, Judy Scalin, is well-respected among her peers, and was an active member of the NDA programs previously quoted. There are approximately 65 dance majors and minors, and many students from other departments participate in daily classes and annual concerts. The students come from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds, but the majority of the students are young, between the ages of 18 and 25, and female.

#### STUDENTS AND SUBJECT

Dance majors do not perceive of themselves as students of dance, rather they call themselves dancers. This suggests an internalization of the subject which is vital to the understanding of the relationship between the students and dance.

In fact, the profound connection between dance majors and



dance was a common and obviously deeply felt theme. When asked why she chose to study dance, one student replied, "I'm a dancer, what else am I supposed to do?" (Transcript 1, Line 27) This sentiment was echoed by another student who claimed, "Dance is who I am, I can't separate myself from dance. Who would I be if I wasn't dancing?" (Transcript 1, Line 458-460) Still another claimed, "I have a need to dance, like inside of me" (Transcript 2, Line 75).

In contrast to the traditional education model which tends to objectify and separate the subject from the students, these students describe a deep intimate relationship to dance. This type of connection between student and subject is a rare element among university programs (Gray, Harris et al). It is a particularly significant one, however, because it embodies the type of connection to subject espoused by feminist pedagogists (Belenky et al, Keller, Gray, Pearson et al).

Certain elements of the subject and of this program in particular, lend themselves to such a feministic approach. First of all, dance offers its students a rare sense of inclusion. Whereas some subject, such as science, have been identified as alienating to women students, dance is particularly female-friendly. In fact, dance is one of the few academic programs in which women's achievements have not been overshadowed. Rather, dance remains a feminine activity in the public eye. While there are, of course, many acclaimed male dancers and choreographers, the dancers interviewed contended that the greater public

continues to conceive of their study as largely a feminine endeavor (Transcript 2,3). First of all, dance is still widely considered a feminine art form. Though this is a limiting stereotype, it serves to encourage or at least validate women's participation in the dance world in ways in which many subjects such as science and math, which are considered masculine endeavors, cannot (Harris et al).

Furthermore, modern dance has a rich, unmistakable legacy of female pioneers. "From the beginning of the modern dance epoch," claims renowned choreographer Alwin Nicholas, "ours has been a matriarchal society" (CODA, 1985: p.1). While other departments offer special studies courses such as "Mathematics Contributions by Women" (course bulletin, 93-94) or "Women and Politics" (course bulletin 93-94), the mainstream of modern dance education already focuses heavily on women's achievements. The posters of Martha Graham, Agnes De Mille and Katherine Dunham which adorn the walls of the office of Judy Scalini, head of the dance dept, serve to both honor these women and remind the students of their strong female role models.

Perhaps the most telling element of this "female friendly" environment is the fact that the majority of texts and handouts used in the LMU Dance Dept. do not devalue women through the use of the generic, "he." An exhaustive study of the department and class handouts collected over 3 years reveals the use of true nongendered words such as "we" or "you" or even "she/he" (Dance Notebook). Dance texts, as well, avoid the male generic. If

anything they err in the direction of she rather than he (Jacobs, 1981, pp. 258, 278).

In addition to embracing students' gender, dance at LMU is particularly sensitive to the different ethnicities of its students as well. Each semester there are approximately three courses of world dance offered, and students are educated about the different cultures and dance styles from such places as Africa, Brazil, China, Cuba, Haiti, Hawaii, Hungary, India, Ireland, Mexico, Phillipines, Spain and more (Schedule of classes, Fall 94 and personal experience). In this way, the students own culture is validated and their knowledge of other cultures is furthered. One student praised the "variety of different ethnic classes" (Transcript 2, Line 172) and later explained that they help her to "see the likenesses in different cultures and that really brings me to where I can get really involved in the class" (Transcript 2, Line 729-731). Still another student recognized that she was receiving:

"...the kind of education that other people are lacking, you know just like acceptance of other people's culture like Dance of Asia and Dance of Africa. Those are my favorite classes here. Cause I really get into that, and I like learning about that. And I think if anything I've learned more to be more accepting of every race or sexual preference because I'm there, and I'm in that surrounding. I have to totally set any other views that I feel aside because I'm dealing with those people and they are people so.."  
(Transcript 3, Line 173-180).

This type of education is, in fact, lacking in many

disciplines. Even women's studies has been criticized for not devoting enough energy to cultural diversity (Pearson, et al). This type of education is important not simply because it exposes students to other cultures but because it allows students to bring their own unique culture and background to the subject, to personally connect with the subject. If studying subjects which marginalize women and minorities "makes them blank out" as Thorne (p. 311) asserts and is detrimental to their education, as Belenky (1986) suggests, then it would follow that subjects such as dance which emphasize women's achievements and acknowledge their many different cultural backgrounds would both encourage and empower them (Belenky, Howe, Pearson, Thorne). Indeed, the strong connection between dance majors and dance must have some root in this inclusion.

