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Reasoning in relation
a normative inquiry of dancing together

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Reasoning in Relation: A Normative Inquiry of Dancing Together

BY

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PhD

January 2020

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A Normative Inquiry of Dancing Together

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January 2020

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This PhD thesis investigates the foundation for a generic philosophy of partnering in dance, providing a framework for evaluating the act of dancing together. Drawing primarily from the analytic philosophies of Catherine Elgin, Margaret Gilbert, H. Paul Grice, and Annette Baier, the thesis lays out the sufficient conditions for dancing together in the strong sense, which I argue is what constitutes 'partnering'. From improvisation to complex and intricate choreography, dancing together seems to be predicated on certain conditions. Moreover, dancing together can be evaluated from a multiplicity of perspectives and makes the joint act of partnering (whether it is a dyad, trio, or more) subject to questions about values. But evaluating value is problematic. The thesis argues that when we understand the conditions that underpin an interaction, a much more complete picture of what it is people are doing in dancing together is achieved. The aim of this study from an epistemological perspective is thus threefold: to critically investigate 1) the conditions of dancing together in the strong sense, 2) the normative problems that arise given the underpinning conditions, and 3) the ethical dimensions of trust and moral agency in dancing together.

Rather than focusing on *how* individuals dance together, this thesis interrogates *what* the necessary conditions are in order to dance together. The thesis unfolds the terrain of associated concepts in dancing together and sets the terms in which partnering can be framed. Through hypothetical scenarios, thought experiments, and a close reading of how partnering operates in a filmed recording of Jiri Kylian's *Petite Mort,* the thesis lays out the sufficient conditions of establishing and maintaining a joint commitment to dance together. Abstracting the principles from specific dance environments is an intentional move to understand the relationship between aesthetic values and ethical concerns within partnered movement on a broader scale. In so doing, this thesis provides a unique, systematic examination of partnering, which contributes to scholarship that is applicable in both the practice and theorizing of dance.

Chapter One: Introduction

For the majority of my teenage years, I spent weekends and weekdays alike practicing partnering as a competitive Latin/Ballroom dancer. I trained first at a local studio, which was a central hub of youth 'DanceSport' (also known as competitive Latin/Ballroom dancing) athletes and, as I grew older, began participating in national and international competitions. One of my main coaches was world champion Vibeke Toft, who introduced me to a number of ideas about dancing together. These ideas centered on the way partners negotiate their relationship in dancing together, how to listen and interpret music together, and how to emphasize or create different narratives by playing with different qualities of movement.

To pay for my classes, I began teaching the many pre-teens and junior competitors at my local studio, as well as wedding couples. I would begin each lesson by asking "do you want to learn steps or do you want to practice moving together?" in my own subversive teenage attempt at behavioral psychology. Most of the time, the response was "we just want to learn the steps". Given the pressures of preparing for a wedding or a competition, it made sense that a couple would want to control at least some part of the experience. Simple choreography of sharing and shifting weight could become more fun or more dramatic with dips, spins, and other tricks to make wedding and competitive couples happy. But when presented with the opportunity to practice the subtlety of moving together outside choreography, I was always curious why anyone would choose otherwise.

Shortly after winning the United States National Collegiate DanceSport Championships, I found myself starved for a different kind of dance experience. Returning to classical ballet and modern dance, I found myself trying to relay ideas of partnering and musicality beyond the world of DanceSport, inquiring into the subtle relationships individuals negotiate when dancing together. Joining a pre-professional youth company, I learned lifts and partnered movement in ballet, as well as jazz techniques and American Modern, including the work of Lester Horton, Martha Graham, and Jose Limon. Not long into my new training, I sustained a stress fracture in my lumbar spine from a partnering accident. My world came crashing down as I realized professional dancing might not be in my future.

Enrolling in university, I hopped from discipline to discipline, beginning with literature and art history and ending with rhetorical theory and cognitive neuroscience. As my back healed, I returned to dance with new questions – how do dancers' thoughts and

motives influence their ability to dance together? What are the underlying factors of dancing together well? Is partnering a form of non-verbal dialogue fueled by physical interaction? Finishing my bachelor's degree, I moved on to graduate school where I met Jill Johnson, director of the Harvard Dance Center and a principal dancer of Ballet Frankfurt and the Forsythe Company. Jill brought established artists to work with us, including William Forsythe, Ohad Naharin, Karole Armitage, Aszure Barton, among others. Introduced to their processes, I continued to deepen my practice of teaching and performing. My curiosity about the subtleties of dancing together with others complexified, infusing itself with my own history of competition and social dancing. I recount this early part of my journey because this thesis is informed by my experiences as both a practitioner and educator.

My inquiry in this thesis thus began by critically reflecting on my own experience in dance partnering. I was particularly interested in the shift of observing from the outside to experiencing dancing from the inside, and the assessment that happens in both instances of engagement. Starting my doctoral journey, I developed experiments examining the relationship between physiological responses and cognitive schemas. I designed physical tasks for dancers within studios settings, to examine the relationship between observable features and self-reported experience. I thought that spending time with expert practitioners would open up a cross-cultural study of values in physical interaction across dance forms, including classical and contemporary ballet, Latin/Ballroom, and contact improvisation. I spent time observing professional dancers at major concert dance companies, including the Royal Swedish Ballet, Batsheva Dance Company, Chicago Hubbard Street, Erick Hawkins Dance Company, and the Boston Ballet. I conducted interviews with expert teachers and dancers including former World DanceSport Champions Vibeke Toft and Charlotte Jorgensen, contact improvisation co-founder Nancy Stark Smith, and contemporary choreographers including William Forsythe, Ohad Naharin, Aszure Barton, and Sharon Eyal. My goal was to acquire ethnographic, qualitative data based on constituent accounts of partnering. I asked about the experience of dancing together, the feeling of attunement, and how dancers knew whether they were attuned or not. My initial qualitative fieldwork led me to further consider distinctions between what dancers thought they were doing and what was observable from the outside. The fieldwork served to unearth new ideas, which I was able to develop dialogically into deeper research questions.

From my time with these companies, I began to realize that there was a larger problem at hand. What I found was that dancers tend to contradict themselves, as well as

each other. Their answers about attunement were vague and subjective. This is not very surprising, given that dancers are not often asked to reflect on and articulate their experience about partnering in such specific ways. Returning to my philosophical roots, I realized that my interest was in understanding generic principles of dancing together. As my attention turned away from acquiring qualitative data, I began to scrutinize what kinds of questions I was asking and the ways in which it made sense to pursue answers. Getting to the heart of the questions about partnering proved to be a difficult task, since the physicality of certain forms (e.g. Latin/Ballroom, classical *pas de deux*) is habituated within my own body. Reflecting on my years of experience has been extremely fruitful, leading to even more nuanced questions.

From these trials and experiments, I kept running into an explanatory problem when attempting to critically evaluate and assess partnering paradigms, both from the inside experience and the outside observation. Some of the interviews were particularly interesting, like when Nancy Stark-Smith suggested that contact improvisation is "not partnering" (personal communication, 2016). Our discussion circled around the question of whether partnering always involves two people, as well as the role of improvisation and communication in the physical interaction between bodies moving together. We touched on how contact improvisation follows a sort of formula of 1+1=3, in which the unity of dancers moving together form more than the sum of their parts. There has been some important scholarship on contact improvisation by scholars like Cynthia Novak (1994) and Cheryl Pallant (2006), who demonstrate the cultural and political influences and implications of dancing together. As Nancy and I discussed contact improvisation and dancing together more generally, it dawned on me that gathering qualitative data was not enough to get to general principles that I was hoping to find.

Moving away from qualitative data, I decided to focus on the explanatory problem about how dancers attune to one another. My research turned to conceptual analysis about *describing* and *evaluating* the interaction between dance partners. I arrived at the conclusion that the contribution I wanted to make was a philosophical framework that might offer a descriptive theory (to describe the interaction) about the normative dimensions of partnering (to evaluate the interaction). I will describe this in greater detail in the following section on research questions.

A related strand in my inquiry that relates to the explanatory problem is one that emerges from ideas about logic and reasoning. In my undergraduate studies, I was exposed to ideas from the field of classical rhetorical theory. I was particularly attracted to Aristotle,

because of his affinity for logic and his commitment to creating functional, practical frameworks not only for creating successful arguments but also for deconstructing those of others. I was fascinated by Aristotle's exposition of concepts such as embodied, culturally-bound dispositions (*hexis* in Greek, later translated to *habitus* in Latin), felt-time as distinguished from measured time (*kairos* versus *chronos*), as well as the five canons of rhetoric including discovery (*heuresis*), arrangement (*taxis)*, style (*lexis*), memory (*mneme*), and delivery (*hypocrisis)* (Spranzi 2011). Given my background in this branch of study, I had initially thought to complete a rhetorical analysis of the claims made within partnering practice by particular practitioners.

I moved on from classical notions to contemporary rhetorical theory, in order to distinguish the persuasive role of the body within communication. Two particular models stood out to me: Lloyd Bitzer's concept of "Rhetorical Situation" (Bitzer 1968), and Jason Buehl's Syncretic Model of Multimodal Rhetoric (Buehl 2016). The former model presents the conditions by which a situation or event can be construed as rhetorical, which I explored in the context of dance partnering (Vidrin 2018). Buehl's model understands the conception, assembly, and circulation of rhetorical artifacts in relation to three overlapping domains of human experience—the cognitive, the material, and the social (Buehl 2016). I found it particularly interesting to note that, according to Buehl, a rhetorical artifact is,

> merely a specific performance in which cognitive, material, and social resources are coordinated in the light of actual or imagined cognitive, material, and social constraints for the purpose of rhetorical action […] best characterized as an emerging form that temporally fixes a diverse range of relations among concepts, institutions, symbol systems, and media. (Buehl 2016, 28)

Given this framing, I was excited to consider how a rhetorical artifact could, for example, be a duet produced extemporaneously by two individuals in a rehearsal space.

Buehl and Bitzer's capacious understandings of rhetoric led me down a rabbit hole of considering the role of rhetoric in the broadest sense. I discovered leading rhetoric scholar George Kennedy, who holds that, "rhetoric, in essence, is a form of mental energy and emotional energy. This is most clearly seen when an individual, animal or human, is faced with some serious threat or opportunity that may be affect by utterance" (Kennedy 1998, 3-4). Given the complexity of human interactions, one can feel threatened, perceive an opportunity to gain some advantage, and seek to accomplish goals in uncountable ways, on a continuum of different qualities ranging from selfish to selfless and everything in

between. As I considered rhetorical methods of analysis, I thought deeply about the persuasive elements of attunement in dance partnering, particularly how partners are *convinced* by each other's physical actions. I found support within rhetoric "as a historical product of practices, rather than as a natural faculty inherent in a cultured human mind, body, or language" (Stormer 2006, 258). I even found work related to bodily rhetoric, such as Shannon Walters' work on Rhetorical Touch (2014), where she suggests, "touch functions in the spaces between the tensions of discourse, embodiment, social construction, and materiality and in locations of partial and potential identification that bridge individual experience with social and political connection" (Walters 2014, 8).

The important realization was that rhetoric as a field does not have a monopoly on considerations of felt-time and culturally-bound dispositions. These lines of philosophy are apparent across civilizations throughout history, and importantly rhetoric does not spend much time reflecting on dance. As I turned away from the Ancient Greek conventions I found myself drawn to broader questions about how partnering is evaluated, across and within different forms of dance. The study of rhetoric offered a point of reference, but I ultimately felt that it could not be central in this study. While rhetorical concepts such as felt-time and dispositions do find their way into this writing, they do so in a nuanced way, without taking up their Greek roots.

As I continued to investigate, I became swept up in complex questions that seemed only to complexify upon engagement. I was drawn to a broad array of disciplines and forms, so much so that I became conflicted with the desire to write for too many populations. I found myself drawn to disparate fields of practice and scholarship because partnered movement is a complex area of study. Not only does it involve multiple individuals moving together, but there are also a plethora of concerns within practice, from biomechanics and physics to social and ethical dimensions. Given the desire to put these different populations into direct dialogue with one another, my considered how to contribute a significant innovation into the dance field. I honed in on the idea of creating a text that would draw on philosophy such that philosophers would be convinced, yet written in an accessible way to support practice by dancers themselves. This contribution focuses on the evaluation about attunement between dance partners.

My linkage of "partnering" and "attunement" emerges from my experience as an International DanceSport competitor (including the slow and Viennese waltz, tango, foxtrot, quickstep, cha-cha-cha, samba, rumba, Paso Doble, and jive). DanceSport itself has a highly codified approach to partnering (Laird 1994), though the vocabulary is

particular to the style of movement. Moreover, the competitive drive has a significant influence on the practice of partnering. DanceSport offers a reference point to synthesize my own experience of overlapping interests in both the aesthetics of attunement as much as the physical principles of partnering. Given that the base of this movement form is lead/follow or action/reaction, it begs the question of what constitutes an "appropriate" reaction. It is interesting to note that dancers and educators represent different schools of thought within DanceSport, all of which vary in how they prioritize musicality, partnering, beauty (aesthetics), as well as physical factors like power and speed (Vermey 1994, Stern 1999, Harman 2019). This thesis is informed by work with my own teachers, former world champions Vibeke Toft and Allan Tornsberg, who told me repeatedly that they prioritize partnering in their teaching and coaching practices (personal communication, February 2016).

Hoping to broaden my scope of partnering, I turned to consider other forms that are not restricted to lead/follow. As I did so, the explanatory problem related to evaluation began to crystallize and gain importance in my study. I found that other forms of dance that involve two or more individuals dancing together (e.g. contact improvisation, ballet, tango) also offer principles from which to attune to other(s) with their own particular ways of dealing with "appropriateness". Principles of weight-sharing and weight-shifting (e.g. rolling point of contact, oppositional force) find their way into many forms often with their own distinct vocabulary and seem often to be taken in tandem with considerations such as competence, temporality, and awareness. Across dance forms that involve two or more individuals moving together—including classical and neo-classical ballet, contact improvisation, "contemporary" and "modern" dance, as well as social and competitive practices such as tango, International Latin/Standard DanceSport, swing, lindy hop, and blues—physical interaction can look and feel quite different. Distinct forms, being what they are, are subject to particular aesthetic ideals that emerge from spaces saturated with cultural meaning. One may know what a certain dance looks like because of the way it has been depicted in photographs, films, and other media, but also because the form itself has conventions that prescribe boundaries and values for how partners move together. For example, the boundaries and values that underlie conventions within classical *Pas de Deux* often presuppose an erect posture, which is different than how contact improvisation values fluid movements that "do not emphasize the body's line or shape" (Novak 1990).

I examined existing texts that explore the practice of moving with others in culturally-specific settings, including Argentinian Tango (Baim 2007), folk dancing (Grau and Jordan 2002), Latin-American dancing (Vermey 1994, Harman 2019), contact improvisation (Novak 1990, Pallant 2006), classical *Pas de Deux* (Serebrennikov 2000, Lee 2002, Dolin 2005), and social dancing (Knowles 2009). I found that the culturally specific representations focus inquiry on concerns of dancing together on their own terms. There are also numerous scholars of dance that take an analytical approach, especially in the relationship between intention, thought, and action (including Carr 1987, Sparshott 1995, Sheets-Johnston 1999, McFee 2003, Manning 2007, Sheets-Johnstone 2015, Katan-Schmid 2016, Bannon 2018, McFee 2018, Pakes 2019, among others). These analytical approaches draw on and synthesize different methods of inquiry: Anna Pakes draws out the phenomenological-ontological dimensions of dance works. Maxine Sheets-Johnstone illuminates the phenomenological-biological dimension of dancing as intentional bodily movement. Einav Katan-Schmid's monograph is a singular project on the works of Ohad Naharin, where *Gaga* is analyzed as a particular movement language. Graham McFee analyzes dance through the lens of aesthetics, and advocates for the ways in which dance can be appreciated. Abstracting the principles from the social, competitive, and concert dance environments, I make an intentional move to understand the relationship between aesthetic values and ethical concerns within partnered movement on a broader scale. The explanatory problem of dancing together, paired with the abstraction from cultural specificities, come together to inform the main, overarching aim of my thesis: to establish a generic, philosophical logic to examine conditions, principles, and norms of dancing together.

Assumptions and Questions

This thesis will be an investigation about the nature and quality of physical interaction in dance, with particular attention to ethical dimensions of claims made by dancers, especially those related to trust, care, empathy, and mutual understanding. This thesis investigates two core, overarching and interrelated questions:

1. What does it mean to dance together?
2. What does it mean to dance together *well?*

These two driving questions center on the evaluation of physical interaction. A significant problem within the claims made regarding physical interaction, whether fine-

grained or gross movement, is a tendency to frame experience within a subjective lens. While the subjective experience of physical interaction is incredibly important for dancers themselves, I focus instead on analyzing the relevant ideas and concepts. Consider for example a subjective account of a physical interaction. The individual will account for whatever is salient, which is driven largely by one's background and history, and perhaps dominant cultural mores as well. One's perception of an interaction will affect not only how one experiences the interaction in the moment, but also how s/he will later describe it. My goal here is not to critique subjective methods so much as to suggest that there may be assumptions (both physical and metaphysical) made on the part of the subject in recounting the interaction. Even in accounting for experience, it seems necessary to understand what aspects of the interaction are relevant to the possibility of the interaction itself. The tension between subjective values and methodological approaches is precisely what makes a descriptive theory complicated, while a prescriptive one likely impossible. Questions that have shaped my thinking along the way were to what extent does understanding the motives depend on familiarity with the setting and conventions of the paradigms people are working within (e.g. international DanceSport, Contact Improvisation, milonga, etc.)? To what extent does partnering depend on the subjective values of the form or the preference of the dance-maker? That is, can we really say what movement is "supposed" to look like, let alone feel like? Thus, I find it worthwhile to develop a philosophical framework that can account for describing conditions and evaluating norms of physical interaction in dance.

Complexity in this study comes from the wide range of possibilities for physical interaction in dance, as well as the manifold motivation for dancers to seek physical interaction in the first place. People may come together to satisfy social needs, intimate desires, as well as their own artistic visions (choreographically, performatively, musically, and so on). Given the plethora of motivating reasons for people to move with others, I have found it useful to distinguish between coming together *through* dance and coming together *to* dance. The distinction holds that coming together *through* dance creates a sort of hierarchy, wherein quality and aesthetic form are lower on the metaphoric rung because movement is happenstance to the encounter, while coming together *to* dance on the other hand, suggests that movement itself is the primary focus. Consider for example a case in which a dancer comes to a social event to relax after a long and arduous work week. In order to distract herself, she may be looking for a partner that provides an escape by twirling her around to fast-paced music. In other words, she will be looking to socialize. Given the social and cultural aspects of dance, this is not surprising. However, her desire to socialize

may significantly influence the way she interacts with others. Rather than say something about the form of practice itself, I am interested in evaluating dancing together in a *generic* sense. I will consider what makes partnering distinct from merely dancing together regardless of the motives to come together. Rigorously considering the necessary conditions of partnering, I will question what kinds of features are relevant to evaluate. To be able to establish conditions, however, first requires unpacking the underlying conditions of dancing together.

This thesis takes an assumption that dance, as a broad field of study, is a practice concerned with (physical) matter in motion. Whether or not practitioners explicitly use terms such as gravity and physics, it is important to consider that a fundamental aspect of dance is people moving their bodies in tandem with the laws of nature. While the laws of nature may not be salient to a practitioner, it is my assumption that (at least for dancing on this planet), one is subject to the laws of nature whether or not one is aware of them. To consider human bodies dancing, however, is already beyond purely physical descriptions, especially when we consider complex ideas such as how partners make decisions based on particular ideas about interaction and attunement. Brute physics is thus not enough to understand what informs the particular qualities of movement that partners are able to achieve together, especially given that this study is about *interaction.* We thus need to understand more than simply how or why embodied human beings act; we need to know how they act in relation to (e.g. on account of) other(s).

Even if attunement, as an idealism, is not epiphenomenal to physical interaction in dance, this thesis examines the types of tensions that arise given the complicated relationship between movement and a particular kind of interpretation of physical movement. I will be examining the norms that are relevant to the evaluation of partnering in a practical sense within a pluralist framework, without attempting to reduce movement or feelings. The space wherein the practitioners are situated (stage, studio, salon), as well as the cultural and formal backgrounds of the practitioners and audience will undoubtedly play a crucial role in how the tensions between looking and feeling attuned are handled. While it may be impossible to directly address these tensions practically in a prescriptive sense, parsing the normative questions lends support for understanding at least some of the ways by which claims about attunement can be reasonably and justifiably evaluated.

In a complete and exhaustive theory of partnering, I would talk about all of the complexity that partnering entails, but here in my thesis I draw on analytical philosophy to investigate the conditions of partnering, and then the norms by which partnering can be

evaluated. Since individuals can seek out opportunities to dance with others for any number of reasons, ranging from social and aesthetic ones, to ritual and tradition, my focus is on the interaction itself. I will examine the relationship between physicality and ethical claims about trust, responsibility, and mutual understanding between partners, and what makes such claims about physicality potentially tenable. Defining attunement, however, is complicated. The simple fact remains that people *feel* attuned, and so the first part of this study is essentially one of an explanatory problem. How do we account for the conditions of attunement, interpreted from the inside of a dyad, as well as the interpretation of an outside observer? What counts as evidence for attunement when partners dance together, and what conditions need to be established in order for interaction to be successfully attuned? As bodies are fundamentally social, experience is unequivocally tied to culture and history. Moreover, situations are not necessarily repeatable, and so we run into tension between empiricism and ontology. A philosophical framework points out these tensions, names them, and provides a basis from which to critically evaluate the subtleties of partnering.

By bringing attention to partnering in this way, I will explore the conditions that govern physical interaction, as well as the potential epiphenomenally emergent sensation (and perception) of attunement. Analytic philosophy provides a method to draw on my own experience as a dancer, educator, and coach to build an argument about the conditions necessary for partnering and the norms that allow for evaluation and dialogue between dancers, invested observers (coaches, choreographers), and audience members. I seek a generic philosophy of partnering that is not only philosophically sound, but will also be applicable and useful in the practice of partnering. I recognize that taking a philosophical lens to identify and parse the finer points of this distinction in a theoretical way will not lead to a truly generalizable argument that is applicable in all cases, nor will it necessarily arrive at a prescriptive framework. There will likely be some points of disagreement with my characterization, but I believe this is ultimately useful to inform dialogue (verbal and physical) between practitioners (to articulate what is working and what is not), as well as the tools by which an audience can evaluate what they observe[1] with respect to the quality of interaction. I will examine the utility and implications of such a framework in the conclusion of this thesis.

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[1] It is important to note here that an instructor, coach, or choreographer is conceived here as “audience” given that s/he is not practicing in the moment, but rather observing interaction from the outside

Summary of Chapters

This thesis is a study on the norms and conditions of partnering. The initial reference point is a conception of how dancing together leads constituents to evaluate the quality of physical interaction between partners. As it stands now, partnering as a term is often quite broad (e.g. two people moving together) or quite narrow (e.g. culturally-bound practice such as ballroom, often with a heterosexual couple moving in very specific, pre-determined ways). Of course, this is not true for all scholarship. Erin Manning's *Politics of Touch* (2007) is an example of a text that examines the broader cultural and political implications of partnering, notably drawing from the context of Argentinean Tango. Cynthia Novak's *Sharing the Dance: Contact Improvisation and American Culture* (1994) is a similar example of a text that investigates contact improvisation as a form of dancing together with cultural and political ties. Susan Ravn's work is also a good example of investigating principles of dancing together in Tango and Sports dance (Ravn 2016, He and Ravn 2018). Maxine Sheets-Johnstone also has a recent chapter on dancing together, where she provides insights based on her previous work on the phenomenology of dance (Sheets-Johnstone 2017). Despite these sources, there are no texts that examine the issues of partnering in a general sense.

The challenge of this study has been in identifying the norms that apply to partnering generally, which can inform how people interact physically in dance, both broadly and in specific cultural settings. The difficulty is how to be generic without getting into specific practices, yet still be relevant for practitioners. Throughout the thesis, I will draw on specific examples of partnering to substantiate and deepen my argument. By drawing upon literature in the fields of epistemology (Elgin 1996, 2017), philosophy of social behavior and joint action (Gilbert 1989, 1990), communication theory (Grice 1991), and ethics (Baier 1986) this thesis seeks to develop discourse surrounding dance partnering. In particular, my hope is to inform the research, practice, and scholarship of dance. I will argue for principles that are generic, such that insights can be applied not only to dance but other fields concerning human interaction, such as philosophy, psychology, anthropology, and sociology. Ultimately, this work is meant to be a contribution to the field of dance studies.

Throughout the thesis I fluctuate in the use of personal pronouns in reference to an imaginary partner (e.g. she, he, one) to maintain the fluid possibilities of partnering. I have

chosen to investigate both the inanimate and animate, because I believe such inquiry reveals the very real possibilities of how agency and choice play a role in partnering. As I investigate the implications of partnering, I will not focus on revealing hegemonic ideologies within dance forms, such as heteronormative approaches that establish fixed roles (e.g. leader/follower). Instead, I will focus on the conditions of dancing together.

For a long time, I have harbored an intuition that dancing together is somehow distinct from partnering. Thus, I have been interested in distinguishing when dancers are merely going through the motions of dancing together and when they are attuning (physically, as well as perhaps in some deeper sense energetically). There are myriad ways to approach this problem, and I choose to do so through the lens of philosophy. I will interrogate the idea and practice of attunement – between partners dancing together, between philosophy and dance, and between ethics and aesthetics more broadly. Since the term partnering has different meanings for practitioners, within the same form and across forms, I have been interested in understanding my own intuition about partnering as a distinct practice of dancing together, as well as broader questions about partnering as a discourse with its own general principles and norms that guide interaction and what those general principles might be. This thesis thus launches a rigorous investigation about quality of interaction in partnering that is missing from the literature related to movement practices in culturally specific settings, which I find necessary to unravel the explanatory problem of attunement. This reference point is immensely complex, with at least two large problems; the ontological one, which questions the nature of partnering, and the normative one, which questions the character and quality of interaction in dance.

One of the central challenges of this thesis is determining the appropriate methods for distinguishing and evaluating the act of partnering. Chapters two and three thus provide a breakdown of the analytic methodology employed in this study. Chapter two presents a Literature Review that draws from a tight selection of prominent scholars of social action, communication theory, and epistemology. This literature is intentionally narrow, in order to provide the basis to analyze partnering through the way particular analytic philosophers have thought about reasoning, communication, and ethics when people interact with each other. Chapter three then focuses on how analytic philosophy provides a rigorous Methodology by which to evaluate the epistemic, metaphysical, communicative, ethical, and normative problems in dance partnering, within which physical principles serve to promote (or inhibit) communicative potential. I shift between focus from the inside and

outside of dancing together to offer a framework for interpreting and synthesizing the regimes of partnering that may be upheld by distinct movement forms.

Chapter four, *Joint Commitments in Dancing Together,* examines the conditions of dancing together to distinguish it from partnering. I will examine how partnering is a special kind of dancing together, with stricter constraints than just dancing together. I examine the conditions that make dancing together feasible. I consider the conditions of partnering in dance on the basis of an encounter that forms a special kind of joint commitment between partners. I examine conditions including willingness, ability, and understanding, and I highlight the normative force of physical commitments in partnering following the work of philosophers Margaret Gilbert and Catherine Elgin, with special attention to elements such as agreement, (shared) intention, obligation, and rebuke. Unpacking these elements may reveal valuable insight into how partnering can be successfully evaluated, leading to a more nuanced understanding of physical interaction.

Chapter five, *Norms of Exchange*, presents partnering as a symbolic act on the basis of signals through proximity (direction), relative position (orientation), and point(s) of contact (touch, eye contact, breath, sound, etc.). I investigate the notion of signaling and interpretation. Following the work of H. Paul Grice, I extend the significance of implicature into the physical domain to investigate when partners seemingly flout cooperation (e.g. obscuring effort or creating seemingly ambiguous positions in order to better support each other).

Chapter six, *Norms of Attunement*, turns to a deeper examination of concepts within attunement in partnering. Instead of examining the language individuals use to describe what it is that they are doing (or think they are doing) or the language they use to evaluate others, I examine how the temporal and relational dimensions of partnering can intersect and diverge. I use the term graviception to highlight the significance of perceiving mass in relation (to the floor, the surrounding air, a partner). Drawing from a filmed recording of *Petite Mort* (1996/2006)*,* an existing duet by Jiri Kylian, I investigate how physical movements of partnering function for partners to attune to each other. I take up these points theoretically, by providing a critical vocabulary to distinguish two distinct ways of relating: coordinating and calibrating. Coordinating is referential to an external structure (independence), while calibrating is recursively relational, or in service to the relation (co-dependence, interdependence). I delineate the qualitative differences in each mode, highlighting the possibility of detectable elements, some of which are empirically

observable (e.g. visually), others of which are kinesthetically experienced and thus difficult to capture and track.

Chapter seven, *Moral Norms*, investigates the ways partnering involves certain responsibilities for each partner. Drawing from the work Elgin, I build an argument for how good partnering, if not by luck, requires moral epistemic agency. I position Elgin's work in line with moral philosopher Annette Baier, who writes about trust, vulnerability, and discretionary power. I examine trust as a three-part predicate, and question whether partners ought to entrust each other to satisfy choreographic ideas as well as uphold a safe and sustainable relation. I examine what it means to understand harm in a partnered situation, and I present the kinds of harm that partnering may inflict. In particular, I examine the significance of resilience in light of errors, as well as the abilities which allow dancers to calibrate to each other to adapt and better prepare for any situation.

In chapter eight*, Reasoning in Relation*, I turn to investigate how the evaluation of partnering entails a certain kind of reasoning, which requires a certain kind of understanding. I examine the nature of heteronomy and autonomy in relation to dancing together, which will serve to open a discussion about agency. I recognize that calibrating and coordinating are not the only two ways to relate, and that each engenders aesthetic preferences that may be suitable insofar as they do not cause intentional harm. I focus on the factors that modify the interaction, including agency, predictability, false belief, and reflective endorsement. I discuss the difference between intentional action (what it is partners are trying to do) and deliberate action (whether partners are competent to achieve their goals, and what their goals require). I investigate a tenable foundation for what is necessary for to exercise deliberate practice when they choose to relate in certain ways and not in others.

The aim of this study from an epistemological perspective is thus threefold 1) to tackle the explanatory problem that the concept of partnering poses for the practice of dancing together, 2) to investigate the normative problems that arise given the conditions by which partnering is possible, and 3) to examine the ethical dimensions of dancing together. It is beyond the scope of this work to engage with the specificities of any particular partnering practice or to compare and contrast practices cross-culturally. Rather, I investigate the conditions that would satisfy partnering in a broad sense, in order to open a normative discussion about evaluation and assessment of physical interaction in dance.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

While my focus in this thesis is constructing a generic philosophy of dancing together, this literature review will begin by pointing to some of the broad philosophical problems in epistemology, communication theory, and ethics as they relate to this study. I draw from the tradition of Western, analytic philosophy, stemming from the work of classical philosophers Plato and Aristotle and enlightenment philosophers Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant. Before getting to the systematic evaluation of partnering, it is necessary to stabilize and ground the particular terms, concepts, and background literature that inform the way I refer to partnering in this thesis. The epistemological foundation of this dissertation is supported through the lens of Harvard epistemologist Catherine Elgin, as well as concepts of philosopher of language H. Paul Grice, social action philosopher Margaret Gilbert, American psychologist J.J. Gibson, 20th century dance theorist and practitioner Rudolf von Laban, and moral philosopher Annette Baier. I will begin by tracing a few broad strokes of traditional epistemology leading into Elgin's work, followed by communication theory leading into Grice's work on the Cooperative Principle in conversation, Gilbert's work on joint commitment, and end with Baier's work on trust and discretionary power.

Background to Epistemology

Here I will present a brief background of analytic philosophy as it pertains to this thesis. Traditional epistemology emerges from the term's etymology "study of knowledge", with a history of particular questions revolving around what might constitute as necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge. One such question interrogates the distinction between appearance and reality. In his allegory of the cave, Plato relates this distinction to an epistemic problem of whether it is possible to actually know anything at all, given that perspectives are necessarily limited by perception. Plato addresses this problem by considering knowledge as only that in which one has sufficient justification to believe (Spranzi 2011).

The commitment to systematically interrogating knowledge as justified, true belief became a staple problem within analytic epistemology, as did the concern that we can be confused and misled by sensory stimuli. This problem was taken up in the 17th century by Rene Descartes, who questioned the nature of, and distinction between, mind and body. In his sixth meditation, Descartes ultimately acknowledges that sensory experience provides

epistemic assets: "the senses have been given to me by nature in order to signify to the mind what is beneficial or harmful to the composite of which it is a part" (Descartes, *M*6, AT VII 83/CSM II 57). Recognizing that mind and body are part of the same system, Descartes nevertheless signals to an exigent problem of whether mental interpretation of sensory experience is trustworthy.

Descartes complexified the appearance/reality problem raised by Plato, further highlighting dimensions of self-awareness and responsibility. The synthetic move to separate mind from body, or reason from experience, became known as Cartesian dualism. This dualism informed the work of Immanuel Kant, who questioned what can be, or indeed should be known independently of experience on the basis of reason alone (Kagan 2018, 70). Kant considered this issue, known as *a priori* reasoning, in relation to ethics, suggesting that we ought to know in advance of inflicting harm that it is wrong. Kant's work is often criticized as too absolute, which led to scholarship that responded to and highlighted subjective experience (Nussbaum 2003). The development of phenomenology in particular challenged Kant's work by accounting for the significance of what can be known through experience, or *a posteriori* knowledge. Contemporary accounts of epistemology contest purely *a priori* reasoning by demonstrating how individuals are always historically, socially, and culturally situated, and so too are knowledge systems (Elgin 1996, Elgin 2017, Nussbaum 2001, Nussbaum 2003).

This thesis finds a balance between the relativism of phenomenology and the absolutism of Kant by grounding into the pluralist account of epistemology in the work of Elgin. Importantly, Elgin draws on the analytic work of Kant, arguing that epistemology refers to a system of "cognitive achievement" concerned primarily with understanding rather than the standard onus of non-fortuitous (i.e. not accidental or by chance) justified, true belief (Elgin 1996, 2004, 2008, 2017). I choose to ground into Elgin's work because she argues that dance provides a form of exemplification that is cognitively valuable, despite it being neither truth-conducive nor reliable (Elgin 2017, 205-220).

Catherine Elgin's Epistemology

In this section, I will focus on two of Elgin's main texts, *Considered Judgment* (1996) and *True Enough* (2017), which together challenge the long-standing epistemic fixations on reliability and truth. *Considered Judgment* introduces her stance on epistemology as a social practice and suggests the pursuit of knowledge is valuable insofar

as we recognize that "there is nothing for knowledge to be except what we take it to be" (Elgin 1996, 60). While Elgin herself acknowledges that this stance may seem to weaken the authority of epistemology, she demonstrates how shifting the lens from knowledge to understanding opens a more urgent problem about our responsibility to what it is we know (or think we know). In *True Enough*, Elgin questions epistemology's commitment to truth, advocating for a holistic approach that "acknowledges that tenable theories must be tethered to the phenomena they concern, but denies that truth is the sole acceptable tether" (Elgin 2017, 1). In this section, I will present Elgin's philosophy in terms of her stance on normativity, imperfect procedural epistemology, as well as her terms of art including reflective equilibrium, epistemic yield, and epistemic responsibilism.

In *Considered Judgment*, Elgin holds that epistemology is fundamentally normative, stating "it concerns what people ought to think and why" (Elgin 1996, 5). By highlighting the normative dimension of epistemology, Elgin's work provides the support for the kind of questions asked in this thesis, such as what characterizes appropriate responses in partnering, and when dancers claim they know something (such as where their weight is in relation to their partners'), what do they take as evidence to justify their claims? I will unpack the normative dimension of how partners systematically negotiate, evaluate, and dialogue about what it is that they know (or think they know) in and through movement in Chapter Seven on Moral Norms.

Elgin maintains that the standards, methods, and goals of classical epistemology, namely the pursuit of objective truth in 'perfect procedural epistemology' and 'foundationalism', are too strict and therefore doomed to be too difficult (if at all possible) to fulfill. Elgin demonstrates the particular shortcomings of perfect procedural epistemology, which hinge on the requirement of determining "precisely what and how much evidence would immunize against error" (Elgin 1996, 28). She claims, "by making the avoidance of error our sole or primary epistemic objective, [foundationalism] overlooked the importance we attach to sensitivity, relevance, informativeness, and cognitive efficacy" (Elgin 1996, 59). Given that perfect procedural epistemology seeks permanent credibility, Elgin argues that this foundationalist aim excludes certain valuable resources and systems because they fail to satisfy foundationalism's rigorous standards. This includes anything that would lead to error, such as "a painter's sense of color, a farmer's feel for the land, and a poet's sensitivity to nuance" (Elgin 1996, 9). Since such experiences can "neither be evaluated in terms of truth nor justified by inference" they are

often considered epistemically inert (Elgin 1996, 9). It has been Elgin's project to demonstrate that this is not the case.

While some of the subjective content may not be worrisome to epistemologists on the surface, Elgin suggests this stance logically excludes that which may be significantly valuable, such as metaphors and ethics, "because their meanings cannot be fully articulated" (Elgin 1996, 28). The matter of excluding ethics from epistemology is troubling when trying to account for the ways in which individuals reason about and justify their actions in relation to each other. Elgin points to how this strict view of epistemology creates a "hierarchy [that] has no room for evaluative knowledge" (Elgin 1996, 28). She finds fault with this claim, and advocates instead for imperfect procedural epistemology, which "is pluralistic, holding that the same constellation of cognitive objectives can be realized in several ways, and that several constellations of cognitive objectives may be worthy of realization [..] there is no straight and narrow path to truth" (Elgin 1996, 14). This kind of pluralism departs from the universalist assertion that there is only one justifiable approach, while simultaneously advocating that the multiplicity of practices be held to standards by which they can be evaluated on the basis of certain conditions and norms. Elgin demonstrates how this approach supports reflective endorsement, insofar as considered judgments "are not held true come what may but accorded a degree of initial credibility because previous inquiry sanctioned them" (Elgin 1996, 15). According to Elgin, imperfect procedural epistemology "prefers error to ignorance" and "risks error to achieve understanding" (Elgin 1996, 14). This approach is significant because it considers "nothing as incontrovertible", and advocates for "reviewing, revoking, altering, and amending previous conclusions, methods, and standards in light of later results" (Elgin 1996, 14). Referring back to epistemology as fundamentally normative, she holds that a failure "should it occur, amounts not to a decisive defeat but to a challenge to do better next time" (Elgin 1996, 15). Thus, by loosening our standards away from truth and toward understanding, Elgin builds a case for how something like dance serves as epistemically valuable.

One of Elgin's major contributions to epistemology is thus the move from non-fortuitous, justified true belief to the negotiation of a system of considered judgments in "reflective equilibrium" (Elgin 2017, 63-69). Elgin notes that "advancement of understanding is not an incremental growth of knowledge" but rather "a process of delicate adjustments" which "must be reasonable in light of one another, and the system as a whole must be reasonable in light of our antecedent commitments about the subject at hand"

(Elgin 1996, 13). To reason about and identify what we know, Elgin suggests that, "actions speak louder than words. If the conclusions a community acts on differ from the ones it avows, we take the actions to reveal its commitments and ignore the avowals. We look at what the members of a community do, not at what they say" (Elgin 1996, 19-20). Elgin's philosophical stance on imperfect procedural epistemology points to inquiry as a social practice, with norms that are established by a community whose network of cognitive commitments manifests in wide reflective equilibrium.

With this framing, Elgin's work is particularly valuable to this thesis because in valuing the cognitive, she opens space for bodily action and sensory input. Elgin advocates that understanding requires interpretation, which is contingent on a refined sensitivity. This sensitivity extends to certain seemingly unreliable things, such as emotions. She maintains that, "emotion, metaphor, exemplification, and fiction affect the constitution and adoption of orientations, the construction and application of category schemes, the generation and extinction of saliencies, the fixing and blurring of focus" (Elgin 1996, 204). In her view, emotions are vital to developing and deepening understanding by providing a frame of reference and acting as "sources of salience" (Elgin 1996, 149). She does not suggest that emotions are wholly reliable sources of justified true belief, but rather that emotions "yield epistemic access to factors we might otherwise miss" (Elgin 1996, 150). She recognizes that overwhelming emotions significantly inhibit our ability to reason and recommends that "rather than exclude their deliverances entirely, epistemology should delineate the circumstances when [emotions] are untrustworthy" (Elgin 1996, 157). Just as blinding light overwhelms our sense of sight and deafening noise influences our ability to hear, Elgin builds a case for how sensory information is epistemically valuable. Elgin asserts that salience is an important factor in understanding, as it supports identifying considered judgments in reflective equilibrium. Recognizing that we can be misled and overwhelmed by our emotions, she proposes that "refining the sensibilities increases emotion's epistemic yield" (Elgin 1996, 158). This statement in particular informs this thesis, as I consider the epistemic dimensions of such a refinement within the context of dancing together and works to influence the communication, mutual understanding and ethical status of partners as they negotiate, evaluate, and dialogue in partnering.

Another one of Elgin's major contributions is an account of epistemic norms that centers on an individual's responsibility. Rather than the standard epistemological approach of rejecting that which is unreliable, Elgin builds a case that it is an individual's responsibility to determine the thresholds of what to accept and what to reject (and when

to claim not enough evidence altogether). Her case hinges on an argument against the acceptance of certain claims based on the typical binary of true or false. Her notion of epistemic acceptability "turns not on whether it is true, but on whether it is *true enough*—that is, on whether it is close enough to the truth. 'True enough' obviously has a threshold" (Elgin 2017, 16). Thus, Elgin provides an epistemological foundation for accepting that which is true *enough* in order to make a cognitive commitment. The maneuver that is particularly valuable to this thesis is that this notion of epistemic acceptance "turns on epistemic responsibility rather than on reliability" (Elgin 2017, 2) and "is not restricted to, and does not always, involve belief" (Elgin 2017, 19). Turning away from that which is reliable (and thus error-free), she critically examines sensory input in relation to making choices. Elgin states, "we can't help but see, hear, and feel what we do. But the issue is not whether we are passive in the reception of inputs; it is what we do with those inputs (Elgin 2017, 92).

Elgin notes that this kind of epistemic "acceptance involves agency" (Elgin 2017, 22), and shows how this responsibility, which she refers to as epistemic responsibilism, provides a framework for what we accept to be true enough in order to be moral epistemic agents. According to Elgin, moral epistemic agents reflectively endorse what it is they accept. Although Elgin considers this a "cognitive end", she notes how this is not necessarily a purely rational, cognitive process. She maintains,

> To be sure, an epistemic agent does not entertain deliverances one by one and ask herself, 'Am I buying this?' Rather, she develops and deploys a variety of methods, mechanisms, heuristics, and habits that enable her to credit or discredit wide swaths of inputs efficiently […] even if her acceptances are largely automatic, she could, if she chose, withhold acceptance of the content of a deliverance, or of a source of deliverances. What makes the epistemic agent responsible for her opinions is that she takes responsibility for them. (Elgin 2017, 94)

In part, this thesis considers the methods, mechanisms, heuristics, and habits that allow partners to reflectively endorse their physical actions in relation to each other. As a driving question, I will consider the conditions that enable partners to exercise epistemic agency to responsibly and reflectively endorse action. Elgin suggests that an agent's ability to be responsible relates to the fact that "voluntary actions are subject to constraints" some of which are "enterprise-specific" (Elgin 2017, 96). She further maintains that "agents can and often do cut corners, jump to conclusions, reason carelessly, and think sloppily. They are subject to criticism for their errors and omissions, for they could do better if they tried" (Elgin 2017, 96). I propose that partnering can be viewed as a specific enterprise, where dancing together constrains and limits certain actions at certain times. As such, the criticism and error of partnering are determined both by the agent and members of the "epistemic community" (e.g. other dancers) who set "standards of evidence and thresholds for acceptance. They determine how much evidence is required for a contention of a given sort to be worthy of reflective endorsement" (Elgin 2017, 97). Elgin's framing of ethics, agency, and value is crucial to this study because her ideas of moral epistemic agency shift the focus from reliabilism to responsibilism. While there are certainly dance scholars who have worked with ethics, agency and value (Bannon 2018, Noland 2009, Pakes 2019), I have chosen to engage deeply with Elgin's work because it provides the foundation for evaluating the role of ethics in partnering from an epistemic perspective. This is especially important given that my aim is to provide a generic understanding of partnering, based on the satisfaction of certain conditions. Elgin's work provides the framing for moral agency and value in the context of ethics, which I bring to bear in dance partnering specifically.

In this thesis I will draw on and extend Elgin's philosophy to dance, in order to investigate the issue of epistemic agency with respect to partnering. I will build an argument for how good partnering, except by luck, requires moral epistemic agency. Dancing together can happen to go really well. Some dancers are so good that they count on everything going well. The question is what can partners do to accommodate each other when things do not go well? How does the ability to accommodate a range of infelicities relate to the general norms of partnering as a discourse? Further, should partners know how to do certain things when agreeing to dance together and, if so, what might those things be? Elgin's work sets the frame for addressing these questions. In chapters seven and eight, I will examine the epistemic dimensions of responsibility in dancing together, particularly in relation to the cognitive commitments required in the physical demands of partnering.

Communication Theory and Value

The normative dimension of knowledge relates to another broad problem within philosophy, namely what it means to communicate well and what it means to understand other(s) given our partial and limited perspectives. These points are normative in that they relate to success and evaluation. For partnering in particular, I will ask what makes an exchange successful and what are relevant norms by which we evaluate success? This normativity can tie in both ethics and aesthetics, such as how expectations set forth by aesthetic ideals influence the ability for partners to communicate ethically.