In addition to including the students, the study of dance encourages the involvement of the whole self: body, mind and spirit. As one student put it "...it is like time consuming and physically, emotionally, and mentally taxing where something else just might be mentally taxing" (Transcript 1, Line 577-579). Students emphasize the fact that dance is not an external subject, but a highly personal experience. "Its something deep down inside, its not a surface thing. And when it is a surface thing to someone you can see it" (Transcript 2: Line 220-221). Dance is a subject which these students experience very personally and, in turn, when they experience something personal it comes through in their dancing. One student described how,

after experiencing an extremely traumatic event, her dancing was affected:

" even when I started eating again I still did not move. And even when I started dancing this semester, (pause) its like I've always been very free in my torso, but I had a really hard time letting go. Everything in me was tight and held in and I could feel it when I was dancing. I just felt so locked in and so tight and so like withdrawn. It was weird. And that's how it was, I just couldn't move" (Transcript 2, Line 757-764).

When this student did finally regain the freedom in her movement, when her body finally released, so did many of the emotions she had been carrying around (Transcript 2).

By tapping into the physical, mental, emotional and even spiritual aspects of the students, dance becomes a subject which involves its students as whole people, as integrated beings rather than fragmented students. Furthermore, this breaks down any barriers between the student and the subject. There is nothing left to objectify, for the students is studying, in effect, herself; the student is the subject. Thus, the dance education process reflect the integrated learning experience described by feminist pedagogists and embodied in Barbara McClintock's work (Keller). In dance, the students truly get "a feeling for the organism" (Keller) which is, in this case, their own body.

This type of integration has been cited by feminist pedagogists as a valuable key to a feminist education. Not only has it been found to aid the student in understanding the subject (Howe, p. 282; Pearson, pp. 93,302), but it has been suggested

that this type of integration is valuable for the students themselves. It may give the student a clearer sense of self, most specifically "a sense of presence and self-importance" (Thorne, p. 312) and a stronger voice (Howe, p. 282).

In fact, dance majors assert that while they are honing their dance skills and knowledge, they are also developing themselves. "I'm a better dancer, I'm more aware of my body and more aware of alot of things because I was here and because I was in dance" (Transcript 3, Line 199-201). Some dancers even claim that their dance training has helped them to succeed in their other classes:

" Like I'm much more vocal than most people in class now, and I think that's because I'm not afraid to. And you know there are some people who have never even danced or anything and they're not afraid to talk but I think that it helps me. I feel more secure" (Transcript 3, Line 206).

In an educational environment in which, notes sociologist Dorothy Smith, "it has not been easy for women to take what women have to say as authoritative nor is it easy to find our own voice convincingly" (Howe, p. 282), the above account of increased self-assurance and vocality speaks strongly about the effect of studying dance on this student.

#### RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STUDENTS AND OTHER STUDENTS

When a student becomes a dance major, she enters not only a field of study, but a social community of students. There are

only about 65 dance majors at LMU. Since they all participate in the annual dance concerts and take many of their required classes together, most dancers can name, or at the very least identify all of the other dance majors. Of course, many of these students form deep and lasting relationships with each other. This type of activity is not at all uncommon. What is uncommon is the underlying sense of unity and community that pervades the dept as a whole. In contrast to the fragmentation inherent in traditional education, dance majors describe a unique connection. The theme of students bonding through their dance experiences is a common one. The dancers seem to cherish this closeness and regard it as unique among the university:

"we can all get together and have so much fun. But you get the bio majors together and like alot of them don't know each other...they may cling together because the class is really hard and they have to study together or something but its not like us where we really know each other. Yeah, we sweat together. I don't know, I was totally thinking about how at the Laura Dean thing how we were all laughing and having a good time and everything and I bet those teachers from the other dept. (that were sitting in) were amazed. You know, I mean, most of my friends are dance majors, and other dept. can't say that. Usually your friends are the people you live with, like the people in your dorms or fraternities or whatever group you affiliate yourself with but its not usually your major" (Transcript 1, Line 614-628).

Indeed, the dance majors function as a sort of community, and even when students aren't close with each other, they still identify because of their dance affiliation. The following dialogue reveals these sentiments:

"Usually if we're all in the Lair and another dance major comes in we're like "Oh yeah, sit down" or whatever. And no I don't like every single dance major but..."

But in a way you do. You like the fact that they're studying dance because it gives you something to relate to...

Yeah, its true. Even someone who you maybe don't like in the dance dept., if you see them perform, its like you can appreciate their...Its like, you might not like your sister but you love her" (Transcript 1, Line 227-243).

The metaphor of family, such as in the dialogue above which compares the dance majors to sisters, is a common one. Oftentimes, the head of the dance department, Judy Scalin, is referred to as "mom" (Transcripts 1,3,4,5). Indeed, the department does sometimes feel like a family. Classes are small and the subject matter is personal, thus students come to know each other intimately. Many hours spent in close confines, be it the dressing room or the rehearsal studio, further fosters these relationships.