The challenge with considering dance as a general form, and indeed partnering for that matter, is largely an issue of how aesthetic, moral, and conventional norms influence and saturate the systems of understanding within the practice of negotiation, evaluation, and dialogue in and of partnering. To get at this normative problem requires first opening up the ways in which partners communicate and understand one another, as well as the standards and norms (e.g. beauty, understanding, trust) that are employed to evaluate partnering systematically. Prominent analytic philosopher Paul W. Taylor (1961) frames normative discourse as a theory of value. He suggests that value lives in "the logical relations between normative assertions and empirical assertions" (Taylor 1961, xi), which I find relevant to the study of dance partnering since some aspects (though presumably not all) of movement are observable and thus the empirical evaluations we make are subject to normative assertions that inform both evaluation and prescription. To evaluate the system of value means looking at partnering discursively. Taylor notes,

> The language in which we express evaluations, prescribe acts, and give reasons for or against evaluation and prescriptions, I call "normative language". When we judge an object to be good or an act to be right, when we tell someone what he ought or ought not to do, and when we try to justify such judgments and prescriptions, we are carrying on normative discourse (preface, vii).

I find Taylor's conception of normativity compelling because it offers broad strokes for questioning values at large, especially in the overlap between aesthetic preferences and ethical values.

Following the line of analytic philosophy, scholars argue that Plato's choice to write in the form of dramatic dialogues reflects a commitment to conversation as a crucial element of knowledge (Puchner 2010, Spranzi 2011). In these dramatic dialogues, Socrates, in his attempt to arrive at absolute Truth, engaged interlocutors to arrive at some kind of

understanding. More often, Socrates demonstrated that his interlocutors lacked knowledge, earning him the nickname "gadfly" (Spranzi 2011). Throughout these exchanges, Socrates demonstrated that he cared about arriving at the Truth *more than* he cared about his interlocutors, and often at their expense. While his method is often called Socratic Dialogue, Socrates' method of exchange is more closely aligned with the ideals of dialectic, an exchange which focuses explicitly on discovering truth (Spranzi 2011).

If dialectic exchanges are truth-seeking, what then is dialogue? Questioning this distinction has been taken up by philosophers across cultures throughout history. In the Western analytic tradition, Søren Kierkegaard, for example, distinguishes two forms of exchanges: communication of knowledge (*videns meddelelse)* and the communication of capability (*kunnis meddelelse*), respectively (Kierkegaard 1967, via Hermann 2008). Each form of exchange has its own value and, according to Kierkegaard, as reported by Hermann (2008), it behooves the communicator to understand when and why to approach an interlocutor appropriately. Martin Buber relates dialogue to the act of turning toward others (Buber 2003). In this way, Buber's work suggests that dialogue upholds an ethical dynamic between interlocutors such that the nature of the exchange is about coming together and turning toward each other rather than necessarily seeking truth. Buber highlights the difference between dialogue and dialectic by maintaining, "the life of dialogue is no privilege of intellectual activity like dialectic. It does not begin in the upper story of humanity. It begins no higher than where humanity begins. There are no gifted and ungifted here, only those who give themselves and those who withhold themselves" (Buber 2003, 40). Buber points to dialogue as an exchange that is natural, one that is widely accessible, yet still requires some kind of commitment to relate.

The resources of analytic philosophy, such as conceptual analysis and thought experiments, provide the very tools for differentiating between kinds of exchanges such as dialectic and dialogue. While dialectic exchanges have been pursued as a method of arriving at truth, they have not always been endorsed. Kant, for example, suggests that

> [dialectic] is a logic of illusion – a sophistical art for giving to its ignorance, in deed even to its intentional tricks, the air of truth, by imitating the method of thoroughness, which logic prescribes in general, and using its topics for the embellishment of every empty pretension." (Kant 1998, 198).

That dialectic can give an outward appearance of truth serves to establish an important point. Interactions can look a certain way such that people evaluate appearance

to justify the nature of exchange. This point is important for this thesis as I will argue for the distinction between dancing together and partnering, including the problem of how certain actions may look attuned without actually being attuned. The debate between dialogue and dialectic also raises important questions about the nature and purpose of communicative exchanges between individuals. In this thesis, I take up this debate to investigate how partnering is a deliberate practice based on physical communication in and through movement. I will argue that partners relating through movement are always communicating to each other, regardless of the purpose, intention, or form of practice. I am inclined to endorse the work of Buber, to understand dialogue as an exchange in which partners value the relation at least as much, if not more, than the truth. The significance of positioning dialogue in this way enables a focused investigation about the ethical realities involved in physical exchanges between individuals.

Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, Kierkegaard, and Buber all represent a particular lineage of thought with respect to the philosophy of communication. Their work finds a particular culminating point in the work of American philologist Herbert Paul Grice, who took up the inquiry of dialogue by using the tradition of analytical philosophy to interrogate the conditions of conversation. Grice has had a significant impact on the way theorists approach the normative questions of communication in the philosophy of language. Using his work as a jumping off point, I probe the conditions that are deserving of attention within the practice of partnering as physical dialogue. I pick up this line of inquiry when investigating the conditions and norms of exchange in chapter five, including the question of how dance partnering facilitates (or inhibits) the transfer of information between the very bodies that move together, framing the traditional concept of audience within a more intimate setting of those engaged in practice.

Cooperative Principle and Gricean Maxims

In 1967, Grice delivered a series of lectures at Harvard University, from which a (1991) book was then published with the title *Ways with Words.* In chapter two of this work, *Logic and Conversation,* Grice points to a linguistic debate that certain aspects of natural and formal languages diverge in meaning. He focuses broadly on the dispute between formalists and informalists, the former who believe that some concepts in natural language "cannot be precisely or clearly defined, and that at least some statements involving them cannot, in some circumstances, be assigned a definite truth value" while

the latter understand that "language serves many more important purposes besides those of scientific inquiry; we can know perfectly well what an expression means (and so a fortiori that it is intelligible) without knowing its analysis" (Grice 1991, 23). He attributes this mistaken assumption to "inadequate attention to the nature and importance of the conditions governing conversation" (Grice 1991, 24). For Grice, meaning seems to be valuable insofar as individuals understand each other (or are able to understand each other) in a conversation. He argues that conversation is a "purposive, indeed rational, behavior" (Grice 1991, 28), and suggests "talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts; and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction" (Grice 1991, 26). This framing is broad enough to consider how non-verbal exchanges function as cooperative efforts, in which a common purpose may be the pursuit of connection. Grice proposes a general "cooperative principle", which states "make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice 1991, 26). This thesis will explore how partnering follows a general principle of cooperation, in particular how such a purpose may have a significant impact on semantic construal between partners within the practice.

Though Grice frames his thinking for the conditions of conversation by proposing the purpose is "a maximally effective exchange of information" (Grice 1991, 28), he also concedes that the "specification is, of course, too narrow, and the scheme needs to be generalized to allow for such general purposes as influencing or directing the actions of others" (Grice 1991, 28). Within a conversation, Grice notes that the "purpose or direction may be fixed from the start [...] or it may evolve during the exchange; it may be fairly definite, or it may be so indefinite as to leave very considerable latitude to the participants. But at each stage, SOME possible conversational moves would be excluded as conversationally unsuitable" (Grice 1991, 26). This is especially relevant when considering how partners interact when entering a physical practice, such as changing and influencing their spatial relationship through touch, eye contact, breath. In chapter five, *Norms of Exchange,* I will consider the conditions of communication in dancing together. I will use terminology from the study of non-verbal interaction, including from the work of American linguistics George L. Trager (Trager 1958) and Edward T. Hall (Hall 1966). For partnered movement, the notion that some moves may be considered "conversationally unsuitable"

is particularly fascinating, especially when considering the governing body that would have the power to deem something “unsuitable”. Bringing Elgin and Grice into conversation provides the framework to consider the significance of communication in partnered movement. This brings us back to the case in which partnering can appear (kinesthetically and/or visually) more or less attuned. In some, cases this may be up to an outside party, such as an instructor, choreographer, or coach, while in others it is up to the practitioners themselves to decide to voice concerns. How partners resolve the sensation or perception of disconnection is as relevant as the physical moves that got them there in the first place. Grice’s Cooperative Principle stresses more than just devoting attention to one’s partner. There is an implication of receptivity—that is, receiving and interpreting in a way that is appropriate to the context. Within the context of dance partnering, this position implicates an ethical claim, given that failure to respond appropriately may lead to misunderstanding that causes harm and injury. I return to this in chapters six, seven, and eight when examining the norms of attunement.

Grice’s major contribution in this work is a concept he calls “implicature”, in which certain claims can be made in conversation without actually being explicitly spoken. My thesis extends Grice’s work by investigating not only how partnering involves physical implicatures, but also the consequences these physical implicatures can solicit (e.g. misinterpretation, misleading, misunderstanding) in the context of dance together. Within partnering, implicature is especially tricky since words are not the medium by which physical dialogue occurs. Grice helps by giving us a conceptual framework that can be used in the investigation of dancing together. This is relevant to the qualities with which a movement is articulated, and how it is subsequently interpreted. I will unpack this idea in chapter five.

To question the extent to which the Cooperative Principle can be generally applicable, Grice proposes four broad categories: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner, which together delineate specific maxims that “yield results in accordance with the Cooperative Principle” (Grice 1991, 26). The maxims call for individuals to make conversational contributions that are “as informative as required” (but not more informative), to refrain from saying what one believes is false and for which one “lacks adequate evidence”, “to avoid obscurity of expression”, “to avoid ambiguity”, to be “brief” and “orderly” (Grice 1991, 26-27). Implicatures, Grice notes, arise when a maxim is “flouted”, or intentionally violated in a way that suggests that something else is being

conveyed beyond what has been spoken. In this way, Grice stresses that each agent in the conversation must be sensitive—not only the one speaking, but also the one(s) listening.

It is important to note that Grice's work is also fundamentally normative. In generalizing about the Cooperative Principle, Grice maintains, "I expect a partner's contribution to be appropriate to immediate needs at each stage of the transaction" and "I expect a partner to make it clear what contribution he is making and to execute his performance with reasonable dispatch" (Grice 1991, 28). These expectations set up norms about what partners ought to do when engaging in conversation. Adapting Grice's argument to view dance can be unhinged by a simple case of individuals moving together without, what might appear to be, a clear purpose. The simple response is that transgression or lack of a cooperative principle renders the physical exchange something different than conversation, such as two coordinated monologues. It is possible to extend the argument by saying those individuals moving together without purpose are not, strictly speaking, engaging in the practice of "partnering". On the surface, this seems rather unfair. Certain movement practices that utilize the term partnering cannot be criticized simply because constituents are exploring the infinite possibilities of physical interaction. Thus, in chapter six I will explore the different modes of relating that are possible in communicative exchanges. I am particularly interested in the tension that is present when considering how one approaches the communication necessary to share and/or shift weight in relation to other(s). Assuming attunement can only emerge from responses that are contextually suitable (i.e. appropriate), there are important claims to consider about one's responsibility to listen and respond to change. The notion of conversational suitability will appear often throughout this work. I will examine the competence required to be able to partner in a way that adheres to the Cooperative Principle, particularly in how reasoning systematically about the conditions of interaction provide the space to build on tacit, experiential knowledge.

In chapter six, I will expand on Grice's work by positioning his philosophy in dialogue with 20th century dance theorist and practitioner, Rudolf von Laban's concept of effort and American psychologist J.J. Gibson's concept of affordance to further investigate the epistemic dimensions of communication in dancing together. There are some cases of Gibson being used in relation to dance partnering, particularly in the work of dance scholar and practitioner Michael Kimmel (Kimmel 2009, Kimmel and Rogler 2018, Kimmel et al 2018). I find the notion of effort and affordance particularly relevant to expand on Grice's work in the context of dance, especially in relation to the concept of attunement between

partners. In this thesis, I will examine the exchange of information in relation to how partners move (e.g. the degree of effort, the awareness of affordances within the partnership) in ways that may seem to flout or disregard cooperation, such as the ambiguity in maintaining a restrictive embrace and obscuring effort from an audience.

Following the philosophy of Grice, I will examine partnering with the presupposition of a Cooperative Principle. Since partners are negotiating through movement, I believe systematic study can reveal important aspects of physical interaction that can support an epistemological foundation of partnering. Connecting Elgin and Grice, I will examine in particular how the communicative act of partnering requires a particular exercise of agency. While formulaic study can be supremely disruptive to the emergence of connection, Grice's work paves a way to approach the normative dimensions of partnering, first by understanding communicative potential of movement itself by reflecting on the conditions that need to be satisfied in order for certain norms to adhere (e.g. communicating well or developing mutual understanding).

Contracts, Rules, and Joint Commitments

Grice also notes how he was "attracted by the idea that observance of the Cooperative Principle and the maxims, in a talk exchange, could be thought of as a quasi-contractual matter" (Grice 1991, 29). In other words, Grice is interested in how partners uphold their side of the agreement in a conversation. He suggests a contingency that there are "certain features that jointly distinguish cooperative transactions" such as "participants have some common immediate aim" and that a "transaction should continue in appropriate style unless both parties are agreeable that it should terminate" (Grice 1991, 29). The goals he suggests of reciprocally giving and receiving information, as well as influencing and being influenced, seem in direct line with the purported goals and values of partnering in a broad sense, and so his work lays the groundwork for examining how maxims such as being informative, avoiding obscurity and ambiguity, and being orderly fit in accordance with exchange of information through dancing together.

Ultimately, however, Grice comes to realize that "while some such quasi-contractual basis as this may apply to some cases, there are too many types of exchange, like quarreling and letter writing, that it fails to fit comfortably" (Grice 1991, 29). Grice is always aware of the ways in which the purpose of a conversation can shift the attention of the interlocutors. His analytical approach to cooperation in conversation opens important

questions about the responsibility of each agent. He suggests, “anyone who cares about the goals that are central to conversation/communication [..] must be expected to have an interest [..] in participation in talk exchanges that will be profitable only on the assumption that they are conducted in general accordance with the [Cooperative Principle] and the maxims” (Grice 1991, 30). Though he has doubt about whether such a conclusion can be reached, by introducing the notion of “care”, particularly in relation the central goals of communication, Grice points to the teleological concern for conversations. This responsibility he places on the interlocutors themselves, though he leaves certain questions unanswered, such as to what extent should one take responsibility for what one may be implicating? To what extent should a partner be assuming anything other than what is articulated?

To get at these questions, it is necessary to have to set the foundation for the significance of responsibility between individuals. There is a rich history of social responsibility, which finds some culmination in the work of political philosopher John Rawls. In his seminal (1955) paper titled “Two Concepts of Rules”, Rawls uses conceptual analysis to differentiate “the justification of a practice and the justification of a particular action falling under it” (Rawls 1955, 18). Rawls highlights the distinct rules and responsibilities of promise-making as a type of contract between two or more people. In considering the practice of promise-making, Rawls looks at the kind of contingencies partners can claim in order to break a promise. He is particularly concerned with the problem of how a utilitarian view, that one will do what is best for the greater good, is at odds with the rules of promises, especially in cases where promises are broken because they seem not to uphold the greater good anymore. He considers examples in which one promises a partner a sum of money, and upon winning that sum of money decides it will be for the greater good if he keeps it. The rules of promises prevent one from breaking an agreement simply because it is no longer serving the greater good.

Rawls goes deeper into theorizing rules by outlining two distinct concepts: summary rules and practice rules. Summary rules, according to Rawls, are rules of “thumb” or convenience. They represent a “summary” of previous decisions arrived at by direct application of more basic reasoning (such as employing the utilitarian principle). They are useful because similar cases tend to reoccur, and as such are “regarded as reports that cases of a certain sort have been found on *other* grounds to be properly decided in a certain way” (Rawls 1955, 19). Rawls maintains that decisions made on particular cases are logically prior to the rules, in that “the performance of the action to which the rule refers does not

require the stage-setting of a practice of which this rule is a part" (Rawls 1955, 22). In principle, one is "always entitled to reconsider the correctness of a rule and to question whether or not it is proper to follow it in a particular case" (Rawls 1955, 23). According to Rawls, using a summary rule is justified if it will lead to an independently correct decision. A basic example is looking both ways before crossing the street. It is not a law, but it is likely the right thing to do. A more complex example is something like "one should tell the truth". Rawls considers this example when proposing a situation in which a terminally ill person asks a friend to find out for him whether his illness is terminal. It may cause further psychological distress, so whether it is right for the friend to disclose this information (i.e. tell the truth) is independent of the rule of thumb. The problem is considering whether a summary rule can serve as useful in every case.

To juxtapose summary rules, Rawls proposes practice rules, which are "logically prior to particular cases" (Rawls 1955, 25). As opposed to a rule of thumb, a practice rule applies to particular practices. Rawls gives baseball as an example, in which it is only possible to "strike out" given the rules of the game and the parameters of having bases, batters, and pitchers. Actions are thus governed by the practice, such that asking, "can I have another strike" after having three would not make sense since the rules of baseball clearly stipulate three strikes. Rawls notes that the "practice view leads to an entirely different conception of the authority which each person has to decide on the propriety of following a rule in particular cases" (Rawls 1955, 26). When questioning whether to follow a practice rule, Rawls suggests that we are effectively questioning the design of the practice itself. Actions governed by practice rules are correct or incorrect depending on the design of the practice. We can consider, for example, a couple dancing the tango in which one asks whether they have to maintain the "dance frame" the whole time. Breaking the frame is certainly allowed in partnering as a whole, but in the case of the particular action it may mean breaking the rules such that one is simply not dancing the tango. Defenses of particular actions falling under practices must take the form of appeals to the rules of the practice, and then defenses of the practice as a whole. Rawls concludes the article by suggesting that "there is no inference whatsoever to be drawn with respect to whether or not one should accept the practices of one's society" (Rawls 1955, 32). In other words, Rawls opens the space for considering ethical action on a smaller scale than gross misconduct by considering how and when to apply each type of rule. He maintains that "one can be as radical as one likes but in the case of actions specified by practices the objects of one's radicalism must be the social practices and people's acceptance of them"

(Rawls 1955, 32). Thus, given the provided tools to inquire systematically, Rawls urges us to consider the responsibilities of reasoning about and within social practice.

While it may seem like a stretch to apply Rawls' work to dance, I find that his analytic approach provides a useful template for considering the underlying rules and principles of dancing together. Thus, I extend Rawls' conceptual analysis to consider the justification of partnering alongside what it might look like to reason about responsibilities for each partner executing a specific action like moving together to music. From this view, it is possible to understand movement practices (e.g. tango, contact improvisation, ballet) as particular conventions of partnering. From there, I can consider the ways in which partnering norms are manifest and employed for particular aims. Rawls provides the foundation to consider the significance of responsibility.

Political philosopher Margaret Gilbert dives deeper into responsibilities, obligations, and rules by considering the social phenomena when people do things together. In her seminal (1990) paper entitled "Walking Together: A Paradigmatic Social Phenomenon", Gilbert considers the necessary philosophical conditions for two people to go for a walk together. She argues that walking together requires the two parties to constitute what she calls a "plural subject". In her view, "plural subjecthood extends not only to goals but also, at least, to beliefs and principles of action" (Gilbert 1990, 10). That is, the two parties must share collective beliefs and joint principles.

In her later work, Gilbert unpacks the idea of collective belief and joint principles systematically. Starting with individual decision-making, Gilbert argues that, "a personal decision *commits* its maker insofar as it has the relevant normative force for the person in question" (Gilbert 2017, 756). Thus, if one makes the decision to encounter a partner, one does so with a commitment such that one's actions will serve to pursue and uphold the encounter. Gilbert is careful to note that the defining feature of personal commitments is such that an individual "is in a position unilaterally both to make and to rescind them" (Gilbert 2017, 131). In other words, the fact that an individual makes a commitment means there is something they now ought to do, and they also have the power to change or end the commitment. Gilbert suggests that, all things being equal, this commitment is such that "one ought to change one's mind first rather than act contrary to one's decision" (Gilbert 2017, 756).

Gilbert's notion of personal commitment sets the stage for two important concepts. One is the fact that the normative constraint creates the possibility of error with what Gilbert calls "exclusionary properties". By making a commitment to something, I may fail to

succeed, even if the failure is insignificant. If, for example, I decide that I will take ballet in the evening, then get carried away with writing such that I lose track of time, my commitment means that, in not taking class, I have acted in error. As such, Gilbert argues that I am in a position to "rebuke" myself for not conforming to my decision. In other words, I obligated myself to ballet. Then, in missing the class, I have failed to satisfy my obligation. This obligation, Gilbert points out, need not be a moral one. It is simply the result of a normative process, wherein the product does not conform.

This feature of commitment in decision-making is crucial for the setting of Gilbert's second concept, which she calls "joint commitment". Gilbert argues that:

> A basic joint commitment comes about as follows: each of two or more people openly expresses his readiness jointly to commit them all in a certain way, and their having made these expressions is common knowledge between the parties. By this I mean, roughly, that the expressions are entirely out in the open between them, and each knows this (Gilbert 2006, 131).

Gilbert maintains that joint commitment must reflect a) some kind of expression of readiness (which need not be verbal, as in the leaning forward of a kiss or meeting someone's quarrelsome tone), and b) the condition of common knowledge. To return to the problem of walking together, Gilbert argues that the two people can only be said to be walking together if they a) satisfy a plural subject (the two individuals) must establish their readiness and this must be common knowledge to them both. She notes that "even going for a walk together has a political dimension" in that there are "many problems to solve" such that "one may always question whether collective decisions and joint principles have been arrived at in a fair way and whether their content is acceptable" (Gilbert 1990, 10-11). I will investigate joint commitment throughout this work as a necessary condition for partnering.

In another paper on joint action, Gilbert offers an interesting example in the realm of partnered dance. The example is as follows:

> Suppose that Joe and Liz are now on the dance floor, having established their joint commitment. The heel of Liz's shoe is suddenly trapped in the wooden floor and she appears to be about to fall. Joe jumps to attention and rescues his partner. Has he acted in a caring manner? Has he acted with concern for his partner's well-being? Has he shown that he considers his partner's needs as important as his own, or that he values her as an end in herself? (Gilbert 2018, 763)

Gilbert argues that, given what we know of the circumstance, the answer to all of the questions is “not necessarily”. For Gilbert, the normative force of the joint commitment is not necessarily a moral one. So, according to what we know of Joe based on the description above (which is notably not much), it is not obvious or in fact necessary that his rescuing of Liz is a moral act. Gilbert suggests that “it is enough for him to understand that the joint commitment to which he is subject is such that he ought – in a non-moral sense – to conform to it, and that conforming to it requires that he does his best to keep his dance with Liz on track. In that case he ought – in a non-moral sense – to rescue her from falling” (Gilbert 2018, 764). The question we are left with is *how* Joe goes about rescuing Liz. Does he gracefully scoop her up and place her down on balance? Does he yank her arm to keep her from falling, and in so doing cause a minor case of whiplash? Does he further disrupt the integrity of the dance by moving suddenly to free her foot? The important aspect that Gilbert does not allude to is the aesthetic dimension of the joint commitment in dancing together. This is unsurprising, as she clarifies that in her work she is not asking, “under what conditions from a physical point of view are people doing things together”, but rather “what thoughts or conceptions must be involved in order for people to count as (intentionally) dancing together” (Gilbert 1989, 165). Elaborating on Gilbert’s work, I will interrogate the necessary conditions to dance together. I will construct an account that examines the relationship between physical conditions and thoughts or conceptions in order to say that individuals are partnering. Moreover, I will examine partnering as a special kind of joint commitment, with a particular content and set of exclusionary properties that are aesthetically driven. In chapter four, I will consider joint commitment in depth, and in chapters seven and eight, I will consider how the physical demands of partnering relate to moral norms of making responsible decisions.

Annette Baier and the Philosophy of Trust

I look to moral philosopher Annette Baier, who, in her seminal paper, *Trust and Antitrust*, bemoans a gap in philosophy that has failed to provide a general account of morality in trust relationships. She raises a concern that trust is not always necessarily a good for which one ought to strive. She states, “we do in fact, wisely or stupidly, virtuously or viciously, show trust in a great variety of forms, and manifest a great variety of versions of trustworthiness, both with intimates and with strangers” (Baier 1986, 234).

Baier shows that there are varieties of trust, and sketches out the relationship between trust, relative power, and voluntary abilities. She maintains,

> Trust is often mixed with other species of reliance on persons. Trust which is reliance on another's good will, perhaps minimal good will, contrasts with the forms of reliance on others' reactions and attitudes which are shown by the comedian, the advertiser, the blackmailer, the kidnapper-extortioner, and the terrorist, who all depend on particular attitudes and reactions of others for the success of their actions. We all depend on one anothers' psychology in countless ways, but this is not yet to trust them (Baier 1986, 234-235).

Baier is adamant about differentiating different forms of trust, framing her exposition around the implicit assumption that "trust is a good and that disappointing known trust is always prima facie wrong, meeting it always prima facie right" (Baier 1986, 235). She maintains that "when the trust relationship itself is corrupt and perpetuates brutality, tyranny, or injustice, trusting may be silly self-exposure, and disappointing and betraying trust, including encouraged trust, may be not merely morally permissible but morally praiseworthy" (Baier 1986, 253). Baier breaks apart the rhetoric of trust, demonstrating how we should be more critical in order to act morally. Close, intimate ties may allow the space to thrive, but there is still a responsibility for what is being created in relationship. This critical lens informs the way in which I will consider the moral dimensions of partnering, particularly how partners rely on and support each other to fulfill choreographic aims while maintaining moral standing.

Baier points out that there are different forms of trust, including at least "unconscious trust, unwanted trust, forced receipt of trust, and trust which the trusted is unaware of" (Baier 1986, 235). Taking a step toward a formal definition, Baier suggests that trust is "accepted vulnerability to another's possible but not expected ill will (or lack of good will) toward one" (Baier 1986, 235). To differentiate between these forms of trust, Baier suggests a test by which we can judge "trust from a moral point of view" (Baier 1986, 232). This test is built on an exposition of the "varieties of sorts of good and things one values or cares about, which can be left or put within the striking powers of others, and the variety of ways we can let or leave others "close" enough to what we value to be able to harm it" (Baier 1986 235). It is important to note that Baier does not, however, consider trust explicitly within the physical domain. She examines trust as a mental phenomenon and argues that "intentional trusting does require awareness of one's confidence that the trust will not harm one, although they could harm one" (Baier 1986, 235). This thesis will

examine Baier's notion of trust and discretionary power in relation to the moral dimensions engendered by the physical demands of partnering. I am particularly interested in unpacking the ways in which partners may exercise discretionary power successfully by being aware of the kinds of harm they can inflict. To support my reading of Baier, I will look at contemporary philosophers of ethics including Paul Faulkner and Thomas Simpson's (2017) edited volume *Philosophy of Trust,* as well as philosophers Richard Holton, Fay Niker and Laura Specker Sullivan, all of whom offer insight into the complexities of trust relationships. I pick up this line of inquiry in chapter seven on Moral Norms.

Conclusion

This study will draw primarily from the epistemologies of Elgin, Grice, Gilbert, and Baier, in order to unpack the necessary conditions that make partnering a discursive practice, subject to normative discourse that informs the negotiation, dialogue, and evaluation of interaction between practitioners. In the next chapter, I will present the methods used to engage in this inquiry, as well as the underlying methodology of analytic philosophy in the context of dance.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Analytic philosophy has a rich tradition of analyzing concepts, and includes branches such as ontology, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of language, and ethics (Williamson 2018). As the name suggests, analytic philosophy is concerned with the analysis of ideas Williamson (2018). Approaching dance from a philosophical point of view means uncovering concepts and ideas embedded in the actions of dancing together. I find analytic philosophy valuable in order to uncover the nuances of dancing together that are generic and applicable across forms of practice. In this short chapter, I will outline the analytic methods I employ throughout the thesis.

The methods of analytic philosophy include distinct approaches such as conceptual analysis, thought experiments, counterfactuals, and hypothetical scenarios (Williamson 2018). In this thesis, I will focus primarily on thought experiments and hypothetical scenarios as methods of analysis. These methods are pertinent to this thesis as I will be examining multiple dimensions of partnering, including the term itself (language), the nature of the act (ontology), the generalizability of the act (metaphysics), how to understand and evaluate the act (epistemology), and how people can (and should) treat each other in the act (ethics). While this may seem widespread, analytic philosophy provides precisely the kind of tools to conceptually unpack and interrogate complex ideas and actions, from the broadest point of physical interaction to the subtleties of attunement. Analytic philosophy has had a very rich tradition of examining the nature and conditions of knowledge, as well as metaphysical assumptions about the relationship between appearance and reality. There has also been a history of rejecting metaphysics, given the idea that looking at things in an analytical vacuum is a worthless pursuit if the aim is accessible knowledge. I recognize that philosophy is useful insofar as the tacit assumptions of analysis are being named and considered along the way. My main aim in using analytical philosophy is to interrogate the nuanced ideas and concepts embedded in the act of dancing together. Rather than focus on the psychological underpinnings of what people think they are doing, I focus on the epistemic problems in the relationship between thought (e.g. intention) and action (e.g. behavioral expression). This is especially important in dancing together, where the intentions and behaviors of individuals may misalign in complex ways. In chapter four, I will interrogate the main concepts of intentionalism in joint action drawn from the work of Margaret Gilbert. I will use Elgin to critically expand Gilbert's work in

the context of dance, which gives rise to the investigation of normative dimensions explored in subsequent chapters.

Throughout this work I will investigate what a descriptive theory of partnering might look like, to provide a critical lens through which to analyze physical interactions in dance. I will also speculate about the significance of joint action in dance. To do this, I will first analyze the conditions necessary to establish that individuals are dancing together, and then analyze the norms that contribute to the evaluation of dancing together well. Conditions in this thesis relate both to the thoughts and actions from which it is possible to say that people are in fact dancing together. Norms in this thesis relate to the evaluation of the established conditions, such that it is possible to claim that people are dancing together *well.* The challenging part is defining the conditions for partnering, and the related norms of partnering *well*. I will examine partnering as a kind of practice that comes to be in certain circumstances. To reason about partnering well, I seek to argue for a gradient in partnering, wherein some cases of people moving together will not be partnering, while in other cases dancers will exemplify poor partnering. A gradient is an analytic tool that demonstrates distinctions in degree or scale. By demonstrating that concepts such as attunement and dependence function in degrees, I aim to unpack the normative dimensions of dancing together.

Analytic Tools

Analytic philosophy provides the tools to create an epistemological foundation for evaluating norms within communication, attunement, reasoning, and trust in partnering. I chose to focus on creating an epistemological foundation because my central research questions examine the criteria and standards of evidence about whether an interaction is constitutive of dancing together, and the factors that contribute to making such claims. Creating an epistemological foundation entails systematically demonstrating particular justifications and distinctions. I will examine and propose justifications for why certain interactions count as dancing together by examining the conditions that need to be satisfied when one engages with others. Creating an epistemological foundation also provides the support for determining the kinds of understanding that is required within the act of dancing together. Using Elgin's epistemology as a lens, I shift the focus from what is it that dancers need to *know* to what it is they need to *understand*. While broad understanding is contingent on contextual factors such as previous experience, training, individual history, and so on,

it is important to analyze the specific role of understanding within the act of dancing together. As an epistemic matter, this analysis will reveal further insight into the normative dimensions of dancing together. Rather than derive generalizations about any particular dance form, I use thought experiments and hypothetical scenarios to conduct a conceptual analysis that interrogates partnering as an exact term with particular conditions and norms. To understand the normative significance of physical encounters and exchanges, I seek to understand what aspects of partnered actions can be evaluated. Taking an epistemological approach allows me to parse the norms with which to evaluate the quality of interaction between individuals, such as attunement, mutual understanding, and trust. I will rely on the conceptual analysis to construct thought-experiments and hypothetical scenarios, which will in turn serve to demonstrate some of the key normative dimensions of dancing together.

Assuming that dancing together involves a number of factors such as competence and understanding, it follows that there are multiple, discrete articulations by which one can respond to any given action. This assumption serves as the basis for conceptual analysis. Conceptual analysis is rooted in language and consists of breaking down concepts by examining relevant terms in order to gain a clearer picture of a concept (Williamson 2018). Conceptual analysis also functions as a tool to make reasoning visible. For example, I analyze how the concept of dancing together has particular terms associated and embedded within it. These terms have their own concepts associated with them, so the investigation of partnering requires a complex conceptual analysis of terms and their related ideas. I will use conceptual analysis throughout the thesis whenever breaking a concept down by the associated terms.

Philosopher of social action, Margaret Gilbert, points out, “a standard and important route to the analysis and explication of concepts is a consideration of how we use certain key words or phrases” (Gilbert 1989, 11). Starting with the inexactness of partnering as a concept, there is an easy claim to make that partnering is simply the term used to describe the act whenever two people say they are dancing together. This is problematic when we look at the range of qualities that the term partnering would describe. Thus, investigating the conditions necessary for dancing together means clarifying partnering as an exact term that refers to a particular kind of practice of dancing together. Prominent analytic philosopher, Rudolf Carnap, maintains that while the explication seeks an exact solution to an inexact problem, we “cannot decide in an exact way if the solution is right or wrong […] the question should rather be whether the proposed solution is satisfactory” (Carnap 1962,

4). As tools, explication and clarification enable the transformation of inexact concepts by recognizing tacit assumptions about the term. To arrive at an explication is to demonstrate the term as "exact", "fruitful", and "simple" (Carnap 1962, 7). I will adopt Carnap's tool of explication the analyze the conceptual aspects of dancing together.

Carnap's tool of explication highlights an important distinction between language and ideas. If partnering can be used as a term simply to refer to people dancing together, then dancing together and partnering can be used interchangeably. I find this problematic, at least because there are different ways of dancing together. This thesis probes the conceptual differences between dancing together and partnering, assuming that partnering is more than just dancing together. As a tool, explication works to interrogate linguistic and conceptual ambiguities. Concepts require defining relevant terms. Throughout this study, I will clarify terms, and examine the tacit assumptions of the terms as they relate to dancing together.

Defining the necessary conditions of partnering, including joint commitment and mutual attunement, provides the basis for establish criteria for evaluating dancing together given particular aesthetic, epistemic, and ethical values. The aesthetic refers to the quality and method of movement (felt, observed), the epistemic questions the features which can be taken as evidence of attunement, and the ethical relates to the quality of interaction between partners (e.g. trust, care). By analyzing the embedded concepts of idea and action within the act of dancing together, I will be able to critically investigate the instantiations of embodied ethics in physical interaction. By examining the conditions and norms of partnering, I will be able to construct a critical vocabulary for questioning assumptions and reasoning about our systems (trained, habituated, enculturated, or otherwise) of understanding ourselves in relation to (or as extensions of) other(s).

Catherine Elgin maintains "a thought experiment is an imaginative exercise designed to investigate what would happen if certain conditions were satisfied" (Elgin 2017, 245). I use the work of Gilbert, Baier, and Grice to construct and evaluate thought-experiments about the nature of partnered movement paradigms with respect to conditions that modulate quality of interaction. Elgin further argues that "a thought experiment has a narrative structure, with a beginning, middle and end. It is subject to interpretation, and to reinterpretation if the background assumptions change" (Elgin 2017, 235). Taking Elgin's ideas on board, my methods have included modifying the narrative structure of thought experiments based on hypothetical scenarios that may occur in typical situations (e.g. one person lifting another), as well as examples involving inanimate matter (e.g. dancing with

a broomstick). Examples from outside dance, such as leaning on a wall or playing the clarinet, reveal insight about aspects of concepts embedded in physical actions. These hypothetical scenarios allow for analysis and interpretation of complex scenarios that may occur when dancing together. They offer opportunities to take on different perspectives. As Elgin suggests, "by adopting a different perspective, we come to see familiar items in new ways. We thereby appreciate relationships between them that we previously had overlooked or underemphasized" (Elgin 2017, 206). To adopt a new perspective about partnering assumes that there is not one right way to partner. By working through a number of scenarios my aim is to present an account for the way partners can reason about their interaction, and advocate for an approach that values communication, mutual attunement, and deliberate decision-making. Conceptual analysis through thought experiments and hypothetical scenarios provides the core method to reveal how partnering might act as a mode of symbolization that communicates intersubjectivity, realized in and through interactive movement.

Whenever possible, I use analytic philosophy to move away from describing the intrapersonal, in favor of critically evaluating the interpersonal. Many of the thought experiments and hypothetical scenarios are elaborations of Gilbert's examples of Jack and Sue dancing together from her 1990 paper "Walking Together". Gilbert offers hypothetical scenarios that I expand upon in order to consider intention in dancing together. Rather than focus on the phenomenal experience of dancing together, I investigate the conditions that would qualify or disqualify claims about dancing together. Conceptual analysis of hypothetical scenarios enables deeper insight into the epistemic dimensions of what it is that people are doing when dancing together, rather than examining what they think or feel they are doing.

To move beyond the hypothetical territory, I turn to an example of an actual duet. In chapter six, I analyze two recordings of *Petite Mort,* an existing duet choreographed by Jiri Kylian (1996/2006). Analyzing two different performances of *Petite Mort* offers the opportunity to examine actual behavior in dancing together. Rather than conduct a historiography of the piece or an ethnography with the dancers themselves, I will rely on conceptual analysis to demonstrate critical aspects of observable behavior in dancing together. The recorded duets offer material from which to construct thought experiments to further analyze the complexity of dancing together.

In addition to conceptual analysis through philosophy, I have observed professional dancers in the context of contact improvisation jams, Argentinian Tango *milongas*, social

dance parties for dances such as the swing, salsa, bachata, as well as DanceSport competitions, and rehearsals and performances of professional companies including the Royal Swedish Ballet, Boston Ballet, Batsheva Dance Company, Berlin Staatsballett, and the Forsythe Company, among others. This observation is paired with my own studio practice dancing ballet, contact improvisation, tango, ballroom, and other social dance forms. My studio practice has served in furthering conceptual analysis to unpack generic problems in dancing together, such as negotiating the shifting and sharing of weight. While I recognize that distinct forms of practice have their own ideologies, I have used observation and practice to return to the problem of what qualifies as dancing together, and what kinds of norms adhere to the evaluation of partnering.

Conceptual analysis brings attention to the philosophical problem of how the concepts associated with partnering relate to elements critical to the generic act of dancing together. Though I use the particular example of Kylian's *Petite Mort*, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to comment on the specificities of any particular partnering practice or to compare and contrast practices cross-culturally. Methodologically, conceptual analysis allows for the creation of an epistemological foundation from which to demonstrate that the act of partnering is distinct from dancing together. Demonstrating this distinction is crucial to support critical and nuanced normative discourse of dancing together. In the next chapter, I will lay out the conditions of dancing together, in order to differentiate the concept of partnering.

Chapter Four: Joint Commitments in Dancing Together

In this chapter, I will consider the conditions necessary to dance together. I will draw on the work of philosopher of social behavior and joint action, Margaret Gilbert. Throughout her work, Gilbert interrogates what it means for people to do things together (Gilbert 1989, 1990, 2006, 2017). For example, in her 1990 seminal paper, Gilbert asks, "what is it for two people to go for a walk together?" (Gilbert 1990, 2). Throughout the paper, Gilbert argues for conditions that establish what she calls a *plural subject*. These conditions include the foundation for a joint commitment based on each member "expressing willingness" to form a plural subject with a particular goal "in conditions of common knowledge" (Gilbert 1990, 7). For Gilbert, common knowledge means that each member knows of the other's goal to walk together (as opposed to each just thinking to themselves that they'd like to engage in walking together without establishing it to the other). Gilbert also maintains that both common knowledge and willingness may be expressed in a number of different ways, such as the way two people understand they are willing to walk together by continuing to walk alongside each other after a relatively short amount of time. Gilbert is careful to note that plural subjecthood "extends not only to goals, but also, at least, to beliefs and principles of action" (Gilbert 1990, 10).

Gilbert's account of taking a walk together fits into the broader scope of her work as a paradigm case of doing something with others, which she refers to as "joint action". Based on Gilbert's account of how doing something together is contingent on establishing a plural subject, I will analyze the necessary conditions within the context of dance. Following Gilbert, I will interrogate how dancing together is contingent on expressing willingness for a shared goal, belief or principle of action (presumably dancing together), in which willingness is common knowledge between partners. I will put the theories of Gilbert in dialogue with epistemologist Catherine Elgin to consider epistemic problems between thought and action in dancing together. Aligning Gilbert with Elgin, I will then consider what makes partnering distinct by suggesting that partnering is a special kind of dancing together.

While Gilbert does not write in detail about dance, her work opens important dimensions about what it means for individuals to interact with each other such that they form a plural subject. In this way, Gilbert's work provides the foundation for a deeper analysis into the underlying epistemology of concepts in dancing together. Drawing from her work, I will examine the conditions of what it means to do something together in the context of dance. What conditions need to be satisfied in order to dance together? To answer these questions, it is first necessary to understand the relevant concepts at play that

establish individuals as doing something together physically. In this chapter, I will (1) operationalize key concepts, including expression, willingness, ability, understanding, and commitment in the context of dancing together, (2) provide a conceptual framing of these relevant concepts to demonstrate how dancing together is a special kind of joint action, and (3) demonstrate the normative problems that arise when evaluating the act of dancing together on the basis of commitment. This chapter will form the basis for a normative discussion about systematically evaluating dancing together that will unfold in later chapters. I will begin by unpacking Gilbert's notion of expressing willingness in the context of dance. I will explore each concept separately in order to begin to explore the nuances of dancing together.

Willingness

Gilbert notes that there needs to be some kind of exchange or interaction to "express willingness". She presents an example in which one person, Sue, is going for a walk and suddenly realizes that a figure is walking alongside her. Gilbert argues "physical proximity is clearly not enough to make it the case that they are going for a walk together. It may disturb Sue precisely because they are *not* going for a walk together" (Gilbert 1990, 2, emphasis in the original). The scenario quickly shifts when Sue recognizes the figure walking alongside her is Jack Smith, someone she wishes to know better. Recognizing Jack as a potential friend, she is no longer disturbed. But there is more to be said about the physical nuances of expressing willingness.

Gilbert's example establishes that if two people walk next to each other, they are not necessarily expressing willingness to go for a walk *together*. By walking alongside each other, it is possible that two people are merely going in the same direction in close proximity. From the outside, it may even look like they are walking together. To illustrate this point more clearly, consider a crowded sidewalk on a street in New York City. Many people walk in close proximity, but one would hardly say they are all walking together. Gilbert argues that "in some contexts it may be enough for both parties to continue walking alongside each other for several minutes without any sign of discomfort" (Gilbert 1990, 3). While this may be true in some contexts, this is clearly not the case in the context of New York City where individuals can walk alongside each other for more than several minutes without signs of discomfort, merely because they are walking in the same direction. Physical proximity is thus merely happenstance to walking on a crowded street. While the

New York City example may seem tangential, it is important to consider the physical nuances of individuals when moving in close proximity with others.

The proximity example in New York City can be illustrated in the context of a crowded dance floor. The music plays and everyone is dancing in close proximity, but one would hardly say that everyone is dancing together, based on Gilbert's idea of expressed willingness. The streets of New York and a crowded dance club are both a particular kind of environment where people can move in close proximity without any significance. But what happens if the dance floor is completely empty except for two individuals? Physical proximity may still not be expressing willingness to dance together. Consider a scenario in which Sue is dancing on her own and suddenly realizes that someone is dancing next to her. Suppose the individual is the same hypothetical Jack Smith. Jack may have gotten lost in his own rhythm and ended up in close proximity to Sue. The proximity may also be merely a passing moment, if Jack closes the distance in order to pass by Sue, pauses to watch Sue dancing on her own for a few moments, and keeps going to the other side of the dance floor where his date is waiting for him. This may also be a malicious proximity, if Jack wishes to coercively impose on Sue. Then his proximity is still an expression of willingness, though notably not of dancing together. When Jack dances close to Sue, his close physical proximity on its own is not enough to be understood as an expression of willingness to dance together with Sue.

There are two terms that have been presented here that need further clarification: expression and willingness. I understand an expression to be any kind of discernable manifestation. Walking together involves the discernable manifestation of walking alongside each other. Thus in walking alongside each other, two individuals may be expressing willingness to walk together. The problem is that discernable manifestations do not necessarily mean the same thing in different contexts, nor do they always mean what we think they mean. Walking alongside each other does not *necessarily* mean that two people are in fact walking *together*. Gilbert notes "what is at issue here is not simply behavioral *expressions* but something that is *expressed*: actual readiness on the part of each jointly to commit them all in a certain way" (Gilbert 2017, 131). Physical proximity may simply be a happenstance behavioral expression, rather than behavior that expresses willingness (as in the case of the crowded New York street or the packed dance floor).

What then is willingness? Gilbert draws a link between willingness and actual readiness. She argues that readiness is "a state or disposition of the will" (Gilbert 1989, 185). For dancing together, however, readiness must be something more than merely a

disposition of the will – it must be a bodily, physical disposition as well. Why is this the case? Because dancing together implies joint physical action for which each party needs to be ready – two individuals cannot dance together if one is not actually ready.

It is important to note that Gilbert's work revolves around shared intentionality within joint action. Willingness is a particular kind of intention to act in a certain way. When people are walking alongside each other in the crowded streets of a city, or dancing next to each other in a crowded club, the distinguishing factor for Gilbert's concept of joint action is that people are willing to do something together. She notes that readiness is "a kind of engagement to act when the appropriate conditions obtain, rather than (or rather than only) a kind of thought or attitude regarding one's so acting" (Gilbert 1989, 185). Thus, Gilbert lays the foundation for understanding that some special kind of engagement is necessary to do something together, without spelling it out in detail.

For dancing together, I argue that the special kind of engagement is based on physical interaction, and for physical interaction to be possible, certain conditions need to be met. If we take the term at face value, interaction seems to presuppose action *between* some entities. We can thus assume that for interaction to be possible, there needs to be some kind of encounter—in other words, a meeting of individuals. Thus, there are (at least) two conditions underlying physical readiness to dance together: encounter and interaction. Interaction is contingent on the encounter, such that without the encounter there is no interaction and there can be no dancing together. Thus, we have our first condition for dancing together: an expression of willingness that is based on a discernable manifestation of *physical* readiness. Gilbert does not go into detail about the *physical* nuances of expressing willingness because her work attempts to account for joint action in a broad sense. She does, however, point out the complicated link between expressions and intentions. She states "action concepts are in general complex: they refer to a species of overt behavior on the one hand, and to intentions and other subjective phenomena on the other" (Gilbert 1989, 165). As an example of overt behavior in dance, Gilbert offers a particularly relevant example:

> Imagine that you see two people, a man and a woman, say, on a dance floor. He has his arm around her waist; they expertly perform the steps of a waltz. Surely the fact that they are dancing together can be obvious, even to one without access to the thoughts of parties concerned? So how can the fact of their dancing together be in any way dependent on their thinking any particular thoughts? (Gilbert 165, 1989)

One striking issue is that Gilbert does not breakdown what it means to expertly dance together. On the one hand, Gilbert clarifies that her work is not "under what physical conditions can people be said to be dancing together? But rather 'what thoughts or conceptions must be involved in order for people to count as (intentionally) dancing together" (Gilbert 1989, 165). I am extending her argument precisely by asking the question she does not: under what physical conditions can people be said to be dancing *together*? Given that an expression is a discernable manifestation, how does expressing willingness function to establish joint *physical* action? Since I am focusing on dancing together, it is important to consider the factors of the physical interaction in particular. Given my additional requirement of physical readiness, what sorts of dispositions or abilities enhance or inhibit the joint physical action?