The relationships cited by these students is in keeping with feminist education models. It constitutes the type of "confirmation and community" which Belenky (p. 193) identifies as a prerequisite for women's development. These students share their learning experiences and feel all the richer for it. In fact, this relational environment is not incidental, but an essential element of dance education as taught at LMU, for in order to achieve many of the set goals of the program, the students must become interdependent. At first, this interdependence consists of critically evaluating fellow student performances or choreography and participating in numerous group



projects. (class syllabi) As a student progresses in the program, this interdependence grows. In advanced classes students are required to choreograph group dances, and thus their grade depends on their mutual cooperation and participation. In turn, these students participate in other student's work. To gain stage performance experience, dancers must attain roles in student's concert pieces. Likewise, students cannot successfully produce concert pieces without the dedicated efforts and participation of other students to dance in their piece. Thus, one cannot make it through the program without becoming interdependent.

In addition, there are certain events which also contribute to the sense of relationship and community among the dance majors. These range from everyday shared experiences such as locker room "bitching" (field notes) and a grueling morning class after which everyone's gluteus is sore for days (personal experience) to formal rituals. The Christmas Blessing occurs annually in one of the studios that dance majors take class in. It involves first a short performance from each dance class under the auspices of "sharing what we have learned with each other" (field notes) and ends with a nondenominational studio blessing. The students, faculty, and whoever wants to participate sit on the floor with one small Hanukkah candle each. The candles are lit first to the west, the east, the north and the south. As everyone softly sings Silent Night, the flame is passed from person to person until there is a circle of light. A short blessing is said for the coming year and, as the circle hums,

everyone slowly blows out their candle.

The pre-concert rituals occur in the spring, before each performance of the annual concerts. Again the dancers are in a circle, but this time they hold hands. Judy Scalin traditionally tells a story, or makes an inspirational speech to encourage everyone. The actual text of this ritual changes every time it is performed. One night Judy might instruct the students to turn to the person on their right and "whisper something beautiful that you've noticed about that person" (field notes), or she may allow some of the students to say a few words to the group. What is consistent though is the circle, a small symbolic token which Judy presents personally to each student, and the feeling of community which this experience fosters in most students (field notes).

Finally, certain episodes reinforce the dancers' community. During particularly traumatic events, such as the recent Gulf War or the L.A. Riots, the dance majors interrupt their classes in order to express their feelings and to give each other support. One dance major remembered the gathering after the riots as one of her most striking memories of the dance dept: "we all talked about how people were feeling about it...but I don't think any other department could really do that" (Transcript 3, Line 7-10). Even though the dancers, who are all from different backgrounds, may not view such situations in the same light, these discussions serve as a way to both work through their feelings and strengthen their sense of connection. In one recent discussion involving a

postponed dance concert, Judy Scalin reminded the students that, "if some of you are wondering why you're here, even though you might not be in the concert, its because we are a family" (field notes).

While this bond and community is an integral element of the social relationship between the dance majors, it is not the end of the story, so to speak. Underlying this sense of community is a social hierarchy. When discussing this social stratification, students most often identify it as "cliques." Students who are less confident of their dance abilities are the ones who most often complain of cliques. "I feel there's alot of cliques, its really cliquish and if you're not up to standard or whatever than maybe you kind of don't fit in" (Transcript 3, Line 12-14). Students who are more confident in their abilities, and are more often identified as the superior performers in the dept are less concerned with cliques. They admit that they may exist, to a certain extent, and yet they downplay their significance.

"Yeah, it gets cliquish but I don't think its really anyone's fault. Like I think for the most part what I've seen is that you're friends with the people you go through Composition 1 with. Because that's such a bonding experience..Yeah, and then you meet people in rehearsals. But when I hear the word cliquey I think of a negative thing. Cliquey to me is like we're us and no one else should sit with us. I don't think we're like that" (Transcript 2, Line 767).

Also, students who transfer into the program often find it difficult to enter the program. One transfer student claims, "it was really hard for me, cause its really cliquey here." (Transcript 2, Line 18-19). She claimed that rather than feeling

welcomed, she felt judged. The message she got from many of her classmates when she came to Loyola was "we are going to watch you to see if you're better or not" (Transcript 2, Line 14-15). As time went on, however, this girl and other transfer students begin to feel more included. "I don't know what it was but I found people alot nicer this year, I don't know why" (Transcript 2, Line 134-135).

The phenomena that these transfer students encountered, and the element which determines this formation of cliques, or a social hierarchy, is competition. Dancers in the real world are involved in cut-throat competition for the precious few jobs available. While LMU dance students are safe from that reality for a little while, they still engage in competitive practices. Dancers compete against each other officially at the annual auditions for parts in the student and faculty dance concerts, but unofficially they are constantly in competition. Students perform daily, whether it be in classes, informal showings, rehearsals or concerts. Each of these performances provides an opportunity to compete with the other dancers, and to establish oneself as a superior dancer. This assessment of each other may be as blatant as formal auditions, or as subtle as watching each other through the mirror during class.

In this way, the students negotiate a social structure, based on perceived ability. The students who are considered the superior dancers or choreographers are not only the most socially active, but the most outspoken in class. Thus those who are

perceived as less talented are more likely to be the quiet ones. This structure is not set in stone, however, and it is shaken when someone demonstrates uncommon proficiency.