Ability

One-sided expressions of willingness are not enough to establish *joint* action, though one-sided expressions can establish coordinated individual action, which the following hypothetical scenario will help to illustrate. Imagine in a dance hall, Jack sees Sue dancing alone and decides to join her. His expression of willingness to dance together with Sue needs to be reciprocated by Sue in order for them to be dancing *together*. Why does this distinction matter? Jack's decision to dance *together* with Sue is not based only on his own willingness. In other words, while they may be dancing next to each other in close proximity, and Jack has expressed willingness to dance with Sue, Jack's expression of willingness is not enough to establish that they are doing something together (i.e. joint action). Sue must also express willingness to dance with Jack in order for them to be dancing *together*. Otherwise, they are merely moving in close physical proximity. More specifically, Jack is dancing in close proximity with Sue, which may make Sue uncomfortable if she does not wish to be dancing with Jack. For the time being, let us assume that it does not make Sue uncomfortable that Jack is dancing in close proximity to her. In fact, it is also possible that they are moving in the same direction, with similar actions or gestures. Consider for example dances like the hand jive, electric slide, or cupid shuffle. Close proximity and similar movements do not necessarily mean that individuals are dancing together. It merely means they are all dancing to the same music and executing the moves of the dance. Both the intentions of Sue and Jack are at play in the interaction in

order to say that they are dancing together. Both must *accept* the other's willingness in order to establish their joint physical action.

The relationship between expressing willingness and acceptance is an epistemic problem because something needs to be understood in order for acceptance to be possible. There must be an encounter for an interaction to unfold, but the interaction between individuals depends on more than just the encounter. Dancing together has an epistemic dimension in that individuals must understand certain behavior as an expression of willingness. In part, this means that certain behavior is intentional (e.g. goal-driven) rather than happenstance. Consider for example leaving the bus at the same time as someone else. You both exit the vehicle and turn right. While this other individual's behavior is certainly a discernable manifestation, it would be odd to assume that this person has a goal to do something together with you simply because you have both left the bus at the same time and turned in the same direction. Thus, it is more likely simply a coincidence. If you find that the person makes all the same decisions as you, including entering into your office building and then into your very office, then you might conclude that the person is following you. You may even go so far as to believe that that in fact the person has a particular goal and that goal has something to do with you. The behavior may prompt you to ask something like "what are you doing?".

For Elgin, epistemic acceptance is a "disposition to act" (Elgin 2017, 19). What is the significance of disposition in the context of dancing together? Coming back to my earlier claim, having a disposition of the will is not enough to establish joint physical action. A disposition of the will certainly reflects something about one's character, but the disposition to act in the context of dancing together should be some kind of *physical* disposition. For example, Jack is only able to see that Sue is dancing alone and move toward her to dance with her given his bodily dispositions (e.g. sight to see, skin to feel and touch, sense of relative position to the floor through proprioception, balance, kinesthesia, and so on). Physical dispositions have a significant influence on how individuals approach one another, as well as the quality of exchange that unfolds. If an individual is missing a limb or is differently-abled in sight or hearing, their disposition will affect the interaction. Whether one has the disposition to move with another is also not necessarily enough to establish readiness.

Physical dispositions to dance together entail more than just willingness. There must be a physical readiness as well as an expression of willingness. The physical disposition may be linked to ability, such as dexterity with respect to balance (e.g.

proprioception), strength, visuo-spatial sensitivity (e.g. exteroception, distinguishing left from right), and so on. If one lacks strength, dexterity, balance, flexibility, and/or other bodily dispositions, then one may not be *actually* ready to dance together with someone. Moreover, one's disposition of will (e.g. willingness) alone may not reflect one's *physical* state of readiness. Consider a hypothetical scenario in which a dancer is hospitalized after a major injury – the dancer may have a disposition of the will such as a wish or desire to dance, but the injury may create physical limitations that prevent the dancer from being *actually* ready in that their body is, literally, indisposed. Jack and Sue are *able* to dance with each other because they have the dispositions to interact with one another and they express willingness to do so. The intention (e.g. willingness) must be paired with a physical readiness (bodily disposition), for the interaction to be possible. The ability to move together will determine whether it is feasible.

"Feasible" and "possible" are not synonymous – an interaction may be *possible* but not *feasible* given certain factors. Something is possible if it can be done, while something is feasible if it is likely to happen. Some encounters may influence interactions such that they are not feasible. Consider a hypothetical scenario of inviting someone to dance. It is *possible* to extend an invitation if there are dancers in the room willing to dance. It is *impossible* if there are no dancers around to invite to dance. It may be *unfeasible*, however, if the dancers all speak different languages, if the event is too crowded to join, or if there is an odd number of participants such that no one is available at the moment. Environmental factors may also make certain situations unfeasible, such as the floor being too slippery or the deejay not having the right music to dance a particular form (e.g. tango, salsa, swing). Such environmental circumstances, while ostensibly extraneous to the partnership itself, significantly affect the quality of interaction by presenting factors that can make dancing together theoretically possible but practically unfeasible.

Feasibility is thus circumstantial. Sometimes individuals claim that certain interactions are not possible, but it may be that they mean interaction is not feasible. Consider a scenario in which one dancer is trying to lift another. The lifting dancer may be too weak to execute a particular kind of lift, which may mean the dancer is not *actually ready* despite having expressed willingness. Thus, lifting in general may seem like a matter of possibility. Indeed, the action of lifting may be subject to particular aesthetic ideals or conventions such that the first dancer's weakness, paired with the aesthetic convention of something such as an overhead deadlift, makes a *particular* lift impossible. However, there may be a way to execute the lift if the two dancers arrange their bodies in a certain way, or

create dynamic choreography that allows for momentum and inertia to complement, enhance, and/or compensate for the dancer's lack of physical strength, such that another kind of lift becomes feasible. The dancer may also spend some time working out to develop strength (assuming the disposition is possible). The ability of the dancers, based on their physical dispositions, will influence what is feasible. By openly expressing willingness to dance together and accepting each other's willingness, individuals are set up to establish joint action.

That joint acceptance is contingent on both willingness and ability establishes an important link between physical action (e.g. dancing together) and intention (e.g. willingness qua readiness). Elgin further argues that epistemic acceptance "bridges the divide between the intellectual and the practical. It is practical in that it consists in a readiness to use a commitment in inference or action –that is, a readiness to do something. It is intellectual in that its range is restricted to contexts where the agent's ends are cognitive (Elgin 2017, 123). The ends of dancing together are cognitive insofar as it is understood that there is a goal, belief, or principle of action that guides and informs the movement.

Importantly, Gilbert's condition of willingness in the context of dance is quite vague. Clearly walking together is a form of joint movement, but is walking together the same as dancing together? If not, what makes it different? A simple answer might be that one is dancing while the other is not. But this does not give much information. Is it merely that the movement itself is different when partners dance together? This seems intuitively wrong – there is more to dancing together than the movement itself. For example, two individuals may be actually ready to interact through movement but not necessarily to dance together. They may be willing to shake hands or make eye contact to establish an interaction but not to touch or establish close physical proximity (despite being physically disposed to do so). By openly expressing willingness, individuals establish the conditions for joint action. Each must accept the encounter for it to become an interaction, but the willingness to interact is not yet to say that individuals have a shared goal, nor that they are necessarily dancing together. Moving forward, I will consider the ends of a joint commitment to dance together.

Joint Commitment in Dancing Together

Gilbert argues that to commit is to be *normatively constrained* in a certain way. That is, there is now something that he ought to do, all else being equal" (Gilbert 2017,

131). Applying Gilbert's notion of commitment to the context of dance, suppose Sue decided that she will go to a dance event to clear her head and dance on her own. By making a decision to go to the dance event on own, Sue commits herself to solo dancing. Gilbert calls this kind of action a personal commitment of the will (Gilbert 2017). She states that "the defining feature of such personal commitments is that the person in question is in a position unilaterally both to make and to rescind them" (Gilbert 2017, 131). I find this pertinent to considering commitment in the context of partnering because dancing itself involves all sorts of personal commitments that influence expression of willingness and the nature of joint commitment with others.

Gilbert's notion of personal commitment establishes two important concepts. One is that the normative constraint creates the possibility of error with what Gilbert calls 'exclusionary properties' (Gilbert 1990). By making a commitment to something, one may fail to succeed, even if the failure is insignificant. When Jack decides to dance close to her, Sue's plan to dance alone may be in trouble. Sue need not necessarily consider Jack's proximity to her a failure, because she can simply go on dancing on her own in close proximity to Jack. By dancing *with* Jack, she acts in error if she does not rescind her commitment to herself. As such, Gilbert would argue that Sue is *entitled to rebuke* herself for not upholding her own commitment to dance alone. A rebuke may be manifest itself into something like Sue slapping her forehead in realizing that she did not uphold her commitment to dance alone. The other important concept is obligation. Sue obligated herself to dance alone. Then, dancing with Jack, she failed to satisfy her obligation. This obligation, Gilbert points out, need not be a moral one. It is simply the result of a normative process, wherein the person fails to uphold a personal commitment. The normative constraints of one's own decisions create a certain normative force, such that a continuum of success (or failure, depending on how one looks at it) comes into play. In the context of dancing together, however, obligations may become moral if they carry the potential for bodily harm. I will return to this point in chapter seven.

The normative constraints of joint action pave the way for evaluation. Willingness, for example, can be evaluated in degrees. Jack may calmly sashay over to Sue. He may also thrash about next to Sue. Sue may have a preference for the thrashing about, such that she expresses willingness by joining Jack in thrashing about. She may also find the thrashing about too violent and conclude that it is unsafe to dance with Jack or in fact that Jack's thrashing is not in fact an expression of willingness, but rather a desperate attempt to call attention to himself. What makes an expression of willingness different than any

other discernable manifestation? For Gilbert, the difference is the intention behind the expression. Though we may not have access to her intention, it is still important to analyze from a philosophical standpoint in order to better understand the epistemic problems between thought and action. If Jack has ended up close to Sue by accident, then his proximity is merely happenstance rather than an expression of willingness. If he has an intention to do something with (or to) Sue, then his proximity can be understood as an expression of some kind of intent. I will return to consider intentionality in more depth in chapter seven and eight.

Individuals can have their own goals within joint physical action of dancing together. They may be following a ritual, a set choreography, enacting a codified or conventional practice that includes some rules of thumb, generalizations, and firmly established principles, or any other number of individual commitments. Individual goals will result in a collection of "I" statements, rather than "we" statements. The purpose of the interaction raises particular questions about why individuals interact with each other, as well as how they do so. In other words, the quality of each dancer's movement within the interaction itself. If individuals have their own commitments, they may somehow interfere with the joint action.

Individual goals may create conflict. Consider a simple example of two individuals, Jack and Sue, dancing next to each other in close proximity. Both individuals express willingness to interact, but each individual may have their own goal. Jack may simply be jamming to the music after a long day of work, willing to dance in close proximity to experience the rhythm. Sue may be enjoying the experience of close proximity with another person. The individual goals may not conflict with one another, such that dancing together is smooth and unproblematic. Gilbert maintains that, "once the exchange has taken place, both parties will be entitled to *assume* that the attitudes and actions appropriate to their going for a walk together are in place" (Gilbert 1990, 7, my emphasis). The entitlement to assume may create certain problems if the individuals are not on the same page.

Gilbert argues that multiple shared *individual* goals are not enough to establish a plural subject. By establishing a plural subject, Gilbert argues that those going for a walk together can say something like "shall we stop here?" (Gilbert 1990, 8). But joint physical commitments do not need to be realized solely in terms of "we" statements. If I ask you, "do you want to stop here?", making it clear that our stopping is conditional on your agreement, that may have less force than "shall we stop here". Extrapolating her argument to dance, those dancing together would need to be able to make a "we" claim such as "shall

we move this way?". Establishing a "we", however, means more than a collection of individual goals. The individuals need *to share* a goal, belief, or principle of action such that they constitute a plural subject. This may be specific to a form, such as conventions for inviting others to dance in social dance forms. This may be choreographed into a duet. Whether the expression of willingness is a product of social convention or designed choreography, some kind of understanding needs to be had between partners.

Understanding the normative constraints of a commitment may drive or deter expressions of willingness. An expression of willingness may, for example, be merely an intention to interact. If two people dancing next to each other make eye contact, the mutual gaze may be an expression of willingness for just that – willingness to make eye contact. It may be a willingness to interact through eye contact. It may also be happenstance to wandering eyes. Importantly, making eye contact may be a willingness to interact up to a certain point – in other words, a dancer may be willing to make eye contact, but not to touch or move in closer proximity. This may (easily) be misinterpreted on the part of a potential partner depending on the previous experience and expectations of the individual. Very little can be said about the *intention* of behavioral expressions such as physical proximity and mutual gaze without knowing additional information. Moreover, the physical conventions of any given dance form may fuel (and be fueled by) goals, beliefs, or principles, or drive (or be driven by) some kind of ideology such that some dances require a certain level of dexterity, flexibility, strength, balance, and/or other bodily dispositions. The ability to accept another's willingness is different than understanding what it is they are accepting.

One may express willingness to dance together with another by maintaining eye contact with a potential partner. The individual may be expressing willingness without *understanding* what dancing together entails. Dancing together may involve elements of close proximity, touch, mutual gaze, and adherence to particular steps. This may be as simple as swaying together to music, or as complicated as a set of choreography that involves lifting, pulling, pushing, going down to the ground and coming back up. Interaction must be feasible, meaning that an encounter is possible and individuals have the disposition to interact with one another. The physical disposition may be further linked to dexterity (e.g. being able to isolate and coordinate various parts of the body), as well as perceptual sensitivity. Part of the sensitivity is an awareness to *recognize* the expression of willingness and accept it as such. If moving in close proximity can be understood as both an expression of willingness and mere happenstance, then what are the factors for

recognizing and distinguishing behavioral expressions that are meant to express willingness to dance together?

Gilbert argues that there is a way to consider joint action in a *strong* sense, meaning more than just two people appear to be doing something together. She states,

> In order for X and Y to be doing A together, some condition of behavioral appropriateness must presumably hold, but both X and Y must also have a special kind of conception of what is going on (Gilbert 1989, 166).

The statement makes two claims 1) that there is some kind of condition of behavioral appropriateness, and 2) each person must have a special kind of conception of what is going on. Behavior in the form of physical expressions are inevitably a part of dancing together, but not all behavior will be appropriate for a given interaction nor will all behavior necessarily be expressive of something relevant to the dance (e.g. dancing in close proximity is not necessarily an expression of willingness, though the proximity can be interpreted as such). What is it that partners agree to when dancing together?

There are several practical problems that are associated with willingness that are worth considering here. What is Jack's motive for dancing with Sue? How long does he intend to dance with Sue? How will he react if Sue does not want to dance with him? This returns to the distinction between coming together *through* dance and coming together *to* dance, which I proposed in the introduction chapter. Any agreement has underlying motives and intention, but these may be implicit for dancing together. Some intentions may be more accessible than others. Consider a hypothetical scenario in which one approaches a dancer, establishing close proximity, and reaches out a hand while maintaining eye contact. It would not be strange to understand the action as an intentional invitation to dance together. If, on the other hand, someone reached out a hand from a distance, without establishing or maintaining eye contact, it would be difficult to ascertain the intentions or even the motives of the movement.

In some cases, the motives are merely to dance with someone for the length of the song, and if something goes wrong then they will part when the song ends. There may also be divergent motives, such that Sue wants to dance with Jack for the length of the song, but Jack wants to take Sue home and so has more in mind than merely dancing together. Here, I am investigating the motives and intentions of *dancing* together, beyond the motives and intentions of doing something together for the sake of togetherness. When Jack has an intention to dance with Sue, he moves closer to her. By establishing physical proximity, Jack voluntarily expresses his intention to dance with Sue. But the physical proximity itself

may be the extent of his willingness. Jack wants to dance with Sue, but he is unwilling to make eye contact, to touch, or to establish other means of interaction beyond the proximity. Thus, an expression of willingness is subject to interpretation.

Gilbert argues that “each person expresses a special form of *conditional commitment* such that (as is understood) only when *everyone* has done similarly is *anyone* committed (Gilbert 1990, 7, emphasis in the original). To dance together, the commitment is conditional in that if one stops moving with the other, the movement may no longer be considered a joint act in the strong sense. Suppose that Jack gets “lost” in the music. He stops paying attention to Sue and moves on his own. Jack’s movement becomes independent of Sue’s, such that despite the fact that they are both willing to dance together, because of the condition of joint commitment they are now dancing on their own in close proximity. Given the normative force of commitments, Sue is entitled to rebuke Jack for not upholding the joint endeavor of dancing together. The entitlement to rebuke and the actual action depends on how partners are encountering and interacting with each other. The quality of their movement and the interaction is contingent on their individual dispositions.

What does Sue have to object to in her interaction with Jack? She wants to dance with him, has openly expressed willingness to do so, and he is just dancing with her in close proximity. To dance together with Jack, the quality of her dancing is somehow keyed to their interaction. It is not necessarily a matter of what anybody knows. In other words, there is a property of dancing that is absent whether anyone can tell, indeed whether anyone knows, or not. Why does it matter if no one can tell? Just because individuals express willingness and have the disposition to dance together does not mean they necessarily will do so. This is because dispositions have a counterfactual dimension. As Elgin points out,

> To ascribe a disposition is to indicate something not only about what does happen, but also about what would happen had circumstances been different. The glass that never is struck and never breaks nonetheless has the disposition of brittleness if it would break if it were struck (Elgin 2017, 52)

A counterfactual will serve to illustrate the epistemic problem with Jack getting lost in the music without Sue being able to tell. Perhaps Sue has the experience that everything is fine. Suppose Jack is just grooving with the music and has a dim awareness that Sue is somewhere nearby. As it turns out, she trips. Does he notice? If Jack doesn’t notice, then there is nothing joint going on. If she doesn't trip, would he have noticed had she tripped? The counterfactual element is critical – if nothing happens, she will never know. But the

counterfactual illustrates what Elgin calls a *dispositional view*. This dispositional view offers insight into what could go wrong based on what one is capable of or willing to do.

Gilbert notes that "if Jack's goal is to walk alongside Sue, *prudence* obviously requires him to monitor the situation carefully and to take what action he can to keep the two of them together" (Gilbert 1990, 4, emphasis in the original). For the context of dancing together, the ability to accept an expression of willingness requires sensitivity both in terms of perception (e.g. monitoring the situation) and in terms of dexterity (e.g. taking action to establish the action as a joint one). Something about physically expressing willingness must factor into what dancers are doing together for it to have influence on their interaction. If one expresses willingness to the other without reciprocation, meaning the other is either unable or unwilling, then the result is merely moving alongside each other in close proximity.

To establish joint action, partners must be willing and able to monitor each other to some extent. The problem is how partners harness their ability, once the willingness has been expressed. Harnessing ability may be a problem of knowing how to do so. Elgin argues that know-how is an "achievement". She claims,

> [Knowing-how] involves a capacity to do something well, or rightly, or correctly. An adequate explication should do justice to this normative character. Some habits are bad; some are neutral; some are good. Some dispositions are benign; some are beneficial; some lead us astray (Elgin 2017, 48).

Elgin's notion of know-how is pertinent to consider in dance, given that individuals may have various habits that preclude them from monitoring or attuning to each other. Consider how Jack getting lost in the music may constitute a habit of his. To dance together with Sue, he will need to work on not getting lost in the music. One could ostensibly be a great dancer but fail to attune, just as someone could be great at attuning but lack the competence to dance well. The degree of attunement will depend on the kind of obligation partners enter into when dancing together. Whether one will be able to access the attunement depends on one's ability and/or competence.

Competence opens the normative dimension of ability, in that one is able to do something *well*. Part of doing something well means understanding how to do it. Elgin argues that know-how may be linked to simply following the rules of the practice, but "not all knowing how is keyed to the norms of a practice" (Elgin 2017, 48). While different

forms of dance may have their own norms, I am interrogating the general conditions for dancing together, which includes how partners access their know-how when dancing together. How partners express willingness and understand the relevant expressions is a crucial aspect of dancing together. More subtly, the way in which an encounter is approached will determine whether the feasible interaction will be successful. As a normative term, success will be assessed according to some standards.

To consider the added dimension of attunement in dancing together, I will consider an example of dancing with a broomstick (this was considered an effective exercise of learning to partner in my ballroom training). By holding one's arms out with palms facing downward and laying a broom longwise supported by the backs of the hands, one could become more sensitive to the requisite dimension of maintaining a dance frame position such as the one in the waltz, foxtrot, quickstep, and tango. Dancing with a broom is not like dancing alone, because one has to attune to the micromovements of the broom or else it will fall. Dancing with a broom sets up what Elgin calls a "logical space". Elgin maintains that,

> A logical space is a multidimensional array of possibilities open to the items that occupy the space. To locate an item in a logical space is to determine which of the possibilities defined by that space it realizes (Elgin 2017, 155)

Attuning to the broom includes the possibilities that are available given the physical characteristics of the broom. Dancing with a broom offers a particular modulation of the logical space via the availability of the broom as a prop to partner. If one is trying to keep the broom steady while dancing with it, then any movement of the broom will offer feedback about one's attunement to it. The dancer has to be sensitive to the broom's movement, but the broom cannot be sensitive to the dancer.

If one is attuned to what the other is doing, then one is in effect more sensitive than if one is not attuned. Suppose Jack and Sue both express willingness to dance together, and so start to dance together. It is perfectly possible that they will *feel* that they are dancing together. But the experience of moving together might be misleading. If one were to trip, the other would likely not notice if they are not attuned to some degree. The problem is that individuals can make various joint commitments such as walking together without necessarily needing to have a high degree of attunement to each other. Their commitment consists merely in coarse-grained attunement. In other words, there is a bare minimum attunement that can satisfy the conditions of togetherness together that will break down

when dancing. Only when something unexpected happens (e.g. some kind of counterfactual) will this become visible.

Gilbert misses important nuances of the *physical* dimensions of joint action. This is unsurprising, since her work is focused more on the doing things together in a broad sense. Nevertheless, her work lays the foundation for considering the significance of physical nuances in expressions of willingness. Consider for example that Jack is much taller than Sue. He takes steps that are twice as big as Sue's, such that she needs to scurry along quickly to keep up with him. If Sue and Jack are not attuned to each other to some basic degree, and walk as they normally would on their own, then they likely won't be walking together for very long. On the other hand, two dancers could mutually attune their movements to one another across a fairly large distance as long as they can interpret the relevant features of the interaction.

So far, I have argued that an encounter and an interaction in the form of some physical exchange on the basis of mutual attunement are the conditions of dancing together in the strong sense. Moving forward, I will refer to dancing together in the strong sense as "partnering". I have demonstrated how interactions are contingent on individual dispositions and capacities to express willingness. But one could ostensibly have a capacity to dance with someone without having any disposition to do so. An individual may be, by character, never inclined to enter the dance floor. Thus, there is more to the joint act than mere willingness and disposition. Though two dancers must be able to dance with each other for the joint act to be feasible, I believe there is more at play in partnering than willingness to move together.

Partnering

In the case of mutual attunement between dancers, each dancer has to be sensitive to the other. But the sensitivity may be limited to merely coordinating actions independently. Consider for example two individuals dancing together. Their action may be coordinated such that they are doing the right movement at the right time, without necessarily attuning to one another. Just because their action is coordinated does not mean that they are partnering, even if they are dancing together. Willingness and shared goal may be enough to establish the joint act of dancing together, but it will not be enough to establish partnering. What I want to say is that the phenomenon of partnering is somehow different,

qualitatively, from dancing together even if there is an expression of willingness to establish a joint commitment to dance together.

Partnering involves establishing movement on account of the other. If Jack senses Sue leaning, he may lean with her or against her. Though Sue's actions need not have any influence on Jack, he can choose to respond to her movement and thus move on account of her action. This would mean that he is attuning to her. If Sue's subsequent action is negotiated on account of Jack's response to her, then they are not merely moving together. Their action is mutually attuned, responsive, and negotiated on account of each other.

Partners can attune to the quality of each other's movements such that they are negotiating timing, rhythm, and quality of movement on account of each other. Quality of movement is what I propose distinguishes one form from another, one kind of dance from another kind of dance. Returning to the example of Sue leaning into Jack, if she is leaning into Jack because she is tired, the quality of her movement will be different than if she is leaning into the other because she is investigating the act of leaning. If the willingness to engage is there, but part of the agreement is implicit or not common knowledge between partners such that there are hidden motives on the part of either dancer, they may run into problems.

It is important to distinguish movement that is joint on account of each other through mutual attunement and movement that is merely simultaneous or otherwise executed without attunement – or the bare minimum of attunement which satisfies the conditions of joint action, but not of dancing. There is some counterfactual element that informs the individual dispositions. If individuals are partnering, they are doing more than the right steps at the right time, because they will have to accommodate uncertainty. Suppose Jack sees Sue stumble. In attuning to her movement, he can come to her rescue (assuming she needs to be rescued). The logical space gives a range of possible ways the interaction might unfold, in that it contains all of the necessary conditional components for partnering to be achieved or not.

When individuals are partnering, they are not just thinking about the range of possibilities, each is also thinking about what the other thinks is going on as well. This is because dancing together can involve different kinds of obligations. The obligation will depend on the norms of a practice. Some forms of partnering present some sort of a choreographic obligation. This is the case for dances that have codified steps and rules or conventions of a practice (e.g. tango). Other forms of partnering may be informed by social practice, and serve as practices of entertainment, intimacy, or exercises in cultural identity.

Given that interactions have normative force, partnering can be evaluated based on the kind of obligation partners are committing to.

Partnering is further formed and informed by individual and collective perspectives. This may be related to expectations, such as codes of conduct or attire. Certain forms of dance may insist on special shoes or attire, just as certain practices may uphold particular ways of encountering and engaging with the floor, music, or others in the space. Certain spaces may feel different than others, which may become evident simply from the first encounter. Consider for example how a stage feels different than a studio space, or how a studio may feel different than a ballroom function hall, public community space, or night club. Some spaces feel open and inviting, while others can feel oppressive and austere. Moreover, individuals are likely also to bring their own associations to the encounter. This is because encounters do not occur in a void. Places of practice have their own historical and cultural cadences, just as individuals have their own personal histories.

Some cultural cadences may be implicit, requiring some kind of inside knowledge, while others make rules and conventions explicit. Consider for example how different cultures have different ideas about mixed genders walking together. In some cultures, it is unacceptable for men and women to walk together, while in others it is so conventional that observers may not even notice. Cadences may be the result of historic practices. Consider for example how individuals may encounter each other at a social dancing event. The history of social dancing in the West has been dominated by heteronormative ideals, in which men invite women to dance[2]. There is no absolute requirement, however, that says men must invite women to dance, nor that men cannot dance with other men, women with other women, let alone those who identify as non-binary. The conventions of a practice contribute to how individuals encounter one another.

Individuals have their own previous histories, expectations, assumptions, and motivations inherently infuse the practice. If one had a traumatic experience in a dance studio, then it is certainly possible that other studios may trigger memories or sensations of the event by association with environment. The aesthetic dimensions are always already situated within the act of moving together. By having a shared goal (e.g. seeking something like a particular idea of beauty in the joint act), individuals are manifesting their own aesthetic values. Whether this is creating particular shapes or avoiding effort, the aesthetic

[2] Viki Harman's (2019) exposition on the sexual politics of ballroom dancing points to the heteronormative conventions of the practices around establishing the joint action of dancing together in the social and competition environments.

values of partnering are manifold. Partners ostensibly need to agree on their goals in order for the goals to be shared. This is a matter of acceptance.

Acceptance may lead to its own slew of problems. Without accepting an interaction, individuals may impose themselves on others. With enough strength and coercion, individuals can be overpowered, and interactions can unfold that are non-consensual. This is especially true in interactions where the power dynamic is unequal. In those cases, the lack of acceptance is a key factor to the evaluation of what went wrong. Practitioners may thus interrogate the thresholds for acceptance and the standards of evaluation for the joint commitment in partnering within the act itself. I will return to this point in chapter eight when examining reasoning.

It may seem banal to say that the emotional energy put into the practice of partnering has a significant impact on how two or more individuals will interact, yet it seems an obvious point of departure for considering what may be regarded as successful within a normative lens, especially when we consider ethical concepts such as commitment and obligation. This stems from the fact that both willingness and ability to interact with others breaks down under certain circumstances. This is the space where it is truly vital to evaluate how people move together, visually from the outside or experientially (kinesthetically, physically, tactilely, and so on) from the inside.

One of the key components that distinguishes merely moving together from partnering is whether partners joint movement is *on account* of the other. Partners' willingness to commit will be subject to attunement to the characteristics of the physical interaction and the changes therein. This includes physical elements such as proximity, pace, direction, and so on, as well as the character and quality of movement. Partners attend to how the movement looks or feels, which is not true when merely moving together. Even the act of walking together may be considered partnering if partners are attending to the aesthetic dimensions of the physical interaction. From walking together to partnering, there must be some kind of a shift in how partners encounter and interact with each other.

The normative force of joint commitment in partnering means there is some margin of success to dance with others in the strong sense. To accept the expression of willingness to dance together, individuals must be both willing and able. Since joint actions are normative, what is the nature of the commitment individuals make to each other when dancing together? What is the significance of attunement to the physical aspects of the interaction, including proximity, pace, and direction of the other? If both Jack and Sue express willingness to dance together, and they accept the physical proximity it may be

enough to say that Jack and Sue are dancing together. But it is not enough to say that they are dancing together *well*. Does this satisfy the conditions of partnering? What are the methods in relation to achieving the goal of *dancing* together?

Conclusion

Dancing together is a special case of doing something together because the physical expressions matter for the joint act itself. Consider for example that Sue and Jack are sitting across the room from each other and both say, "yes, I'd like to dance together". Though both have expressed willingness to dance together, the expression is not enough since there is no physical interaction happening yet. This is different than if they had expressed interest in something other than dancing together, like singing or playing a video game. In other joint acts, physical proximity may not be a necessary condition. Consider for example how a minute of silence on a national holiday could be construed as a joint action across the country, where everyone jointly observes a silence without any sort of physical proximity. In dancing together, however, physical proximity seems to be a necessary condition. The sort of physical proximity dancing demands has something to do with moving together. But the proximity alone is not enough[3]. Partners can adjust and modify their physical actions through behavioral expressions such as physical proximity to express willingness (or unwillingness) to move together. Behavioral expressions such as physical proximity may also be mere happenstance. Returning to the case of the dancers who are simply dancing alongside each other, they need not be mutually attuning to one another. If they are mutually attuning to one another, they may be simply attuning so as to not bump into each other. This may be the case in dances such as the twist, hand jive, electric slide, macarena, cha-cha slide, cupid shuffle, and so on. To change their physical action *on account of each other*, individuals need to be sensitive and responsive to relevant features of the interaction.

The conditions presented in this chapter, namely the expression of willingness contingent on an encounter and exchange, as well as the establishment of a shared goal in conditions of common knowledge, do not reveal what makes partnering good or bad, successful or unsuccessful, appropriate or inappropriate. While partnering cannot occur without interaction, certain exchanges are considered and evaluated by those practicing as well as those observing. This aligns with the driving questions in this thesis circle around what it means to partner and what it means to partner *well*. To address these questions, it is

[3] It is important to note that there are various ways in which 'dancing together' could be experienced when not in physical proximity (e.g. skype and teleconferencing rehearsal). My focus here is on dancing together in the same physical space.

necessary what it means to dance together in the strong sense, how that strong sense is evaluated, what kinds of claims about dancing together are tenable, and the difficulty of prescribing rules or designing formulas that predict the success of an interaction.

Partners' willingness to commit will be subject to the characteristics of the physical interaction and the changes therein. This includes physical elements such as proximity, pace, direction, and so on, as well as the character and quality of movement. Partners that attune to each other will be doing more than merely dancing in close proximity. Both behavior and intention are situated within the normative domain: not just behavior, but *appropriate* behavior. Not just a conception, but a *special kind* of conception. What are the behavioral conditions for dancing together?

Why does the distinction between merely moving together and partnering matter? By establishing that partners constitute a plural subject with a mutual attunement condition wherein movement is negotiated on account of each other, it is possible to argue that partnering establishes 1) a specific kind of joint commitment, 2) an obligation to uphold the commitment, and 3) entitlements to rebuke a lack of attunement or a penchant for merely coordinated action. This reveals some insight into the normative dimension of partnering.

Gilbert lays the foundation for analyzing how the expression of willingness in doing something together is *ongoing*. Importantly, establishing the joint action of dancing *together* is contingent on more than a one-off, singular expression of willingness. One may not have been paying attention to the other, off in some daydream, and so fails to monitor the expression of willingness pace and proximity accordingly. The other may also have stopped paying attention, such that both lose sight of each other and, despite being willing to dance together, both are no longer expressing willingness since they are no longer in close proximity or keeping pace with each other.

Individuals must have some base level of mutual attunement in order to do something *together*. But is this enough to partner? Moving together may satisfy the experiential (phenomenological) condition of joint physical action, but the experience of togetherness is not the end I am after in this thesis. I propose that partnering, or dancing together in the strong sense, requires an understanding of mutual attunement such that partners can form a joint commitment based on an expression of willingness and ability to mutually attune to one another. Together these constitute the conditions for partnering which I am approaching from the perspective of epistemology. I focus on *what* (rather than how) partnering is founded on. Despite the fact that dancing together requires an encounter

and some sort of interaction based on mutual attunement, it is not the case that any physical interaction can be referred to as partnering. Interaction is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for partnering, which needs to include at least willingness and ability to accept the joint commitment. The concepts that are embedded in the physical act of partnering have to do with the nature of the obligation, including harnessing ability (competence) and the degree of attunement. I propose that partnering means coming together *to* dance, rather than just coming together *through* dance. *Establishing* the commitment, however, is not enough within the act of partnering. Partners must *maintain* the joint commitment, which requires understanding actions on a fine-grained scale. In the next chapter, I will argue that understanding these actions is contingent on communication between partners.

Chapter Five: Norms of Exchange

In the previous chapter, I established the conditions for partnering as dancing together in the strong sense, where individuals form a joint commitment to negotiate

movement on account of each other through mutual attunement. I argued for necessary conditions of expressing and accepting willingness, contingent on physical readiness, ability, and understanding the agreement of the commitment. I also pointed to encounter and exchange as two factors within the physical interaction of dancing together. The discussion closed with the epistemic problem of *maintaining* the joint physical commitment. How is it that partners maintain and negotiate their willingness within their physical interaction? While exchange may be a necessary condition of partnering, it is important to note that there are different kinds of exchanges. For example, there are communicative exchanges, such as the ones between people walking together. There are also the non-communicative exchanges, such as the ones presented in the previous chapter when considering interaction between the environment (ground or air) or props such as a broom.

Some interactions are experienced as more meaningful and deeper than other interactions. Why is this the case? At least in part because individuals find different things meaningful when interacting with others. Before entertaining the meaning of a particular expression, however, it is necessary first to be aware that each movement, no matter how small, can be significant in the process of exchanging and interacting with others. Bodily movements can be informed by aesthetic discourses and conventions, whether they are social, competitive, folk, concert, or otherwise. But one can interact with others without being aware of the meaning of gestures, since gestures may be different across cultures and represent subcultural meanings within the same cultural milieu. This is an epistemic matter.

Drawing on the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953), Gilbert distinguishes between *thin* and *seriously intended* communication (Gilbert 1989). In both instances of communication, "some person, P1, uses (means) term 'T' and understands 'S'; another person observes P1's utterance of 'T' and understands 'T' in sense 'S'" (Gilbert 87, 1989). The distinction Gilbert claims is that *thin* communication "does not require that either person has any reason to believe that they interpret [terms] in the same way" (Gilbert 1989, 87), while *seriously intended* communication "essentially involves *intentional* achievement" (Gilbert 1989, 88, emphasis in the original). For the context of this thesis, the important aspect that needs to be unpacked is how expressing willingness in dancing together is a communicative act. Based on Gilbert's notion of *thin* communication, it is possible that individuals may willingly commit themselves to a joint act in which they use similar gestures, movements, and the like, but interpret the same gestures differently. In doing so, they may be setting themselves up for losing depth of possibility and meaning

from the interaction specifically because the exchange is thin. Dancing together based on *thin* communication may not constitute partnering (i.e. dancing together in the strong sense) because the lack of mutual understanding puts partners at risk of being unable to maintain their joint commitment. Thus, I propose that partnering requires ongoing communication in the form of a *physical* conversation.

In this chapter, I will argue that partners maintain their joint physical commitment by expressing and negotiating willingness through communicative exchange in an ongoing, continuous way. I will present the epistemological foundation to understand communication in dancing together as a *physical* exchange of information. To do so, I will interrogate the maxims of cooperative communication proposed by American philologist H. Paul Grice. I will lay out the conditions of communicating willingness in partnering, to which the relevant norms of evaluation can adhere. I will argue that these conditions are based on being both *receptive* and *responsive* to proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact. These conditions can be linked to a broader understanding of communication that is *paralinguistic,* or beyond that which is spoken. Some of the terminology, such as the spatial (proxemic) and temporal (chronemic) relationship partners establish in their communication will emerge from the work of American linguists George L. Trager and Edward T. Hall.

Grice points out that conversations "do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks" and are "characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts" (Grice 1991, 26). His notion of conversation is thus quite specific, in that it excludes exchanges which are random or uncooperative. Furthermore, Gricean conversation has a clearly established purpose, which "may be fixed from the start, or it may evolve during the exchange; it may be fairly definite or it may be so indefinite as to leave very considerable latitude to the participants" (Grice 1991, 26). His narrow, focused conception of conversation fits neatly into Gilbert's notion of joint commitment, in that those within the exchange obligate each other to make particular kinds of conversational contributions.

Grice's cooperative principle, which I already introduced in the literature review, is as follows: "make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice 1991, 26). The principle has a certain normative force, given that accepted purposes and conversational contributions obligate interlocutors to communicate in a certain way. Drawing from Gilbert, the normative dimension of communication suggests

the potential for failure, which suggests there are right and wrong ways to engage and evaluate an exchange. It is not hard to imagine how failure to make appropriate contributions may lead to confusion and misunderstanding between partners. Grice also maintains that cooperative conversations have "a common set purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction" (Grice 1991, 26). This also aligns well with Gilbert's notion of joint commitment, in that participants in a conversation will be committed to some purpose (or set of purposes).

To question the extent to which the cooperative principle can be generally applicable, Grice proposes four categories: Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner, which together delineate specific maxims that uphold the cooperative principle. Together, these four categories constrain the transfer of information, including a) quantity of information b) the quality of information), c) relation of information to the purpose or to other bits of information in the conversation, and d) the manner in which information is presented (Grice 1991, 28). Applying Grice's categories of information transfer to dance partnering, I will first focus on the *manner* and *relation* with respect to maintaining joint commitment. I will then position Grice's concept of cooperation in line with Elgin's concept of exemplification, in order to parse the epistemic problems partners may face in maintaining their joint commitment when dancing together. I will consider thought experiments and hypothetical scenarios of communicating willingness, and then turn to Grice's concept of implicature. I will end with a discussion of the normative dimensions of communication in partnering. Rather than provide a how-to guide for communication, I will develop a critical framework for evaluating communication in partnering.

Receptivity

In the previous chapter I argued that a physical encounter is necessary for interaction to be possible. The encounter provides the conditions for an exchange on the basis of some physical transfer of information. I propose that the *manner* of transfer in partnering is based on (at least) three conditions: proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact. Different forms of movement practice will have different conventions about each of these conditions. For example, an Argentinian Tango has different points of contact, proximity, and orientation than the International DanceSport Tango, in which partners use different manners to convey information to each other. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I will examine each condition abstractly, outside of any particular dance form.

Proximity refers to the distance at which partners encounter and interact with each other. Partners can direct their movement in multiple dimensions, including forward, backward, side, up, and down. Orientation refers to the relative physical position of each partner to the other(s). Partners can orient to each other by facing, pitching, and twisting toward and away from each other. This includes multiple planes such as forward and backward (sagittal), spinal rotation (transvers), and side-to-side (frontal). Point(s) of contact refers to the method of interaction such as touch, breath, eye contact, and rhythm, as well as external elements such as sound (e.g. music).

Proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact function as the manner by which partners establish and maintain ways of dancing together. These three conditions can be established and maintained in a multitude of different ways. For example, there can be close proximity with no contact (e.g. facing away without touch or eye contact) and contact without close proximity (e.g. establishing and maintaining eye contact from afar, or perhaps even teleconferencing). Proximity can be considered a function of space, in which direction is negotiated through shifts of weight toward and away from a shared center. Orientation can be considered a function of shape, in which relative position is negotiated through extension, flexion, rotation, and translation in the spine and pelvis. One may use multiple points of contact to establish shared focus, including complex rhythm through touch, breath, and gaze.

Communication is only possible given some kind of an encounter, just as it will be constrained (e.g. stronger or weaker) given certain factors. To understand the conditions of communication, I will examine two factors systematically: signaling and interpretation. I propose that a signal is something that conveys information. To illustrate nuances in signaling, I will begin with encounters with inanimate matter and then with exchanges between human agents. I will first examine linear exchanges, in which information is transferred in one direction.

I can encounter and act upon inanimate things, such as a wall or an instrument. For example, I may commit to encounter a wall with the goal to practice leaning, shifting, and displacing my weight to build strength, coordination, or even courage to be off-balance. My exchange with the wall will be rather limited, since the wall cannot signal (i.e. convey information) to me on its own. A limited exchange in this scenario is favorable, however, since I have a particular goal in mind when encountering the wall. While it is possible to act upon a wall, it is odd to say that the wall is communicating with me. But I am signaling to the wall, even if it has no way to signal back. The wall does not choose to support my

weight, it does so simply by the design of its reinforcement. Moreover, while my actions do have some effects on the wall (since I apply pressure, the wall matches my force with an equal and opposite force as per Newton's third law of motion), the effects are likely too small to be observable or significant. Acting upon a wall allows me to practice signaling through proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact.

Committing to act upon a wall, however useful as a means to practice holding and releasing weight, is significantly different from acting upon an instrument designed for interaction (such as a musical instrument or digital device). A musical instrument is more complex than a wall as it is in many ways designed for interaction. I can commit to play a clarinet and maintain my commitment through pressure and breath because the clarinet has distinct mechanisms that react to these certain parameters, many of which require specific knowledge (e.g. through training, extensive practice, or some other means of spending time understanding the design and mechanics). To control the sound, I must simultaneously produce breath into the mouthpiece while stabilizing the reed with my embouchure. The clarinet has recognizable effects based on how I interact with it, all of which are predictable contingent on my familiarity and expertise with the clarinet. A clarinet, given that it is designed for interaction, can hone different communication skills than that of a wall. I cannot lean against a clarinet, nor can it support my weight. One can produce signals (i.e. convey information) within the interaction in ways that may not be possible with a wall (such as the production of sound). The question is *which* communicative skills are relevant to dancing together. Being able to practice producing and listening to nuances in music may be valuable for establishing and maintaining rhythm. Being able to lean against a wall may be valuable to practice being in off-balance positions.

There is an exchange happening between myself and a wall or musical instrument, though it is limited given that the basis of signaling is entirely contingent on me being the only one involved to establish and maintain proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact. As such, I can maintain my commitment through the conditions of proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact in the mouth and fingers. Importantly however, neither a wall nor a clarinet can establish or maintain a *joint* commitment. Nevertheless, there is something important to be learned about signaling when considering the ways in individuals can be *receptive* to action. While the clarinet cannot play without me, it reacts differently given the way I interact with it. For example, a clarinet will react differently in the cold than it will in hotter weather, because the wood expands and contracts under different temperatures. A clarinet is different, however, from a two by four piece of wood resting in

my garage. A two by four will also expand and contract given different temperatures, but a clarinet is more flexibly dependent on ambient circumstances given the fact that is has distinct mechanisms that will react differently given the manner in which I signal. A clarinet is more reactive (to both the weather and me) than a two by four. Moreover, my clarinet will play differently than my partner's clarinet, and so if I attempt to treat another person's clarinet the same way as I would my own, I may run into some trouble. My success is contingent on how well I *attune* to the clarinet. Though the clarinet cannot attune to me, I must be *receptive* to it in understanding the effects of my signals on it.

Though it is not yet considered a conversation, Gricean maxims may serve to understand how information functions in my unidirectional exchange with a wall or clarinet. Physical information includes how much I lean into or away from the wall (quantity), how close or far and with what orientation (relation), and characteristics of movement (quality). I can further practice the manner of signaling by changing how I move. Though neither the wall nor the clarinet can signal back, I can be receptive to the effects of my signals. In this way, receptivity is more than just registering what is going on (within myself, my partner, my surroundings). I propose that receptivity means that due attention and weight are committed to the phenomenon of attuning to the subject of the interaction.

Signals can be discrete. Proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact can all be established such that I can come close to the wall and walk away. I could also be encountering either of these unintentionally, and not even notice that I did so. I may in fact be surrounded by walls, but I am not committed to any interaction with them. The walls might not be salient to me, given a particular frame of reference. I can face the wall (orientating to it) and face away without necessarily seeing it. I can also direct my gaze (eyes as point of contact) to the wall, see the wall and look away, just as I can establish a point of contact with my hand and immediately remove my hand. By encountering the wall and clarinet I can establish a willingness to commit to interaction, but it does not mean that I necessarily will commit.

Signals can also be continuous. In playing the clarinet, I am constantly adjusting my mouth and fingers. I produce continuous sounds and maintain contact with certain keys when performing a composition. I also maintain contact with the clarinet so as not to drop it. I attune by listening to the pitches. By establishing and maintaining a particular orientation, proximity, pressure, and breath, I am expressing willingness and it is *my ability to be receptive* that allows me to maintain my commitment through these continuous signals.

Between inanimate matter like a wall and clarinet, there are non-human animate subjects, such as a cat. I call to my cat and she reacts differently. Sometimes her ears perk up, sometimes she looks at me, sometimes she even comes over. But her reactions differ, and it is difficult to be certain about how or when she will react. She seems to choose when to sit with me and when to go about her own business. There are ways in which my cat can express willingness to sit with me, which may be something like a proto-joint commitment, though it is likely difficult to make a joint commitment with a cat because of barriers in mutual understanding.

Physical interaction with a wall, a clarinet, and cat are limited compared to a person, given the way individuals can be receptive *to each other*. The limited exchange with a cat can be further illustrated with a limited exchange that happens with a baby. For example, my one-year-old nephew has learned certain physical signals as well as certain words, though he cannot yet form full sentences. When he wants my attention, he can wave, pull on my hand, yell out. He establishes willingness to interact when he pulls me into his room to show me his toys. Occasionally, we dance together. Even without any formal dance training, my nephew can maintain close proximity, facing me while holding my hand. He can exhibit disappointment or frustration if I unilaterally decide to stop dancing with him. As such, my nephew and I can make a joint commitment, albeit somewhat limited. Following Elgin's logic, the question is what is *salient* to him and what actions of mine produce the kind of communication necessary to maintain a joint commitment.

Signaling depends on the types of constraints that are present for each partner. If I come to a social event of a movement form I have no experience with, interacting with a partner may not be feasible because I will find their movement potentially random or too complex. Similarly, an advanced dancer in a different form may have trouble interacting with me upon realizing that their actions have no recognizable effects on me. While the interaction is ostensibly possible, it may be unfeasible given my lack of experience with the present form. This will depend on my ability to receive (i.e. be receptive to) the given signals (which may be further contingent on quantity and/or quality of training or practice).

Sometimes the manner of communication is influenced by the aesthetic and formal conventions of the genre being practiced, at other times communication is something dancers can explicitly negotiate. For partners to physically maintain their joint commitment to move on account of each other, they need to be able to differentiate their own individual actions, as well as their joint action, with respect to proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact. In part, differentiation of action means that individuals are receptive to the physical

effects they have on each other's movements. This is a matter of how partners respond to each other.

Responsiveness

While a clarinet or a wall cannot make signals on their own, individuals can produce a variety of signals in how they encounter and *respond* to the subject of their interaction. Human interaction is complicated at least because of the fact that individuals, unlike inanimate matter, can be *willing* and *able* to signal on their own with symbols that are culturally and/or conventionally significant (Hall 1966). This forms the basis for communicative exchange. There are linear exchanges, in which an exchange of information is unidirectional (e.g. oral presentation in front of others), and transactional exchanges, in which an exchange of information is bidirectional (e.g. depositing or withdrawing money from a bank teller, buying groceries from a grocer, chatting with friends).

Grice's maxims require individuals to make conversational contributions that are "as informative as required" (but not more informative), to refrain from saying what one believes is false and for which one "lacks adequate evidence", "to avoid obscurity of expression", "to avoid ambiguity", and to be "brief" and "orderly" (Grice 1991). Grice stresses that each person in the conversation must be sensitive—not only the one communicating, but also the one(s) listening. This is because Grice considers the *transfer* of information as the paradigm case. There are plenty of places where ambiguity and vagueness may be appropriate if the goal of conversation is no longer the successful transfer of information. Moving away from the goal of cooperation means these requirements will be relaxed.

When considering the kinds of exchanges that occur within the context of partnering, it is important to understand the ways in which exchanges are evaluated. Assuming that partnering involves communication, it is necessary to inquire into the nature of this exchange systematically. I am extending Grice's notion of conversation to include full body movement. If partners are engaging in a physical conversation, what is being communicated? Further, how do expectations set forth by aesthetic ideals (i.e. values such as particular shapes, movements, feelings, images, and so on that are associated with the movement either by the practitioner or by the cultures of the form of practice) impact the ability for partners to *successfully* communicate with each other? To unpack this question, I will employ Elgin's notion of exemplification.

Elgin argues that “dance consist of symbols” (Elgin 2017, 206). While her argument is centered on the relationship between spectators and performers, it is not difficult to see how the symbols may be between dancers themselves. Drawing on Gilbert’s example of Jack and Sue walking together, there are two instances that can be construed as instances of symbols in moving together. The first one is proximity. If two people are walking on opposite ends of the street going the same direction, one might be hard-pressed to say they are walking together. On the other hand, a common way of pursuing a suspect is to have three people spread out and look independently, regulating their movements so as to keep the suspect in the center of a triangle. Though they are not close to each other, they may be moving together in order to follow a suspect. Moving in close proximity may be understood as an expression of willingness to establish a joint commitment. I propose that the behavioral expression of proximity can be understood as a *symbol* of joint action. The second condition Gilbert mentions is when individuals keep the same pace. By walking next to each other, individuals keep time (in a rough sort of way) such that they walk *together*. Thus, keeping up with each other functions as a *symbol* that individuals are doing something together. Proximity and timing are at least two ways of interpreting symbols in joint action.

Elgin maintains that an instance can be converted into an exemplar by excluding that which is (or can be) distracting. To understand this conversion, Elgin argues that there is a need to breakdown the instance into “components—those we seek to exemplify and those we do well to set aside” (Elgin 2017, 192). From the discussion in chapter four, we know that not every discernable manifestation (e.g. expression) in dancing together will be meaningful. If in dancing together I start swinging my arms, the movement may be purely aesthetic. If I wave to my partner to come closer, the wave functions communicatively. In this case, the wave serves as a signal to come closer, and the wave also functions as a *symbol* of joint action. Connecting to Grice’s categories, the added layer of symbolic action is important in that the symbol conveys some *quantity* of information, using movement of the arm as the *manner* of transferring information. The quality of the movement will bear influence on the quality and quantity of information conveyed between partners.

Elgin further argues that dance is replete with symbols that function as *exemplars* (Elgin 2017, 208). In other words, she claims that movements can instantiate certain properties, patterns, or relations. For example, a leap can exemplify joy, just as a leap into someone’s arms can exemplify love or intimacy. A different kind of leap or jump may exemplify frustration (such as the way infants throw tantrums by hopping up and down),

just as a leap into someone's arms can exemplify fear (as when someone thinks there is a mouse and jumps into another's arms for fear of getting bitten). While these examples are somewhat reductive, I point to them in order to establish that the action itself has some properties that relate to expressions such as joy, frustration, love, intimacy, and so on. It is the *quality* and *manner* of the movement that needs to be unpacked further.

Close proximity and matching pace can thus exemplify walking together. But they can also exemplify other things, such as crowdedness. As I argued earlier, proximity and pace are not enough to establish whether people are actually walking together (as in the case of people walking in close proximity in the same direction at the same speed). Elgin maintains that exemplification is contingent on instantiation, in that action or movement "functions as a symbol that makes reference to some of the properties, patterns, or relations it instantiates" (Elgin 2017, 184). Elgin further argues that movement can *seem* to instantiate certain properties by exemplifying them. For example, bodies cannot instantiate weightlessness (since we are bound to the laws of gravity), but bodies can appear to be weightless by exemplifying particular qualities of movement[4] that give the appearance of weightlessness. Extending Elgin to the context of partnering, I propose that understanding symbols means being receptive to context, which influences whether individuals will accept or reject the interaction, as well as how and when to end the interaction once they have accepted it.

In partnering, signals function in both an epistemic and aesthetic dimension in that partners sense and interpret symbolic action. As Elgin suggests, "we are prey to massive information overload. Inputs flood our sense organs. Infinitely many obvious consequences follow from every belief. To know, understand, perceive, or discern anything requires overlooking a lot. The question is: what should be overlooked?" (Elgin 2008, 43). Signals may include all sorts of actions, including direction of movement, relative position, as well as posture and facial features such as a smile, raised eyebrow, nod, averted glance, and so on. As exemplars, symbols such as proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact can exemplify willingness (or lack of willingness) to establish a joint commitment. As communicative exemplars, they can function further to maintain the joint commitment of mutual attunement necessary for dancing together in the strong sense (i.e. partnering).

There are all sorts of ways people can interact with others without being receptive to properties of each other. I remember my father never noticing when my mother got a

[4] See Laban 1966 for a thorough investigation of qualities related to movement, including free/bound, heavy/light, sustain/direct.

haircut, even when the resulting coif was quite different. The haircut was simply not salient to my father. I agree with Elgin, who insists that people attend to information they find relevant based on their frame of reference or attitude. She states that an attitude "supplies an orientation", which is related to "expectations, states of perceptual readiness, patterns of salience, and dispositions to utter, accept, reject, and deliberate (Elgin 1996, 153). Returning to the notion of physical disposition in chapter four, it is the changes in proximity and pace that provide a frame of reference for two people dancing alongside each other. Being *willing* and *able* to maintain distance or pace exemplifies a maintenance of the joint commitment. Having made a commitment to move alone (such as walking down the street in New York or dancing alone in a club), the actions of those individuals in close proximity need not necessarily influence the actions of the individual. Having made a commitment to walk together, if one changes pace or distance, it is the obligation of the other to maintain by keeping up.

Expressions such as willingness require receptivity. Consider how despite facing each other, one partner has a slight rotation away from the other, a slight pitch backwards, and a slight translation to the side. These slight movements may be choreographed, such that the individual is upholding the design of the movement. The movements may be dispositional, relating to how an individual executes movement with others based on what is feasible within one's individual body or pursuant of one's character. They may be habitual, informed by how an individual typically moves. The movements may be something else entirely. In any case, the movements can be interpreted as symbols that exemplify something about the interaction between partners, therefore conveying information as signals. Elgin argues that "if one has the requisite background, what is being symbolized may be perfectly clear" (Elgin 2017, 218). To consider whether Elgin's claim holds for partnering in dance, it is important to ask what qualifies as the requisite background in partnering (e.g. dispositions, abilities, competencies)? To address this question, I will first unpack the epistemic problems, related to thought and action, of receiving signals in partnering.

A symbol that functions to convey information (i.e. signal) can be interpreted in a number of different ways. When I increase pressure, I may be signaling a greeting, vying for my partner's attention, indicating for my partner to come closer or stay in position. With the same pressure, I could be signaling that I am falling, having a panic attack, or keeping my partner awake. The interpretations for something like pressure, proximity, and orientation are complex and manifold because they can exemplify a multitude of things.

Partners may also develop their own symbol system where changes in pressure function to convey particular kinds of information. Consider a hypothetical scenario in which any time Sue squeezes Jack's hand, he understands that Sue is asking him to slow down. Thus, the squeeze functions as a symbol that conveys information to Jack that he is going too fast for Sue. If Sue finds herself dancing with someone other than Jack, she will likely quickly discover that her changes in pressure will not convey the same information with anyone other than Jack.

Though many dance forms have their own idiomatic vocabularies, conditions such as proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact are not neutral enough to be truly regimented. This is because dance forms that function as conventional, regimented systems will always be influenced by cultural backgrounds, as well as individual histories, as well as physical and mental dispositions. Language is similarly influenced and constrained by cultural backgrounds, but it does not follow that one always needs to be aware of these influences in order to communicate linguistically. The epistemic problem is thus a matter of what can be interpreted.

No matter how regimented dance partnering is, there will always be a matter of subtle interpretation that challenges partners to be receptive to one another. What can partners do in order to interpret signals? Elgin argues that interpretation must

> draw on context, background assumptions, and, where available, collateral information instead […] their interpretive stance is Gricean. They assume that the cooperative principle is in effect, hence that they have the resources needed to interpret the exemplar correctly (Elgin 2017, 189).

Elgin reiterates that Grice's cooperative principle is designed to promote the set of purposes to which partners commit. It is important to consider the normative significance of cooperation in *physical* transfers and exchanges of information. I understand partnering to have multiple levels of interpretation based on the conditions of proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact. Such interpretation includes (at least) visual, kinesthetic, and tactile signals which can be executed in the moment, without necessarily requiring extended deliberation. That is, through the ongoing, continuous process of movement itself, partners make interpretations about the quality and character of the signals within a partnership.

For a simple example, consider a dancer suddenly moves into close proximity of another dancer. There is a near infinite number of possible responses for the second individual, but for the purpose of this example, suppose that the sudden proximity is

unwanted. What signals function to communicate discomfort to the other dancer? There may be a tightening of the partner's body, a slowing down or hesitation, or perhaps the individual simply continues moving past and avoids the interaction completely. In such cases, as well as ones where there is no choreography, the partners can attune to these signals. They can sense the tightening or the hesitation and negotiate movement on account of the signals they interpret. Following Grice, I will position partnering as a physical conversation in which a main aim of partners is to cooperate. The significance of positioning partnering in this way enables a focused investigation about the normative and ethical problems involved in physical exchanges between individuals. I will consider what it might mean to communicate appropriately and ethically.

Epistemic Problems in Receptivity and Responsiveness

Signals may be easily overlooked or misinterpreted. Consider an example of a concept from contact improvisation sometimes referred to as "going for a ride". A simple exercise that illustrates this concept involves one individual leaning forward almost into a forward fold while in contact with another mover. The folded individual "scoops" the other individual onto their back, giving them a "ride" by lifting them off the ground. Considered formulaically, however, joint action can cause problems because of misinterpretation. Taking the same example, an individual bends forward to explore the physical motion of pitching and bending. Another individual in close proximity misinterprets this as an opportunity to "go for a ride" by suddenly giving weight to the pitched individual. In some circumstances, sharing weight is a suitable response to a lean, and in others it is an opportunity to fall, jump, move away, or any other number of actions. A weight-sharing movement may also be a performative action emerging from the result of studied imitation. Given the myriad possibilities of aims a practitioner may have coming into a practice, creating an exhaustive formula for communication in particular is simply impossible. However, there are still conditions that need to be satisfied in order to maintain a joint commitment.

Consider for example an asymmetric relation. An expert dancer offers to dance with a novice dancer. The expert executes certain actions, only to discover that the novice does not react. The expert comes to realize that certain actions do not register with the novice, so the expert adjusts by excluding certain actions to accommodate the competence of the novice.

Consider the same example from a different angle. The novice dancing with an expert tries to execute actions as she has seen them executed by experts. The problem with repeating movement is that there is more at play than the motions themselves – there is intention that underlies movement, which can contribute significantly to the *quality* and *quantity* of information being exchanged between individuals. Elgin offers a relevant example:

> The novice who emulates the performance of an expert treats that expert as an exemplar. She identifies the features of his behavior that she thinks account for his success. That is, she factors his complex behavior into elements, selectively disregards those she considers irrelevant to his effectiveness, and sets herself to reproduce the rest (Elgin 2017, 194).

In the context of dance partnering, none of these actions need necessarily be deliberative. The novice sees an expert execute a lift and attempts to do the same. She may study with the expert or she may just see it once in passing and attempt it from memory. Her success will be contingent on multiple factors, including whether she has the aim to cooperate by moving on account of the expert's movement, or merely move with the expert with only a base level of attunement. In Elgin's example, the novice is emulating the performance of an expert, but she may not know what the postures or movements are exemplifying. Thus, she may be missing important information – she needs to know how the exemplars function. By interpreting movement as a symbol of some kind, partners are radically cutting down the number of possibilities for what movements exemplify. To interpret movement successfully requires understanding more than just the way the movement looks. Partners need to understand what they are doing *with* the movement, including the *quality* and *manner* in which they convey information to each other. As such, they need to understand what any given movement is an exemplar of, provided they are trying to be communicative (and cooperative).

Suppose that the novice is emulating the expert in trying to change the direction of her partner. A change of direction requires some kind of signal. The novice is walking toward the expert, holding his hand while he walks backwards. Suppose that to change her partner's direction from backward to forward, the novice needs to signal through a pulling action. A pull can look like the mere movement of an elbow, changing proximity from close to slightly further away. If the novice emulates the expert by imitating the movement of her elbow away from her partner, she may not actually be signaling a change of direction

because she does not pull. To successfully signal a change of direction, the movement of the elbow must be accompanied by a particular quality of movement (e.g. physical resistance to establish a pull).

It is possible to look at the example at a finer grain by interrogating the quality of response time between each partner. At first glance, this may seem only relevant to forms where prescribed timing plays a principal role, such as highly choreographed duets set to predetermined music. The choreography may involve time-based cues that are musically driven, such that dancers must be attentive to the sound. Upon closer examination, the same is true even for improvisational practices, since partners communicate with each other through their pacing to one another. Recall that in the last chapter, Gilbert sets the stage for how even something as simple walking together involves keeping time (at least in a rough sort of way). This can be true for dances that have a particular set of rhythms that partners execute in relation to the music, or for improvisational practices with no music given that any movements (e.g. lifts, floorwork, foot patterns) can be time-dependent.

How do partners identify their relationship to time? There are the obvious considerations of measured time, such as music or predetermined choreographic sequences, as well as less obvious elements such as internal bodily rhythms. For example, in lead/follow scenarios a follower is constrained by the timing of the leader. In extemporaneous leading, such as the kind seen in tango, swing, bachata, and other partnered dances, a follower is further constrained by not knowing when the leader will change direction, orientation, or point(s) of contact such as rhythm or touch. A leader is subsequently constrained by the time it takes for a follower to respond. The internal element of time functions as a clear constraint in that partners must be attentive to potentiality—when is a particular signal going to be most effectively received by a partner? This is true too in other forms of improvisation that do not necessitate leader/follower roles (e.g. contact improvisation); though it is perhaps more acceptable to disrupt sequences by actions such as jumping out of a lift or opting out in what might seem like the middle of a phrase because the roles are relaxed.

Grice posits that within a conversation, "at each stage, SOME possible conversational moves would be excluded as conversationally unsuitable" (Grice 1991, 26). This is especially relevant when considering how partners interact when maintaining their joint commitment, such as maintaining eye contact, maintaining a (proxemic) spatial relationship, or maintaining touch. The notion that some moves may be considered "conversationally unsuitable" is rather intuitive when considering the typical flow of

exchange between individuals whose aim is to cooperate by negotiating movement on account of each other. In some cases this may be up to an outside party, such as an instructor, choreographer, or coach, if the movement is externally designed. In other cases, it is up to the practitioners themselves to decide when something feels unsuitable. How partners resolve the sensation of disconnection is as relevant as the physical moves that got them there in the first place. This is where the standards of evaluation are necessary to understand.

Formulaic study of responses can lead to merely coordinated independent action: a practitioner gives the impression of responding appropriately by articulating a studied response which is inappropriate based on some subtle misunderstanding. Grice notes how in cases of communication within natural languages, exchanges always seem to have the capacity for multiple interpretations. This harkens back to the problem I presented at the start of the chapter about Gilbert's distinction between *thin* and *seriously intended* communication. Within the context of dance partnering, the problem may be one of misattunement.

There are multiple levels of complexity. For one, there is the case in which a particular quality of movement is perceived by an outside party (instructor, choreographer or coach). The perception may be a misinterpretation of what is being communicated between the performers because (at least) 1) one may not be privy to what is happening between the moving bodies, or 2) one may not understand the way in which the manner and quality of movement are conveying particular information. For example, gestural choreography may seem to indicate particular cultural tropes that are not significant to the action of the performers themselves, such as when one dancer extends a hand to another seemingly in invitation but is really only extending the arm as part of the design of the choreography. On the other hand, partners can sense and perceive signals (kinesthetically, physically, tactilely) such that they are both audience and performer to each other. It is interesting to note that a partner may misperceive and/or give ambiguous signals based on a lack of understanding of the conventions of a particular form. A prime example is the signals in some social dancing forms. To lead an underarm turn, a leader may be taught a signal to raise the arm of the partner, under which s/he can then perform the turn. Even with extensive training in other forms of dance, the signal to turn from the lifting of an arm is a convention particular to the social form. Thus, without explicit previous experience in the social form, arriving at understanding of an underarm turn is unlikely (though of course, not impossible). Signals such as these demonstrate how movement is being negotiated on

account of a pre-determined symbol, rather than on account of the movement itself. I will return to this problem in the next chapter when examining norms of attunement.

The case is interesting to consider both for an individual who newly arrives to the social form as a leader or as a follower. The novice leader may raise the arm of an experienced follower for aesthetic effect (i.e. a movement the leader finds beautiful or pleasing), and so unknowingly leads the follower into a turn. Similarly, an experienced leader raises the arm of an inexperienced follower to no avail, given the lack of experience prevents the novice from discerning the lifted arm as a relevant cue. If the movement is meant to be cooperative, but a partner does not perceive it as such, then there is a problem of interpretation.

Implicature in Dancing Together

Grice interrogates what he calls "conversational implicature", in which certain actions may seem uncooperative, but in fact convey information that is indeed cooperative. A simple example Grice provides is as follows:

> A is standing by an obviously immobilized car and is approached by B; the following exchange takes place:
> A: I am out of petrol
> B: There is a garage around the corner (Grice 1991, 32).

It may seem that B is being irrelevant, since he does not directly respond to A's problem about being out of petrol. But if A understands B's comment as cooperative, then it becomes clear that B is providing relevant information in the form of an implicature.

Matters get more complicated when implicatures involve some kind of inside information. Grice's famous example involves Person A asking Person B how Person C (not present) is doing and being met with a response, "Oh quite well, I think; he likes his colleagues, and he hasn't been to prison yet" (Grice 1991, 24). The implicature that Person C has not yet been to prison can be met with a contextually appropriate response only if Person A understands why Person B implicates Person C being in prison. Otherwise, Person A will likely ask something along the lines of "what do you mean?" in which case Person A does not understand what is being implicated in the claim.

There are (at least) two levels of complexity in Grice's notion of implicature: 1) the fact that conversations involve implicatures that may require some kind of inside

information, and 2) the consequences that implicatures solicit. Within dance partnering, implicature is complex because words are not the medium by which physical dialogue occurs. This is relevant both to the qualities with which a movement is articulated, and how it is subsequently interpreted. Precisely because of this complexity, it is important to understand how certain movement can implicate willingness (or lack thereof), intentionally or not.

As I mentioned earlier, Grice considers information transfer the paradigm case in conversation. As such, the maxims (quantity, quality, relation, and manner) delineate specifics to uphold the cooperative principle. The maxims require individuals to make conversational contributions that are "as informative as required" (but not more informative), to refrain from saying what one believes is false and for which one "lacks adequate evidence", "to avoid obscurity of expression", "to avoid ambiguity", and to be "brief" and "orderly". Grice stresses that each person in the conversation must be sensitive *as long as* the successful transfer of communication is the goal (Grice 1991).

To avoid ambiguity and to be brief and orderly in movement will depend on the disciplinary boundaries of a particular form. For example, a choreographed duet that is performed for an audience might be composed specifically to exemplify ambiguity to an audience. There is no failure in communication there, at least not between the audience and performers. Since the message of the dance is that it can be read in multiple ways, it is doing what it set out to do. It may be that the dance is trying explicitly to be uncooperative. Even so, it is probably desirable for partners to avoid ambiguity in communicating *with each other*, since they are trying to do something together. Even if the dance seeks to exemplify a lack of cooperation, partners may need to cooperate in their effort to exemplify the underlying message of the dance.

Partnering can be impeded if partners communicate ambiguously. Excessive arm movements in lead/follow, for example, may be ambiguous because one can unwittingly change the direction, timing, and spatial orientation of a partner. This may also be failing to uphold the maxim of quantity, in that one does not have adequate information to interpret the movements of one's partner.

Sometimes actions are ambiguous because they are functioning as implicatures. Consider an example in which two individuals are swaying together in a stationary position, holding hands. They move freely, changing orientation by spiraling the shoulders, side-bending, and pitching forward and backwards. One dancer constrains one's own movement by adding resistance, and thus resists the movement of the other, adding slight muscular

pressure to the hands of her partner such that her partner's movement is restricted. This constraint may be seen as

1. An oppressive act flouting the cooperative principle
2. A cooperative act, where resistance is an invitation to explore off-balance movement or elasticity

Resistance in this way can be a form of physical implicature, particularly because resistance may be interpreted as the *opposite* of willingness. Both interpretations could be correct, making the action ambiguous. The first interpretation makes the act seem uncooperative, but the second reveals the way in which resistance in this scenario is indeed cooperative. Resistance can take the form of ambiguity in that the same action may be properly interpreted in the two different ways mentioned above. If it is meant to be *either* one or the other, then it is an unambiguous symbol that has been misinterpreted. This is an important matter to consider.

Partners communicate by successfully interpreting what movement exemplifies. Physical resistance can be vital to some actions in partnering, despite (or regardless) of the idea that resistance may be perceived as a lack of willingness. For example, lifts and off-balance positions require resistance, since rigidity allows dancers to maintain bodily shapes, positions, or postures while being lifted or in physically precarious positions. When working in the studio, I call this action "resisting to support". Both the resister and the mover have some obligation to each other (the resister may also have an obligation to themselves). If the resistance is ambiguous, it may be an invitation to explore the cooperative aspect of the partnership. It may also be misinterpreted by those who lack the requisite communicative skills (e.g. novices).

Another example of implicature in partnering is obscurity. Recall the example of interacting with a potential partner who is willing to engage only *up to a certain point.* The dancer accepts the pace and the proximity but withholds certain physical information. This may be because the dancer hopes to obscure effort, either from a partner or from audience. By obscuring effort, the act may be cooperative. But like all implicatures, it has the danger of being interpreted as uncooperative.

Implicatures open a problem about the intention of communication. Withholding physical information or giving ambiguous signals may cause problems. Grice maintains that successful interpretation of implicatures depends on competence, suggesting that "it is within the competence of the hearer to work out, or grasp intuitively [that a particular supposition is required to understand an implicature]" (Grice 1991, 31). The implicature

may fail to be received as cooperative if one is not sensitive to the competence of the other, including if the partner assumes competence of the other that is not actually available. Furthermore, I propose that a partner may be *unreceptive* to the cooperative nature of a physical implicature if one is not sensitive to the quality and manner of information that is physically conveyed. To what extent should a partner be assuming anything other than what is physically articulated? Grice offers the following thought:

> Any one who cares about the goals that are central to conversation/communication (e.g. giving and receiving information, influencing and being influenced by others) must be expected to have an interest, given suitable circumstances, in participation in talk exchanges that will be profitable only on the assumption that they are conducted in general accordance with the CP and the maxims (Grice 1991, 30).

The goals Grice suggests of giving and receiving information, as well as influencing and being influenced, seem in direct line with the goals of dancing together in the strong sense (i.e. partnering) in that action is being negotiated on account of each other's action. By introducing the notion of "care", Grice restates the normative concern. I argue that it is by *caring* about the goal to negotiate movement on account of each other, rather than (or in addition to) just establishing it, partners are able to maintain their joint commitment. Grice initially suggests a contingency that there are "certain features that jointly distinguish cooperative transactions" such as "participants have some common immediate aim" and that a "transaction should continue in appropriate style unless both parties are agreeable that it should terminate" (Grice 1991, 30). Ultimately, however, Grice comes to realize that "there are too many types of exchange that it fails to fit comfortably" (ibid).

How partners negotiate their joint commitment depends on their ability to differentiate their signals. If partners can successfully interpret each other's movements then they may be able to fairly easily accommodate uncertainty. In some cases, they can also talk to each other and use language as another mode of communication to understand each other. If one is unfamiliar with the form of dancing together, however, interaction may prove to be difficult or perhaps unfeasible if the dancer perceives movements as random or is unable to differentiate signals because they are too complex. By accepting that actions in partnering are always communicative, all movements are technically open to interpretation. If partners are being uncooperative, or indeed do not have cooperation as a main aim, then maintaining a joint commitment may be unfeasible. This is where the door to the ethical realm opens.

Ethical Considerations

Sometimes partners communicate things that they don’t intend. In particular, through proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact, partners can unintentionally communicate a lack of care. There is a difference between communicating a lack of care because one does not care and communicating a lack of care because one lacks the requisite communicative skills. This brings us back to the link between willingness and ability. Individuals may be willing to establish and maintain their joint commitment, but they may be unable to do so because they lack the refined ability (e.g. physical dexterity) to articulate particular qualities of movement (thereby reducing the quantity of information), or they lack the perceptual awareness to interpret minute changes that are signaling relevant bits of information. The important aspects to consider is 1) whether each partner actually *values* communication (or whether one is simply upholding a conventional rhetoric of togetherness), and 2) whether each partner has the refined awareness to engage in fine-grained communication—that is, to communicate subtle or nuanced information, and to interpret signals from one’s partner(s) as indicating subtle or nuanced information. The second point may be a problem of merely emitting signals. For example, consider someone blushing. The sudden redness in one’s cheeks constitutes some kind of physical information because of a change in a visual appearance. But a blush does not *necessarily* communicate anything. One merely had a change of state that was visible such that someone could draw an inference. If the blushing individual says something like “I'm very embarrassed”, then something has been communicated.

The same example can be considered in a partnering context. Consider that two people are dancing together, and one begins to slip. There could be a non-communicative signal, such as an increase in pressure that signals a state-change akin to a blush. Or the one slipping could give a look that communicates something like "help me out", or further cry out for help. In the case of increasing pressure, one may merely be emitting a signal such as fear, which is not necessarily communicating a cry for help. If a partner is responsive, then some exchange has occurred. But the pressure could easily be taken as noise rather than as signal.

Given the joint commitment to move together, each partner has an obligation to uphold the commitment as long as they have the goal of dancing together in the strong sense. To maintain the joint commitment, partners must be receptive to what is being communicated. Since communicating is something that is done (rather than simply thought about), then it is not a matter of messages we somehow emit merely by happenstance. Being

willing to cooperate and being *able* to cooperate are different dimensions of the same problem. In cases where partners are emitting signals that are merely noise, they may not be dancing together in the strong sense.

There is a tension in partnering between willingness and motive that makes it hard to evaluate when something is awry (from the outside) and why (from the outside or from the inside). Some people may come to partner because they are seeking a romantic companion, to exercise power, to make money, or any other number of reasons that do not actually place value on communication. Moreover, competing values such as feeling good and attending to one's partner may disrupt the attunement to what is being communicated. To what extent does understanding the motives depend on familiarity with the setting and conventions of the paradigms people are working within (e.g. international DanceSport competition, contact improvisation jam, tango milonga, etc.) as well as the values (aesthetic, moral, social) of the form or the preference of the dance-maker? That is, can we really say what movement is "supposed" to look like, let alone feel like? Moving beyond the aesthetic composition of physical interaction, partnering can understood as a practice that explicitly values bidirectional communication on the basis of conditions that enable partners to be receptive and response to dance together in the strong sense.

The value system of each partner will play into how movement is negotiated in practice, including how it relates to the aesthetic conventions of the form. There are two major incongruities here: 1) partners may communicate something other than what they intended because of a lack of awareness and/or competence, and 2) partners may communicate in such a way that is incongruous with the values they purport to have. Certain values, such as such as feeling or looking good, may overshadow values such as care for each other such that communication becomes less nuanced or overlooked altogether. Partners interacting without explicit awareness to the ways in which their proximity, orientation, and shared focus have normative dimensions might not be positioned to appreciate the depth of responsiveness.

Being willing to communicate and being able to communicate are ostensibly manifested in different ways. Thus, it matters what partners are receptive to and the manner and quality with which they respond. In this way, receptivity is more than just registering what is going on (within myself, my partner, my surroundings). Receptivity suggests that due attention and weight are committed to the phenomenon of negotiating movement on account of each other's movement, which requires epistemic acceptance (i.e. both willingness and ability). Along with the psychological features, training, habits, and

previous experiences are also significant to responsiveness. My partner may be more receptive if we share a common background. That is, if I am trying to execute a complex lift but my partner only has experience executing the lift (rather than being lifted), he may be less responsive simply because he lacks the requisite experience and/or skill. Alternatively, I may be partnering with someone who has some certain experience, having trained for a number of years. If I lead a movement my partner has never seen or experienced kinesthetically, he may be less responsive simply because he is unfamiliar with the movement. My partner may not understand the types of movements that are appropriate within the form, thus he may be ill-equipped to make choices because he feels there are too many alternatives or very few possibilities. Shared focus such as timing also plays into responsiveness. If I move too quickly or not quickly enough, interaction will be possible but likely unsuccessful. For example, my partner runs toward me and I anticipate catching her by bringing my arms up too quickly. In doing so, I miss the chance to be responsive to her and she bumps into me. On the one hand, timing is a problem of interaction and on the other, it is a problem of competence. The notion that something may be "unsuitable", and thus inappropriate, requires a refined sensitivity. In each distinct case there are myriad options for action, that will bear physical consequences.

Proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact can all be determined or prescribed in advance. In some forms, proximity, orientation, timing, and touch are established as part of the rules of the dance such that partners will be exchanging information through multiple points of contact while maintaining specific body postures, positions, and/or patterns (e.g. tango). Some forms fix certain features of proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact. A certain dance may require partners to orient toward each in close proximity, with touch as a point of contact by connecting palms on one side of the body and through a half embrace on the other side. A certain dance may also involve roles, such as leader and follower. Leaders may have a distinct task, such as changing the timing, direction, and spatial orientation of a following dancer. In other forms, these conditions are negotiated through the practice in real-time, without prescribed rules (e.g. improvisation). They may also be determined compositionally, such as in complex choreography that requires intricate timing and bodily architecture with multiple points of contact. Each condition can lead to fine-grained and nuanced movement, such that despite facing each other, one partner may have a slight rotation toward or away from the other, a slight pitch forward or backwards, a slight translation to the side, and so on. Movements may also function to accidentally express ambiguous, albeit subtle, cues (such as the case in the social form).

Training and/or practice are required to hone abilities into competencies in the conditions of proximity, orientation, point(s) of contact, in whatever form(s) individual choose to engage in. The quality of training and practice will further influence how abilities are harness into competence.

Not all dancing interactions prioritize communication in a way that concepts like responsibility and commitment are *physically* salient. In practice, partners may use more force than necessary because the value of certain aesthetic conventions (e.g. more bodily resistance to maintain particular posture) overshadows the physical care of negotiating proximity, orientation, and shared focus to uphold and maintain a joint commitment. Thus, the ability to be receptive and recognize the subtle effects of movement significantly affect partnering such that one can visibly tell when something is missing if one knows what to look for. While partners need not have an explicit goal to communicate, there will still always be an exchange of information. Partners obligate themselves and each other is to understand the appropriate responses potentially available, in the moment, in ways that are appropriate given the constraints and resources within a given form of movement.

Conclusion

To evaluate the communication between partners, it is necessary to have a stable conception of how physical signals function as communication. To have a stable concept means to understand the conditions that make physical interaction possible, feasible, and fitting of an act that can be called partnering. The conditions presented here in this chapter provide the basis for logical, systematic consideration of evaluating and assessing communication in physical interaction in dance.

Taking a step forward into any particular practice, what happens when individuals move together with a purpose other than to communicate, such as exercising a cultural identity, seeking a romantic partner, fulfilling work in order to make a living, or indeed without any particular purpose at all? An approach in which dancers are not attending to their communication may render an exchange a different thing altogether, such as two coordinated monologues. It is possible to extend the argument by saying those individuals moving together without a communicative purpose are not, strictly speaking, engaging in the practice of dancing together in the strong sense (i.e. partnering) While the practice of moving together need not be purposeful, the phenomenon of maintaining a joint commitment to move on account of each other is significantly different than merely moving together without a commitment.

In this chapter, I argued that even fine movements have communicative potential. Partners maintain their joint commitment through communicating in conditions of proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact. *Physical* dialogue is tricky because bodies are always changing, which is why formulaic study can be so disruptive to the act of communication, and the subsequent emergence of connection. Assuming mutual attunement can only emerge from responses that are contextually suitable (i.e. appropriate), one must be receptive and responsive to change.

Having established the conditions of communication in partnering, building on the conditions of willingness and ability from chapter four, I will turn now to examine the evaluation of quality within proximity, orientation, and shared focus between partners. Some partners may take their aim to be the achievement of some aesthetic ideal and believe that cooperation is just a means to achieving that ideal. Others might take cooperation to be a subsidiary aim. The communicative problem is that partners may signal *without* attuning to feedback. The ground air traffic controller is a prime example. The signals the controller makes to the pilot of the plane are that the space is clear to leave the gate and move onto the runway. The only feedback the controller is attuned to is whether the plane is moving or not. But the pilot depends on the controller for signals. There is no mutual attunement there, only a linear exchange between the controller and the pilot. The problem we are left with is one of attunement. In the next chapter, I will turn to the norms of attunement to consider how partners negotiate their joint commitment when something goes wrong.

Chapter Six: Norms of Attunement

In the previous two chapters, I argued that partners establish a joint commitment to negotiate movement on account of each other and maintain their joint commitment by communicating with and responding to each other. I argued that receptivity, responsiveness, and exemplification feature in signaling between partners. But there is more to maintaining the joint commitment than merely signaling. The previous chapter left us with a particular problem: just because partners are signaling to each other does not necessarily mean they are *attuning* to each other. Whether partnering is choreographed or improvised, it may be the case that two partners are dancing together, signaling to each other, but not attuning because they are not receptive to all of the relevant elements of each other's signals. Executing choreography can mean executing predetermined signals (such

as a change of direction, relative position, point of contact(s), or timing), such that the dancers merely do the movement that is choreographed without being receptive to each other's physical feedback. How partners move will influence whether mutual attunement is feasible, but attunement may very well be feasible and partners still do not attune to the full degree. Distinguishing the degree to which partners attune to each other based on particular qualities of movement is an epistemic problem, connected to understanding the relation between thought and action.

In this chapter, I will interrogate the degree of mutual attunement in partnering. I will demonstrate how sometimes partners depend on each other for certain kinds of signals, and I will argue that in some cases, the degree of attunement is crucial to the successful execution of a movement. If, as argued in chapter four, dancing together in the strong sense necessitates a joint commitment to negotiate movement on account of each other, what does a higher degree of attunement enable partners to express and understand? Given that the conditions of partnering include both an encounter and exchange, I interrogate what factors of partnering contribute to negotiating dancing together *well.* I will begin by presenting an example of an existing duet performed by two different pairs of dancers. Discussion of the duet will pave the way for constructing hypothetical scenarios that further conceptual analysis of dependence and attunement in partnering. After analyzing how the performance of the duet varies between two couples, I will consider the concept of affordances to further analyze the epistemic problem of *what* it is that dancers are attuning. I will bring in the concept of weight and effort from dance scholar and practitioner Rudolf von Laban, to consider the normative dimensions of partnering well.

Kylian's Petite Mort

In 1991, Czech choreographer Jiri Kylian choreographed a work entitled *Petite Mort* on Nederlands Dans Theatre for the Salzburg Music Festival. The work features a complex and intricate *pas de deux* in which a male and female move together through lifts and off-balance positions. In 1996, Johan Inger and Elke Schepers danced this duet with the Netherlands Dans Theatre[5]. In 2006, Roberto Bolle and Greta Hodgkinson performed the same duet excerpt as part of the Gala Concert of World Stars in Italy[6].

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[5] Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XKjgCugrT0

[6] Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63xi-zexEgo&t=43s

Rather than focusing on the development of the piece, the underlying concept, or even the experience of the dancers, my interest in comparing the two versions of the same duet is to interrogate quality of movement in partnering. I will focus in particular on the observable, behavioral expressions of the dancers in order to draw attention to physical dependence. Basing my observation on the two-dimensional representation of the video, I do not have access to what the dancers were thinking, nor what the choreography is supposed to be. The only information we have is that which is available from viewing the two-dimensional representation of the video. Since I am not providing a historiography of the piece, I also have nothing to say about whether one couple is executing the choreography more correctly than the other. Instead, I will focus on unpacking distinguishable differences in the execution of the two movement passages to demonstrate differences in physical dependence and attunement.

There are two moments in particular to which I would like to draw attention. The first occurs about fifteen seconds into the duet. I will first roughly describe the design of the choreography based on the way it is executed in both duets. The female dancer bends her left leg with her foot flat on the ground (*plié*), moving her right leg into a bent position at the ankle of the left leg (*coupé*). She then straightens her left leg pushing onto the ball of the foot (*relevé*), while extending the right leg knee-first into a straight position (*developé*). She proceeds to cross her left arm across her body at the pelvis. At the same time, the male dancer frames the female dancer from behind, with his legs in a wide stance on either side of his partner. He catches his partner's left hand with his right hand, his right forearm making contact with her upper right thigh. The female dancer then releases her crossed left, and bends the extended right leg (*attitude*), while the male dancer wraps his left arm across her abdomen to clasp his right hand. The female dancer then bends backwards, throwing her head back over his left shoulder (*cambré*). As she straightens up out of the backbend, the male dancer comes to the floor. He switches his right hand at her upper thigh to his left hand, making contact as the dancer brings her left foot to the ground to straddle the male dancer.

I will now analyze how this passage differs for the two dancers. When getting into the *developé*, Elke seems to release the weight of her leg into Johan's forearm, such that there is a transfer of force. In contrast, Greta seems to be holding her own leg such that there is little or no transfer of force between her and Roberto. We can see this transfer of force in the way the female dancers move following contact with their male partners. When Johan makes contact with Elke's leg, she shifts slightly toward his arm. When Roberto

Figure 1a: Johan Inger and Elke Shepers in Kylian's Petite Mort for Nederlands Dans Theatre 1, 2006

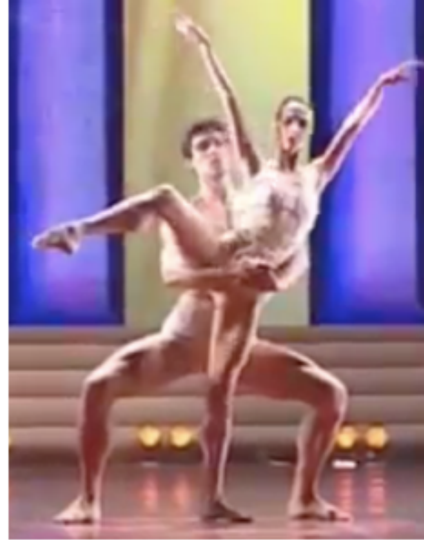

Figure 1b 1: Roberto Bolle and Greta Hodgkinson in Kylian's Petite Mort performed at the Gala Concert of World Stars Concert, 2006

makes contact with Greta's leg, she shifts slightly away from his arm. Without access to their mental states, it is impossible to explain the intention behind the movement. But the shifts do indeed occur in opposite directions.

Moving on, in transitioning from *developé* to *attitude*, Elke's weight shifts to the left. As she executes the *cambré*, the line from her shoulder to her foot is almost completely straight (figure 1a). This gives us an idea about how her weight sits in Johan's left arm. In contrast, Greta's ribcage translates slightly to the left such that she maintains the position of her lower body (figure 1b). While Elke's position is dependent on Johan's (the position is physically impossible to sustain on her own because of the preceding shift of weight), Greta's position is independent of Roberto (the position is physically possible to sustain on her own). The distinction between Elke's weight shift and Greta's ribcage translation is subtle. However, what happens next is fascinating to consider. Greta's heel comes down and she begins to stumble in the *cambré* and the following action as Roberto comes to the floor. Without access to Greta's mental state, it is impossible to understand precisely why she begins to stumble. It is possible, for example, that she stumbles on purpose. Perhaps she enjoys the experience of stumbling. Perhaps she feels the choreography would benefit from micro-adjustments of her foot.

From a mechanical perspective, however, it is possible that she loses her footing *because* of the way she executes the movement. It is possible that for physical reasons, she could not maintain her original position on her own. It is also plausible that she had to stumble if she was not going to rely on him, because the position was too precarious. By moving her ribcage to the side, rather than shifting weight into Roberto's arm, Greta is

moving independently. In other words, there is no established dependence between Roberto and Greta, despite the availability of his arm. Perhaps Roberto is not available to be depended on. Perhaps his arm is there merely by design of the choreography, and when Greta goes to shift weight, she feels something that makes her think he is unavailable for support. My aim here is not to assign blame, nor is it to probe into the reasons for Greta's movement. I am merely pointing to the fact that the same passage is executed differently, such that the degrees of dependence are different. There is no evidence to support *why* the degrees of dependence vary from watching the footage alone.

The second passage I would like to draw attention to directly succeeds the previous segment. I will again begin by describing the design of the movement in general terms. The male and female dancers are sitting on the floor, facing each other. They both rise, the male dancer holding the female dancer's right hand with his right hand as she extends her leg into a standing split (*penchée*).

As Elke rises, she fully extends her right arm and shifts her torso backwards while maintaining the same posture. As she extends her leg, her pelvis moves backwards into the standing split (figure 2a). The position is again dependent on Johan – the position is impossible to achieve without the support of her partner. In contrast, as Greta rises, she keeps her elbow bent and her torso stays almost in place as her leg extends into the standing split (figure 2b). Greta's position is possible independent of Roberto. Again, without access to their mental states, we do not know why each dancer executes the movement as they do (though dance training, familiarity with choreography, and so on will play a role). All we have evidence for is the degree of dependence established by each position.

Figure 2a: Johan and Elke

Figure 2b: Roberto and Greta

From the point of view of geometry, the shapes presented in the two figures are different. The screenshots are taken at the zenith point of the *penchée.* From the point of view of physics, there is a clear difference in the way the two female dancers are physically

depending on their male partners. The way they are relating to each other is different. From the pictures alone, we cannot tell how or whether they are communicating. We also do not have insight about the signals that are being received by each of the dancers. Thus, there is a limit to the kinds of claims we can make about their intentions toward each other.

The case of *Petite Mort* being performed two different ways offers an instance of observing partnering from the outside. So far, I have been primarily concerned with how partners encounter and interact with each other from inside the partnership. In the previous chapter I also touched on the notion of receptivity, which relates to what dancers each bring to the partnership from their own inner experience and self-image. Turning to observation does not discount what I have argued so far, but rather offers an illustration of what partnering might look like. I have considered dancing together in the strong sense through thought experiments from an imagined position of being 'inside' the duet, whereas here I am taking this analysis into the observation of an recorded performed duet. The performance of the two duets are different, which is valuable in that the differences enable a discussion about the subtleties of dancing together in the strong sense. In both instances of the duet, the dancers are moving together while executing complex movement. I am less interested here in understanding the phenomenal experience of the dancers, but simply wish to point to the way in which the same duet can be executed such that different qualities of dependence are visible. Though similar by design, the differences in execution reveals how the same movement can be done differently. But what makes the execution different? As I see it, Johan and Elke are relating to each other differently than Roberto and Greta. Clearly the differences in execution have to do with differing physical dependencies. I believe that the difference in dependence reveals something important about attunement in partnering.