" Yeah, and its really funny, because you have people who are in the cliques and some of them will like venture outside of a clique to talk to you, like if you did good in a piece or whatever. Its like "oh you did so good at auditions," and you know they won't talk to you for awhile" (Transcript 2, Line 119-124).

The existence of a hierarchy goes directly against the goals of feminist pedagogy. By encouraging a community of students sharing ideas, and by working to ensure that the students are not fragmented from themselves or each other (Belenky, Thorne), feminists hoped to eliminate or at least diminish such a stratification. Still, competition is an element of dance which is impossible to ignore or conquer. But while this "cutthroat" (Transcript 2, Line 56) mentality pervades the department, students seem to manage to maintain a balance between the competition which is necessary for their art, and the community which is necessary for their interdependent work. Students usually maintain an outward friendliness, and any sense of malice which my result from this competition is generally balanced out and counteracted by the sense of community within the department and the intense bonding experience previously mentioned. Even some of the students who felt alienated because of the cliques claim that one of the most important things they'll take with them from Loyola is the bond with each other. This dialogue between two transfer students reveals these sentiments:

" Friends, I mean there are totally friends that I think

I would like to keep in touch with, and that I'd like to collaborate with in the art world. And like, meet up with and go on auditions and do all that fun stuff with" (Transcript 2, Line 767-770).

" Or maybe you'll just call them up and say, "Hey, how you doing?" Cause you support them, you support everybody. You say "Yeah, she came from our school" (Transcript 2, Line 773-783).

## THE CLASSROOM

When one enters a dance classroom, it's uniqueness is immediately evident. First of all, it is not actually a classroom, but a studio. As such, there are no desks, chairs or podiums. The blackboard is at the side of the studio, the mirror at the front. Thus, the focus is on the reflection of the students. While Gray (1989) claims that the rigid lines and hierarchical arrangement of traditional classrooms sets the tone for a rigid and hierarchical education, the dance studio is free of such a structure. Thus, the tone of the class is set by the professor, and the experience of the students themselves. The studio is set up to facilitate movement, thus the classroom work focuses on physical experiences of phenomenon, rather than on an idea represented in a textbook, film or blackboard drawing. These students live their work, and their understanding of their subject grows only as their experience increases.

Another unique aspect of the dance class is the intimacy between professor and student. In general, students in the LMU Dance Department enjoy a personal relationship with their professors. This is facilitated by the intimate size of the dept,

and thus of the classes, and further encouraged through teacher-student conferences. Furthermore, students claim that the nature of dance requires a "vulnerability" (Transcript 2, Line 664) and this allows for a more personal relationship. Not only do they experience teaching on a "one to one level" (Transcript 2, 152), but they feel that "our teachers open up to us more. And then you get a different type of bonding with your teachers in the dance dept than you do outside of it" (Transcript 2, Line 668 - 670). Indeed, students seem to know more about their professors finances (Transcript 2, Line 353), background (Transcript 4), sensitivities (Transcript 1), and even sex lives (Transcript 2, field notes) than would be common for most educational relationships. Professors also express a feeling of intimacy. "I don't think there's any question," claimed one faculty member, "that I know every student better than that student even knows that I know them" (Transcript 5, 181-182). Thus, students and faculty alike claim that there is in general less of a gap between them than in traditional classrooms.

While experientiality and intimacy are felt throughout the department, further generalities are not so easily drawn. For while the student's classroom experience is possibly the most integral in determining the existence or lack of a strong feministic perspective in dance education, it is also the most complex and conflicted aspect. Both the structure of the department and the voiced opinions of the students suggest a conflict between a masculine and feminine approach.

University level dance classes can generally be divided into three types: technique, composition, and theory. The first type, technique classes, may vary in specific subject matter from ballet to modern dance to an ethnic dance form, but the point of each class is the same. Each is intended to familiarize the student with that particular dance style, and to train the dancer to perform it correctly. There are several levels for each dance style, and progression from one level to the other is based on proficiency and perfection of the technique. Instruction usually involves the professor demonstrating an exercise or movement series, which the students repeat to the best of their ability. The professor then corrects the students who are "doing it wrong" (Transcript 4, Line 170). In fact, the basis of these technique classes is to train the student to master the particular dance form and this is a difficult and precise endeavor for, as one student noted, "everything has its proper place and if its not there, you are going to be wrong" (Transcript 4, Line 173).

These classes may be said to follow traditional masculine education models. There is a definite hierarchy in the class with the professor at the top, the most "correct" dancers next, and the least proficient students at the bottom. This hierarchical structure among students can be observed in several various manifestations. First of all, the way in which students structure themselves in lines for across the floor movement, or in rows for center floor work reflects this hierarchy. The most proficient, or "correct" students most often take places at the front, while



the least confident students take up the rear (field notes). Sometimes this structure is altered when the best students decide to go last, and then we find that the students in the front are perceived to be of middle to high level, and the least proficient students hide in the middle (field notes). Also, some students suggest that the attention they receive in technique classes is dependent on their perceived abilities. One student, who considers herself "not necessarily very technical" complains that she is not getting equal attention:

"I feel like the Modern III teacher now only talks to people she thinks are good. And I know I'm not doing stuff right and not once all year has she corrected me, you know. And things I know, "Oh, I wasn't doing that" and she hasn't corrected me (Transcript 3, Line 48-52).