The pertinent question about dependence has to do with the *degree* of attunement in the exchange between partners. The difference in execution of the two couples serves as a basis for interrogating attunement in a more general sense, including how each partner attunes to their own action, and the action of other(s). What are the physical elements or features partners are attuning to in each other's movement and what are they attuning to in themselves? What do they take as evidence of particular kinds of dependence? Having presented the conditions of establishing joint commitment, the nature of the agreement based on some degree of mutual attunement, and the information being exchanged through signals to maintain the joint commitment, I will now move to address how maintaining the joint commitment *well* is contingent on more than mere signaling. I will consider how one attunes to one's environment, as well as how one identifies and attunes to the actions and

responses (i.e. feedback) of one's partner(s). Moving forward, I will consider the complex relationship between attunement and dependence in partnering using the images as a point of departure. I will analyze Roberto and Greta's performance in order to further generalize certain aspects of attunement and dependence.

Dependence

Drawing from Gilbert's work, we can say by now that physical, behavioral expressions may play a significant role in establishing willingness to form a plural subject. We also know that behavioral expressions such as physical proximity may not be enough to establish willingness because of the context of the encounter (e.g. crowded streets of New York) or because of the intention of the other (i.e. lack of willingness). Drawing from Elgin's work, we can also say that physical expressions exemplify aspects of relationships which can be interpreted by others (even if the one expressing was trying to exemplify something other than what is being interpreted).

While I have been focusing on the nature of joint commitment between partners, it is worth registering that dependence is not just a mental phenomenon when the interaction is physical. What can be said about dependence based on physical action? Gilbert maintains that action concepts are complicated because "they refer to a species of overt behavior on the one hand, and to intentions and other subjective phenomena on the other" (Gilbert 1989, 165). She further argues that,

> if the intention does not 'fit' the behavior we will be inclined either not to know what to say, or to say that the apparent action is not in fact occurring – no action is occurring – or to sense that we are indeed now operating with a revised concept, with a purely behavioral concept (Gilbert 1989, 165).

Because I do not have access to what the dancers are thinking, I can say very little about their intentions. Nevertheless, the case of *Petite Mort* illustrates that when moving together, partners can behave in different ways that gives us some clues about intentions. This is the heart of the epistemic problem in dancing together that concerns the relation between thought and action. One of the ways in which behavior can differ is in the way they depend on each other. By referring to dependence here, I mean to suggest a physical way that partners use force to rely on each other for certain movement. Independence and co-dependence represent different *types* of dependence.

Whether or not they intend to, the two couples are behaving differently. The two couples seem to establish different types of dependence. Sometimes they are co-dependent,

such as the case in off-balance positions. Sometimes they are physically independent, such as the case when there is no point of contact established or maintained. Point(s) of contact (e.g. mutual gaze, breath, and music) suggest that partners are somehow dependent, rather than fully independent or co-dependent. From the *Petite Mort* example, it seems that there are also *degrees* of dependence. Based on the positions in images 2a and 2b, we can see that Greta's *penchée* requires fewer degrees of dependence than Elke's. That Greta and Roberto have a point of contact means that they are not completely independent, but both could *feasibly* achieve the position they are in without each other. By contrast, it is *unfeasible* for Elke to achieve that position on her own without Johan.

The movements that follow the depictions in figures 1a and 1b further illustrate degrees of dependence more clearly. When Greta starts to stumble, what can be said about how she is depending on Roberto? Without access to Greta's inside information, we do not know her intention. But the fact that she stumbles gives us a clue about some aspect of her exchange with Roberto. Importantly, Greta loses her balance and *continues* to adjust the foot of her standing leg. She gives very little of her weight to Roberto, with whom she is in contact. There is also some evidence of how smooth the movement can look based on a comparison to Elke's execution. Though very little can be said about Greta's intentions from a video, the movement of her foot is visibly discernable and reveals how she moves independently to Roberto in comparison to the way Elke moves dependently with Johan. Recall that in chapter four, I proposed that an expression is any discernable manifestation. That her adjustment is discernably manifest can be read as an expression of independence (i.e. a lack of dependence).

Physical dependence is related to force, which can be considered in a subtle way by examining the use of certain everyday objects. For example, when wiping down a table with a washcloth, I am not merely making motions along the table. I am using force to wipe the table down. This wiping down involves continuously applying force as long as I am engaging in the act of wiping. This can be juxtaposed with using a broom. When sweeping, I can swing the handle to pile dirt into a corner. This can be done by continuously applying force until I reach the corner. This can also be seen as a series of discrete signals in which, rather than continuously applying force to get the dirt into the corner, I am successively applying force and releasing it. I can initiate the action of the sweep through increased force, and then let the broom swing the rest of the way. The difference I am trying to highlight is in the way I am applying force to complete an action, or applying force to initiate and then releasing (in the case of the broom, I am letting inertia do the rest of the

work). To differentiate the two ways of moving, I introduce the term "maneuver". The wiping action is a maneuver; it requires continuous force. The sweeping may also be a maneuver, but since it does not require continuous force, the action may be simply a motion. Though both require force, maneuvers require a more refined sensitivity to force and resistance.

Connecting force to dance, a maneuver requires a certain amount of *effort*. Laban writes about force in the context of effort, which is related to time, space, and flow of movement (Laban 1966). There is a distinguishable difference in effort between making the motions of swinging the broom and actually sweeping. Importantly, both the broom and washcloth cannot move on their own such that movement depends on how I apply force, which is contingent on the effort I employ. While it might be odd to say that the washcloth and broom depend on me to move, the point is merely to illustrate how force functions to create maneuvers versus merely moving without force. If I do not apply force to the washcloth or broom handle, I likely will not be doing a very good job of cleaning. But moving with a person is different than moving with an inanimate object.

In the case of the *penchée,* it is visible that Elke and Johan are using more force than Greta and Roberto. This may not be of consequence, since they may have had artistic freedom to choose the angle of the leg and the degrees of dependence. Nevertheless, the force both couples are exhibiting is different. But in the earlier passage, when Greta stumbles, she seems to be fighting for balance. Though she is in contact with Roberto, there seems to be little to no exchange of force such that Greta is moving independently. This gives us a clue about the intentions of her movement (e.g. resilience in losing balance), but without access to her mind it is impossible to know for certain.

Suppose that both couples have expressed willingness to form a joint commitment, and both are constituting a plural subject. This is not enough to say that they will maintain their joint commitment *well*. In the case of Roberto and Greta, it seems as though both are moving without much transfer of force. When there is some force transferred, there is a different kind of relation within the partnership. I propose that the difference is in how Greta and Roberto are attuning to one another. The question is *what* they are attuning to in each other's movement.

Attuning to Feedback

If the action of one partner has no recognizable effects on the other, the interaction will be physically independent. On the other hand, the interaction will be too taxing for one partner if the other exhibits too much dependency. To understand the degrees of dependence, partners must attune to each other. To distinguish further between degrees of attunement, I introduce the terms "coordinating" and "calibrating". One difference in attunement is that in coordinating, partners move with little to no transfer of force, while in calibrating partners move with such a significant transfer of force that they influence each other's movement. I will examine coordinating and calibrating in relation to the performance of *Petite Mort.*

Observing Roberto and Greta, it is possible that they are able to dance together without transferring much (or any) force between each other. Greta's continued adjustment in her *developé* illustrates this point, in which though they are in contact, the point of contact does not seem to factor into a dependency because the transfer of force is too small. Greta moves independently of Roberto, save for the fact that they are tethered to one another through their points of contact. Without the transfer of force, Greta and Roberto's actions are coordinated such that they satisfy the requirements of the choreography. In calibrating, partners move with a significant transfer of force such that they influence each other's movement. This is illustrated by comparing Elke and Greta's performance. Elke establishes dependence on Johan by moving into an off-balance position, which requires a significant transfer of force. The transfer of force establishes a physical dependence such that each can attune to the other's movements.

There are physical interactions in which one's actions significantly influence the action of the other(s). Coming back to Grice, the possibility of physically influencing others through movement raises important questions about the *quality* and *manner* of information being transferred between partners. In Roberto and Greta's performance, some of their actions can be seen as merely going through the motions of the duet in comparison with Elke and Johan, who seem to be physically relying on each other in more significant ways. What are the two couples doing differently?

I propose that certain movements require partners to rely on something more than a mere signal. To calibrate, partners need to maneuver each other. This requires sensitivity in that partners must be willing and able to be receptive and responsive to *feedback*, which establishes a different kind of dependence than coordination. I propose that feedback is the information that can be extrapolated following some action, including the effects of one's

actions. Take the instance of being off-balance. To get back on balance, one needs to maneuver a partner onto a sustainable axis such that they are no longer dependent. A simple pull is not enough to do so, since being-off balance in this case, may establish a dependency such that feedback is required to understand where the partner's axis is located in order to restore balance. Feedback here is the information extrapolated from the action of being off-balance. The maneuver required is a calibrated action, sustained in such a way that Elke is relying on Johan to place her back on balance. Without Johan she will be unable to regain her balance to continue the design of the choreography. What is interesting is that she could feasibly pull Johan to get back on balance, but this is not what happens in the duet – Johan and Elke rise at the same time in such a way that their attunement to each other is clearly discernably manifest.

One could ostensibly signal without attuning to feedback. I may pull my partner because someone told me to, or because I saw someone else do it, or because I like pulling on my partners. The signal of pulling may be a pre-determined symbol of the dance, where I pull whenever she moves away from me. To attune to feedback, I must be receptive to the information my partner conveys related to her being off-balance, such that I can maneuver her back on balance. When dancing with a partner, maneuvering depends on partners attuning to feedback such that they use an appropriate amount of effort to achieve the maneuver. Mutually attuning to feedback is not only whether one attunes *to* a partner, but whether partners attune to the feedback they receive from each other. Maneuvering exemplifies a different tactile relation when there is a calibrated transfer of force. Before getting into the complexity of partnering beyond physicality, I will consider the significance of degrees of attunement by considering how Greta deviates from the choreography that Elke is executing. The problem I want to highlight is that there is more to partnering than merely going through the motions of the choreography.

I am assuming, based on Elke's performance, that Greta executes the transition from *developé* to *attitude* as it was choreographically designed. In other words, she executes the movements in the correct order. Extending her leg, Greta stumbles and adjusts her stance. The adjustment was not part of the design of the passage, so she is adding movement. The problem with analyzing Greta's movement is that we cannot tell the intention for the adjustment without additional information (e.g. interviewing her about the intention).

I propose that the constraints of successful execution for the choreographic passage are quite strict given the complexity of the movement. How does the movement hang together such that doing a movement at the right time contributes to the subsequent

movement? To do so requires some analysis. Elgin argues that one way to perform an impersonal, objective evaluation is to establish a magnitude. Magnitudes, according to Elgin, "can be used as bases for comparison of members of a set" (Elgin 2017, 162). Magnitudes have certain thresholds, which may be relative but not completely arbitrary, and defining a magnitude "depends on what we want to do with the information we glean" (Elgin 2017, 162). Suppose that in order to execute this passage of movement well, she needs to push off Roberto with a certain magnitude of force in the right direction. In other words, to borrow from physics, Greta needs to establish a vector for her movement to stabilize herself. The vector represents the direction of movement plus the magnitude of force toward the ground. By establishing a vector, Greta establishes a different degree of attunement to Roberto such that she is depending on him for more than merely the coincidence of touch. To stabilize herself with control (and perhaps something like grace), Greta needs to oppose Roberto by using some effort. As such, doing the movement well means more than doing the right motion at the right time. This we know only in comparison with Elke, who is stable and controlled in her execution.

The degree of effort in order to attune to feedback means that she needs to calibrate, rather than merely coordinate the motions. There are added dimensions that go beyond doing the designed motions that have to do with how Greta attunes to Roberto. Without the proper force, we can now explain why she needs to make the extra adjustment. Given her adjustments, what sorts of claims can we make about Greta? The adjustment is corrective, in that she needs to remain in control after losing balance. The fact that the movement was corrective reveals something about the degree of attunement to her partner. Importantly, there are many possibilities for why she did not rely on Roberto, but the possibilities open to her now are a direct consequence of actions she made up to this point.

Using Elke and Johan's performance as the template, I propose that Greta's stumble is a mistake. I am assuming that it was not her intention to lose balance, and so she has 'failed'. Drawing from Gilbert, the failure could be in obligation to her partner, as well as in her obligation to uphold the choreography. It is, of course, possible that Greta intended to stumble but I will move forward assuming that it was unintentional. How do we identify in what way Greta has failed? One way is to consider what her action exemplifies. I propose that movements have functional significance, in that they exemplify one's dependence to something or someone. Greta's position is not *functional*. Her adjustment exemplifies a lack of dependence on Roberto. Without depending on her partner, her position will not

enable her to generate the requisite magnitude to extend her leg with control. I am also proposing that Greta is coordinating her own movement independently.

Greta's stumble functions as evidence in that it is discernably manifest, and as such expresses a lack of dependence. But what evidence do we have that Greta's mistake is an expression of something more than a lack of dependence? Is it possible that her continued adjustment expresses a lack of willingness to be dependent? Or a lack of understanding about what the movement requires? It is possible that Greta does not understand the conditions of the joint action (e.g. what can she can count on Roberto for?). Insofar as she takes it upon herself to do things that really ought to have been done *together*. It is possible that she didn't grasp the joint commitment, just as it is possible that she did in fact understand something such as she had to take it all on herself independently. But this does not necessarily mean that she is not *attuned* to Roberto. Perhaps Roberto is a poor partner, and she knew full well that he is a poor partner. Thus, she is actually attuned to a high enough degree to receive feedback that while it seems like Roberto is offering support from outside observation, he is merely placing his arm there by design. I am assuming all sorts of competence – for example, that she could have done the movement differently (at least based on other performances of other duets where she demonstrates her ability to perform complex maneuvers without stumbling). It is possible, for example, that Greta was attuned to Roberto such that she could tell that he was not offering enough effort for her to depend on him in the moment. She may have decided to move independently because he had not offered enough effort in the past. It is possible that the particular mistake was made because she did not take herself to be able to count on him for something. It could be that she was wrong, it could be that he was wrong. It could be a mismatch of expectations.

The difference in the two duets is striking. Dependence seems to allow for a different way to attune to each other, such that calibration is possible, and perhaps even necessary. Throughout the duet, both couples seem to instantiate calibration and coordination. Without getting into the details of the execution, or the nuances of the choreographic choices on behalf of Kylian, it is important to note that calibration and coordination are two possible alternatives of attuning to feedback. To maneuver and calibrate, partners need to be attuned to feedback to a higher degree than when coordinating. When attuned, partners are receptive and responsive to when they are using less effort (coordinating, intentionally or not). The reasons for *why* Greta stumbled may be infinite, so I turn now to the epistemic dimensions of bodily disposition related to

attunement, dependence, and effort. Establishing a higher degree of dependence may require a higher degree of attunement. But what allows partners to attune to feedback?

Affordances and Graviception

Physicists distinguish between weight and mass, though the two terms are sometimes (mistakenly) used interchangeably in everyday practice. Weight is alternatively defined as a *scalar* quantity, meaning the magnitude of the force of gravity, or a *vector* quantity, meaning the direction of the gravitational force acting upon the entity (Frauenfelder and Huber 2013, 50), which in our case is a dance partner. Weight is typically measured using a scale (e.g. spring, hydraulic, pneumatic), yet despite this quantitative approach to weight, there remain discrepancies with how the concept of weight is understood in phenomenal experience. Metaphors of heaviness and lightness abound throughout literature, and often make their way into idioms in vernacular usage. Consider Shakespeare's famous line in Macbeth: "whose **heavy hand** hath bow'd you to the grave" (Macbeth, III.i.4). Macbeth's usage of heaviness implies a hand applying undue or excessive force. This is significant when we consider how our notion, or indeed our very sense of weight changes given different tasks. We can consider how the sense of weight changes based on internal cues, such as one's emotional state (the valence and the arousal), as well as external cues such the environment (if one is standing on ice or concrete, slippery wood floor or sticky marley). The internal perception of each individual will undoubtedly be subject to background, experience, type and duration of training, as well as individual idiosyncrasies of upbringing. There are many factors that will also play into the motives for why people choose to dance together (or if others choose for them, such as a coach, instructor, or choreographer). In this section, I will investigate the significance of awareness and perception in attuning to one's partner while dancing together.

The sense or awareness of weight is referred to as *graviception* (Mittelstaedt 1996, 61; Batson 2015, 2). Relatively little research has been conducted with respect to graviception, likely because it is difficult to measure. The key aspect is an awareness of force, as weight is subject to the force of gravity (Mittelstaedt 1996, 61). Graviception likely builds on the sense of body position (proprioception) and the sense of body in motion (kinesthesia), to provide an added sensory awareness related to direction and magnitude for what part of one's body is moving and the relative position of the given area (e.g. left side of the rib cage moving downward with some force). This is evident in apparent weight,

when, for example jumping on a moving elevator. The force it takes to get lift is much harder if the elevator is moving. If I jump just as the elevator is stopping, I will get more lift than usual because I will be able to use the momentum created as a result of the moving mechanism.

Laban writes about weight as an effort factor and distinguishes particular qualities of movement, including movement that is light, heavy, direct, indirect, sudden, and sustained (Laban 1966). I may be using the balls of my feet to push away from the floor, giving a sort of light-weighted quality. Or I may be exploring the sense of heaviness, pushing into the floor to achieve a similar, yet distinctly heavy-weighted quality. The movement may be a very fine movement. In using graviception, I can attune to the floor to vary my degree of dependence on the floor for different movements.

Attuning to the floor means understanding the properties of the floor such as texture (e.g. rough, smooth), firmness or flexibility (e.g. hard, soft, springy), incline (e.g. flat or sloping) as well as my own ability to interact with it. This feedback relates to the concept of affordance, first proposed by American psychology J.J. Gibson (Gibson 1979). I propose that graviception is one of the senses that promotes awareness of affordances within one's environment, in that awareness of weight influences one's quality of movement. Consider the act of walking. I do not need to be explicitly aware of my weight to do everyday things like walk. When I am walking, my awareness of my weight is likely implicit, depending on how much effort it takes to walk. My awareness of my weight is likely far more *salient* if I am tired than if I am energized simply because fatigue requires more effort to move. This is especially evident when we accidentally trip. For example, walking down the stairs, I stumble. Perhaps there was something on the stair I didn't see, causing me to trip slightly. I swipe my left foot with my right and accidentally extend too far beyond myself. Lurching forward, I flail my arms in search of something with which I can stabilize myself. I find the railing and restore my balance. The flailing in that moment can be seen as an instance of resilience, rather than a random movement. In stumbling, I seek control and so my flailing can be understood as a discernable manifestation of seeking to restore balance. With a restored sense of equilibrium, my awareness of my weight is suddenly different. I may approach the succeeding stairs with apprehension, afraid I may lose balance again. My trepidation about tripping may be related to previous balance, in which case my awareness of my weight is likely even more salient. I may proceed with more effort (i.e. more resistance), emotionally nervous and physically tense as I move down the stairs. My weight

will be more salient to me, and I will interact with the world differently because of this experience.

Awareness of weight changes based on the way we relate to the environment. My sense of weight should not change if my eyes are closed *unless* something in the environment is affecting my sense of weight. For example, if I know I am standing on ice, I may be more cautious about how I move. The ice provides a different affordance than concrete in terms of moving freely (i.e. limited degrees of freedom in movement because of slipperiness). I may know this because I see the ice, or because I feel the ground suddenly become slippery. If I don't know I'm standing on ice, I likely will not react accordingly. But I may have my eyes open and still miss the ice because the ground is not salient to me. Consider for example walking down the street in the winter and suddenly slipping. I missed the ice that was covering a patch of the sidewalk and so I did not respond by being more cautious, perhaps by planting my weight and bending my knees. I slipped because of a misattunement with the environment. Even with my eyes open, I did not register the ice and so I slipped.

In some cases, the visual is not enough since we may miss things. Consider a hypothetical scenario in which a couple is partnering in a state of zero gravity. What types of actions will this couple be able to execute, and what might be more difficult given the weightless state? The couple will be able to receive visual signals about relative position and proximity, as well as tactile signals from touch. They will be able to potentiate movement, but without gravity it will be difficult to make any sort of step together. The quality of exchange will be unsurprisingly limited in zero gravity given the affordances of the environment. The closest we have to dancing in zero gravity is synchronized swimming. The quality of exchange is different rather than necessarily limited, as there are things people can do in the water that they cannot do on land (sustain lifts for long periods of time), just as there are things we can do on land in a couple that we cannot do in water (take steps together), given the affordances of land and water.

I propose that some aspect of graviceptive attunement is visibly perceptible. Before getting to the question of individual dispositions, abilities, or competencies, my proposition here is to establish that graviceptive attunement can function as a visual signal that is interpreted by partners, as well as those outside the dyad (i.e. choreographers and audience members). It is possible to see when someone is moving with a heavy quality and when someone is moving with a light quality. As one shifts weight from foot to foot, the awareness of foot pressure in contact with the floor is a part of graviceptive attunement.

The extrapolated feedback of foot pressure in contact with the floor reveals something about the property of the floor and what kind of interaction is possible given those properties. This involves attuning to the feedback from soles of feet, as well as to the ways in which limbs are informed by shift in weight. This is apparent when dancers transition from position to position if the form calls for it or if they are moving fluidly without emphasizing or arriving at any particular position. As such, I propose that graviceptive attunement opens a dimension of interactive affordance that can explain the difference between what Greta is doing and what Elke is doing. Based on the quality of their movement, we can say something about how they are attuning to the feedback from their partners, at least in a physical sense. Graviception, like proprioception and kinesthesia, can be understood as a way to attune to a partner, the ground, and the surrounding environment; particularly to the affordances of one's body and the changing in relation to shifts of weight.

Graviceptive attunement is readily evident when we lift others. We can tell how much effort our partner is exerting by how we attune to them through the sense of weight. This is because bodies are subject to the laws of fluid dynamics. Fluid dynamics govern the way liquids and gases move through space. This includes particular laws about conservation of momentum and energy, as well as the conservation of volume. For example, you can pour water from a bottle into a glass. The water will conform to the container it is in. Bodies are filled with liquid and as such are subject to the laws of fluid dynamics. We use our muscles to move through space, jump, sit down, and stand up. The center of mass is a dynamic element of bodies, such that muscles contribute to the quality of movement through space.

Consider lifting someone who is asleep. The action of lifting a sleeping person will make their internal liquid move about, making the center of mass dynamic in such a way that the task is more difficult than lifting a person who is awake and can help by engaging the core and keeping the center of mass steady. In lifting a sleeping person, their mass may shift below the body because of swinging limbs, making the lifter work much harder to maintain steadiness. Since bodies are subject to the laws of fluid dynamics, a partner will feel heavier when they release all muscle tension and feel light when they tense certain muscles to support their own center of mass. This is a precarious balancing act, because if one makes themselves overall tighter, they can become too rigid.

Whether movement is improvised or choreographed, a main concern in degrees of attunement and dependence is how signals invite feedback in the form of responses that are fitting (appropriate) to the situation. Coordinating opens a danger of withholding physical

information because the transfer of force is too small. When Greta adjusts her stance on her own, she is moving independently of Roberto such that he may have trouble attuning to her. But Greta's lack of dependence is only a failure if their joint commitment involves a mutual attunement condition. Without knowledge of their commitment, it is difficult to say whether she fails in her obligation. But the adjustment does reveal that they are not moving well together, especially in comparison to Elke and Johan's performance. The fact that they both continue with the choreography seems to suggest that they are at least attuning to the choreography.

Partners may use excessive force without attuning. This may be better illustrated with a *feedforward* model. In a feedforward model, individuals plan movement without feedback. This is what happens whenever we move or interact with the world. But feedforward planning can reveal epistemic problems in understanding affordances. I see a closed door and lean against it, assuming it is closed. To my surprise, the door swings open. I took the fact that the door was closed as evidence that it was locked. I acted from a false assumption. The same can be true of trying to open a door I think is open. By reaching for the handle I pull hard, only to hit myself in the face with my hand because the door did not budge. The effort I thought was required to open the door turned out to be excessive since the door was locked. We need to plan in advance, but making assumptions may lead to unpleasant or even disastrous consequences.

To sum up the discussion so far, partners can vary their degrees of attunement and dependence. Such variance requires competence as well as willingness. Though calibration requires a transfer of force, it does not follow that partners will calibrate *well*. The coordinative relation can be an aesthetic choice but may lead to problems if it inhibits mutual attunement to feedback and affordances of the joint physical action. Moreover, the relationship between physical and mental receptivity is complex. That is, individuals may be physically receptive, but not mentally. This returns us to the epistemic problem between thought and action, particularly the one raised in chapter four in Gilbert's special conceptions and thoughts while doing something together. I will elaborate on this the next section.

Evaluating Receptivity and Responsiveness

Roberto and Greta seem to rely on the other as little as possible. This is qualitatively different than the way Johan and Elke rely on each other. It may very well be the case that

Roberto intends to dance well with Greta, and for whatever reason it does not work out. As noted earlier, without access to their mental states, it is impossible to know what they are thinking or intending. There are still a number of factors at play here that are visually discernable with respect to dependence, which may be contingent on the design of the movement, and/or their own idiosyncratic tendencies, dispositions, or intentions. Perhaps Elke and Johan had more time to rehearse than Roberto and Greta had. But time is not the only dimension at play in partnering. If we look at partners who have been dancing together for a long time, we are likely to see evidence of miscommunication, misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and so on. This is unsurprising given the complexity of physical interactions. But the subtlety goes beyond the potential for misunderstanding. Long-time partners may certainly have more opportunities to learn a considerable range of facts about each other. These facts may be commonplace ones, such as favorite food, number of siblings, birthday and birthplace. These facts may also be nuanced ones relating to personality traits, idiosyncratic anxieties, and "triggers", resulting in the ability to push each other's buttons and/or alleviate misunderstandings. As such, communication between long-time partners may be more nuanced because partners know *relevant* things about each other. Knowing each other's vulnerabilities does not, however, necessitate that partners will negotiate well or communicate with sensitivity. If the dancer knows something but does not act upon it, then the knowledge is not being activated. The dancer needs to make their know-how active to act appropriately in light of knowledge of that fact.

Time itself merely provides opportunities for this know-how. As Elgin argues, know-how may be tacit, formed from experience, habit, or it may be explicitly trained (Elgin 2017, 50-51). In either case, there is a question of when to implement this know-how and the ability involved therein. Greta is clearly a very skilled and competent dancer. The errors she makes in the performance may come from a number of factors outside her skill. Perhaps she had a bad day, perhaps there was not a lot of time to learn the choreography, perhaps she was not feeling well. There are many reasons for why she may not have access to her know-how.

Evaluation about attunement is complex because there are many factors at play. We are subject to the psychological dimensions of ourselves and our partners. The ever-changing relationship between partners perpetuates an emergent experience (physically, psychologically, emotionally, energetically, etc.) wherein each partner affects the other. Factors such as previous experience, aesthetic conventions of distinct movement practices (e.g. tango, classical ballet, flamenco, etc.), and emotional states effectively impact not only

how receptive a partner will be, but also what is salient within an interaction. My partner may be less receptive to me because I smell bad or remind him of a hated enemy. Despite being physically able and willing, my partner may be unreceptive because he is scared, bored, nervous, or any other number of emotional possibilities. Thus, even though the focus here is on physical interaction, there is clearly more at play than pure physicality.

One way to understand the receptivity of one's partner is through investigating effort and physical resistance. Resistance can be experienced by applying pressure to any area of one's partner (palm-to-palm, shoulder-to-shoulder, pelvis-to-pelvis, etc.). Resistance offers a way to maintain a joint commitment of mutual attunement if one senses the other is falling, and so adds resistance in order to offer support. Investigating resistance in this way reveals something about the affordances of the joint physical action, as resistance may be contingent on multiple factors, including one's environment (if one is standing on ice versus if one is standing on concrete) and one's emotional state (if one is upset versus if one is content). If I am upset, I may take things more personally and be less physically forgiving. This can translate to using more force than necessary to execute an action. It may also translate to moving more slowly than I would were I not upset. The same is true if I am excited – I may be too emotionally aroused to be receptive to my partner. Making emotional or physical resistance salient can significantly influence the physical interaction because partners can create a frame of reference for understanding the qualities of interaction. This includes how partners depend on each other for particular movements.

Not surprisingly, distinct movement practices (i.e. classical ballet, International DanceSport, contact improvisation, etc.), have their own constraints, which constitute a particular normative structure (and often a distinct etiquette) for what is salient, which can be learned. This is fundamentally tied to an ability to respond in a particular way (for example, a response that is efficient in that it conserves energy and angular momentum). Appropriate responses may be studied and practiced, sometimes with immediate results and other times with a fair amount of effort. Ultimately, what constitutes as suitable or unsuitable, as right or wrong, in each given case is subject to the constraints of the particular culture; an etiquette which may very well be tacit.

Since I have argued that partnering is a fundamentally cooperative act, it is not enough to move independently. Nor is it enough to establish co-dependence. Given that partners have an obligation to uphold, I argue that good partners are *interdependent.* This is qualitatively different than independence, when partners do things on their own, and co-

dependence, when partners do everything together. By interdependent, I propose that partners maintain their own sense of attunement to the ground and to the environment, while integrating themselves to each other. To maintain their joint commitment, partners must attune to the relevant features of their dynamic. This is an epistemic problem. Elgin argues that epistemic interdependence "extends epistemic reach: more data can be gathered, more experiments run, more matters investigated, more factors considered, more perspectives accommodated" (Elgin 2017, 130). I propose that partners can do more when they dance together in the strong sense, but joint *physical* action also requires a higher degree of attunement to feedback and affordance. By mutually attuning to feedback and affordances of the joint physical action, partners can move with more control and be more resilient than if they merely coordinate their actions at the right time and place.

Recalling Gilbert's argument, there are both physical and mental factors at play when doing something together. One can be physically receptive, but not mentally. Consider an example in which one is physically competent but unwilling. A novice dancing with an expert is a prime example. It is possible that the two can dance together, given that they both have the dispositions to dance. But the expert might find dancing with the novice too boring, and so is unwilling to commit. One can also be mentally receptive, but not physically. The novice is excited and mentally receptive to dance with the expert. When the expert attempts certain movements, the signals do not register such that, though the novice is mentally receptive, she does not attune to feedback and is unable to understand the affordances of the joint action. She is unable to physically interpret the signals and is thus less physically receptive.

Experience and attunement to feedback and affordances are not necessarily always linked. Part of this may be personal chemistry, if partners do or do not get along well or are willing or unwilling to get along well because of their interpersonal dynamics. This is the case in which partners may dance together for a long time without ever attuning to each other. Experience alone does not necessitate that partners will attune to a high degree. If partners only practice coordination, they may never develop ways of attuning since in coordinating, movement and timing are independent of one another. Consider a case in which an expert dancer has always been paired with another expert dancer who does all of the adjusting and attuning to feedback such that the first dancer never learns to attune to feedback and affordances. In dancing with another expert, the dancer might considerably struggle to maintain the joint commitment because of his practice of coordinating. Moreover, coordinating may set partners up for consequences such as unintentional harm.

In calibrating, timing and movement is contingent on a transfer of force between dancers. Partners must be receptive to feedback in order to calibrate and attune.

One of the key components that distinguishes merely moving together from partnering is whether partners negotiate joint movement *on account* of the other. Partners' willingness and ability to commit will be subject to attunement to the affordances of the physical interaction and the changes therein. This includes physical elements such as proximity, pace, direction, and so on, as well as the manner and quality of movement and relation between partners. Partners mutually attune to each other's movement, sensing the affordances through feedback such that physical negotiation is possible on account of the movement itself, which is not true when merely dancing together in the weak sense.

From the perspective of normativity, aesthetic conventions dictate the method and form of movement (e.g. classical ballet, contact improvisation, Argentinian Tango, etc.,), some of which may be perceived from the outside. Take for example a weight shift that occurs when one partner needs to physically adjust in order to accommodate the other(s). The adjustment may occur when transitioning between movements (such as preparing to lift or coming out of a lift), as well as changing direction, timing, or orientation. Within improvisation, the small shifts may be aesthetically admissible as partners follow the flow of energy and focus on supporting each other as best they can in the moment. Within choreographed passages, however, a physical adjustment may not be a part of the set choreography and so it can be seen as a transgression. This depends on a number of factors, including whether a choreographer gave guidelines for appropriate ways to attune and execute physical adjustments. In one instance, consider a dancer lifting another dancer such that the aesthetic concerns of the lift become the primary focal awareness, while the concerns for the safety of the partner become the secondary, subsidiary awareness. It is possible, given the loci of attention, the aesthetic drive negates the awareness of the partner in such a way that leads to consequences that range from minor stumbles to serious injury

Of course, situations may arise wherein adjustments are necessary to support each other, and so the space of aesthetic normativity is liminal and difficult to evaluate outside of contextual examples. One such example is when the environment is different than expected, such as the floor is slipperier than before, a partner's palms are sweatier, attire has come undone, and so on. Consider for example the raked stage. The slanted surface creates a different set of affordances than a flat surface, which for dance makes an already complicated task even more arduous given that dancers must also negotiate the problems of going upstage or downstage on an incline while executing complex sequences. When a

dancer makes an adjustment, it may be to prevent harm from falling on the incline, an aesthetic choice, the result of incompetence, or something else entirely. Another context may be where individuals are learning to partner. The introduction of a novel movement pattern presents difficulty that may make the aesthetic values more salient. It may be more acceptable for dancers to adjust in performance because the raked stage presents more difficulty than dancing on a flat surface.

In some cases, evaluation is supported by comparison, such as the case of *Petite Mort* being performed by the two different couples. Evaluation from the outside is limited since there is missing information about intention. Aesthetic normativity in dance partnering is particularly complex because of the physical interactions that may literally put one another at risk. However, if norms are only evaluated at the stage of gross, observable, and potentially dangerous movement, we ostensibly lose the nuanced thresholds at which partners mutually attune to feedback and affordances.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I conducted an analysis of a recorded duet performed by two different couples to illustrate the challenge of evaluating expressions of dancers in the physical joint action of dancing together in the strong sense. The juxtaposition of the two duets revealed important nuances about attunement to feedback, including clues about dependence and affordances of the partnership. Though these clues are visibly discernable, without access to the mental states of the dancers it is impossible to be certain about the intentions behind the movement. Nevertheless, the differences in quality of movement revealed a distinction between coordinating action and calibrating such that attunement to feedback is visible from the outside.

In the next chapters my focus will be on the epistemic value in relation to the ethical dimensions of dancing together in the strong sense. I will focus on the epistemic inquiry of partnering as a discourse with its own value system that is applied differently in different contexts and in different forms of movement. To mutually attune to one another, individuals need to understand the range of possible alternatives. This may mean understanding something about conventional responses within a given form, or it may be simply attending to nuances of the physical action, including pace, direction, and proximity, as well as the manner and quality of the movement itself.

Communicating *well* can thus be understood as a relationship that comes to be when partners interact in a way that is appropriate to a) the context and b) each other.

Communicating well requires each partner to attune to feedback and the affordances of their joint physical action. In the subsequent chapter, I will argue that partners need to recognize that they can harm each other and there are tools to make deliberate choices such that they will successfully adapt if circumstances change unexpectedly. That partnering can cause harm means the ethical dimension relates to the aesthetic one, but it does not necessarily mean that the product will be ethical. The converse may also be true such that the aesthetic dimension furthers the ethical one, since performances that are alike ethically might diverge aesthetically. There can of course be non-communicative ethical norms in partnering. “Don’t injure your partner” is an example of an ethical norm that partners can abide by without communicating anything about it to each other. Moving forward, I will continue to focus on the ethical norms that adhere to the communication between partners.

Making assumptions about dependence may set partners up for disastrous consequences. Assumptions may be habituated, such as the result of many years of practice with one partner and assuming the same will be true for another partner. This is likely also the case even without a partner. What are the norms of developing sustainable patterns of interacting physically with others to be ethically and aesthetically good? Part of this, I argue, is a matter of establishing *interdependence.* In the next chapter, I will examine the role of vulnerability in dependence, as well as the mental states partners may form in dancing together. I will argue that if there is a positive obligation to contribute to the promotion of jointly acknowledged aesthetic ends, then the resulting dynamic is ethically different.

Chapter Seven: Moral Norms in Partnering

In the previous chapters, I have argued that dancing together in the strong sense, which I refer to as partnering, involves a joint commitment to negotiate movement on account of each other through mutual attunement. I have argued that there are fine-grained levels of attunement, which enable partners to maintain their commitment to each other by being receptive and responsive to the information conveyed (signals), the effects of the information (feedback), and the affordances of their physical interaction and their environment. Based on Gilbert's notion of exclusionary principles in commitment which introduce failure as a possibility, I have argued that dancing together is a special kind of joint action that has an obligation to register each other's actions. The exclusionary properties relate to the normative constraints of social action, which serve to delineate erroneous or inappropriate action. Building on Grice, I have suggested that this obligation is maintained through communication in a cooperative manner. Drawing from Laban, I proposed that the normative dimension of dancing together is further manifest in the *quality* of movement. An emergent question with respect to mutual attunement to feedback is that the joint physical action warrants particular actions (i.e. responses) and excludes other actions. Having established the nuances of communication and attunement in Chapters five and six, I will return now to the complexity of appropriate action in partnering.

In this chapter, I investigate the ways in which partnering entails a certain kind of responsibility. Drawing from Elgin, I will build an argument that good partnering, if not by

luck, requires moral epistemic agency. To build this argument, I will ground into the work of moral philosopher Annette Baier, including her notion of trust, vulnerability, and discretionary power. I will examine the significance of trust in dancing together, and question what, if anything partners ought to trust each other to do. I will then turn to the notion of moral norms, to examine what it means to understand harm in a partnered situation, and I will present the kinds of harm that partnering may inflict, such as exclusion, objectification, and manipulation. In particular, I will examine the significance of resilience in light of errors, as well as the willingness and ability which allows dancers to calibrate to each other to adapt and better prepare for any situation.

Ethics

My view of normative ethics is based on the question of evaluating what is "right" or "good?" There are two branches of normative ethics that I will distinguish between in this chapter. One is deontology and the other is virtue ethics. Deontological ethics is based on obligation and duty, often relating to the principle of 'doing no harm' and avoiding poor or bad consequences (Kagan 2018, 70-73). By contrast, virtue ethics is based on the principle of 'doing good' and going above and beyond the avoidance of negative consequences (Kagan 2018, 25-27). In this thesis, I have been slowly building an argument for dancing together that is based on the virtues of attuning to feedback and affordances and on communicating cooperatively. In this section, I will touch on the distinction in normative ethics for the context of dancing together before moving on to consider the moral norms that apply to joint physical action.

A standard paradigm within deontological ethics is the trolley problem, which describes a rogue trolley heading down a track where five innocent people are tied up (Foot 1967). One can either a) do nothing and allow the trolley to kill the five innocents or b) make a choice to push a button to switch rails where only one person is tied up, thus killing one individual while saving the lives of the five innocents. The problem challenges respondents to ascertain whether one choice is more ethically acceptable, or at least less objectionable than the other. While perhaps useful for opening dialogue about ethical reasoning, the biggest criticism is that the dilemma is unrealistic and thus proves too difficult to draw meaningful conclusions that are practical. The trolley problem is not one of skill, but rather an extreme scenario meant to stimulate thought and discussion about ethical reasoning. The question is whether it is ever morally acceptable to kill, such as when that action would save the lives of others. It is worth noticing that Foot juxtaposed the

trolley case with an organ transplant case, where a physician harvests the organs of one healthy person to save five ill ones. The issue Foot presents is whether the good of the many outweigh the good of the one.

My search into morality is based in virtue ethics, and as such is less extreme given that the consequences within partnering need not necessarily result in injury (though they can), but rather result in misconnection or misunderstanding. The trolley problem reveals something about the way deontological dilemmas can be designed as *forced choice*. As the name suggests, forced choice designs require respondents to choose between the options presented without the opportunity to voice a "nonresponse" answer, such as "no opinion" or "I don't know”. Rather than follow the deontological model, I will consider the problems of virtue that arise in partnering. In some cases, perhaps partners are tasked with deciding out of a limited number of choices. It is more likely, however, that partners face a multitude of appropriate ways to act. This opens a subtle discussion about harm.

The normative dimension of appropriate action cultivates particular expectations for how an interaction can, or indeed should, unfold. But expectations need not be explicit. As Elgin points out, communities are made up of “practitioners who share a discipline” (Elgin 2017, 140). As such, expectations may be driven by social conventions, individual preferences, or even the rules of a practice. While rules may seem too strong here, Elgin argues that rules can be open to interpretation, which constitute the criteria for how communities function together. Rather than focusing on *how* individuals practice dancing together, which would follow under the branch of practice theory, I am interrogating *what* is being reasoned about in order to build the epistemological foundation. Consider for example how an invitation to dance can take many different forms. One can walk over and stretch out a hand. One can spot another from across the room and understand sustained mutual gaze as indicative of a joint commitment. One can walk over and ask “would you like to dance?” The rules of a practice will govern *how* practitioners reason, but the fact that dancing together has rules or norms at all is part of what I explore here. As she is rooted in epistemology, Elgin points out,

> The fact that we agree about how particular cases are to be decided and how precedents apply shows, it is urged, that the members of the community bring to bear a common set of criteria. Without criteria, tacit or explicit, our verdicts would be jointly inconsistent and at odds with the verdicts of other members of the community. Indeed, if no agreement antedated our explicit statements of rules and criteria, those statements could get no purchase; for nothing could determine whether the rules and criteria governing those

> statements were consistently and correctly applied. Nothing would provide them with a univocal interpretation (Elgin 1996, 63).

Before getting to the agreements and verdicts of practitioners, we need to understand *what* it is that people are agreeing to do when they dance together in the strong sense. For practitioners who seek to negotiate movement on account of each other, there are already some criteria that come into play in order to determine whether movement is in fact mutually attuned to feedback such that partners are responsive to each other. The criteria create expectations about interactions, which are subject to interpretation. But what about a partnered interaction is subject to norms and expectations? Rather than create criteria, I focus on the epistemic problem of what the criteria refer to in terms of expectations and norms.

Expectations can be predictive. One can expect a partner to move a certain way because one has partnered with them before. This may be the result of habits, such as when one's previous training informs the types of movements they choose to enact. This may also be the manifestation of aesthetic preferences, such as when one tends toward certain movements because they like the way they feel or look. Aesthetic preferences may shift based on one's interests, or form habits which may be more complicated to reform. Expectations function from a *feedforward* rather than a feedback model. If one's feedforward model is false, then they may have trouble in successfully interacting with a partner.

Expectations can be normative. In other words, expectations can form around the way an interaction should unfold. This may be the result of the practice rules or conventions of a form. Consider for example how a codified dance like the Argentinian Tango involves some kind of normative expectations about proximity, orientation, and points of contact. The dance hold, also known as an embrace, is a recognizable norm in which partners stand close to each other, facing each other, perhaps making eye contact or perhaps each looks over the other's shoulders, with multiple points of contact through the pelvis, side-body, hands, and upper body. The dance hold offers a certain kind of rule, such that it forms criteria around how partners interact. Dancers can form these expectations because they have seen others move in this way, or they have been taught how they should move together. These norms can be broken, with the understanding that forms have their own history and rules about practice.

‘Can’ and ‘should’ are different notions. Consider how the statement ‘you can trust your partner’ and ‘you should trust your partner’ differ. 'Can' implies possibility – the fact that in moving together you can indeed trust your partner is an emergent factor of the conditions of interaction. 'Should' implies a norm – it is somehow *better* to trust your partner. The word ‘should’ figures into the broad domain of normativity, which includes subcategories of standards, such as aesthetic, epistemic, and moral norms. When someone says “you should trust your partner” they may be making an aesthetic claim: you should trust your partner because it will look or feel better, or because trusting your partner will lead to better form (adhering to the rules of conventions of a particular practice or aesthetic preference). They may also be making a moral claim: you should trust your partner because it is the *moral* thing to do. They may also be making an epistemic claim: you should trust your partner because she is reliable, and by trusting her you have less to worry about. What makes trusting your partner better? In these aesthetic, moral, and epistemic norms, we register that there are ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ ways to partner. Given that dance has ideal forms—the particular movements or ideas which dancers strive to achieve or execute in the act of moving together—there is a question of how to distinguish when dancers are making aesthetic claims and when they are making moral ones. Part of this is a contextual, phenomenological problem that must be addressed in practice. That is, practitioners may be concerned with the experience of moving together and the feeling of mutual attunement. Part of this problem, however, is an epistemic one. Drawing from Elgin, I have argued that partnering involves epistemic acceptance of joint action on the basis of willingness, ability, and access to know-how. Thus, it is necessary to distinguish between who partners ‘can’ trust and who partners ‘should’ trust.

It is perfectly *possible* to trust a partner. Barring any sort of previous trauma, personal predilection for suspicion, or negative advice from a trusted source about a prospective partner which would make trusting *unfeasible*, we *can* trust anyone. In other words, there is no conceptual barrier to trusting anyone. Whether one *should* trust a partner is a different story. Ascertaining whether one should trust a partner entails a particular kind of evaluation. What do partners need in order to determine whether a partner is trustworthy? Moreover, what kind of relationship does trust afford such that we should want to trust a partner at all? To get at this question, it is necessary to understand better what is meant by ‘should’ and ‘trust’.

Trust and Reliance

In the previous chapter, I identified the significance of physical dependence in how partners mutually attune to feedback and affordances. I used dependence to refer to the way in which partners physically rely on one another to achieve certain joint actions. Moving forward, I will refer to dependence and reliance interchangeably, in order to draw attention to an ongoing debate in philosophy about distinguishing trust from reliance. This distinction was first introduced into the ethical discourse in 1986 by Annette Baier. As introduced in the literature review of chapter three, one of her arguments is that if we assume trust and reliance to be interchangeable, we may stand to lose subtlety in systematically accounting for subtle forms of trust (see page 43-44 of this thesis).