This quote is used not to determine the degree of fairness on the part of dance technique professors, but to illustrate the clear distinction drawn between who is technically "good" and who is "bad," and the hierarchy which results.

Furthermore, this classroom environment is characterized by a pronounced application of the jug/mug model, for the students are attempting to directly imitate the dance style and performance techniques of the professor. One professor even makes common references to such a model in the class itself. She refers to the students as "empty vessels," and vows to fill them "with my knowledge" (field notes).

In contrast to this is the second type of dance education, the composition class. These are intended to teach students about the process of composing movement phrases and dance pieces. The

classes are not necessarily about training choreographers, claims one professor, but about undergoing process (Transcript 5). These classes are taken in levels as well as the technique classes and yet the student progresses through each level by means of completion of the preceding course, doing away with the idea of "mastery." The focus, is "the process of your discovery of movement voice," (Transcript 5, Line 91-92). Since everyone's movement voice is different, there is no right or wrong answer. Instead, students are evaluated on the depth of their involvement and their dedication to the process. As such, the focus is on the students individual experience, and the teachers serve as the facilitator to such experiences. Classes are conducted differently at each level, but typically a bulk of the instruction involves students performing their compositions and receiving feedback from both the professor and fellow students.

This type of education environment relies heavily on feministic education models. The focus is on individual experience and journey, rather than achieving a set ideal. The phrase "discovery of movement voice" (Transcript 4, Line 92) particularly rings full of feministic ideologies and their attention to personal voice (Belenky et al, Howe, Pearson et al, Rich). Furthermore, the power structure of the classroom places everyone on a more equal standing. No composition professor could ever expect their students to adopt a choreographic style that resembled their own, nor would they likely want them to. Thus, the instructor becomes more of a guide than a master to be

imitated. As one student commented about a composition professor, "she's just there so she can help us, she has something to offer. But I don't get the feeling like she's talking down to us" (Transcript 1, Line 408-410). This absence of a hierarchy sets the stage for a more collaborative environment from all the students. It confirms them as intelligent dancers and accept student critiques on almost the same level as the professor's critiques. In fact, at least one professor claims that she learns a great deal from her students (Transcript 5). The result of all of this is a community of learners who excel by reaching deeper into their own experience, and by finding their own voice -- a feminist educators ideal.

The third type of class which dance majors take are considered theory classes. These range in content from Laban Notation to Music Theory, from Dance History to Kinesiology (course catalog). These classes are not as easily defined as strictly masculine or feminine but rather are somewhere in between. Kinesiology is a case in point. It is taught by both the presentation of lectures and the shared experiences of students injuries and special knowledge. Furthermore, while students are expected to objectively understand the scientific principles, and to memorize the specific origins and insertions of the muscles of the body, they are also given more freedom of interpretation and more room for personal experience than most science courses would allow. For instance, one of the final exams asks the student to "Consider the concepts we have studied this term (gravity,

stability, fitness, flexibility). How does the essence of these same concepts manifest as one tries to understand the phenomena of Racism? (exam, 1993). Thus, the student is not just asked to expound on the principles, but to make connections between the subject and the experiences of the student with relation to those around her. Furthermore, this approach softens the edges of a "right" answer, for while each student knowledge should be the same, their connections will vary. It is not, however, an easy question, for it requires the student to not only know the principle, but to understand it abstractly. Thus, we find a feministic approach to the most masculine modeled of subjects -- science (Harris). This blend of masculine and feminine models is a characteristic found in most theory classes at LMU.

Thus, within a department comprised of three different types of classes, there are three different approaches to education. Technique classes generally rely on a masculine approach, composition classes utilize a feminist approach, and theory classes fuse the two approaches. The feminist perspective has definitely shaped these classroom experiences, and yet its dominance is unclear. When the focus is shifted from structure to the student's voiced experiences, the picture becomes no more clear.

Dance students often complain of being babied. "We get treated like children a lot" (Transcript 1, Line 210), they claim. These students resent the fact that things like class attendance are so closely monitored. There is the feeling that

this kind of monitoring is not appropriate at the college level. One student recounted an incident in which she was confronted by the head of the department about missing a single technique class.

"So I said "Yeah, I did, its not going to happen again, I had to miss, whatever" so she was like, "O.K. because Dawn told me you missed...but I wasn't there checking up on you, I was there checking up on someone else." But still, why is she checking up on anybody? Those kinds of things is when it gets irritating" (Transcript 1, Line 194-200).

These students resent this "checking up" because they feel they are being treated like babies. "If we're not doing well," suggests one student, "don't give us a good grade, that's all" (Transcript 1, 218-219).

These same students claim that the department is often too strict. The professors are, according to one student, "less understanding" (Transcript 1, Line 384) about personal crises. "They expect us to be like wonder-people" (Transcript 1, Line 398). This sentiment is echoed by another student who claims that the professors "don't take into consideration" (Transcript 4, Line 153) what students are going through in their life.

Other students, however, view the situation in a much different light. They agree that student are babied, but see it in terms of students taking advantage of their professors. Whereas the above students complained there is not enough understanding, these students complain that there is too much. "I have never seen so many students whine at their teachers before" (Transcript 2, Line 499). They claim that students push the teachers around and delay due dates by complaining "we're so

busy" (Transcript 4, 507). Mostly, this occurs in composition classes, but it also may occur in theory classes as well (personal experience), but it occurs, "with the written work mostly" (Transcript 2, 505). Both students and faculty agree that this is a result of the close relationship between student and professors because students feel they can "get away with it" (Transcript 2, Line 502; Transcript 5, Line 275).

Thus the student experience, like the department structure, suggests an internal conflict. Students complain of being babied, but cannot agree on whether "babying" involves strictness or leniency. According to Judy Scalin, the intensity of their critiques of the department reflects a certain freedom and student control (Transcript 5). This may well be true but in this study it is more clearly indicative of the wide range of expectations which students maintain about their classes and the way they should be run. Some students expect understanding and flexibility, while others expect to "do it...or take the grade drop" (Transcript 2, Line 510-511).

Indeed, this conflict pervades the department as it struggles to define itself somewhere between the masculine and the feminine perspectives. Although the program strives to nurture its students, and provide them with a feministic environment, it must also adopt some more traditional, masculine methods to maintain academic integrity. Through feminist models, the tone of an experiential learning "journey" is set, and the sense of community may be fostered. Still, masculine models have

their place as well. These traditional methods are used to teach technique, to ensure that "understanding isn't taken too far", and to provide a sense of balance (Transcript 5).

#### STUDENTS AND THE UNIVERSITY

Contrary to the wishes of many of the dance majors, their classes are not all within the dance department. According to university policies, the students must take a battery of core classes including English, history, philosophy, science and theology (1990 Course Catalog). If these students enjoy certain feministic methods in the dance department, it is unlikely that they will encounter the same type of pedagogical philosophies throughout the university. Neither, for that matter, is it likely that they will find the same sense of community among their university peers as within their dept. In fact, the uniqueness of the dance dept comes into clearest focus when viewed in relation to the larger university. Or, more specifically, when we consider the dancer's reactions to university non-dance classes.

This reaction, most commonly, is not a positive one. Dance majors generally don't appreciate their required core classes. They feel that what they learn in these classes has no bearing on them as students or people. One student articulated that "It has no relevancy to what I want to do, or what I'm about" (Transcript 4, Line 262). Another student lamented being forced

to study things which " I just don't want to learn about" (Transcript 1, Line 69). Even students that do very well in all classes complain about the core class requirements. "I just haven't gotten much out of it that's applicable to life" (Transcript 1, Line 71-72).

It is not the case that these students only want to take dance classes, they simply aren't interested in the ones which are required. There are many classes which these students identified as interesting. One student claimed to love certain classes like African religion, and all or her Afro-american Studies courses because she felt a kind of connection to them, even though she herself is caucasian (Transcript 2, 705-711). Another student enjoys political science classes, and has developed a great love for education classes (Transcript 3). Still another student is likes art history and computer classes (Transcript 1). Thus, it would not be accurate to say that dance majors only enjoy dance classes. Their interests are obviously not limited. The problem then, lies not so much in the fact that they must take other classes, but in which classes they must take.

Oftentimes the problem that students identify is the presentation of the classes. The most common complaint is that the students don't feel the subject is relevant, that they can't make a connection with what they are studying (Transcript 1,2,3,4). This reiterates the feminist claim that women have a felt need to connect with their subject (Howe, Thorne, Pearson).



Furthermore, it lends evidence to the earlier claim that these same students do enjoy a certain connection to dance, for if they didn't then they wouldn't react so strongly to it's absence in their other classes. In addition, students identify certain teaching methods as discouraging them in these other classes. "It's not as intimate" (Transcript 2, 662) claimed one student, and "it's not as personal" (Transcript 4). More specifically, students resent the type of passive position in which they are often placed. These students are so used to experiencing their lessons first hand that when they are expected to assume a passive position in other classes, they resent it:

"like history where its just sitting there listening to a man run his mouth for like an hour, about stuff that you just, you know what I mean. I don't know. Its so active-passive. Classes here in dance are totally active, you take like...do you know anything about lightness? Well, lets get over here and try to figure out what lightness is. You experience what lightness is. But you learn about like the German Reformation and you sit there and talk about it. You just sit there and its so passive. So that's the difference, you know, like actually getting a grasp on things" (Transcrit 4, Line 293-310).

Because of this conflict, dance students at LMU have come up with various ways of dealing with their required classes. One student reported that she always sits up at the front of the class, because that is the only way she can remain focused (Transcript 2, Line 643). Another student just works harder to keep up her academic reputation. In addition to individual strategies, the department has come up with its own solution for this interest gap. The chair of the department, Judy Scalin, has

identified certain teachers who "understand dancers" and she encourages her students to take their classes from them.