Baier argues that there are forms of reliance without trust. The problem of trust in physical interaction can be deconstructed by looking at trust toward an object. For example, a couch is designed to hold weight, similar to the problem of weight-sharing in partnering. By sitting down, I am giving the couch control of my weight such that it holds my body up. This is a one-way street because the couch cannot make choices. I can still say I trust the couch colloquially, but this may mean something other than mere reliance. I am relying on the couch to hold my weight, but if I say I trust the couch, then I have some beliefs about the sturdiness of the couch. This moves us back into the realm of mental states and beliefs, despite the physical nature of the interaction.

In the previous chapters I introduced encounters with a wall with the purpose to practice leaning, shifting, and displacing my weight to build strength, coordination, or even courage to be off-balance. I also examined acting upon a clarinet and a broom to attune to feedback. But acting upon a washcloth, broom, wall, chair or clarinet, however, useful as a means to practice attuning, is significantly different from dancing with another person. What makes an encounter with a wall or chair different than an encounter with a person? Obviously, the exchange between a wall and a person will be different given that people can make choices. But what about the encounter itself? Encountering a person may be in some significant way different than encountering a wall because one is inanimate. But one can probably encounter a wall as one would a person. What does this mean? Even without getting into the ontological problem of animate versus inanimate matter, this question is fraught with cultural and historical problems.

Consider how a person may be perceived as an object (e.g. property), just as an inanimate object (e.g. clarinet) can be personified into a subject. Subjectivity, including the personification and anthropomorphism of a non-human entity, likely requires some kind of

specific belief about the entity, which subsequently informs the way one approaches an encounter. A musician playing an instrument and a blacksmith wielding a hammer are clearly interacting with materials in different ways, yet both can encounter the materials as subjects by personifying the subject of the interaction. Encountering an entity as a subject opens a different sort of physical relation than encountering an entity as an object or prop. This difference may be more than merely a different intention, for individuals can think (or feel) they are doing one thing but in actuality do something else. Suppose that Joe, a strong, muscular dancer, approaches Jack, who really enjoys dancing with others because he enjoys being off-balance. Joe and Jack begin dancing together and Jack takes advantage of Joe's strength by using him to achieve off-balance positions. In other words, Jack is relying on Joe's strength in order to achieve his own selfish interests. This kind of behavior may be normatively inappropriate, particularly if Joe is not on board with being used in this way. This may lead to problems such as manipulation or exploitation, which I will address later in the chapter.

Physical reliance may be a matter of giving up control to some other object or agent. It is possible that moving together need not necessarily present a significant physical influence on partners, such that they do not *need* to physically rely on each other. Close proximity, mutual gaze (eye contact), and perhaps even physical contact may simply be an instance of two atomistic individuals sharing space. Consider a scenario in which two dancers are moving together, holding hands and independently coordinating (i.e. not calibrating) their action to something other than to each other (e.g. to the choreography, rhythm, or conventions of a particular dance). Because they are independently coordinating, if they let go of each other their movement will continue in much the same way. Thus, while we may be relying on some basic elements of proximity, relative position, and points of contact, it is not necessarily the case that dancers are trusting each other. They are merely relying on each other for some kind of action.

In my view, reliance is thus an action and trust is a mental state. Attitudes toward a partner significantly influence how one relies on another, as well as whether each finds the other(s) reliable. Thus, trust and reliance are not interchangeable in the philosophical sense. If partners are merely using the term trust to refer to reliance, then there isn't really a problem about mental states. If I have a particular attitude (e.g. trust) toward my partner to physically attune in a certain way, however, then the nature of the agreement in the partnership complexifies. One way to distinguish trust from mere reliance is a matter of motives. Baier claims that trust is a special kind of reliance in which we rely on the good

will of another. Baier builds her claim about good will by suggesting that we feel betrayed when others do not act out of good will despite having the option to do so, while only disappointed when others let us down despite having tried their best. The distinction can be illustrated in a few ways in the following scenarios.

Consider relying on a partner to be on time during a duet, in which they accidentally stumble and go off-beat because the floor was unexpectedly slippery. Knowing they were trying their best and the floor was slipperier than expected, one may simply feel disappointed because the one who stumbled may still have been acting out of good will. Juxtapose this with a partner who is off-time to sabotage the performance because they would rather be dancing with someone else. Baier would argue that one is left with a sense of betrayal because the motives were not of good will.

Another example is about the subject of reliance. We would likely feel disappointed by an amplifier failing such that it disrupts the beat of the music, but we do not feel betrayed since the amplifier could not betray our trust as it has no good will (or ill will for that matter). Juxtapose this with the reliance on the good will of a band to play a fixed tempo so that we can perform a particular dance. Instead, the band plays at a continuously changing tempo because they don't like our dancing. We feel betrayed by the band because of their lack of good will. There may also be a case in which the band plays at a continuously changing tempo because they are incompetent. Then we are unlikely to feel betrayed, because there was no ill will. Implicit normative expectations about trust with respect to physical attunement may lead to unwarranted feelings of betrayal because the relational agreement is unclear, ambiguous, or unspecified.

Baier points to the problem in specifying what counts as good will. One might think that good will means any kind of motive that is positive, but consider a scenario in which Jack has a motive to make Joe happy. Jack thinks that the only way to do so is by manipulating Joe or lying to him. If Joe is relying on Jack, it is not to promote his happiness by such devious means. As Baier points out, "where one depends on another's good will, one is necessarily vulnerable to the limits of that good will. One leaves others an opportunity to harm one when one trusts, and also shows one's confidence that they will not take it" (Baier 1986, 235). According to Baier, confidence further opens a relation between trust and vulnerability.

In response to Baier, philosopher Richard Holton argues that we can trust without a presupposition of good will. In other words, good will is not a necessary condition for trust (Holton 1994). Consider an example of how a divorced couple can trust each other to

take care of their kids, even though (or despite the fact) they have no good will toward each other[7]. This suggests that trust, the mental state, is plausible with varying motives of reliance as an action. But Baier could argue that the parents, despite no good will toward each other, are confident in one another's good will toward the kids. What, if anything, would be the difference if the father was just completely confident that the mother would never harm the children? This brings us back to the worry about what counts as good will. So how do we go about specifying relational norms that have physical manifestations?

There are physical interactions in which one's actions significantly influence the action of the other(s). The possibility of physically influencing others through movement raises important questions about the quality and character of relation between partners. Partners can establish physical dependence which allows them to calibrate and maneuver. Returning to the example of *Petite Mort,* the maneuver required to get Elke back on balance after her *penchée* is a calibrated pull, sustained in such a way that Elke is relying on Johan to place her back on balance. Without Johan she will be unable to regain her balance, inhibiting her ability to continue with the choreography. But without accessing to what they are thinking, we cannot claim that Elke has any particular attitude toward Johan.

In responding to Baier's work, philosopher Karen Jones adds an expectation condition to reliance to form trust, such that the truster expects the trusted agent will be "directly and favorably moved by the thought that someone is counting on her" (Jones 1996, 8). As a general point, this is probably false. The trusted person may be completely unaware of the trust or be indifferent to it. But partners need to take a stronger stance toward each other in order to satisfy the conditions of partnering. Since partnering requires establishing a joint commitment to mutually attune and negotiate movement on account of each other, there is an expectation about the obligation itself. By going through the motions, partners fail to recognize that they are relying on the other to do more than merely execute the movements. This is as much true of choreographed partnering as it is of improvisation. If Roberto is merely moving next to Greta by holding her hand, facing her and in close proximity, then their interaction is physically limited because Greta cannot rely on Roberto to maneuver and calibrate, and vice versa. The mutual attunement condition for physical

[7] This is adapted from an example of philosopher Richard Holton's: "one member of an estranged couple between whom there is precious little good will can still trust the other to look after the children" (Holton 1994, 2).

contact sets up a particular kind of dependence, which may trigger particular beliefs about trust and responsibility.

When partners are moving together, they rely on each other to do the right movement at the right time, which sometimes requires more than the mere uptake of signals. Assuming again that dancing together in the strong sense involves having a shared goal of cooperating (as argued in chapter 5), then partnering requires relating in a continuous and attuned way such that partners are both receptive and responsive to feedback and affordances of their physical interaction and of their environment. In certain movements, signals need to be reciprocal such that *physical* attunement is established, which, as argued in chapter four, is based on physical readiness and ability. Consider the fact that I can turn by myself. I can set myself up with a functional position to use the floor and create my own torque to execute multiple revolutions. I can also turn myself while in contact with a partner. When a movement requires a partner to turn me, however, I am relying on him in a particular way. This is more than merely a signal, since the movement requires him to maneuver me to turn. This includes the impetus to initiate the turn, as well as the force to execute a full revolution (or multiple ones) and the force to stop on balance. In such a scenario, I am relying on his skill to maneuver rather than simply leave me on my own, or worse, manipulate me by generating motions that are not functional. In other words, maneuvering should achieve calibration in order to be functional. Building on my argument in chapter six about the functional significance of movement, I propose that the functionality of movement is a product of calibrating such that the continuous attunement creates the potential for the movement to happen at the right time *in the right way*. Since the movements are contingent on the laws of gravity and force, graviception will be the sense that allows partners to functionally rely on each other and thus mutually attune to feedback.

Good partnering involves more than signaling. From chapter five, we know that communication in partnering is bound to signals that emerge from proximity, relative position, and point(s) of contact. An individual's range of responses for signals needs to be appropriately broad enough to account for maneuvers that require special forms of reliance (e.g. receptivity to feedback). If the range of responses is too narrow, partners will betray trust by failing to uphold the agreement of the commitment to dance together. This supposes that partners are capable of a broader range of responses, and that the broader range is appropriate. It also supposes that partners are willing and able to be receptive to a broad range of responses that are appropriate.

In chapter four, I noted that willingness is an expression of voluntary intent. Elgin points out that, "voluntary actions are subject to constraints" (Elgin 2017, 96). Some of the constraints, Elgin maintains, are "enterprise-specific", such that the enterprise "both enables and limits the range of a participant's voluntary actions" (Elgin 2017, 96). Taking forward Elgin's proposal about 'enterprise-specific' constraints within the enterprise of dancing together, I propose that partners can *choose* to constrain their movement through coordination or calibration, since neither is inherently right or wrong. But lacking the skill to physically differentiate between calibrating and coordinating means lacking the skill to partner well. In other words, someone who lacks the skill cannot make choices that depend on being able to draw the distinction. But trust may not be purely voluntary. Consider the fact that partners may say something like: "I don't know why, but I trust him even though he has a poor track record of dancing with others" or "I can't help but distrust him, even though there may be a perfectly innocent reason for his behavior". An emergent question is how the decisions partners make to rely on each other influence, and are influenced by, the attitudes they form toward each other in their joint physical action.

Deciding to Trust

Contemporary philosophers Paul Faulkner and Thomas Simpson (2017), present a standard problem in the philosophy of trust related to the notion of *deciding* to trust. In general, we can decide to trust all sorts of people. We can decide to trust a doctor to perform a physical exam, decide to trust a partner to be punctual, or decide to trust a friend to look after the cat. Circumstances like these entail some kind of reasoning about whether someone is worthy of our trust. If the product of this reasoning is favorable, it is fitting to describe ourselves as having decided to trust. Our reasoning is in error if the person turns out to be *untrustworthy*.

The decision to trust brings us back to the notion of joint commitment being a necessary condition for partnering. When partners enter into a joint commitment with a partner, they may also be *deciding* to trust that partner. The commitment itself upholds the constraints of mutually attuned joint movement, such that if both have expressed willingness that is common knowledge, they are entering into an agreement with each other to uphold the commitment or display a signal (verbal or otherwise) that they are no longer willing to commit. But what is it that partners are trusting each other to do?

A standard paradigm in the philosophy of trust distinguishes between two- and three-place predicates (Faulkner and Simpson 2017). In a two-place predicate, an agent broadly trusts another agent. This would follow a logic such as "I trust my partner". No other clauses or claims need to follow. This is juxtaposed with a three-place predicate, in which an agent specifically *entrusts* another agent with some special task or belief. This would follow a logic such as "I trust my partner *to catch me if I fall"*. When partners claim they trust each other, are they speaking about two- or three-place predicates? It seems, given the way partnering involves the specific act of moving together, a three-place predicate fits best.

There are certain things partners need not entrust to each other. For example, in partnering, I do not need to trust my partner broadly such that if my house caught fire he would go save my cat from dying. The agreement partners make is such that each of their actions will support moving together for the duration of their dance. Thus, partnering likely involves a contextually constrained trust. From the discussion of joint commitment in chapter four, we know that we are in a position to rebuke a partner for not upholding the commitment. If partners have been dancing together and trusting each other for a long time, their trust might extend to non-dance situations, like rescuing cats. We are not, however, in a position to rebuke a trusted partner if he does not save our cat during a fire because the agreement likely does not cover random unfortunate scenarios. But there may be those who treat the trust in partnering as a two-place predicate. What would this mean? If trust in partnering is a two-place predicate, then partners are committing to broad, open-ended trust. Even if this is a personal disposition for trust, *deciding* to trust opens an important distinction between trust and belief.

I see Sue and Jack dancing together. Sue is trying really hard, making an effort to attend to Jack's movement. I form a belief that Jack is merely going through the motions, executing the pre-determined patterns at the right time that he and Sue have rehearsed. When they are done dancing together, Jack approaches me and invites me to dance. I can choose to trust Jack even if I believe that he is only going to go through the motions. I can choose to trust Jack in partnering because it will help me hone my own skills of calibrating or attuning to feedback even Jack does not attune to feedback from me. I can choose to trust Jack because I believe that if something were to actually go wrong, he would be there to catch me. The choice to trust need not be explicit. My choice to trust Jack may simply be the result of wanting to dance with a friend. In watching Jack and Sue dance without injury, I may form the belief that I will be okay dancing with Jack. I may be naïve or I may

simply believe that Jack will dance differently with me. I can believe that Jack has an ambivalent attitude toward the aesthetic ideals of partnering. I can even know this to be true, that Jack chooses to partner in order to fill time that he considers would otherwise be boring. I can also believe that Jack is a good person even if he does not care about partnering as much as I do. This is problematic when considering precisely *what* I am choosing to trust Jack to do. The fact that he is a good person may make it reasonable to trust him not to allow me to get injured. But that is very far short of what I have been talking about. If he is just going through the motions in the dance, then all I can reasonably trust him to do is go through the motions and help me if I am in serious danger.

Am I merely relying on Jack to do the choreography then? Would this be constitutive of partnering? If we are both willing to establish a joint commitment to mutually attune and negotiate movement on account of each other, then we are satisfying the conditions of partnering. Knowing what the conditions are makes evaluation possible. But we may be partnering *poorly*. As argued in chapter five and six, *establishing* an agreement to mutually attune and *maintaining* the agreement are different things. This is where the distinction between partnering and partnering *well* begins to develop. Partnering *well* involves more than merely going through the motions with the willingness to mutually attune. Partnering *well* means partners must attune to each other at a high enough level that they can sense and perceive the information they convey (i.e. signals) and the effects of that information (e.g. feedback). Going through the motions may mean missing particular signals to make the joint venture not only more aesthetically pleasing, but more morally responsible. This is where the deontological and virtue ethics distinction comes into a sharper focus – is partnering well contingent on avoiding negative consequences or on bolstering the virtues of attunement and cooperative communication? I argue that when my aim is to partner well, I am trusting my partner with something more than merely avoiding negative consequences and going through the right motions at the right time. What is the nature of trust in a good partnership given the joint commitment to dance together? By trusting my partner, am I merely relying on them to do the right thing at the right time?

Why do partners need to claim trust at all? One argument is because trust is a virtue. We can say that partnering involves physical reliance that takes a three-part predicate, such that we are relying on our partner to be on time and to do what is necessary to uphold the joint act of dancing together. Why is reliance not enough? For one, because not all movements involve reliance each other in significant ways. Moreover, the physical relation is always situated within cultural norms, individual bodily histories, and idiomatic forms

of movement. I propose that physical reliance plays a key role in the notion of trust as a three-part predicate in partnering in that partners can make a choice to rely on each other even when they need not. While partners may trust each other overall, they ought to (at least) trust each other to mutually attune. This is especially important for when things happen that are unexpected.

In responding to Baier's work, Holton (1994) further unpacks the nature of trust by examining the attitudes we hold of each other, especially when we are relying on someone to do something specific. He maintains that trust involves reliance plus an attitude of readiness to feel betrayal (or gratitude) based on the outcome of the action. Holton relates this attitude to what he calls "participant stance", arguing that in our interactions with others "we are ready to take particular reactive attitudes should they act in certain ways" (Holton 1994, 4). Holton does not clearly define exactly what a participant stance would be, but he suggests that it "can require engaging in a whole network of further attitudes and actions, and perhaps beliefs" (Holton 1994, 4). Holton himself understands that this analysis is reductive, and I point to it here because it opens a significant view of how it is possible for people to regard each other in their interactions. This is important to consider in the act of dancing together in the strong sense because taking a participant stance (or not taking one) likely influences the quality of the movement. Returning to the Gricean categories of information presented in chapter five, the quality of movement will subsequently influence the quality of information being conveyed, as well as the manner, quantity, and relation to information between partners.

This can be illustrated by examining what happens if we are relying on a partner to do something specific. For example, if I am relying on my partner to place me back on balance after a lift and she merely places me on the floor and moves on, then I feel betrayed. It is more than disappointing, as in the case when my partner went off-time because the floor was slippery. By merely placing me back on the floor, my partner has betrayed my trust because I was relying on her for balance such that I formed a belief that she would ensure that I was on balance before moving on. Recall that trust is more than just reliance. There may be many reasons why she did not place me on balance, but let's say that one of them is because she fails to register the way in which I was trusting her. She may be unwilling or unable to be receptive such that the is a low degree of mutual attunement. This failure to register my reliance may mean that she had the right sort of stance but made a mistake in overlooking one of my expectations. It may also mean that she fails to take a participant stance toward me. Given that our aim is to partner, and thus to mutually attune

to one another, I am in a position to rebuke her for not placing me back on balance. But there may be more going on with respect to her approach. She may be subscribing to a deontological view of avoiding harm, rather than following a virtue-based view of trying to do good. Perhaps my expectations are too high, perhaps hers are too low.

The expectations mutual attunement open up are tied to the ways in which physical reliance plays out in negotiating movement on account of each other. When partners fail to take participant stances toward each other, they are in essence treating each other as objects rather than participants within the interaction. Thus, there is a question of whether the ethical dimension is a matter of the technique (e.g. physical tools employed to solve the problem of moving together) that is inherent to a form of movement, or is it another layer altogether related to joint physical action in a broader sense? The ethical dimension underscores a complex relationship which I will examine through a specific lens wherein being right or wrong about oneself (in terms of relative position, direction, timing, graviception), significantly influences the affordances of the partnership.

Responsibility

Following the three-place predicate line of inquiry in trust, to what extent can a *tenable* claim be made about whether partners ought to be responsible to relate well to each other? As Elgin points out, "one familiar requirement on responsibility is 'ought' implies 'can': *x* is responsible for *y* only if whether *y* obtains is under *x*'s (direct or indirect) control" (Elgin 2017, 91). Given the joint commitment, partners are directly obligated to uphold mutual attunement. While there may be scenarios that are outside their control (e.g. the floor being too slippery), it is up to partners to negotiate their movement on account of each other such that they are mutually attuned to feedback and affordances.

Consider an example of a well-trained dancer making a mistake. This seems to be what is happening in the case of Roberto and Greta as discussed in chapter six. Should we hold Roberto and Greta morally accountable for their errors in choreography? Gilbert argues that the commitment to do something together is not yet to factor in a moral responsibility. Recall Gilbert's hypothetical example of Joe and Liz dancing together I presented in the literature review, when Liz's shoe gets stuck and Joe comes to Liz's rescue. It need not be the case that Joe is acting out of good will, but rather upholding the agreement of dancing together. This is distinct from partnering, because Liz and Joe's agreement may have simply been to dance together in a weak sense (in which they are willing to do something together and dance happens to be the joint action they choose to pursue). Thy

may full-well have expressed willingness to establish a joint commitment of doing something together. But my view of dancing together in the strong sense has a tighter restriction on mutual attunement to negotiate movement on account of each other. As such, to what degree do the aesthetic and ethical overlap when we consider partnering to fulfill certain complex choreography? Where is the threshold between moral and aesthetic norms in partnering? A part of this responsibility refers back to the problem of willingness plus ability, especially in relation to care (as a shared goal, as well as an individual goal). As I argued in chapter five, there is a difference between communicating a lack of care because one does not care (i.e. is unwilling to care) and communicating a lack of care because one lacks the requisite communicative skills (i.e. is unable to manifest care physically). Partners may be putting each other in the way of physical, aesthetic, or moral harm if they lack the skills to communicate well.

The inquiry opens the door for discussing negligence, particularly in relation to culpability. While expert partners know how best to negotiate misunderstandings in context, there is still a question about accounting for the ability to do good in negotiating physical interaction. Being willing and able to establish a joint physical commitment based on a high degree of attunement does not mean that partners will necessarily do good. They may satisfy all of the conditions and choose to adopt a deontological view such that their actions avoid negative consequences rather than upholding virtues. Following Gilbert's arguments that I set up in chapter four, the joint agreement of partnering entails mutual attunement to negotiate movement on account of each other. Failure to uphold the obligation can result in entitlements to rebuke. Partners who are *not* mutually attuned to feedback and affordances, but feel that they *are* may be setting themselves up for problems. If things go well, then it is only by luck that nothing goes wrong.

To summarize the points so far, we can see that trust is a special form of reliance that emerges through a certain kind of relation. This relation may take time, but as shown in the previous chapter, time is not the only factor at play. The temporal dimension is necessary for maintaining the attunement continuously as part of the process of dancing together, and it is where change will register. But trust does not necessarily need time to develop as in the case of strangers who feel an instant bond upon dancing together[8]. In some cases, partners can simply choose to trust each other. What benefit is there from

[8] Scholar-practitioners such as Vermey (1994), Novack (1990), Manning (2009), Harman (2019), and many others write about instant bonds in which dancers, knowing nothing about each other, feel connected upon meeting for the first time.

dancers trusting each other when dancing together? What detriment? What happens when I trust my partner to establish mutual attunement, but my partner does not trust me? These questions circle around the virtues of trust. I turn now to consider the fact that trust may not be all that virtuous in dancing together in the strong sense, particularly when trusting a partner to establish a relation independently. Having satisfied the conditions of willingness to establish joint commitment, what underlies the normative dimension of one trusting the other without the evidence to do so?

False Beliefs

One problem of trust is that it is typically considered a distinctive state of mind (Faulker and Simpson 2017). The problem with trust as a state of mind is that maybe humans are not reliable introspectors about their mental states. As such, we can create false beliefs. In other words, I can decide, with some degree of confidence, that I will trust my partner to catch me if I fall. This may lead to problems down the line if I have entrusted you despite having no reason to do so. I may have a belief that I am not justified in having. I can further this belief that my partner will catch me *gracefully*, making us both adhere to a particular quality of movement. The predicate comes with an aesthetic contingency: not only do I entrust you with my safety, I do so with the trust that it will be adhere to an aesthetic standard (e.g. grace). How do we account for the relationship between dancers *physically* relying on each other in the moment and the mental states (e.g. beliefs, attitudes, etc.,) such as trust and responsibility that are formed and inform the interaction?

Partnering may become second nature to dancers, such that making a joint commitment to mutually attune is easy. On the other hand, partners may come to take attunement for granted, such that they form false beliefs that a partner is always attuned. Partners may also think they are attuned, but are actually not attuned to feedback or not in a fine-grained way so as to sense and act within the affordances of the partnership. As I argued in chapter five, partners need to understand what movement exemplifies, otherwise they are merely going through the motions.

In the physical act of dancing together, the skillset to initiate action is distinct from executing and completing action. Consider for example how the act of lifting a partner and placing the partner down on balance are two distinct, though interrelated skills. The willingness to place a partner down on balance and the ability to do so are not always congruent or emphasized equally. What kind of reliance does the act entail, and what kind of mental state is beneficial to the interaction? The problem I am suggesting is that trust is

not necessarily something that partners should be striving for if they do not have evidence to support the belief. Trust is not all that virtuous if one is blindly trusting their partner to place them down on balance. A dancer may be setting themselves up for injury *because* they have formed a belief such that they are relying in a way that relinquishes their own responsibility. Acting from the trust, the dancer will not place themselves on balance because they are leaving it to their partner. In this case, the dancer is relinquishing the control over their own body, which ought to be their own responsibility. Building on the argument of communication in chapter five, I argue that partners have responsibility in how much information they convey, in what manner, with what quality of movement. This responsibility satisfies both the deontological view of doing no harm and avoiding negative consequences, as well as the virtue-based view of the positive dimensions that open when partners strive to communicate well. This blind trust opens a kind of reliance that makes one vulnerable, which is irresponsible on their part even if their partner also fails to uphold the obligation to mutually attune to feedback.

Trust opens one up to vulnerability, and since the act of partnering involves physical reliance, the potential for harm is ever-present. The problem with false beliefs is that dancers can think they are doing one thing, but actually do something else. Consider for example how dancing with a partner, Sue suddenly feels uncomfortable. Sue feels she needs to choose whether to continue the dance or end it. Afraid to hurt her partner's feelings by ending the dance in the middle of their interaction, Sue chooses to continue dancing despite her discomfort. Thus, she adopts a deontological view where she believes she is avoiding harm. But in choosing to continue the dance, suppose Sue starts to mentally "check-out". Sue receives signals and responds appropriately up to a certain threshold but no longer fully invests in the dance. As such, she is still expressing willingness to dance together, but no longer in the strong sense since she is withholding certain physical information and not attuning to feedback. By diminishing her dependence on her partner, Sue is relying on her partner only enough to go through the motions. She may even start paying attention to grounds for suspicion, and in so doing directs her attention away from the bases of trust. Though she has the ability to attune to a high degree, she is now attuning to whether she has grounds for suspicion beyond her feelings of discomfort. By merely going through the motions, Sue is coordinating. But this form of coordination creates a different kind of relation, such that Sue is interrupting their mutual attunement – Sue has ceased calibrating. Her willingness to continue dancing in order not to hurt her partner's feelings may be well-intentioned, but her lack of attunement reflects a limited sort of

willingness that may negatively influence the interaction. Her deontological view may be preventing her from dancing together in the strong sense.

Sue's feeling about the physical interaction makes the interaction limited. Perhaps Sue begins to develop distrust of her partner, which further means that she avoids relying on him other than to go through the motions. By choosing to coordinate in response to discomfort, Sue makes maneuvering more difficult because there is no longer a high degree of continuous attunement. She is relying on her partner only to give signals about direction, proximity, and perhaps timing. By relying in this way, Sue figures the motions into her plan to continue dancing together despite discomfort. Coordination in this way is a sort of "checking-out" in order to continue the dance without investing dependence on her partner. In other words, she begins to move independently. Sue's caution may be well-meaning but may also be the result of a false belief. By withdrawing from reliance, Sue may be missing out on important signals that are important to her safety, as well as the safety of her partner. As Elgin argues, "to be trustworthy, an agent needs to be both competent and well-intentioned" (Elgin 2017, 127). Furthermore, by coordinating independently and interrupting mutual attunement, Sue makes herself vulnerable to the motions of her partner.

In distinguishing trust from reliance, all we have been able to do is show one person's attitude, stance, or belief about something or someone. Certain beliefs may be unfounded, such that one's blind trust makes one vulnerable to harm. Both partners may operate from trust grounded in experience (rather than whatever is happening in the moment), having danced together before such that they take mutual attunement for granted without necessarily checking-in with each other. Given the subtle reciprocal relation between partners, viewing trust as unidirectional hinders understanding about what partners stand to gain by both trusting each other, especially when treated as a three-part predicate.

Discretionary Power

Baier seems particularly interested in trust relationships where there is some kind of inequality in power between the agents. One major shortcoming in Baier's work is that she treats trust as unidirectional. Baier's examples of trust are limited in a relation sense, as she examines trust in postal workers, grocers, and day-care providers, between enemies in war, and between strangers when asking for directions (Baier 1986, 234). The reliance in partnering is far more intimate, even if it involves complete strangers, by virtue of the fact that the relation is physical, proximate, and often touch-based. But philosophy is not

ill-equipped to deal with physical intimacy, since there are standards for evaluating interactions in sound and tenable ways.

Contemporary philosophers Fay Niker and Laura Specker Sullivan have critically engaged with Baier's discourse, suggesting that trust "can be understood as a *property of the relationship* itself" (Niker and Sullivan 2018, 2, emphasis in the original). In response to Baier, Niker and Sullivan distinguish between thick and thin relationships, where thick relationships are characterized as "parties [that] have a certain shared history" (Niker and Sullivan 2). By looking at thick relationships in particular, Sullivan and Niker show that there are circumstances in which it is desirable to make choices on behalf of a partner which would otherwise be considered inappropriate or unethical. A standard example could be something such as a healthy spouse making financial decisions on behalf of a sick spouse. Given the considerable length and "thick" quality of the relation, such a scenario would be considered ethical. The sick spouse may in fact be capable of making the decision, such that the scenario seems less ethical on the surface. What makes the relation "thick" is years of experience making decisions together such that one has confidence in what the other would decide.

We can relate this to a problem in partnering. Jack lifts Sue and carries her across the floor. From her viewpoint, she can see that there is a puddle ahead of them. Because Jack does not see the puddle, Sue needs to decide about how to move forward. This can be a pre-determined signal, such as a squeeze or a clicked tongue. Let's say the partners have not determined a signal in advance. Is it acceptable for Sue to jump out of the lift in order to save herself and her partner? The case seems to suggest yes. But suppose that neither of them sees the puddle. As soon as Jack reaches it, he stumbles. Since he is holding on to Sue, he decides he can save her by holding on. Being mutually attuned, he catches her and all is okay. Without mutual attunement, Sue could have lurched forward and ended up hitting the ground face-first because Jack held on to her rather than letting go. In the extended hypothetical situation, Jack acted on behalf of Sue and ended up preventing Sue from deciding on her own. When partners rely on each other for safety, they make themselves vulnerable by relinquishing their own responsibility. Through relying on another in physically precarious ways, partners make themselves less independently accountable by surrendering responsibility to the other. This vulnerability pays off when the desired movement is achieved without issue.

Safety in dancing together involves the skill to maneuver carefully, which requires each to have a sense of how the other will respond in not far-fetched emergencies. In other

words, each adjusts his/her own behavior in light of what is reasonably expected of the other. This is often the case in crowded dance floors, where one dancer may make decisions about maneuvering for the other(s), in order to avoid injury. The success of making decisions on behalf of someone else, for the benefit of those parties involved, is contingent on mutual attunement, but also on the thickness of the relation. The more dancers have practice in maneuvering together, the thicker their trust can become.

Elgin maintains that trustworthiness is contingent on being competent and well-intentioned. But this does not yet reveal why partners ought to trust each other. Elgin holds that,

> Because of the division of cognitive labor, epistemic agents need to depend on one another. So epistemic agents should be trustworthy. This involves having and properly using appropriate background assumptions and know-how. Having them can perhaps be construed purely cognitively, but being willing to properly use them is a matter of volition (Elgin 2017, 127)

Partnering can create all sorts of power asymmetries. To agree to partner, dancers may be consenting to a relinquishing of control over certain things like direction, orientation, timing, and point(s) of contact. But just because they are giving up some power, does not mean that they are losing the ability of choice. The quality of movement in executing shifts in direction, orientation, timing, and point(s) of contact are contingent on a partner's competence in responding. The greater the competence, the greater the range of possible responses. The greater the range of possible responses, the more choices a partner has to express willingness and make that willingness manifest (e.g. with care). The problem of power is still present, however, since partners can take advantage of each other, dominate, and repress the ability to make choices by overpowering, manipulating, objectifying, and exploiting each other. I propose that willingness to dance together in the strong sense means willingness to be vulnerable in a certain way. There is a trade-off in vulnerability such that being vulnerable can be seen as a virtue to do good, but being vulnerable without the ability to do so responsibly may place individuals and their partners at risk.

Harm

There are at least two types of harm that occur within partnering paradigms. One is physical and the other psychological. Given the complexity of human interaction, the separation between the two kinds of harm is artificial – physical harm causes psychological

distress, just as psychological harm likely manifests in physical ways. Keeping with the synthetic distinction, physical harm is the result of physical action. There are perhaps quite obvious forms of physical harm, such as dropping one's partner from a lift or accidentally tripping, yanking, shoving, or any other bodily action. Psychological harm is perhaps more subtle than physical harm. It is less obvious and sometimes very difficult to evaluate or even observe since we do not have access to the minds of other people. Psychological harm may be accidental and short-lived, deliberate and enduring, or a range between these two extremes. Psychological harm may be the cause or root of the physical attitude toward a partner. Consider for example objectification as a demoralizing or dehumanizing attitude. In objectification, partners effectively treat each other as props, degraded to the status of an object. Though they may have made a joint commitment, their behavior does not match the intention. They may be willing to dance together but may be unwilling to be vulnerable (e.g. unwilling to be up control) such that attunement to a high degree is unfeasible. The attitude may be a product of conventions, such that the effort needed to change direction, which is some kind of subtle pull or push, becomes an excessive yank or a shove. Objectification is a subtle pervasive attitude that infects partnering, since terms such as pushing, pulling, shoving, yanking refer to somewhat relative, subjective actions. One might believe that they are softly pulling, while their partner is convinced they are intentionally yanking.

Another form of psychological harm touched on in this thesis is exclusion. Similar to objectification, exclusion is an attitude relating to one partner (or a group of partners) while imposing negative constraints on others. Partners can form exclusive ultimatums through movement, such that constraints become negative rather than generative. This may be the case in using excessive force, where partners feel forced to respond in coercive, excessive ways so as to avoid injury. Partners can be uncomfortable and thus psychologically remove themselves from the situation. This may be a way of signaling to a partner that one wishes the dance to end. Unfortunately, not all partners will be sensitive, and by psychologically checking-out, they may miss important signals that can prevent injury.

Both exclusion and objectification fit into a class of harm I will call manipulation. One manifestation of manipulation is in the physical sense, as in the point I was making above when partners feel they have to use excessive force to avoid injury. For example, if I sense my partner is falling, I may yank on her arm to prevent her from falling. What could have been a careful maneuver becomes a manipulation with lack of ability. Since partnering

involves some negotiation of power, manipulation relates to control for some instrumental aims outside of the partnership. This manipulation can be a form of deception, such as withholding or lying about relevant information. Consider for example how a partner can coordinate independently such that the other doesn't receive relevant information about weight placement and center of mass. Deception can be unintentional, such as a social convention of performativity. Consider the fact that when Greta continues to readjust her foot independently, she is obscuring information about her center of mass such that if Roberto wanted to offer physical support in a nuanced way, he would not be able to because the manner and quality of her movement prevents a transfer of information. As another example, consider how a social dance form can use signals that are completely idiomatic to the form itself. A great dancer that is a novice to an unfamiliar form may accidentally be withholding information about center of mass because they are imitating what they see others are doing. In other words, the act of merely going through the motions constitutes a sort of performativity without establishing dependence or reliance on one's partner. Using Elgin's terminology, this may be because the act of emulating prevents one from understanding what the movements exemplify. I have seen this in my own teaching of ballroom techniques to professional ballet dancers. Drawing on my argument in chapter six, I have observed how the skillset of ballet includes highly refined proprioception and kinesthetic awareness, but does not necessarily mean that dancers will have refined graviception when partnering. Thus, they may accidentally be withholding information and unintentionally deceiving their partners about crucial information such as weight placement and center of mass. Dancers end up manipulating each other to emulate movement, rather than develop understanding of what a push or pull signals or exemplifies in upholding the obligation to dance together.

There is negative empathy, which is sensitivity to cause harm and deciding to do so in the moment. For example, I know how much force it takes to lift my partner. Having gotten into an argument earlier in the rehearsal, I use excessive force to keep her in place. Using excessive force on purpose may already signal that the joint commitment is no longer one of mutual attunement, but something else. Perhaps I am merely trying to execute the design of the choreography, and in so doing, I am no longer willing to make a joint commitment. My willingness to attune to my partner has changed because of our earlier argument. I have seen this many times in rehearsal as well. Since partners end up spending a lot of time together, they know how to use information against each other. Their knowledge is not inert, but nor is it used for positive ends. In other words, they act from

self-interest, which is engaging in partnering for one's own personal gain. This form of manipulation may also lead to one objectifying their partner, because one facilitates one's own ease and comfort at the expense of others.

Harm may sometimes require intense scrutiny, because it is not always readily visible. Partners can believe all sorts of things about the partnership and act from that belief. This is one reason why skill in partnering is so important – partners need to be able to distinguish when beliefs about a partner are false and when they are true. They need to exercise opportunities to understand whether a partner is trustworthy and develop some kind of objective standards to evaluate the thickness of the relation. As Elgin argues, "objectivity emerges from the self-reflective activities of epistemic communities. It is neither mere correlation of an opinion with mind-independent facts nor a matter of pure consensus" (Elgin 2017, 159). The notion of objectivity that emerges with evaluation of norms, as well as from self-reflective activities, is important to consider in the context of what it is that dancers are reflecting about in the joint physical act of partnering.

Breaking down the forms of harm, although perhaps reductive and inexhaustive, reveals the ways in which good partners need to be mutually attuned to each other. If good partnering is more than mere signaling (e.g. maneuvering, calibrating, attuning to feedback and affordances), and requires partners to make decisions about 1) modes of effort and dependence, and 2) when and how to entrust each other with specific actions, then we finally arrive at the foundation of moral epistemic agency in dance. Good partners are responsible to themselves and each other and understand how to 1) mutually attune and interpret signals, either at face value or as implicatures when appropriate, 2) exercise a broad and relevant range of dependence, and 3) decide, in the moment, about expectations set forth by the joint commitment (whether it is implicit or explicit). Attunement, in the form of receptivity, responsiveness, and resilience form the epistemic norms that partners exercise in the act of partnering.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, I have hinted at the ways in which partnering is within an ethical domain simply because of the reality that the act of moving together can cause harm. Given the idea that there are appropriate and inappropriate ways to respond, an interaction is ethical if and when 1) partners respond to each other appropriately, 2) do not cause deliberate harm. While unintentional harm may be excusable, it may still be

considered morally objectionable. This is rightfully so, since some kind of harm has been done. I have presented the distinction of a view based on doing no harm and one based on attempting to do good. Investigating the conditional underpinnings of partnering has demonstrated the significance of willingness and attunement through concepts such as receptivity, responsiveness, feedback, affordance, and vulnerability. These concepts also move into the realm of normative ethics when we evaluate the positive and negative consequences of the joint physical interaction. There is also the simple fact that partners can cause each other harm. The problem is what partners do with the moral objection and how they resolve harm.

There is a trade-off in vulnerability when partners do not attune to each other. By doing things independently, partners open themselves up to being wrong and thus inflicting harm that is accidental. By doing things together, partners open themselves up to harm that is intentional. As Baier points out, “the one in the best position to harm something is its creator” (Baier 1986, 236). The question we are left with is about making reasonable choices in partnering, including those related to responsibilities, obligations, and trust. Baier maintains that “the truster, who always needs good judgment to know whom to trust and how much discretion to give, will also have some scope for discretion in judging what should count as failing to meet trust, either through incompetence, negligence, or ill will” (Baier 1986, 238). Considering the overlap of moral and epistemic norms in dance informs how reasonable and responsible agency can be developed. But while dancers may employ the rhetoric of trust and responsibility when they speak about their interactions, this does not necessarily mean that they will be able to discernably manifest or critically evaluate moral norms in practice. Even if they are able, it does not mean that they necessarily will. The challenge remains with articulating the reasoning around why a response was appropriate or not. If we take a relativist view of the problem, then anything can be inappropriate or appropriate depending on context. If we take an absolutist view, then we significantly narrow the range. Taking a pluralist view allows us to broach the range of possible appropriate responses. While this seems to be a phenomenological problem, there is an epistemic problem embedded inside: what are the standards for appropriate responses in a partnering paradigm? Thus, the final question is what dancers reason about within their interactions. What does it mean to exercise agency to be moral epistemic agents? What are the embedded virtues in receptivity, responsiveness, and resilience? These questions will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Eight: Reasoning in Relation

Partners make all sorts of decisions when making a joint commitment to dance together and negotiate movement on account of each other. As argued in the previous chapter, one of the decisions relates to whether or not to trust a partner. From discussion in chapter four, we know that another decision that partners make is whether to express willingness to dance together, just as one can decide whether to accept another's willingness to dance together. Choosing to express willingness or accept the willingness of another does not yet tell us whether the interaction will be mutually attuned, even if partners are *willing* to be receptive and responsive to each other. Dancing together involves a normative dimension in that partners can mutually attune well or poorly. Articulating and parsing the normative questions of partnering well lends support for discussing at least some of the ways by which claims about mutual attunement between partners can be reasonably and justifiably evaluated. Normativity of this kind is a form of relativism: the standards which determine what is right for one partnership are likely quite different from the standards which determine what is right for another. Yet the matter of standards persists in practice, and so a critical investigation of the normative dimensions can elucidate deeper understanding of the structures within dance partnering (i.e. power dynamics within social practice). To avoid this relativism in the context of evaluation, I am advocating for a

reasonable pluralism that defines a range of acceptable behavior without specifying a set of standards. I will proceed by assuming that standards exist, and investigate the underlying structure by which standards can be developed.

In this chapter, I will consider the problems of being *willing* and *able* to make choice in setting intentions. I will return to Gilbert's notion of plural subjecthood and intentionality and I will interrogate Elgin's notion of moral epistemic agency, epistemic responsibilism, and reflective equilibrium in the context of dancing together. I will elaborate on Gilbert's concept of intentionality to demonstrate the ways in which responsible partners systematically reason about their physical interaction in partnering. I will interrogate what it is that partners are reasoning about in their physical interaction, and I will conclude by considering the matter of pedagogy and education in dancing together.

Intentionality

Individuals can and do make choices about how they encounter and respond to the subject of their interaction. From the discussion in chapter four, we know that acceptance is a matter of willingness, ability, and understanding that is accessible rather than inert. The possibilities open to partners are a consequence of actions and decisions they made or did not make earlier. As I argued previously, to partner, or to dance together in the strong sense rather than merely dance together by luck or happenstance, dancers must be willing and able to accept a joint commitment to dance together and negotiate movement on account of each other and in mutual attunement to feedback and the affordances of the physical interaction.

Gilbert argues that in the strong sense of doing something together "each must intentionally act in his/her capacity as a constituent of a plural subject of a certain goal, a subject whose other constituent is the other person in question" (Gilbert 1989, 166). Within the act of dancing together in the strong sense, there is a major problem that concerns how intention and behavior relate to each other. As we have seen throughout this thesis, intentionality may not match behavior. Yet Gilbert maintains that "human beings appear to be in an important sense powered by their ideas and views of their situation" (Gilbert 1989, 12). For the purposes of understanding partnering, Gilbert's position has to be further elaborated and further constraints need to be recognized. How does intentionality play a role in negotiating movement on account of each other? Is intentionality enough to be able to negotiate movement on account of each other?

To do something intentionally is to do something on purpose, which is to have some kind of idea of what to do. The skill to do something on purpose in dance requires some kind of accessible understanding. As Elgin argues, understanding is not enough if it is inert, because it will not feed into the action itself. Consider a simple example of doing a single turn. If I set an intention to do a single pirouette, I will attempt to do one turn on purpose. To do so intentionally means to be powered by a mental state that aligns with my desire. But I may lack the skill to do so. Then, unless I am lucky, I won't have done a turn. I merely would have tried to do it. Thus, despite my intention, I may generate too much force for a single turn, I may fall out of the turn, or I may fail to complete a full revolution. To be deliberate, I need to know how to achieve control in executing the turns, such that I can do a single, full turn. I need to know how to prepare the turn (using the right magnitude of force to generate appropriate torque), how to correct myself if I feel I am falling out of the turn, and how to finish the turn once I've completed a full revolution. Something more than intention is required. As I've argued throughout the preceding chapters, ability to attune and respond to feedback is required as well.

Gilbert alludes to a distinction between deliberate and intentional practice, but she does not directly spell it out. Her example hinges on a made-up practice of *zigging*, which involves brushing one's teeth at the same time as someone else. Her example is as follows,

> It is true of zigging, then, that one cannot zigg on one's own, or without the participation (in some weak sense) of another agent. Now it is possible for someone to zigg deliberately. That is, he deliberately brings it about that he cleans his teeth while someone else in the house is cleaning hers. Two people could even deliberately zigg, in relation to each other, each expecting the other to be engaged in teeth-cleaning at a certain time, and hence cleaning his own teeth at that time. Meanwhile it is obviously perfectly possible that two or more people zigg entirely by accident. They really do zigg, none the less (Gilbert 1990, 156).

It seems then that to zigg accidentally is to intentionally brush one's teeth at a time that coincidentally someone else is brushing their teeth. To zigg intentionally is to be powered by an idea or view of brushing one's teeth at the same time as another. By extension then, to zigg deliberately is to ensure the conditions of brushing *in relation to another* are satisfied. Drawing from Gilbert, I propose that to be intentional is to do something on (or with) purpose, while doing something deliberately is to ensure the conditions of relation (i.e. attunement) are satisfied. In my view, being deliberate requires resources to realize intentions, whereas being intentional is merely to do something on purpose following an idea or view in mind. In order to be deliberate, I propose that one

needs the resources to realize intentions in action. For dancing together in the strong sense, this is a matter of pairing willingness and ability.

To be deliberate means having some awareness of false beliefs and counterintuitions. One example in partnering is the use of force. For example, I may believe that the only way to bring my partner upright from an off-balance position is to pull her toward me by using my upper body strength. While this may be a way to restore my partner's equilibrium, it may also overly strain my arm and lower back. Another way to restore my partner's balance is to use my own center by lowering my arm and moving my pelvis toward my partner. In the latter example, a dancer can avoid using excessive force of pulling by using one's own center and thus having more control through a high degree of attunement to return a partner on balance. Using one's center is valuable wherever partners are moving off-balance and provides a counterexample to using brute force. There may of course be aesthetic reasons for using brute force. Exchange of force becomes problematic if the dancer takes upper body strength as an absolute (i.e. this is the only way to return a partner to balance). The absolute comes from a false belief that successful weight-sharing comes from the upper body alone. Some may reason that brute strength is necessary to achieve certain actions (e.g. lifts), and in some cases this is true. But in other cases, action may be contingent on the right alignment for the bodies involved such that no excess force is needed. False beliefs may be born of good intentions that fail without the appropriate competence.