"But its funny because when I had to sign up (for history), Judy said "take Father Eng, he loves dancers" not like loves, but you know he appreciates them, and he did seem to appreciate the arts in his lectures in history. That he didn't, I mean he expected just as much from you as anybody else but he didn't treat you differently at all" (Transcript 2, 650-657).

In addition to the conflict in material presentation and teaching style, students report encountering various forms of stereotypes about themselves and ignorance about their field of study. Generally, these instances stem from the belief that dance is somehow academically "soft." Oftentimes, dance majors encounter people who believe dancers don't have to work hard. One student claimed that people were surprised when she went to the library (Transcript 1, Line 510), and that the common attitude is that dance papers are "no big deal" (Transcript 1, Line 560). "People think," complained one student, "that we don't think and that we don't have papers to do" (Transcript 2, Line 441). One student recalled a frustrating incident in which a professor, a fellow student, and even her own boyfriend doubted her academic abilities:

"My boyfriend doesn't think we have anything to do. I'm like, "look at me, I'm writing ten page papers, OK? Please tell me that I don't think." It like "excuse me, we can think." I mean, I wrote a theology paper on dance, I got an A and I shoved it in his face because he's Jewish and it was a Judaism class (Transcript 2, 443).

"When I wrote that paper for theology, the teacher was surprised, really surprised. I got an A on the paper, but I

mean he was so surprised that he told another student. I went to the classroom and there was some guy standing there and he was all "Did you talk to the rabbi yet? He got a really surprising paper on dance and judaism, he said it was an excellent paper." And they were both so surprised and it's like "Yes, I do have a brain" again (Transcript 2, Line 625-633).

Furthermore, students claim that they often encounter the attitude that dance doesn't deserve academic recognition from many different groups of people. Sometimes it comes from family members who often have "a freak attack" (Transcript 3, Line 152) when a their daughter decides to major in dance. One student recalled telling an in-law that she was a "dance major and business minor" (Transcript 2, 464) to which the woman replied, "shouldn't it be the other way around?" (Transcript 2, 467). It also comes from classmates who complain "it really upsets me that there are some majors on this campus (implying dance) that get the same amount of credit for their classes" (Transcript 1, Line 531). Finally, the administration many question its value for while they do support and respect the dance program "they don't remotely understand what we're doing, the profundity of what we do" (Transcript 5, Line 557). This faculty member isn't complaining, for she feels the administration provides the department with adequate respect and space, but she still believes that dancers are perceived as "silly" or "weird" (Transcript 5, Lines 572, 573).

In an attempt to combat these stereotypes, the dance department has employed strict grading policies, which ensure that only a small percentage of the students receive high grades

(faculty letter). This is enforced under the ideal of maintaining "exceptional work" (faculty letter). In fact, if more than 20% of students in any given class receive an A or A-, it is considered a problem (data). Since many classes have less than 20 people, sometimes less than 10 (personal experience), this policy may sometimes result in curving the grades down in order to reach the goal of 20%. This practice is in operation to ensure that courses aren't considered too easy in the eyes of the students and the administration, and to maintain "academic integrity."

Still, dance students are constantly battling the misconception that they don't really have to work, that their study is academically soft, and that they don't deserve academic recognition. This phenomena, not surprisingly, is similar to that of Women's Studies departments which, reports Pearson (1989), "tend to be seen as outside the mainstream of the real work of the institution" (152). Being outside the mainstream is a common feeling for LMU dance majors. In fact, when speaking of the university, these students often adopt an "us and them" frame of reference (Transcripts 1,2,3,4). One student sums up this attitude by referring to Burns, the building which houses the departments of dance, music and art.

"I feel more comfortable in Burns than anywhere else. Its because the people around here are more artistic and like there's a whole different mind frame in here...I feel a lot different when I'm outside of Burns. Not like I'm on trial or anything but I just feel like,you can feel the difference between being out there and in here" (Transcript 4, Line 322-337).

#### DISCUSSION

This essay examined the utilization of feministic models in dance education at LMU. Specifically, it searched for the elements of connection, community and confirmation within the dance department. The subject of dance lends itself well to a feminist perspective because of female dominance in both its history and its enduring perception as a feminine endeavor. Furthermore, the nature of dance encourages its students to form a deep connection with their subject and thus glean more from it in terms of personal growth. This inclusion and connection is characteristic of feministic education models, and it is articulated by LMU dance majors as "something deep down inside" (Transcript 2, Line 220) and "the kind of education that other people are lacking" (Transcript 3, Line 173).

The relationship between students may be viewed largely in terms of community. Dance majors feel a deep connection with one another both through their common identification and their structural interdependence. Still, the element of competition which is inherent in dance creates subdivisions within this larger community. The students term these divisions "cliques" and they tend to have a hierarchical nature. Thus, while community largely defines the department, it does not escape the masculine model of hierarchy.

The dance classroom is divided between technique, composition and theory classes with each utilizing a different perspective. Technique is dominated by masculine models, composition by feministic, and theory classes attempt to balance

the two. This difference is based on the intention of each class, be it "mastery," "journey" or "understanding." Furthermore, this blend of perspectives may function to provide "balance" within the department. Overall, it is seen as a sort of compromise between the two perspectives.

The relationship between the university and the department is a strained one. There is an "us and them" mentality as each rejects the other's teaching practices. This rift supports the idea of a feministic modeled dance department for if it followed traditional models, the students would not see it as so outside the mainstream. Various methods are imposed by the dance department to lessen this rift. Students are encouraged to take classes from "dance-friendly" professors while the strict grading policies of the department are intended to provide "integrity" in the eyes of the larger academe.

Together, these factors suggest a strong feministic tendency. It is modified somewhat, however, in order to accommodate some dance conventions such as competition and rigid technique and also to maintain face within the larger academic institution. Still, the connection, community, and confirmation inherent in the program, and the perceived rift between the department and the rest of the university illustrates a department which is not operating within traditional educational parameters. The LMU dance department, consciously or unconsciously, draws upon feminist principles to educate its students.

This feminist analysis of the department was applied mainly through the point of view of the student. But, like any other complex social or educational environment, it could have been approached from any number of perspectives. Surely dance educators, largely under-represented in this study, would have a modified view of the situation, as would non-majors who participate in the program. Furthermore, dance may not be the only bastion of feminist principles on college campuses. Barring the obvious, women's studies, there must be other field of study which rely on feministic perspectives to further their educational goals, at least to some extent. Students often referred to the theater department, for instance, when comparing themselves to the rest of the university. There seemed to be a sense that theater majors have similar educational experiences in regards to at least connection, community and experientiality. Furthermore, the association with art and music raises questions about the possibility of the use of feministic principles in these areas as well.

While this particular feminist construct is studied within the context of a single university department, its implications on the perspectives of education and society as a whole may be much larger. Neither the students nor the department exist in a bubble, and the acceptance of feministic models in such a university setting suggest a larger trend toward the feministic perspective. If connected, experiential learning is valued in academia, the fostering of a feministic perspective will

encourage these female students to continue these types of thought patterns in other areas of their life as well. Indeed, the fact that dance education is valued, though outside the mainstream, suggest a trend toward embracing the feminist perspective and the contextual, holistic thought patterns it embodies. Ultimately, the condition of the dance department and LMU may be seen as a representation of the feministic perspective in society as a whole.



"It would be different if I could find a program where I was helped to see things in my own way. That would be gold"

Belenky 211

conquer knowledge/complete knowledge

#### FRAGMENTATION

women fragmented from each other --- (Rich, 136-137)

women in low status so no role-models ---- (Rich, 137)

fatherly relationship with girl student --- " A woman centered university would be a place in which the much-distorted mother-daughter relationship could find a new model: where women of maturer attainments in every field would provide intellectual guidance along with concern for the wholeness of their young women students " (Rich, 140)

"fragmentation of knowledge that weakens thought ....it is difficult to imagine a women-centered curriculum where quantitative method and technical reason...would continue to be used as an escape from wholeness. (Rich, 143)

antihierarchal (Rich, 145)

#### ACTIVE VS PASSIVE LEARNING

"claim" vs "receive" -- difference is between acting and being acted upon, and for women it can literally mean the difference between life and death. (Rich, 231)

Elizabeth Barret Browning -- impatience with studies which cultivate a "passive recipiency" in the mind, and asserted that "women want to be made to think actively" (Rich, )

look at the classroom....small soft voices....silence...terms of academic discourse are not her language (Rich, 243 - 244)

experiential B 201

need structure B 204

being good prevents development of an authentic voice B 209

Jeanne Block "argued that because girls in our society are raised to accommodate existing structures, they need colleges

that will help set them free. " Belenky, 213)

#### BANKING TEACHING

get what is inside me, inside you vs. coach, ally, partner in learning. (Belenky 208)

fill students by making a deposit of info which the teacher considers to constitute true knowledge. ----- not only teachers fault, perpetuated by students (Belenky, 214-215)

" the kind of teacher they wanted was one who would help them articulate and expand their latent knowledge" -----

midwife ---- assist the students in giving birth to their own ideas, in making their own tacit knowledge and elaborating it. (Belenky, 217)

"assist in the emergence of consciousness. They encourage the students to speak in their own active voices" (Belenky, 218)

#### CONNECTED CLASSES

dialogue ( Belenky, 219)

" the connected class provides a culture for growth" (Belenky, 221)

" In a community, unlike a hierarchy, people get to know each other. They do not act as representatives of positions or as occupants of roles but as individuals with particular styles for thinking." (Belenky, 221)

" ..unless she knew the critic personally and the critic knew her personally she found criticism of her work

"hurtful but not helpful" (Belenky, 222)

" the connected class constructs truth not through conflict but through consensus whose original meaning.... was feeling or sensing together, implying not agreement, necessarily, but a "crossing of the barrier between ego and ego," bridging private and shared experience" (Belenky, 223)