Communication in partnering opens a question of what information partners are able to access in each other's movement. In chapter five, I pointed to how Gilbert responds to Wittgenstein in distinguishing between *thin* and *seriously intended* communication. Wittgenstein introduces a problem that there may be information that is private to the world, accessible only to the individual (Wittgenstein 1953). The discourse on private language is fraught with complex ideas, but it is worth mentioning here because dancing together in the strong sense might possibly involve intentions that are private and those that are public. Without getting further into the private/public debate, I propose that in partnering, intentionality has to be manifest *publicly*, because partners need to make their communication accessible to each other. In other words, since dancers have to communicate with each other in order to establish and maintain their joint commitment, they need to make signals publicly available to each other through established conventions, long-term experience, or even a quasi-contract made on the spot. Partners need to know that touch means something in particular, so a system needs to be established to

communicate with each other. Thus, it is not really a great idea to worry about what is in people's minds in dance because it is possible to publicly access what they are (or are not) doing. There can be various misattunements regardless of whatever was in someone's mind. In the context of partnering, it does not necessarily matter what people thought they were doing considering the fact that dancing together involves discernably manifest *physical* expressions. Returning to Greta's stumble, it does not matter for the success of the performance in the moment what she thought she was doing, because she did in fact stumble. Thus, I propose that having an intention is not enough to partner well. The resources required to be deliberate are necessary to move with skill. The problem is that people make mistakes, about themselves and each other. There are certain things that are knowable, but not with absolute certainty. Thus, partners need to understand something about each other to successfully negotiate joint action.

Understanding involves more than mere isolated facts. Given the necessary conditions of joint commitment and communication, as well as the conditions and norms of attunement, it would follow that these are the concepts that need to be understood, and furthermore exemplified in movement. Understanding can be contingent on years of experience and training, but it may also be realized without any previous training. Consider for example how novice dancers may exhibit attunement to feedback without being explicitly taught or trained. This is unsurprising given that attunement in physical interaction is not unique to dance. The epistemic dimension of partnering suggests that whether someone has the requisite abilities can be predictable if partners know what to look for in the interaction.

Elgin argues that predictive success is epistemically credible if predictions are "borne out considerably more often than chance" (Elgin 2017, 112). Thus, there is some aspect of understanding that needs to be accounted for in successful interaction to make a prediction more secure than mere coincidence. To interrogate if this works in partnering, consider that if I want to influence my partner's timing, direction, or orientation I need to understand where his weight is. One way to do so is by placing my hands on his pelvis (or wherever his center of mass is). A novice may be unfamiliar with this way of negotiating direction, and so may try to influence their partner by applying pressure to the shoulders causing the facing to shift (orientation) but not necessarily accessing weight and center (direction). Influencing my partner's timing, direction, or orientation requires more than being certain about weight placement – I also have to feel in which direction and with which orientation my partner is already moving. Thus, it is more than just being in the right

place at the right time. I need to be aware of the range of actions possible while moving, as well as my goals for influencing my partner, perhaps in accordance with a particular score. Even if I know what is coming because of the pre-determined score, I will still have to negotiate proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact in real-time to execute the action in the right time in the right place. To add the layer of negotiating joint action in the right way for the right reason reopens the question of being virtuous in dancing together.

Predictive success in partnering functions in all sorts of different paradigms. For example, a rule-based system will hold that actions are governed under certain imperatives. Consider how a certain dance has particular rules such as conventions about proximity, orientation, touch, rhythm, and patterns of movement. To execute the particular dance means following the rules of the practice. Juxtapose this with a discovery-based system in which there are very few rules (or at least not very specific ones). Partners can modify proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact as they see fit, and as long as they are negotiating movement on account of each other, it will be considered dancing together. This is a simple, reduced way of viewing differences between codified and improvisational practices. In all cases, the ends of the interaction are important to consider when understanding the capacity of each partner to make decisions in the moment. If, for example, my intention in partnering is to be disruptive or subversive, I will ostensibly encounter my partner differently than if I intended to be cooperative or communicate well. If I am not looking to cooperate, then I may merely be moving *alongside* another rather than partnering. Being deliberate may also contribute to understanding and preventing harm. Rather than focus on the problems of practice in *how* partners make decisions, I turn to *what* it is that partners make decisions about.

Agency

I propose that agency in partnering is a capacity to make and satisfy choices, where degree of weakness and strength is based on the range of possible alternatives. Agency here is not treated as a binary, on-off aspect of interaction, but rather a continuum from weak to strong where one can determine degree based both on the quality and quantity of the choices each agent is able to make. That partners can make decisions makes them agentic. But just because they can make decisions, does not mean that they will be able to in the moment.

How partners negotiate unpredictability depends on their ability to differentiate their actions. If partners can read each other's movements (or they can talk to each other),

then they may be able to fairly easily accommodate unpredictability. There are many more possible choices for how to act with a dance partner than with a wall, clarinet, or cat, at least because humans have more agency. Partners cannot know what is not accessible to them, and moreover cannot control what will be accessible. Thus, partners have to attune to what is being exemplified, whatever information is salient to them in the moment including feedback and the affordances of the partnership.

In normal circumstances, when I approach a person and there is no relationship between my actions and hers, I would quickly understand that we are not interacting, or at least in very limited way. This is likely to be true about how we engage with all sorts of other things that behave unresponsively. This is true even of the way infants engage with others, which we can here consider as human agents with limited agency. In a simple study, Brazelton et al (1975) demonstrated that after several minutes of interaction with a non-responsive (e.g. straight-faced, expressionless) parent, an infant (as young as six months) "rapidly sobers and grows wary [..] makes repeated attempts to get the interaction into its usual reciprocal pattern. When these attempts fail, the infant withdraws [and] orients his face and body away from his mother with a withdrawn, hopeless facial expression" (Brazelton et al 1975). This simple study demonstrates how one might act in an encounter with someone who is unresponsive. Yet people do, however, choose to engage with unresponsiveness. For example, unresponsiveness can be an aesthetic choice and does not necessarily delimit the way partners negotiate on account of each other. If Jack becomes unresponsive by falling still, Sue may fall still also. She may try all sorts of ways to negotiate movement on account of his unresponsiveness.

Agency and predictability thus modify the quality of a physical interaction. I am unlikely to make certain choices if I cannot predict what will happen. Unless I am not as interested in knowing what is going to happen, in which case my relationship to agency is somewhat unusual because I am either a) less concerned with the effects or consequences of my actions or, b) very concerned with the effect of my actions, but not particularly moved by the probability. For example, I think there is a slim chance that my maneuver to lift my partner across the floor will work, I am concerned with its working, but willing to take long odds that it may not work.

One might object to this point about not being able to interact with unpredictable things by asking about the role of certainty in improvisation. There is indeed something strange going on in the situation when we encounter randomness and chance such as the kind in improvisation. By choosing to improvise, one exercises agency in a wagering type

of activity. Ostensibly one's priorities are with a different aspect of the interaction than predicting what will happen. Thus, unpredictability contributes to the interest in how the interaction will unfold, which is worth the potential risk that something will not work. Unpredictability and uncertainty are both particular exercises in agency. Consider for example that Sue lifts Jack over her head with one arm. She may have never done so, but she is curious to see if she is strong enough to get Jack into the air and, if not, whether she is skilled enough to get him safely back on the ground should she fail. Jack may be having an anxiety attack for being lifted in such a precarious way, but he may also be invested in Sue's development as a good partner. They might recognize that it is risky but agree that if they can pull it off, the result will be worth it. So the risk is worth taking. Thus, Sue is exercising her agency in a way that has less to do with whether she can predict the outcome, and more to do with the associated inquiry to see what will happen.

The other kind of objection to making choices in the face of unpredictability is that human agents are only somewhat predictable. Acting in the face of uncertainty is a particular challenge when interacting non-verbally. But partners can glean a lot of information within the nuances of physical interaction in order to negotiate unpredictability. It is not how well partners can predict what the other(s) will do, but how well they will be able to adapt to what a partner will do given an unexpected encounter or circumstance. This is a matter of harnessing ability with competence. Partners can never be absolutely certain if a partner will be ready to respond, so they must attune to ongoing, continuous communication through proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact. Acting with certainty may mean acting from expectation, which can further inhibit mutual attunement to relevant stimuli, particularly if something unexpected happens. Knowledge may be inert in that one can assume that because something worked a particular way before, it must always work this way. Inert knowledge detracts from the process of mutual attunement to relevant stimuli because the know-how is inaccessible. With inert knowledge, one is not actually responsive to the situation, but rather acting from a place of expectation or idealization.

Here we get into an interesting problem about agency in partnering. If partners are merely reacting to one another, does this imply that they are bound to each other's constraints? That is, given the relationship to each other, are partners free to make their own choices, or are they in some way bound, unable or unwilling to make choices? Elgin borrows language from Kant, to highlight the difference between autonomy and heteronomy. She argues, "someone who acts autonomously makes the laws that bind her,

while someone who behaves heteronomously is bound by constraints he neither makes nor endorses” (Elgin 2017, 92). If partners are autonomous then they are free to make choices, independently *and* on account of each other. If an act is autonomous, it is done because the agent endorses it. It is a product of reason. If it is done heteronomously, it is a product of desires or emotions that are not legislated or endorsed by reason. In the extreme case, the heteronomous subject is a victim of his desires, emotions, and drives such that he cannot make a choice. The dancer who is attuned to the actions of his partner, and behaves as he does because he is suitably attuned, acts autonomously. The autonomous dancer can make decisions independently of whatever his partner is doing, or he can make choices on account of what his partner is doing. It is also possible that the autonomous agent can ignore what one’s partner is doing. Elgin argues that agents can “decide whether on reflection to endorse considerations that present themselves as candidates for acceptance” (Elgin 2017, 92). Either way, he can reflectively endorse them, rather than just being driven to do what he does because of unfettered desire or emotion. If an individual is heteronomous, then her actions are a product of unfettered desire or emotion, bound and limited by particular factors. This distinction is useful to analyze insofar as we can understand the awareness each partner has of the constraints elicited by the other, as well as those potential conventions and values ascribed by any given form of partnering while allow individuals to make decisions on their own and in concert with each other.

Consider the way partners act toward and react to each other. Agents make choices about how to constrain particular elements including timing, direction, and orientation—sometimes constraining many elements together, and at other times less so and in different amalgamations. Within partnering, understanding is manifest physically. In each case, the actions of each partner will reflect the quality of their agency, but extenuating circumstances can turn an autonomous agent into a heteronomous one. For example, my partner, while perhaps bound to my constraints, has the autonomy to decide the quality of her response, as well as the agency to accept that my action warrants a particular reaction in the first place. If, in an overhead lift, my partner suddenly becomes afraid, then her unfettered fear may cause her to react by becoming rigid. Her fear prevents her from responding, and by merely reacting she is no longer able to reflectively endorse trust in me as a partner. Assuming that enough information is available to her in the physical situation such that she can be confident that I will not drop her, then it is possible for her to make a choice. But her fear makes certain choices unfeasible, they are unlikely to happen. She does not reflectively endorse or reason about the fact that I have control and am in a position to

keep her safe. On the other hand, her fear may also be a rational and autonomous reflection on her situation. She is afraid because she has reason to believe that I am not in control and or in a position to keep her safe. After all, epistemically grounded emotions can lead to the same situation as heteronomous ones. In either case, my ability to attune to my partner's sudden rigidity, and my competence in dealing with it appropriately to keep us both safe, will contribute to how our interaction unfolds (e.g. whether or not will be successful).

Successful interaction is contingent on actions having recognizable effects, in which recognizable effects exemplify the type of dependence within the interaction. For example, a wall is independent given that my actions have no recognizable effect on it. Although a wall is dependable and predictable, it is odd to say that the wall is interacting with me, and even odder to say that the wall has agency. But I can successfully interact with the wall insofar as my action of leaning is supported by the recognizable effect of the wall withstanding and supporting my weight. My action on a clarinet has more options for recognizable effects, such that certain actions will lead to a sound while others will not. The clarinet has distinct joints and keys that react to certain parameters, many of which require specific knowledge. Having an aim to play the clarinet in a certain way, or indeed lean against the wall to practice being off-balance, are cognitive objectives. Elgin maintains that "it is reasonable to ask whether, or to what extent, the acceptance of a given premise or rule furthers the agent's cognitive objectives" (Elgin 2017, 22). In the case of the wall or the clarinet, my engagement serves to offer opportunities to practice my cognitive objective of sensitivity and attunement, which can subsequently support how I listen and respond with a partner. But the wall and clarinet are fairly predictable, as compared to a human.

Animate subjects are far less predictable than inanimate matter. Nevertheless, we can learn something about agency when we consider the ways in which inanimate matter is *reactive* to our actions. While the clarinet cannot play without me, it reacts differently given the way I interact with it. But to say that the clarinet has agency is odd, because it cannot make decisions. Human interaction is more complicated, at least because of the fact that individuals, unlike inanimate matter, have agency. It is useful, however, to consider the difference between weak and strong agency. This will depend on the types of constraints that are present for each partner. If Jack comes to a social event of a movement form he has no experience with (e.g. tango), interaction with a partner may be limited because he will find their movement potentially random or too complex. Similarly, an experienced dancer in a different form may have trouble interacting with me upon realizing

that their actions have no recognizable effects on me. While the interaction is ostensibly possible, the lack of experience may be what limits agency.

Gilbert offers an example of a man and a woman doing a waltz together, such that it is recognizable as the waltz from merely seeing them on the dance floor. If those observing can recognize that the couple is dancing together, Gilbert questions, "how can the fact of their dancing together be in any way dependent on their thinking any particular thoughts? (Gilbert, 1989, 165). She counters with the following statement:

> Unbeknownst to the observer, she is moving automatically, while her mind is a complete blank. Are they waltzing together? Are they doing anything together? Is *she* doing anything at all? That she is, is not obvious to me, except in the sense in which mere physical movements are doing" (Gilbert 1989, 165, emphasis in the original).

Since Gilbert's work is focused on the conditions of doing something *together*, she is questioning whether the female dancers' automaticity can disqualify the act as a joint one. Gilbert's automatic dancer problematizes the act of dancing together if there is no underlying thought or conception of togetherness, but mere automaticity. How do we account for the relationship between physical conditions and thoughts or conceptions in order to say that individuals are partnering? The question is about what partners exemplify in their movement and through which senses this is perceived. From the discussion in chapter six, we can say that graviception allows partners to attune to feedback about shifts in weight, which change the affordances of the physical interaction.

Returning to the performance of Greta and Roberto, what is interesting to note is that Greta continues to stumble after her first adjustment in the attitude. That she *continues* to stumble exemplifies independence, and as such indicates something about her orientation to Roberto. Without access to her mental state, very little can be said about what she was endorsing or whether she acted autonomously (e.g. she chose to stumble on purpose). Supposing that she wanted to do the choreography well, her continued stumble signals that she reacted heteronomously to losing her balance – she felt herself falling and reacted by adjusting her stance. I bring this point up to propose that Greta's orientation to Roberto in that moment is not that of an agentic partner. In continuing to stumble, the stumble reveals insight about her training, habits, and disposition to dancing with a partner; she adjusts on her own to save the choreography without relying on Roberto. Perhaps she had no other choice because Roberto somehow made it clear to her that he would not help out. It is also conceivable that maybe she would not have entertained the possibility that it was her

responsibility to rely on Roberto in that moment. In other words, it might not have occurred that he could have helped her out. Through comparison with Elke's performance, something about Greta's performance is recognizable in terms of her agency and the way she accepts responsibility by limiting the agency of Roberto in the moment of readjustment. It is also important to note that, despite the continued stumble, both continue the choreography and do not quit mid-performance. Both exemplify their commitment to the choreography by continuing the piece as if nothing happened. It is necessary to acknowledge that the moments that I have pointed to are extremely fleeting, and very likely are non-deliberative. Thus, it is likely that Greta's training and habits take over as her primary resource to be resilient in the face of choreography.

The epistemic dimension of moving together leads to a familiar problem in epistemology: there is always an unknown element in doing anything, which is especially true of doing anything together with others. The unknown element leads to an important kind of uncertainty: individuals generally do not have the resources to be absolutely certain what others are going to do next, so they must launch inquiry about what is going to happen. This may seem too intellectualizing in the context of dance. But if individuals are attending to expressions of willingness in an ongoing, continuous way (subject to changes in proximity, pace, or other actions that call willingness or commitment into question), then some kind of inquiry might be a necessity.

The degree of agency partners can exercise is sometimes governed by the form of partnering. For example, in some forms certain features of proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact are fixed, yet each partner can still make choices, albeit a limited number. A certain dance may require partners to orient toward each in close proximity, with touch as a point of contact by connecting palms on one side of the body and through a half embrace on the other side. A certain dance may also involve roles, such as leader and follower. Leaders may have a distinct task, such as changing the timing, direction, and spatial orientation of a following dancer. If the action of the leader has no recognizable effects on the follower, negotiating movement on account of each other may be unfeasible because the follower is too independent. Though each ostensibly has agency, their decisions may have little to no influence on each other such that each acts independently. On the other hand, the interaction will be too taxing for the leader if the follower exhibits too much dependency. Having too much agency can be paralyzing because the choices are too broad, just as too little agency can be paralyzing because the choices are too narrow. Some constraints are necessary for partners to exercise their agency successfully.

Sometimes constraints depend on the aesthetic and formal conventions of the genre being practiced, at other times constraints are something dancers can explicitly negotiate. For partners to physically negotiate both their individual agencies and their joint agency as a plural subject, they need to be able to differentiate their own individual actions, as well as their joint action, with respect to proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact. In part, differentiation of action means that partners recognize the physical effects they have on each other's movements. If I am unfamiliar with the form of partnering, interaction may prove to be too difficult or perhaps unfeasible if I perceive movements as random or if I am unable to differentiate them because they are too complex. What is perceived as random or complex will likely depend on the context, as well as individual backgrounds and personal histories.

There is a distinction in being prepared for uncertainty by being prepared for anything versus preparing for the worst. This distinction is particularly important to consider when identifying the willingness qua physical readiness and the ability to be ready. When partners prepare for the worst, they may be operating from a feedforward model that prevents them from attuning to feedback because they have already formed beliefs about the partnership. The ability to be prepared for anything in dancing together is as much contingent on physical ability as the kinds of mental models partners operate from. Thus, I turn now to examine the nature of reflection in dancing together.

Reflective Endorsement

As agents, partners can reflectively endorse their choices. But Elgin argues that "reflection does not occur in a vacuum. It involves sensitivity to epistemic ends and means, capacities and limitations. It is imbued with (often tacit) background assumptions and is responsive to epistemic circumstances" (Elgin 2017, 99). I propose that the epistemic circumstances relate to the affordances of the partnership. When partners attune to the information conveyed (i.e. signals), and the effects of the information on each other (e.g. feedback and affordances) at a high enough degree, they are able to understand what is and is not possible. They can reflect, in the moment, on the choices they have available to them. Nuances in agency are contingent on how partners are attuning to each other. To be attuned to one's partner is to be aware of the possibilities within the interaction, including both the limitations and the resources (e.g. physical, psychological). Sometimes this has to do with the degree and quality of experience of dancing together or previous training leading up to the interaction. Attunement coupled with agency may come on a steep learning curve, so

much so that partnering paradigms may be avoided in favor of simply dancing together. It may be easier to move together without the added condition of negotiating movement on account of each other. On the one hand, previous experience (e.g. growing up with siblings or in environments in close proximity with others) may make joint action familiar and natural, but each individual case is different. On the other hand, even when partners have danced together for a long time, there are plenty of reasons why they may be unwilling or unable to negotiate movement on account of each other on any given day. As Elgin argues, "people have inner lives replete with motivations, perceptions, emotions, and thoughts. Because a variety of combinations of psychological elements might yield the same outward behavior, it is impossible to uniquely determine the underlying psychological states from observations of overt behavior alone" (Elgin 2017, 240). Nevertheless, there are aspects of overt behavior that reveal insight into feasibility of mutual attunement.

Since movement in partnering can exemplify all sorts of different aspects of the relation between dancers, partnering has multiple levels of interpretation for behavior, including (at least) kinesthetic, tactile, and graviceptive. Assuming these levels of interpretation are significant in the physical interaction, there emerge particular tensions with respect to quality of attunement, including:

1. One can feel attuned without being attuned
2. To look attuned is not necessarily to be attuned
3. Some movement may *look* more attuned than *actually* being attuned

That one can feel attuned without being attuned is a phenomenological problem – people can feel all sorts of things for any number of reasons. The second and third problem are more complicated from an epistemological perspective. Gilbert's example of the automatic dancer is an illustration of the last two tensions. Without access to other people's minds, we cannot tenably account for intention. But there is more at play than knowing what other people are (or are not) thinking. Long-time partners may know each other's opinions on certain matters such that they know what they're going to say or do, but that does not mean that they are attuned. They simply have experience. An epistemic problem is how partners rely on what they *think* they know, rather than attuning to the information available in the moment. This relates to the cases of false belief, where a partner forms a belief about the way in which they can rely on their partner that is not rooted in evidence such that they think they know something but are mistaken. This can also relate to the *feedforward* model, in which partners act from previous experience rather than from the feedback available to them in the moment. A simple example is when a partner has

executed a lift many times and has come to the conclusion that there is a particular point of contact that is most efficient to successfully execute the lift. In going for the point, the partner acts from a feedforward model and misses information that the point of contact is different than usual. Perhaps the other dancer is sweatier than usually or wearing a different material. By acting from a pre-planned, feedforward model the dancer misses valuable feedback and is unable to perform the lift. This may result in a misstep or even serious injury. The problem is that partners may take their interaction for granted such that they no longer reflectively attune to feedback. As partners become more comfortable within their interaction, there are ostensibly more possibilities to attend to nuance and subtlety, just as there are more opportunities to take joint movement for granted. But partners may be comfortable simply because more time has passed together, or because they are trusting people without the necessary reasons to justify this trust. As I argued in the previous chapter, trust is not a virtue if it leads to blind reliance. While on the one hand, more time means partners have more opportunities to understand what any given movement exemplifies and interpret relevant information to mutually attune to one another, it does not mean that partners will necessarily take advantage of the opportunities.

As Elgin points out, “an agent’s reflective endorsement is a willingness to be bound by an epistemic commitment (an opinion, method, or standard) because, given her background epistemic commitments, she thinks that her epistemic purposes will be served by her being so bound (Elgin 2017, 99). The background epistemic commitments in partnering are the agent’s responsibility to reflectively endorse. But an agent can reflectively endorse something and still be wrong. Since epistemic agents have little control over their environment, they are not negligent if they turn out to be wrong, as long as they gathered all the information they could. One of the problems with mental states is that there is no way to be absolutely certain what someone is thinking without monitoring their mind. There may, however, be some valuable insights gleaned from observing how others move by interpreting what the movement exemplifies.

The information partners need to interpret to mutually attune contributes to their ability to have good form, which can be tied to aesthetic, epistemic, and moral norms. However, there is no universal aesthetic requirement of concern for what partners are doing together. But even without a universal aesthetic requirement, I propose that the moral requirements are still there. Regardless of whether we pursue a virtue-based ethics or a deontological one, partners take on certain obligations when they dance together in the strong sense. For example, there is no universal objection to treating each other as props—

it may simply be an aesthetic choice. Partners may have agreed to do so in advance. Without mutual attunement, however, dancers will merely be moving together. Each may be using the other, but since each has agreed, there is no problem in the commitment. Moreover, they can, and do, reason about how they behave when treating each other as props. I believe that dancers should develop the ability to partner well, so that the range of possibilities within the partnership expands.

Partners can be aware that the standards and norms they set for themselves will influence how they negotiate joint movement, and indeed how they accept and endorse joint action. But just because they can be aware of the standards, does not mean that they will be, or that they will exercise agency in accordance with those standards. Presumably partners want to have as broad an aesthetic range as possible, so they will not want to foreclose their options in dancing together. The capacity for responsiveness is grounded in movement histories and abilities to reflectively endorse those histories in appropriate ways. Reflective endorsement is a process of strategic bodily iteration, drawing on one's unique disposition and movement history to maneuver through the expectations of other bodies in a given situation. Thus, I turn to the question of responsibility. What are the tools partners can learn in order to satisfy their epistemic and moral obligations to each other?

Moral Epistemic Agency

The idea that partners can, as epistemic agents, reason about their interaction needs further clarification. I have numerous times pointed to the fact that partners are mutually attuning to their ongoing joint commitment. As such, I now propose that their joint action can be considered a physical inquiry. For Elgin, the onset of inquiry involves a commitment that include "hunches, rules of thumb, superstitions, and old wives' tales as well as confirmed generalizations, proven theorems, firmly established principles, and solid evidence" (Elgin 2017, 64). In the moment when Sue realizes that someone is dancing alongside her, she begins a physical inquiry. If she continues dancing, she may have a hunch that the encounter is an expression of willingness to dance together. When she glances over, her hunch is proven right as she realizes that it is Jack Smith. She continues to dance alongside Jack, constituting a physical proximity and orientation toward Jack, and in so doing establishes a physical willingness to dance together. As they continue to dance together, whether their actions will be negotiated on account of each other necessitates

ongoing attunement to feedback and affordances for both Jack and Sue. But inquiry involves systematically ruling out or refining commitments.

Partners exercise moral epistemic agency by accepting a commitment in which joint movement is established and maintained well through a high degree of mutual attunement based on receptive and responsive communication. In chapter six and seven, I demonstrated how physical dependence plays a role in negotiating movement as well as underlying mental states such as trust. The point of agreement the negotiation presupposes can be considered as the space where inquiry begins. Decisions made in real-time by each party are based on interpreting the physical actions they direct at one another. Movements like weight-shifts and weight-sharing are negotiated on account of each other, individually and in concert with others, regardless of whether the movement is extemporaneously generated or choreographed. For successful communication, there must be agreement between each agent about which signals are meaningful and what constitutes an appropriate response. This agreement may be largely unspoken, simply by following the conventions of a particular movement form. That is, in partnering, to be able to communicate physically and to engage in a calibrated mode of attunement, dancers cannot simply be moving randomly, even if movement is improvised. Agreeing on the appropriate conventions by which partners negotiate movement raises a concern of what partners reason about within their interaction. Reasoning here is not in reference to the verbal exchanges that occur between partners, although those too are valuable. Rather reasoning here is in reference to the means by which partners understand and interpret each other through their joint action.

Elgin distinguishes between available reasons and accessible reasons. Available reasons are those that an agent recognizes as relevant as those the agent can “call to mind” (Elgin 2017, 100). I have an available reason to believe that Sue is trustworthy because I just saw her lift Jack and place him back on balance before moving on to another action. Accessible reasons are those she as an agent can readily draw on, which is information that is obtainable in an “epistemic milieu” (Elgin 2017, 100). An accessible reason is asking someone in the studio if Sue is trustworthy, if I realize that I do not have the information myself. Elgin further argues that “reasons are considerations that can properly be adduced to support a conclusion […] reasons thus are public” (Elgin 2017, 100). Extending to dancing together, Elgin’s claim suggests that one’s own ideas and hunches may inform how one moves but if the ideas, hunches, beliefs, and so on, do not emerge from the information I have accessible and available, then I am no longer reasoning and may be setting myself up for trouble. My argument is that *responsible* partners actively recognize what is

physically available and possible given the affordances of their partnership. They are able to adapt to suitable modes of interaction and to accommodate each others' abilities.

One's ability to reason when something is unsuccessful may yield more successful results. The problem is that we may be successful by accident or by coincidence. Consider how one might be successful in executing multiple partnered turns, because of strength and dexterity, but not because of refined senses of graviception. We can consider even more subtle examples in which success may be a result of the material of the interaction with the floor because of footwear (e.g. socks or dance shoes) or the type of floor itself (more or less slippery). By switching to a different studio space, different material of footwear, or a different partner, one might fail to execute the turns that were otherwise (accidentally) successful. Without deliberate reasoning, one may never come to understand why one was successful in the first place. Thus, it is up to partners to hold themselves and each other accountable. The range of alternatives is there, but the question is what enables access to it. A successful partnership will be grounded in partners' *willingness* and *ability* to intentionally and deliberately access the part of their knowledge that is relevant to the current situation, which unfolds in real-time. But this reasoning need not be deliberative, given that dancing together involves sensing and perceiving information through the body in real-time. As such, moral epistemic agency is not a brute application of previously learned 'inert' knowledge, but a responsive, embodied understanding of how individual movement possibilities are accessible and appropriate. It is in this conception of reasoning that we come to virtue ethics.

Elgin argues that "virtues are relatively stable dispositions to think and/or act well, where a disposition is not merely an ability to do something, but an ability combined with a propensity to do it" (Elgin 2013, 136). Elgin's claim moves beyond ability to suggest propensity. This is particularly relevant to partnering, as individuals might be willing and able to dance together in the strong sense, but may not have the disposition or propensity to follow a virtue-based model of doing good. Virtues in partnering must be related to the disposition and propensity to attune to a high enough degree such that feedback and affordances are accessible, which includes fine-grained responsiveness and exercising responsibility in one's own actions in relation to others. Virtuosity in partnering is necessarily relational, since negotiating movement on account of each other well requires an epistemic exercise of understanding relevant features of the interaction. Virtuosity is a disposition to think *and* act well, which means being deliberate in the dexterity and awareness to negotiate interaction with ease, precision, and excellence. How well partners

maneuver each other, whether passages are choreographed or improvised, reveals insight about excellence in attunement. The problem with virtuosity is that different forms have different value systems, and different observers may have different histories which limit the classes of comparison or the ideology of what's appropriate in physical interaction. As such, virtuosity may be something that needs to be negotiated as part of the joint commitment established between partners when they agree to move together. Elgin further argues "internalizing the norms of a practice does not just engender a disposition to behave, but a normative disposition—a disposition to hold oneself accountable" (Elgin 2017, 52). This is one of my personal interests as a practitioner and educator. By internalizing the norms of partnering, dancers engender the disposition to mutually attune and hold themselves accountable for their attunement. This includes how partners exercise their agency in negotiating joint movement on account of each other, with virtues such as respect, empathy, generosity, and caring. Thus, as I argued in the previous chapter, success in dancing together in the strong sense means adopting a virtue-based view of moral ethics. Since the shared goal is to negotiate movement on account of each other, part of the virtuosity is also the *propensity* for mutual understanding. Thus, virtuosity in partnering is keyed to reasoning in the moment.

Elgin points out that "the agent, along with other members of epistemic community, sets standards of evidence and thresholds for acceptance" (Elgin 2017, 98). This is problematic if the standards are too low or the evidence is undefined. This is why Elgin endorses epistemic responsibilism – it is a responsibility of agents themselves to exercise choice to set the standards. For partnering, where the standards influence well-being in joint action, the standards need to be appropriately defined so as to ensure good form to support cooperation and safety. Responsible partners recognize how their own actions influence others at least in so far as they uphold and maintain their joint commitment to each other. To be responsible is to understand the range of appropriate responses potentially available, in the moment, in ways that are ethically suitable given the constraints and resources of the agents.

Certain forms will have more rigid conventions about how to respond given certain actions, while other forms of movement may provide more freedom for constituents. Dancers may also be able to innovate within a form, finding ways to adhere to aesthetic conventions while pushing the boundaries of a form to new possibilities. As long as partners are willing and able to cooperate, and they have the ability to deliberately bring their intentions into action, they will be set up for reasonable physical inquiry. As their

interaction unfolds, they will have opportunities to revise their commitment. As Elgin argues,

> if an opinion is supposed by a tightly woven tapestry of reasons, and the opinion turns out to be erroneous, more than that particular opinion must be revised or rejected. The question arises: how could it be wrong? What have we been missing, or overlooking, or underestimating, or misconstruing? The realization that this is *not* the way things are in a particular area can afford avenues of insight into the way things are at the very least, it enables us to focus attention on particular aspects of our system of commitments (Elgin 2017, 305).

It is likely impossible to directly address the tensions of attunement practically in a prescriptive sense because there is no way to be absolutely certain in advance whether one will be attuned or not. There are, however, signals that reveal insight about whether attunement is feasible and likely. Using Elgin's language, partnering is a pure procedure. She states that "only if the procedure is actually carried out are its performers and products determinate" (Elgin 1996, 16). To evaluate the pure procedure of dancing together in the strong sense is to examine the course of the actions that occur – attuning to feedback and the affordances of the partnership throughout the procedure. Partners ought to aim to evaluate as objectively as possible, to reflectively endorse the information they are receiving.

There is an important distinction worth clarifying. The difference between being deliberate and deliberating. To deliberate is to engage in thoughtful consideration. Elgin further argues that,

> Being duly sensitive to circumstances involves being sensitive to the norms of a practice. Such sensitivity is a part of knowing how to participate in those practices, for the norms govern what may be done, what must be done, and what must not be done within the practice. If this sensitivity has become second nature, we need not deliberate, and may not be able to articulate the norms that constrain or guide us" (Elgin 2017, 51).

Thus, it is possible to be deliberate without necessarily deliberating about one's actions. Moreover, one need not necessarily be able to articulate what one is doing well. This effectively characterizes those who partner well without conscious awareness of what it is they are doing. They are negotiating movement on account of each other because it is internalized, and as such, requires no extended deliberation. Moral epistemic agents in partnering resist the lure of certainty by engaging in physical inquiry to attune to and responsibly respond to the information that is accessible to them.

Drawing from Aristotle's concept of virtue, Elgin suggests that doing the right thing in the right way, at the right time for the right reason can become internalized. As such, an agent "does not, and need not, deliberate about what to do. She need not even be conscious or expressly aware of why she does what she does" (Elgin 2017, 50). Understanding in partnering means that responsible partners make choices about how to communicate, exercising moral epistemic agency to adhere to a joint commitment to move together responsibly.

To be able to approach partnering systematically requires understanding the inner logic of ever-changing physical information, such as subtle shifts in spatial relationships, forces of energy, and so on. By referring to logic here, I do not mean to suggest a purely deliberative process. Rather, logic in this sense refers to analysis built on foundational principles emerging from an embodied process of sensing, interpreting, and evaluating physicality. From the previous chapters, we know that this is complex because of the underlying motivating factors for why partners seek to establish joint commitments in the first place. Elgin argues, "in agreeing to work together, people engender obligations to one another—obligations whose content is determined by the objective they are jointly pursing" (Elgin 2017, 139). In this way, logic in partnering is driven by the joint goal of negotiating joint movement on account of each other. Thus, an adequate theory of partnering must account for what is already happening when partners' movement is negotiated on account of each other. A descriptive theory of partnering must also account for what it is that partners are after in their shared goal of dancing together in the strong sense.

There are two goals that I want to spell out further here, one is efficacy and the other is efficiency. By referring here to efficacy and efficiency, I am referring to the idea that in each case of partnering, there is a way to conserve energy (i.e. be efficient) as well as satisfy aesthetic criteria of a given movement form (i.e. ballet, contact improvisation) or a particular choreographer. There are at least two notions of energy here. One is the conservation of energy, which points to the laws and principles of physics (e.g. inertia, force, angular momentum, and so on). Another notion is how energy is conserved such that dancers do not get fatigued, which can be quite a strange guiding question given that certain forms of dance often require complex and effortful sensory multi-tasking. One of my favorite ballet teachers used to say, "if you are worried about efficiency, stop practicing ballet because this form is about complexity". Whether or not he was right, we can consider a simple example. A *tendu*—one of the basic movements in classical ballet—involves focus on turnout and spine alignment, as well as *porte de bras*, let alone rhythm (and musicality

if relevant) when executed at *barre*, center, in choreography or in improvisation. Despite it being a seemingly simple movement, a *tendu* will expend quite a lot of energy, as compared with just moving the foot out without any such concerns. This is why efficacy is parallel to efficiency—one attempts to conserve energy *in tandem* with the aesthetic concerns of the form. The aesthetic concerns of one form (e.g. contact improvisation) may have a stronger focus on effortless, energy-saving movement than another form (e.g. classical ballet) given varying emphasis on specific bodily positions and formalized choreographic patterns and figures. These aesthetic concerns will influence how partners engage with each other, which may not always be explicit.

When people do things together, they may have a host of goals, intentions, and motives underlying their joint action. Divergent motives don't matter as long as they don't get in the way of responsiveness, receptivity, and resilience. Though we may not have access to what people are thinking, we do have clues based on what is manifest in the act of dancing together. There is also a function in doing something together, a means to an end such as walking together to get to the store or dancing together to build community, as well as intrinsic value such as walking together or dancing together for the sake of doing something together. This is where the distinction between efficiency and efficacy becomes more important. Partners may be willing to dance together, but not to make themselves vulnerable by giving away (at least some) control of things like direction, orientation, timing, point of contact, and so on. Though being vulnerable may in the end be less efficient, it may also lead to more effective cooperation. By being vulnerable, partners are able to establish and maintain higher degrees of attunement and exercise better and more respectful choices in light of the affordances of the partnership.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to demonstrate the normative significance of deliberate actions and responsible reasoning with respect to mutual attunement. I unpacked the underpinning claims of efficiency, efficacy, and ethics, and I argued that it is the precision and coordination of these three concepts that makes partnering different than other kinds of interactions that are physical such as merely moving together. I drew in particular on Elgin's concept of reflective endorsement and moral epistemic agency, expanding Gilbert's concept of intentionality within the realm of dance. I argued for the difference between

intentional action–to do something on purpose, and deliberate action—to do something on purpose with the added complexion of having the competence to be able to do so well.

Responsible dancers attune to the way their partners respond and/or react, to evaluate and reason about whether a partner's proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact are appropriate and constitute an expression of willingness to form a joint commitment. Sensitivity to the responses or reactions prepares partners for the unexpected. As Elgin argues, a skilled reasoner "constructs sound arguments, draws on relevant evidence, holds herself responsible for flaws in her reasoning. The corrections she makes or accepts, as well as the principles she adduces, are indications of the norms she takes herself to be answerable to" (Elgin 2017, 53). This depends on how nuanced partners' choices are in understanding the available range of responses. In whatever partnering paradigm partners choose to practice (e.g. lead/follow, improvisation, predetermined choreography, etc.), responsible partners must accept the constraints of the form as well as the fact that actions are always communicative. I often use the maxim "everything you do matters—it doesn't matter what you do" to remind dancers that all of their actions have consequences, and it is a responsibility to evaluate what is appropriate in the moment.

Within the physical interaction, aesthetic conventions also significantly impact the different possibilities with regard to which partner has the agency to accept, reject, or ignore actions. Having particular *aesthetic* goals about how they move together within their interaction, in addition to negotiating movement on account of each other, will further restrict what constitutes as appropriate. Willingness, ability, and understanding need to be satisfied in order to dance together in the strong sense, but individuals will not necessarily make good decisions even if all the conditions are satisfied. Thus, I argue, non-deliberative reasoning based on physical inquiry is a necessary component of partnering well.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have interrogated the act of dancing together as a joint physical commitment. I identified sufficient conditions to establish a commitment, which served to distinguish between dancing together and partnering. I defined partnering as dancing together in the strong sense. In making this distinction, I argued for mutual attunement as an additional condition, which plays a role in how partners maintain their joint physical commitment of dancing together in the strong sense. Further, I have argued that mutual attunement is a relationship where partners are receptive to feedback and the affordances of the partnership such that they can be appropriately responsive. In so doing, I have laid a foundation for evaluating normative dimensions of establishing and maintaining a joint physical commitment. This foundation serves as an epistemological framework from which to create a descriptive theory of partnering.

The previous chapters have sought to make clear the conditions and normative dimensions of dancing together. In this final chapter, my goal is to explore the implications that emerge from this epistemological foundation. I will consider how this foundation provides effective terminology to support critical evaluation of physical joint commitment. I will examine embedded values of establishing and maintaining joint physical commitments, including empathy, generosity, and care. I will conclude by demonstrating that partnering is discursive – though different forms of practice have their own rules and conventions, the basis for joint commitment in the physical domain makes partnering a discourse in and of itself that is relevant and applicable across genres that value joint action in the strong sense.

Evaluating Predicates in Partnering

Throughout this thesis, I have argued that maintaining the joint commitment in partnering is reliant on fine-grained mutual attunement, in which communication, dependence, and agency play a key role. The joint commitment in partnering requires more than just the conception of attunement that partners envision when dancing together. By extrapolating epistemic problems in partnering, I demonstrated that partners have evidence to reason about the quality of the interaction. Evidence can be coarse or fine-grained, depending on the competence of the individuals. Since the relevant concepts of attunement are complex and multi-faceted, partners may use the same words in inexact, vague ways based on inadequate understanding. Thus, terms need to be defined and stabilized in order to be on the 'same page' and to evaluate successfully what is and is not working.

The main concepts I have identified throughout this thesis are willingness, ability, understanding, attunement, commitment, receptivity, responsiveness, and affordance. In chapter seven, I introduced the distinction between two- and three-part predicates. I argued that trust in partnering is a three-part predicate, where partners trust each other to be receptive, responsive, and resilient when things go wrong. Having laid out an epistemological foundation, I propose that that the other relevant terminology, namely willingness, ability, understanding, attunement, commitment, receptivity, and responsiveness, are also three-part predicates. As such, we can ask: willing *to (do) what?* Ability *to (do) what?* Committed *to (do) what?* Receptive *to what?* Responsive *to what?* The affordances *of what*? Understanding these terms as three-part predicates supports the evaluation of my main research questions, mainly what it means to dance together and what it means to dance together well. Together the relevant terms coalesce into a framework that supports my main aim of developing a generic philosophy of dancing together.

In chapter four, I argued that for an interaction to be feasible, partners need to have a base level of attunement to each other, as well as their environment and others around them. Though a base level of attunement may satisfy the conditions of joint action, it is the focus and the degrees of attunement that will differentiate dancing together in the strong sense. Thus, it is not just that dancers express willingness, but that they express willingness to do something in particular (e.g. to be receptive to relevant signals). Moreover, partners must be *able* to be receptive, contingent on physical readiness and bodily disposition to sense and perceive relevant information. With a low degree of attunement, partners may

encounter obstacles, physically, emotionally, or even energetically, which will render their interaction unfeasible even if they have expressed willingness to dance together. For example, partners may fail to establish a common timing necessary for the interaction, run into other couples on the dance floor at a social event, or be unaware of aesthetic conventions of a given movement form such that their interaction breaks down. By mutually attuning to each other, partners can maintain their joint commitment by deliberately responding to each other's signals that are formed through proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact.

Partners may form a joint commitment to mutually attune and negotiate movement on account of each other, but their actions do not align with their intentions. This, too, requires critical evaluation of whether they are actually moving on account of one another. On the one hand, there is the phenomenological experience of dancing together. Partners can *feel* attuned without necessarily satisfying the conditions of mutual attunement. This can be for a number of reasons, but the *experience* of dancing together is not what I have been after in this thesis. Rather, I have been asking how the phenomenon of dancing together is different when partners are negotiating movement on account of each other.

Since partnering is a physical act, the understanding of aspects such as transfer of force, graviception, timing, effort, and so on needs to be exemplified and manifest in the action. This is observable and discernable from the outside, as well as from inside the partnership. I have considered how individuals exemplify particular kinds of relationships in the act of dancing together. Competence in *exemplifying* these signals does not necessarily mean competence in *discerning* these signals. This is how we can account for dancers that are good partners within certain relationships, and not so good partners within other relationships. A major problem is that partners can *attempt* to mutually attune without the skills to do so. I have explored how while they have set an intention and establish a joint commitment, their attempts to partner are unlikely to be successful without the requisite skills to do so.

I have argued that it is important to note that from merely observing it is impossible to tell the exact intentions of others because we do not have access to other people's minds. Nevertheless, there are clues that offer evidence about aspects of attunement, including receptivity, responsiveness, and agency. Evaluating the two recordings of *Petite Mort* provided the opportunity to conceptually analyze dancing together from a real scenario. Returning to the case of Roberto and Greta performing *Petite Mort,* both Roberto and Greta's responses and reactions are determined by the experiences and habits that led up to

the moment of the performance. That Greta stumbles is a misstep that happens often in dance. That she *continues* to stumble reveals her orientation to Roberto, opening insight about her training, habits, and disposition toward dancing with others in a broader sense. As I discussed, without access to Greta's thoughts, we don't know why she continues to stumble in the way she does. But by evaluating the continued adjustment and readjustment in light of concepts such as receptivity, responsiveness, and resilience, there are clues that support claims about her agency. My analysis showed how Greta limits Roberto's agency in the moment that she continues to stumble on her own. The continued adjustment and readjustment of her foot reveals that she is taking responsibility for herself, and in so doing limits the agency of Roberto. Attributing limited agency means limiting the responsibility.

Even with familiar movements, such as existing patterns or set choreographies, there is a limited set of individuals who have insight about what the movement should be. Observers thus need to be informed (such as a choreographer, coach, or instructor) such that they know what they are looking for. I have proposed that without relevant information, observers must withhold the temptation to ascribe meaning about intentions based on overt behavior alone. But observers can respond by saying something such as 'I cannot make a claim because I do not know what the dancers partnership is *predicated* on'. By viewing Greta stumble it is impossible to say whether or not she intended to trust Roberto, or even whether she actually trusts Roberto in that moment. Perhaps she does, and the mental state is not aligning with her behavior. While the distinction between dancing together and partnering is real, it may actually be difficult to discern from the outside. Thus, I have focused on the terminology of interrelated concepts to support more critical evaluation.

In chapter four, I explored how forms of practice, including those that involve choreography, regimented systems, or even improvisation, set necessary conditions but not sufficient conditions. There are a vast number of degrees of freedom and fine-grained choices that go into how partners do what they do. Dancing together is a realm within which they have choices. This is discernible, in that expressions are physically manifest such that they can be visible to others. I believe that dancers must appreciate how much room for choice is open to them regardless of the prescription of the form.

Experienced dancers may come to genres where they do not understand the conventions and rules of the practice, and so merely emulate what they see. They may make all sorts of mistakes based on conceptual errors, from bumping into a partner from poor negotiation to bodily harm. As I argued in chapter eight, competence and propensity are different things. Just because one is willing and able, does not mean that one will

necessarily behave well. Moreover, sometimes dancers do not realize how much agency they've got because they might be focused on being efficient according to standards that they follow too dogmatically. Things gets murky when the *how* and the *what* are collapsed. Thus, I have focused throughout this thesis on the conditions that satisfy dancing together in the strong sense, and what norms contribute to partnering well.

In chapter seven, I noted the distinction in moral ethics between deontological views that value a 'do no harm' principle, and a virtue-based view that values a 'do good' principle. Drawing on Gilbert's concept of plural subjecthood, we are left questioning the singular subject in dancing together. Understanding the two terms, singular and plural, as a continuum provides the basis to qualify interaction. This satisfies the concern in this thesis to describe the kinds of attitudes and range of movements individuals can exemplify in dancing together in order to more critically evaluate what is happening.

In chapters seven and eight, I attempted to untangle the complex idea of what it means to be a plural subject through constructing hypothetical scenarios and thought experiments. A complicated scenario that is particularly compelling to dissect is when two interacting individuals retain their individuality, rather than forming what would be a plural subject. Within dancing together, there are at least two ways in which agents can behave as individuals. The first is perhaps quite obvious: individuals can make selfish choices. For the purpose of getting across the point, consider the following hypothetical scenario: when presented with a situation in which a couple may get injured if they continue dancing, a selfish partner will abandon the partnership and move away from the situation. The second way in which an agent behaves as an individual is less obvious. Taking the same situation, if the partner is ready to protect his partner above himself, then his selfless action is still singular – he thinks only of his partner. In both cases, a partner behaves with one individual aim. We can consider less reductive examples. Consider how a social event may attract individuals to socialize through dancing. Upon entering the event, a singular partner will focus on their own aims to socialize, behaving in a way that is either entirely selfish (doing the majority of talking without waiting for a partner's response), or entirely selfless (listening to a partner without offering anything of their own). These reductive examples do not show the depth or breadth of mentalities in partnering, but simply serve to illustrate how a partner can behave within a physical interaction. This returns to the predicate problem of what it is that dancers are *willing* and *able* to do, and what they understand about the joint commitment of dancing together. Their *understanding* might prevent partnering because the strong sense of dancing together imposes restrictions of being

attunement to feedback and affordances. As I argued in chapter seven and eight, this requires willingness to be vulnerable.

In chapters five through eight, I have considered a plural mentality. As a plural subject, each partner behaves in a way that supports themselves and their partner. Plural agency upholds the relation between partners above and beyond individual aims. In a situation where the couple may both be injured, a responsible plural agent will reason, in the moment, about the available choices to protect the partnership (and those within it). As argued in chapter eight, to be responsible in partnering is to have both the disposition and the propensity to act well. I have also argued that people make mistakes. The crux of the problem is how partners adapt to each other when something unexpected or erroneous happens; partnering involves an obligation to negotiate movement on account of each other (chapter four) and this obligation requires communication to maintain and uphold the commitment (chapter five). By synthesizing the arguments about obligation and commitment, I can unpack how partnering might be understood as a civic practice.

Limitations

This study has a number of limitations worth mentioning. One is that it may be perceived as ableist. Willingness and ability have featured prominently as two keys conditions of establishing and maintaining a partnered interaction. This leads to questions such as, who is and who is not able to partner and how does the condition of ability exclude certain populations from partnering? While these questions are certainly valid and critical, the aim of this study has been to distinguish between dancing together and partnering. My conception of dancing together is broader, encompassing various styles and forms. Partnering, on the other hand, is more specific, such that certain approaches will be excluded in order to distinguish the act of doing something together for the sake of togetherness, and doing something together with mutual attunement. There are many reasons why people might not want to mutually attune. There are dispositional reasons why people will be unable to mutually attune. What those specific reasons are and who they impact has not been included here, since my aim was to argue for how ability itself features into partnering as a necessary condition. We can take blindness as an example. Those who are clinically diagnosed as blind cannot see, but this does not necessarily have bearing on their ability to comprehend or deeply interact with others. This is true of partnering as well – the disposition that prevents individuals from mutually attuning is the disposition that excludes partnering. Noting that ability may suggest a privileging of ableism, my intention

is not to align ability with particular bodies. That is, my point about mutual attunement does not rest on societal expectations of normalcy.

There is also a limitation in this study on two particularly complex notions: one is performativity and the other is consent. I do not speak explicitly about performativity in partnering because the notion that partnering is whatever we say it is, is necessarily limited in a practical way. When two people decide they are partnering, they may have reasons to believe that they are. If they are merely dancing together without mutual attunement, then my study offers tools by which onlookers and partners alike can evaluate their performance in a way that breaks down whether or not the reasons are plausible. The feeling of partnering, as written about by phenomenologists and practitioners, is different than the phenomenon of partnering that is contingent on the satisfaction of certain conditions (namely mutual attunement).

I see ways in which partnering need not necessarily be performed exclusively by two bodies, nor exclusively in Western forms of dance. The thought experiments and hypothetical scenarios throughout this thesis have drawn on the work of Margaret Gilbert, as well as the comparison of the *Petit Mort* duet. I do not see these necessarily as the only instances in which partnering is performed or enacted. There are instances of mutual attunement in forms that are call and response, that do not even involve physical contact through touch. It is for this reason that my conditions of communication name proximity, orientation, and point of contact as generic conditions. As I argued in chapter five, the point of contact could be breath, eye contact, music, or even choreographic structures. As long as the dancers have the means to mutually attune to each other, then they can satisfy the conditions of partnering. I think this is applicable in many forms of dance, outside of those I have mentioned or those that are even well-known or documented. Gilbert's paradigm case of walking together clearly frames the argument that individuals can be doing something together in the strong sense as long as they satisfy the conditions of willingness in common knowledge (which I argued in chapter four). My extending point is that to dance together in the strong sense requires mutual attunement. Any form that permits mutual attunement can be considered partnering. Those forms that involve physical interaction without mutual attunement would, according to my theory, be considered dancing together but not necessarily partnering.

As for consent, who has the power and privilege to consent to mutual attunement is a significant topic for future studies. In my own practice as a professional dancer, I think often and deeply about what consent means with respect to partnering. These questions,

while fascinating and crucial, interfere with the broader epistemological inquiry into necessary and sufficient conditions that I sought to establish. That is, the idea of consent only makes sense given that there are certain commitments that obligate partners to each other. Before getting to consent, it was necessary to lay out the foundation for those commitments and obligations. While this study was limited to laying out an epistemological framework for establishing, maintaining, and evaluating partnering, I look forward to taking up the critical questions of ableism, performativity, and consent in my future work.

Partnering as Civic Practice

By attending to subtle shifts in proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact, partners prime each other to make movement matter. In chapter eight, I argued that responsible dancers reason about the quality of the interaction by launching ongoing inquiry. This includes whether a partner is going through the motions of partnering as a code dictated by an aesthetic convention versus intentionally and deliberately communicating through proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact. Sometimes this is apparent immediately, as dancers lack the differentiation to understand how their proximity, orientation, and point(s) of contact influence their partner. Other times, partners may move together for a long time without ever realizing that they are merely upholding the conventions of a practice, rather than negotiating movement on account of each other.

Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated the value of joint commitment, communication, dependence, and moral epistemic agency. I have also argued that the aesthetic and moral dimensions are already situated within the act of moving together. In chapter four, I argued about the shared goals partners commit to in dancing together. By seeking something like beauty in the joint act, partners are manifesting their own aesthetic values. Whether this is creating particular shapes or avoiding effort, the aesthetic values of partnering are manifold. Within the physical act, however, there are ways to inflict harm, intentionally or not, such that the moral dimensions are ever-present. There are more complex issues at play when we consider the aesthetic pursuit of harm, which opens up a culturally-saturated slew of questions that are beyond the scope of this thesis.

I have argued that to partner well means understanding actions toward each other as part of an ongoing inquiry, not as affirmation of absolute truth. In other words, responsible partners recognize that they might be wrong. Moral epistemic agency is a

significant responsibility in partnering. It means entering into a joint commitment to be responsible for oneself and for others. For dancing together in the strong sense, the predicates that are instantiated and exemplified by the partnership are not available to the individuals alone. It is important to note that dancing together and partnering are different, not *necessarily* better or worse. Because of the willingness and ability to establish dependence, and willingness and ability to be receptive, those who seek to establish a joint commitment *to partner* can make certain things manifest that were not available to the other. But the same is true of the opposite, by doing something together they sacrifice something that could be manifest of doing it apart. My framework supports the claim that dancing together in the strong sense extends the expressive powers of the partnership in that those partnering can do things that those merely dancing together cannot. The success of a physical interaction will be based on one's willingness and ability to attune to the feedback from signals that exemplify features of attunement.

Given that partnering involves multiple people negotiating movement together on account of each other, previous histories, expectations, assumptions, and motivations inherently infuse the practice. The fact that partnering can be evaluated as a range from good to bad, successful to unsuccessful, and so on, makes the joint act subject to questions about which values are good, worthwhile, or appropriate. The pursuit of partnering as an ideology, in which there is some margin of success to respond appropriately in moving with others, makes the joint act value-laden. The multiplicity of perspectives in partnering, even if the scenario is simply a dyad, makes evaluating value problematic. The larger problem is that genres of partnering have their own ideologies, so what works for tango might not work for contact improvisation on an aesthetic scale. But the values of partnering with respect to mutual attunement, communication, and agency may be beyond the aesthetic.

As a civic practice, negotiating movement on account of each other may lead to salience such that practitioners are more aware and attuned to elements of physical interaction in a broad sense. By civic practice, I mean that partners orient to each other as responsible, moral agents. By dancing together, individuals can embody the traits of being good citizens. I have shown how one way to understand the standards of communication and attunement is to consider how signals function between partners in conveying more information than relative position, proximity, and point(s) of contact in chapter five. Signals between partners function as symbols that exemplify attitudes such as trust, respect, caring, empathy, and so on. Exemplification in partnering means that partnering is not a

metaphor or representation for relationship, the act itself requires relating. As such, upholding a joint physical commitment to be vulnerable, to be respectful, to be caring, to be responsible, and so on, can be understood as a practice of negotiating physical interaction that might build skillsets related to empathy, generosity, and other virtues.

In chapter eight, I argued that responsible partners exercise moral epistemic agency to adhere to a joint commitment to communicate with care, treating their partners as agents who are capable of acting and responding from their own individual dispositions and complex histories. I asked, how do dancers shift from using the words to actually exemplifying the concepts? This is partially an empirical problem, which would require testing out what is happening when dancers say one thing but do something else. Given the necessary conditions of joint commitment and communication, as well as the norms of attunement, reasoning, and agency, it would follow that these are the concepts that need to be understood, and furthermore exemplified in movement.

My framework offers the basis for developing strategies for ethically interacting with a partner. These strategies should focus on making certain aspects of movement salient, such that physical interaction becomes a practice of attuning, setting intentions, and developing precision and control to deliberately realize intentions in action. Maintaining mutual gaze, sustained physical contact, isolating and synchronizing particular body parts are all examples of features that require strategies and tools to be efficient and ethical. The strength and dexterity necessary to execute particular elements also features into partners' ability to negotiate their movement on account of each other with ease and precision. How well partners maneuver each other, whether passages are choreographed or improvised, reveals insight about excellence in relation. The problem with virtuosity is that dance genres have different value systems, and different observers may have different histories which limit the classes of comparison or the ideology of what's possible in physical interaction. As such, virtuosity may be something that needs to be negotiated as part of the joint commitment established between partners when they agree to dance together.

The arguments I have developed have formed in part through reflecting on my own experience working with ballroom dancers, I have often heard the rhetoric that ballroom dancing leads to better communication skills. But I have also seen firsthand how ballroom dancers preparing for competition focus so much on winning that they forgo communication and negotiation in order to physically excel. I have seen a similar sort of situation at contact improvisation jams, where practitioners are so focused on the aesthetic experience of the movement that they do not attend to what their partners are signaling.

These examples serve to demonstrate the possibility of singular agents despite the rules or conventions of a practice. To address this kind of attitude, I have examined how partners need to make the goals of their commitments explicit and look out for patterns that signal lack of attunement. If the commitment is merely to do something together, in which dance is happenstance, then there is not an obvious problem since there is no commitment to negotiate movement on account of each other. But dancing together may have an implicit agreement that leaves some people feeling dissatisfied or misunderstood. I have shown that the motives for doing anything physical together are problematic when motives diverge such that a shared goal is impossible to uphold.

Dancing together may present a tension between an individual motivation and a collective one, and it is sometimes (if not always) impossible to glean the motives of others without explicitly asking. The tension between the individual motives and the collective ones further opens the space for considering the normative dimensions of physical interactions as they correlate to civic practice (e.g. how people relate to each other as citizens of the world). The situation in which one may be at fault for having individual motives that misalign with the collective ones are the places in which implicit social contracts are prevalent.

Throughout chapters five, six, seven, and eight, I demonstrated that the competence to partner well requires technical understanding. Competencies such as fine-grained attunement and subtle communication skills may also point to how partnering can have utility beyond itself. This is a rhetoric that appears in claims such as dancing together leads to improved memory, happiness, better communication skills, and so on. The implication of utility means orienting to transfer skills, beyond the dancing itself. But this form of moral epistemic agency need not transfer over outside of dance, or otherwise all great dancers would be great people (which we know is not the case). While some of these claims may be purely rhetorical to attract newcomers to a form, what would need to be true in order for partnering to be considered a civic practice? One obvious cross-over may be the way in which partners practice communicating with one another. The kind of communication would have to be basic and general enough that it would be applicable in circumstances outside of dance. Although the specifics of this thesis involve dance, physical interaction is not peculiar to dance—there are all sorts of interactions from which individuals want to be attuned, to be calibrated rather than just coordinated.

Virtues like responsibility, empathy, and trustworthiness are success terms, meaning that one actually understood the other person's point of view *correctly*. What does

a dancer need in order to claim empathy in partnering? The dancer needs to understand how things look from a partner's point of view. This is different than *thinking* about what things look from a partner's point of view. A dancer needs to understand how the transfer of force influences a partner's movement, whether it inhibits or facilitates movement and to what degree. The dancer needs to understand how the quality of movement, including weight (graviception) and time, influences a partner's movement as well as their own movement. In other words, a dancer cannot empathize if s/he is clueless. Certain aspects of the interaction need to be available and salient to a partner in order to successfully understand what things look from another's point of view. Reflective equilibrium emerges from practice since reflection is possible only after the fact.

Virtuosity will play out differently in different genres of dance, but I argue that the principles of communication, mutual attunement, and moral epistemic agency are common to partnering as long as partners aim to cooperate. If the aim is to enact particular choreographies or ideologies, then aspects of mutual attunement and agency may fall away because the satisfaction of ideology trumps communication. Thus, we distinguish between dancing together and partnering. The distinction accounts for how partners discern the quality of dependence and attunement they experience. In other words, the responsiveness in negotiating movement on account of each other.

There are many concomitant concepts to consider with regard to negotiating movement on account of each other, such as strength, dexterity, care, curiosity, and so on. A large part is selective attention and mutual attunement to feedback and affordance, specifically on how dancers depend on and relate to each other in the act of moving together. It involves identifying where plausible complacent beliefs were false. In other words, what made one think that a certain action was appropriate. There should also be an identification of how to prevent something from happening again if it was inappropriate. In some cases, the obvious thing to think is not right so responsible partners should account for counter-intuitions. Good partners should provide opportunities for each other to ask where they went wrong and how to avoid going wrong again. My framework upholds a virtue-based model rather than a deontological one, to support moral epistemic agency.

Perhaps individuals do not want these opportunities to uphold a virtue-based approach. But the solipsistic dancer who does not care about attunement will likely not get the same opportunities as the one who does; a difference which will be visible in the way they execute movement. Individuals may have competing values about what movement is aesthetically pleasing or worthwhile to pursue. The conception of things as competitive

pulls against mutuality. Sometimes things are not competitive, but people still behave in a competitive way as a result of practice. What individuals can do is create contexts that manifest why caring, responsibility, commitment, communication, and mutual attunement matters. After all, partners' individual motives and teleological concerns will influence how they perceive, interpret, and articulate their actions, which begs the question of what people are committing to. This returns us back to the three-part predicate problem. Since dancing together necessarily involves joint action, the skill to coordinate and calibrate by choice can be seen as a basic tenant. The quality of movement and the form and techniques used to move together will likely vary from practice to practice, within and across forms depending on context, history, and personal idiosyncrasies and dispositions. The fact that there are basic principles of establishing joint physical commitments supports my claim of a generic theory, which can now be spelled out in greater depth.

Value, The Discourse of Partnering, and Future Research

I have shown that good partners understand that dancing together is a serious matter. As a discourse in and of itself, partnering can be understood as having an ideal form related to how dancers communicate, mutually attune, and exercise agency in their physical interaction. This is evident when dancers strive for ever-better levels of communication, dependence, and agency in the act of moving together. My argument has concluded that dancing together in the strong sense is contingent on generic, discursive conditions to negotiating movement that is applicable across forms. However, dancing together is frequently complex because of the elements that require attention such as coordinated steps or movements, the environment of the interaction, music (if applicable), aesthetic conventions, underlying motives, and so on.

I have been interested in examining what partners are doing when dancing together, beyond interacting with other aspects such as social conventions or pre-determined choreography. In some cases, if partners dance together solipsistically, then they are guaranteed that they will dance together because the choreography serves as a template for joint action. By following the template, partners need not explicitly worry about the signals or the design of the choreography. But templates often fail to account for the unexpected. Therefore, partners need to be in inquiry to negotiate change, whether it is unexpected or not. I propose that practitioners that care about developing their own responsible partnering ought to ask how their own dispositions, backgrounds, and histories contain ideological

(e.g. aesthetic, ethical, epistemic) tethers and how those tethers dispose them to valuing certain physical choices and possibilities over others. With the epistemological foundation set, I propose that partnering is a discourse that values attunement, responsibility, communication, and intentions being realized deliberately. By discourse, I mean to suggest that by coming together *through* partnering, individuals form and inform a particular set of values based on negotiating movement on account of each other.

I have shown that one value that partners can uphold is the aesthetic convention within a particular form (chapters four, five, and six). Consider for example the conventions of tango in tandem with those of contact improvisation. One values fixed points of contact (the standard tango "embrace" or "frame"), while the other places value on rolling points of contact. Neither is inherently right or wrong and partners may experiment with both fixed and rolling points of contact, which does not bear significant influence on the aesthetic conventions of the forms themselves (unless enough people decide to form some new conventions such that there is some kind of paradigmatic shift).

When viewed as discursive, partnering thus takes on a broader value system. Though movement need not be formally learned, it needs to be practiced together with others. Individuals without any previous specialized training can ostensibly negotiate their joint movement and attune their movement to others in quite nuanced ways, but it will only be through doing that this comes to be. Through practice, partners can continue to develop deeper conceptual understanding. As long as dancers are agentic, with some base level of attunement, they will satisfy the conditions of partnering such that negotiating movement together on account of each other will be both possible and feasible. This accounts for the ways in which a couple performing a jive can be similar to a couple practicing contact improvisation, or how tango vocabulary is congruent with that of classical *pas de deux*. While the movements themselves may be different, as well as the cultural meanings and identities of the practices, my focus has been explicitly on the quality of the interaction. That is, how partners execute the movements in relation to and on account of each other.

Partnering can be evaluated as a range from good to bad, successful to unsuccessful, and so on. This makes the joint act subject to questions about which values are good, worthwhile, or appropriate. The multiplicity of perspectives in partnering (whether it is simply a dyad or more than two individuals), makes evaluating value problematic. One question I have asked is whether there is a reason we *ought to* value partnering. The absolutist would say yes, there exist independent reasons for people to value partnering. This could be expressed as something like "valuing partnering is valuing responsible

physical interaction". This could exclude other forms of value, such as beauty, grace, dexterity, exercising cultural identities, and so on. The relativist would say that any reason to value partnering is a valid reason to partner. This is problematic when we consider the ways in which partners may injure each other because of unrefined awareness or a lack of care. My research into this complex area has led to me adopting a pluralist position, in which I argue that there are right and wrong reasons to value partnering, especially when we take into account the nature of a joint agreement between partners. If the willingness is predicated on basic engagement for one partner and on vulnerability for the other, partners will run into problems. These problems need not necessarily make partnering wrong, but they may result in miscommunication. If the miscommunication results in injury, then partnering may be wrong within a moral/ethical domain. Since I have argued that partnering is ultimately a joint, communicative act, then the reasons to value partnering are entangled with communication. To practice partnering is thus to practice communicating.

The ultimate point to consider is that participating in physical interaction may have no other value than itself. This is an intrinsic view of partnering. From this intrinsic view, one can begin to explore the limitations and detriments to partnering within any given context. If partnering simply has value in and of itself, one can ask what movements or attitudes lessen the value in practice. The simple, reductive response is anything that inhibits either the willingness to engage in the joint act or the available common knowledge between all the partners involved.

By using the terms individual and plural subject, I have shown that it is possible to qualify partnering interactions through the lens of analytical approaches. In setting up this frame, I show that it is possible for future research to conduct empirical research of partnering, to gauge and measure particular shifts from novice to expert, or how communication skills differ between genres of partnering. From the framework that I have developed, researchers can be prompted to further ask how trust is developed between individuals in practice and what might be the emergent aesthetic properties of an ethical partnership. That is, questions might include; how does an ethical practice inform biomechanics that can then be interpreted (observed and evaluated) visually, as well as experienced physically (proprioceptively, kinesthetically, graviceptively)?

In this thesis, I have constructed a unique in-depth analysis of partnering as a framework intended to make not only a contribution to practice, but also to philosophy itself, by expanding on the notion of establishing and maintaining joint commitments in the physical domain. In so doing, this thesis draws attention to the complexity of human

interaction in dance, which I propose is dependent on an acute understanding of communication and ethics. This, in turn, tells us more about those values in the context of human interaction beyond dance. By arguing that partnering is a practice of listening and responding, I propose that individuals can build deliberate communication skills that are ethically grounded. This is pertinent to sensing the changes that occur on a daily basis, as well as those that occur more rarely. We all have a particular way of moving when we are excited, angry, upset, and so on, and being able to differentiate that in a family member, partner, colleague, or others around us can help raise questions about what is different and how to support each other. I have been examining the conditions of physical interaction itself, regardless of the form, social conventions, and so on. This thesis can make dancers better equipped to reason about their physical interaction in and beyond dance. It is up to practitioners to develop the skills to do so.

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Appendix 1: Partnering as Rhetoric

Vidrin, I., (2018). “Partnering as Rhetoric”. In *A World of Muscle, Bone & Organs: Research and scholarship in dance*. Ed. Ellis, S., Blades, H., & Waelde, C. Coventry, UK.

Abstract

Bodily rhetoric is a burgeoning field, with scholars investing attention to the ways in which non-verbal communication mediates change between individuals and groups in complex scenarios, including political settings. Scenarios in which individuals move together—whether in completely extemporaneous situations or in existing forms such as Contact Improvisation, Argentinian Tango, or Classical **Pas de Deux—**pose a similarly complex communicative problem. Drawing on the work of Lloyd Bitzer, I demonstrate how rhetorical theory provides methodological insight by which we can better understand the dynamic practice that is always already happening in situations where individuals move together.

Key Words: Rhetoric, Partnering, Ethics, Paralinguistics, Lloyd Bitzer

Introduction

When considering the act of dance partnering, whether a dyad, trio, or large group dynamic, it is reasonable to wonder about the character of non-verbal interactions between moving bodies. That is, the movement idiosyncrasies of each individual, as well as the quality with which they engage each other in and through movement. For example, people can move together in a way that is dialogic – a (non-verbal) coordinated effort between two or more individuals – as well as a sort of "polyphonic" monologue, wherein multiple bodies interact as one while retaining their own distinct movement quality. Polyphony here is an extension of the musical concept; though bodies are not strictly speaking voices, it may be a useful term to describe how nuanced cues, with or without physical contact, provide the space to retain individuality while moving together. In both scenarios, individuals rely on a process of listening and responding to impulses and cues, be they physical or perhaps even energetic. Whether through coordination, harmonization, synchronization, or other communicative efforts, this essay investigates the potential for cues and impulses to function as persuasive elements that impact communication between partners. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to parse the nature of dance partnering itself, I move to present partnering as a rhetorical act that relies on a certain type of non-verbal persuasion between two or more individuals moving together physically and/or energetically.

By invoking the work of prominent scholars of rhetoric, namely Lloyd Bitzer and George Kennedy, I will attempt to construct a theoretical understanding of bodily (physical and energetic) discourse. To set up this argument, however, requires understanding how a rhetorical framework offers a relevant methodology to parse the ways in which partnering explicitly necessitates critical (bodily) discourse. The framework is one in which rhetoric is understood in basic Aristotelian terms as the "available means of persuasion".[i] Subsumed within this definition is an attention to quality – not only how a particular articulation (be it verbal, physical, or energetic) functions persuasively, but also the potential to discern properties such as tone, character, attitude, and so on. Positioning scholars such as George Kennedy and Lloyd Bitzer in conversation with dance provides insight into non-verbal modes of communication,

which I take to be a prominent feature of dance partnering. This structure is hermeneutic, as its content models how partners can potentially interpret each other and how each partner will (or will not) reciprocate. That dance can be communicative in a performative way, to an audience, is an argument articulated by leading scholars including Maxine Sheets-Johnstone,[ii] Susan Leigh Foster,[iii] and Graham McFee,[iv] as well as countless movement and dance practitioners. The arguments presented in this paper, however, explore how dance partnering facilitates (or inhibits) the transfer of information between the very bodies that move together, extending the traditional concept of audience to a more intimate setting of those within the practice. I ask how partners act as performer and audience for each other, in real-time, and how discrete movements, continuous as they are in practice, lend themselves to the rigorous study of non-verbal (physical) dialogue. To probe the conditions by which partners interpret cues and impulses from each other, I ground specifically into the work of rhetoric scholar Lloyd Bitzer, who demonstrated the significance of situations from which rhetorical discourse emerges.

It is important to note here that examining dance through a rhetorical framework is not a new approach. Cases are visible as far back as Plato in the ethical concerns of Greek *choraia* (a term designated for both music and dance),[v] and more recently endeavored by the work of rhetoric scholar and choreographer, Cynthia Roses-Thema. Following her claim that dance performances function as rhetorical situations,[vi] this essay utilizes a similar rhetorical framework to understand the conditions by which partners interpret and understand each other. Conversely, examining rhetoric through the lens of movement is also not a new approach. Speaking of movement and mobility more generally, rhetorical theorist Helmut Pflugfelder claims:

> Rhetoric is very well suited to addressing mobility concerns in part because movement in the world – as enacted by the coordination of people and technologies – is argument. That is, when people move, they take part in and comprise rhetoric. Rhetoric is not limited to the language arts, but is epistemic. Rhetoric occurs whenever we create meaning, link meanings together to form systems, or engage in a productive art. This rhetoric is never just the intervention of people into situations, nor the application of meaning to cold, dispassionate objects, but a process that occurs whenever people move in the world.[vii]

What does it mean in this context for rhetoric to be epistemic? Robert L. Scott, a theorist who famously championed the rhetoric-as-epistemic doctrine, noted that, "man must consider truth not as something fixed and final but as something to be created moment by moment in the circumstances in which he finds himself and with which he must cope".[viii] The epistemic in this case refers not to static, *a priori* knowledge, but perhaps closer to understanding that is gleaned in the moment. Scott posits, "if one can be certain, then one needs no commands or urgings (either from oneself or from others)".[ix] Acting in the face of uncertainty is a particularly cogent point for interacting non-verbally. For one, we can never truly know if a partner will be ready to respond, so we must attend to physical and energetic cues and impulses that communicate our partner's state of presence. Acting with certainty may also mean acting from expectation, which can further inhibit

attending to relevant stimuli, particularly if something unexpected happens. Fixed knowledge, or assuming that because something worked a particular way before it must always work this way, detracts from the process of attending to relevant stimuli. Thus, this is a study on the ways partners discern cues and impulses from each other; basically understood as listening and responding, or alternatively still, action/reaction. Cultural anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell developed a vocabulary for such cues that allow individuals to communicate and respond to one another, which he called "paralinguistics".[x] These bodily cues include touch (*haptics*), eye contact (*oculesics*), personal space (*proxemics*), culturally meaningful[xi] gestures (*kinesics*; such as a wave or a thumbs up), culturally appropriate response timing (*chronemics*), and so on. This is particularly relevant for partnering, as these are the cues that one senses (visually and/or kinesthetically) and subsequently interprets when moving with other(s). Thus I ask, how are partners convinced by subtle movements, such as a lingering or avoidant gaze, and how does a rhetorical framework provide a model by which to make these tropes salient to practitioners, as well as observers?

Taking a step beyond paralinguistics, bodily movement itself need not have a narrative or one-to-one linguistic mapping to be considered rhetorical. As rhetoric scholar Jennifer LeMesurier suggests, the body can be understood as a "functional, inventional actor and bearer of ideological weight, capable of producing rhetorical influence […] our range of rhetorical actions is guided by our embodied memories just as much as our training in argument or analysis".[xii] It is here that we can begin to explore the nature of bodily discourse.

Rhetoric and Energy

Expanding on the Aristotelian definition of rhetoric, George Kennedy, known for his expert translations of Aristotle's work, offers the following view:

> Rhetoric in the most general sense may perhaps be identified with the energy inherent in communication: the emotional energy that impels the speaker to speak, the physical energy expended in the utterance, the energy level coded in the message, and the energy experienced by the recipient in decoding the message. In theory, one might even seek to identify some quantitative unit of rhetorical energy - call it the "rheme" - analogous to an erg or volt, by which rhetorical energy could be measured.[xiii]

Though Kennedy is being somewhat provocative, perhaps even facetious with his suggestion of the "rheme", we are still left with an open question of interpretation. How can the emotional and physical energies be interpreted and experienced, particularly non-verbally, when moving together? Harvard philosopher Catherine Elgin positions her epistemology in conversation with this kind of emotional understanding, noting "self-knowledge enables us to access the information our emotions embed".[xiv] How does one become aware of one's own emotional energy in movements such as a particular gesture, look, or other non-verbal cue? How does such awareness impact the quality of a response from a partner? That is, the character of physical dialogue between two or more people, as well as subsequent ethical dimensions such as trust, care, vulnerability, responsibility, and so

on? Elgin suggests, "if we can identify our emotions, assess our level of expertise, and recognize how sensitive we are, we can profit cognitively from their deliverances. Reflective self-awareness pays epistemic dividends".[xv] Though Elgin is situated within the field of epistemology, identification is a crucial concept to rhetorical studies. Indeed, according to eminent rhetoric scholar Kenneth Burke, identification provides the space for rhetorical discourse, as one is persuaded by content in which one can identify *with* another.[xvi] Many concepts have been used by different cultures throughout history to describe such emotional, energetic identifications in relation to body and time. *Wuwei* in ancient Chinese philosophy [xvii] and *duende* [xviii] in flamenco are two prominent exemplary concepts, wherein an individual somehow transcends oneself (perhaps by channeling a divine presence) such that action flows seamlessly. Within the tradition of rhetoric, this seamless flow of time is referred to as *kairos,* which often translates as "felt" or "experienced" time. Rhetorical theorist Debra Hawhee holds, "*kairos* is thus rhetoric's time, for the quality, duration, and movement of discursive encounters depend more on the forces at work on and in a particular moment than their quantifiable length".[xix] Viewing partnering as a discursive encounter through the rhetoric-as-energy lens provides the framework by which we can explore the emergence of rhetoric that is non-verbally mediated.

To ground the argument, I turn to Lloyd Bitzer, who in his well-known (1968) paper introduces the reader to the notion that rhetoric is situational. Bitzer notes the pragmatic nature of interactions that seek a goal beyond themselves (such as inspiring action or inciting change), and names three constituents that together comprise a rhetorical situation: a) an exigency (or urgency to solve a particular problem), b) an audience that must be able to act as a mediator of change, and c) constraints that limit decisions and actions.[xx] What follows is an outline of the exigencies, audience, and constraints pertinent to partnering.

Exigency in Partnering

Bitzer maintains that the first constituent of a rhetorical situation is the demand of an exigency. He notes, "any exigence is an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be".[xxi] So what, then, is the exigence in partnering? In dance, the exigence is often a product of the problems a given form makes for itself, such as particular shapes, postures, or relationship to rhythm and music. Bitzer is careful to note that "an exigence is not rhetorical when its modification requires merely one's own action or the application of a tool, but neither requires nor invites the assistance of discourse".[xxii] The obstacle a partnering situation presents, at the very base, is to successfully interpret the quality of shifting and sharing weight of others. One cannot simply rely on one's own action to move *with* other(s) because one must acts toward and react to other(s). The reasons are myriad, from satisfying an aesthetic ideal to achieving a state of transcendent connection. Thus, given the relational nature

of bodies moving together, the act of partnering itself seems to invite the assistance of bodily discourse.

Before we can entertain the meaning of a particular movement, we must first be aware that each movement, no matter how small, can be significant in the process of communicating with others. These minute bodily movements form the discourse that is the primary communicative medium of partnering. The appropriateness of each action, be it an assertion, response, proposition, and so on, is an especially relevant concept to Bitzer, who notes, "the situation dictates the sort of observations to be made; it dictates the significant physical and verbal responses; and, we must admit, it constrains the words which are uttered in the same sense that it constrains the physical acts".[xxiii] Any movement form, such as Argentinian Tango, classical ballet, Kathak, or Contact Improvisation, will have its own set of conventions, which dictate how bodies can respond to each other. Bitzer states, "although rhetorical situation invites response, it obviously does not invite just any response".[xxiv] In other words, "to respond appropriately to a situation" means that one "meets the requirements established by the situation".[xxv] Each situation is fairly unique, so it is difficult, if at all possible, to be able to prescribe appropriate responses divorced of context. The ability to notice how dancers are compelled to respond based on particular qualities, both kinesthetically and visually, is precisely what makes partnering a matter of rhetorical concern. With respect to physical contact, for example, rhetoric scholar Shannon Walters suggests,

> Rhetorical touch takes place when bodies come in contact; the meanings produced by this contact are rhetorical in that they convey messages, craft character, and create emotion in a way that fosters a potential for identification and connection among toucher and touched. In short, touch is rhetorical because it is epistemic, creating knowledge, communication, and understanding about the widest ranges of embodiment and ways of being in the world. Understanding touch as rhetorical makes rhetoric accessible to a wider range of bodies and minds, increasing the means of persuasion and possibilities of rhetoric.[xxvi]

Again we are directed to the notion of rhetoric as epistemic, this time in an explicitly bodily sense. Walters suggests above the relationship between knowledge, communication, and understanding. Positioning this within the epistemology of Elgin, the epistemic is a "cognitive achievement"[xxvii] concerned primarily with understanding, rather than the limits of traditional epistemology (namely non-fortuitous justified, true belief). Elgin's work does not, however, hierarchize the cognitive over the bodily, and so her work sets a solid framework for understanding *from and within* embodied practice. Her investigation of epistemic yield within the arts more broadly is especially valuable given her claim that "dance enriches our lives at least in part because it enables us to understand things differently than we did before".[xxviii] While this may seem like a banal statement, I believe understanding the nature of dance partnering may reveal insight about interactions that extend beyond dance practices.

Within the demands of partnering, the physical dialogue that takes place necessitates agreeing on the appropriate conventions for negotiating movement. That is, if we are moving together within the context of a *milonga*, we will ostensibly be negotiating weight in a way that is significantly different than if we are moving together in the context of a Contact Improvisation jam. The same can be said if individuals are negotiating weight in a ritual form versus combat. Indeed this can be further differentiated if individuals are moving together in the context of capoeria versus aikido.

Agreeing on the appropriate conventions by which partners negotiate movement raises a concern of whether partnering is a form of physical argumentation, albeit informal. In a previous section I appealed to Pflugfelder, who stated "movement in the world is argument".[xxix] Argumentation here is not in reference to the verbal exchanges that occur between partners, although those too are valuable. Rather argumentation here is in reference to the means by which partners convince each other that a given physical action necessitates a particular physical response. As rhetorical theorist J. Anthony Blair states, "arguments aim to move us by appealing to considerations that we grant and then by showing that the point of view at issue follows from those concessions […] the process is impossible if the appeal is vague or ambiguous. Thus vagueness or ambiguity makes argument impossible".[xxx] Blair suggests that this is true of standard verbal and written arguments, as well as visual ones. If partnering involves finding agreement of how weight is shifted and shared, what are the tools with which dancers make their arguments? Of particular significance is the point of agreement the negotiation presupposes, which we can consider to be the space where an exigency emerges. Though partnering may not seem to be an argument in the formal sense, decisions are being made in real-time by each party based on interpreting the physical actions they direct at one another. In moving, weight is always already being negotiated, individually and in concert with others, regardless of whether the movement is extemporaneously generated or choreographed. For ease of communication, there must be agreement between each agent about which cues are meaningful and what constitutes an appropriate response. This agreement may be unspoken, simply by following the conventions of a particular movement form. Rhetoric scholars Chaim Perlman and Louise Olbrechts-Tyteca, who present a case for non-formal argumentation, state, "if we presuppose the coherence of reality and of our truths taken as a whole, there cannot be any conflict between facts and truths on which we would be called to make a decision".[xxxi] That is, in partnering, to be able to communicate physically and achieve a state of connection, dancers cannot simply be moving randomly, even if it is improvised. While there may be no inherent truth-value in our physical arguments, we ostensibly interact with our partners in a way that they understand us to be trustworthy. Thus, it seems there are certain consequences at stake if we are not aware of the ways we influence each other physically. That is of course

assuming we want to level with our partner(s). Duping them explicitly, while beyond the scope of this paper, is still a provocative thought when considering how our smallest actions influence and are interpreted by our physical interlocutors. To make sense of the non-formal argumentation elicited in a partnering situation, of the point of agreement in the process of negotiating weight, let us focus on how an action executed by one partner is sensed and perceived by the other.

Audience in Partnering Situations

Bitzer claims "the second constituent [of a rhetorical situation] is the *audience"* [xxxii] (emphasis in the original). He states,"since rhetorical discourse produces change by influencing the decision and action of persons who function as mediators of change, it follows that rhetoric always requires an audience – even in those situations when a person engages himself or ideal mind as audience".[xxxiii] Bitzer, like many before him, points to the performativity of rhetoric, yet is clear that one may engage oneself as both audience and performer. It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider audience-performer relationship in a more traditional understanding, yet if we consider a partnering scenario with two individuals, it is evident that each influences the other. It may still be unclear how each individual mediates change. In cases where partnering is sequenced choreography or improvised lead/follow, one partner relies on the other to complete actions based on certain predetermined cues (such as a change of direction or timing). In this way, though movements may be quite fast, one is acting as audience for the performer. It is interesting to note that it is perfectly possible that both individuals are moving at the same time. In such cases, as well as ones where there is no choreography, the spectating partner(s) must be very sensitive to potential cues, choosing when and how to respond. Bitzer clearly states that an audience must be able to act as a mediator of change.[xxxiv] Thus, as one partner listens and is influenced by the performer, so the spectating partner(s) elicit(s) change by reacting. In this way, partners are always switching fluidly between spectator and performer for each other, mediating change through subtle cues that can be physical, visual, or perhaps even energetic. It is important to note that the absence of movement, the choice of stillness, can be a valid response, perhaps sometimes even more than choosing to respond by moving.

Bitzer notes, "in any rhetorical situation there will be at least one controlling exigence which functions as the organizing principle; it specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected".[xxxv] For a simple example, consider an individual who suddenly moves into close proximity of another. There is no limit to possible responses for the second individual, but for the purpose of this example, let us say the sudden proximity is unwanted. What cues may function rhetorically to communicate discomfort? There may be a tightening of the partner's body, a slowing down or hesitation, or perhaps the individual simply continues

moving past and avoids the interaction completely. These cues may easily be overlooked, creating a new problem (exigency) that needs to be addressed.

A more complex example may involve the quality of response time between each partner; or, following Birdwhistell, the *chronemics* of an interaction. At first glance, this may seem only relevant to forms where timing plays a principal role, such as ballet and ballroom. Timing in a practice such as Contact Improvisation is no less important however, given that concepts such as "pelvic tracking" are also time-dependent, despite the form having quite a capacious understanding of what signifies an "appropriate" response. A response may, for example, be too quick; rather than focus on responding by attending to relevant stimuli, and thus connecting to the impulse, one responds by executing an action based on a preconceived notion. If there is a particular aesthetic in mind (i.e. a particular line, pattern, movement figure, or even quality of effort), both the performing partnering and the spectating partner will be bound to movement that satisfies the aesthetic ideal.

This is perhaps the most difficult view to articulate, because there are multiple levels of complexity. For one, there is the case in which a particular aesthetic quality is perceived by an outside party. The outside perception may be a misinterpretation of what is being communicated between the performers because one may be not be privy to what is happening between moving partners. For example, gestural choreography may seem to indicate particular cultural tropes that are not significant to the performers themselves, such as when one dancer extends a hand to another seemingly in invitation but is really only extending the arm as part of the architecture of the choreography. Those trained in non-western forms (i.e. Balinese dance) are quite familiar with culturally meaningful gestures, which may be easily misread or misunderstood by those who are inexperienced. On the other hand, a partner is always sensing and perceiving the cue kinesthetically, and so is also technically acting first as a spectator, before continuing on to perform a response as an actor. It is interesting to note that a partner may misperceive and/or give ambiguous cues based on poor conceptual understanding of the conventions of a particular form. A prime example is the cues in social dancing forms. To signal an underarm turn, a leader is taught to raise the arm of the partner, under which s/he can then perform the turn. Even with extensive training in other forms of dance, the signal to turn from the lifting of an arm may be a convention particular to the social form. Thus, without explicit previous experience in the social form, arriving at conceptual understanding of an underarm turn is unlikely (though of course, not impossible). The case is interesting to consider both for an individual who newly arrives to the social form as a leader or as a follower. The novice leader may raise the arm of an experienced follower for aesthetic effect, and so unknowingly leads the follower into a turn. Similarly, an experienced leader raises the arm of

an inexperienced follower to no avail, given that the lack of experience prevents the novice from discerning the lifted arm as a relevant cue.

In relation to the misperception of cues, performance theorist Erving Goffman introduces an asymmetry within communication, noting how one is usually aware "only of one stream of [one's] communication" while an observer is aware of that stream "and one other".[xxxvi] Goffman points here to the way in which an interlocutor (observer/audience) experiences the "expressive behavior" of a performer in a given interaction. As dancers, we are apt to control our movement far more than is conventional in everyday life, yet Goffman's claim is still relevant. The claim he makes is both epistemic and aesthetic in that the "other" in the conversation – whether an interlocutor or merely an onlooker – witnesses, interprets, and subsequently derives meaning from particular visual cues, including posture and facial features such as a smile, frown, raised eyebrow, averted glance, and so on. In being preoccupied with form (aesthetic expectation), one may no longer be attending to relevant stimuli of the partner, as well as the possibility of accidentally expressing ambiguous, albeit subtle, cues (such as the case in the social form). Before arriving to the semantic construal of cues and impulses, it is clear that the aesthetic expectations of partnering practices may interfere with ethical dimensions such as care, responsibility, and trust. The main rhetorical concern that emerges from the tension between aesthetic and epistemic concerns in partnering is how partners are convincing each other that a particular cue is relevant and as such necessitates a particular response that is fitting (appropriate) to the situation. To get at this problem, we move to the constraints of partnering.

Constraints in Partnering

Bitzer claims "every rhetorical situation contains a set of constraints made up of persons, events, objects, and relations which are part of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence".[xxxvii] He delineates between two classes of constraints, ones that are "originated or managed by the rhetor" and "those other constraints, in the situation, which may be operative".[xxxviii] That is, the constraints that are created by the rhetoric of the individuals and those that are intrinsic to the situation itself. With respect to the operative constraints, a simple and obvious example is physics; there are only so many movements that are physically possible given forces such as gravity, as well as consequences of momentum, pressure, inertia, and so on. If one pushes a partner, the individual can respond by effortfully absorbing or effortlessly surrendering to the force of impact. The space itself is also intrinsically constraining – perhaps a ceiling is too low to execute a particular lift, or a room is too small to complete a full sequence with a supported *saut-de-chat*.

The constraints that are created make for interesting study with respect to dance partnering. Partners working together can begin to coordinate, conserving energy to seemingly

defy gravity by finding ways to use momentum and inertia. There are the obvious considerations of measured time (*chronos)*, such as music or predetermined choreographic sequences, as well as less obvious elements such as internal bodily rhythms (*kairos)*. In lead/follow scenarios, a follower is constrained by the timing of the leader. In extemporaneous leading, a follower is further constrained by not knowing when a partner will change direction, orientation, rhythm, or speed. A leader is subsequently constrained by the time it takes for a follower to respond. The *kairotic* element functions as a clear constraint in that the actor must be attentive to potentiality – when is a particular cue or impulse going to be most effectively received by a partner? This is perhaps especially true in ritual movement, as well as extemporaneous forms such as Contact Improvisation; though it is perhaps more acceptable to disrupt sequences in CI than in other forms (by actions such as jumping out of a lift), attending to the potential of one's partner(s) provides opportunities to be intentional about response to previous action. Given that many of these practices are saturated with cultural meaning, distinct forms have their own communicative content and conventions, which serve as constraints. For example, both Argentinian and ballroom Tango typically do not involve both partners engaging in floorwork, though there may be choreographic choices that can involve floorwork (such as dips, death drops, and other "tricks"). Contact Tango, on the other hand, blends the conventions of Argentinian Tango and Contact Improvisation to provide dancers with more opportunities to interact through conventional foot patterns, as well as non-conventional floorwork and lifts. Irrespective of form, responding to movement is tricky given the myriad possibilities of articulation. As Elgin suggests, "we are prey to massive information overload. Inputs flood our sense organs. Infinitely many obvious consequences follow from every belief. To know, understand, perceive, or discern anything requires overlooking a lot. The question is: what should be overlooked?".[xxxix] Taking a step back, it is evident that knowing which cues are relevant is something that is manifest in context, which necessitates a certain kind of sensitivity to movement. This claim, while reductive, serves as a strong argument for the embodied understanding derived from engaging in physical practice (in studio or social settings). Indeed, the first canon of Aristotelian rhetoric is discovery [heurisis], which seems to necessitate understanding the constraints to appropriately respond to an imminent exigency. Creating a universal formula that could prescriptively dictate which movement(s) function persuasively is quite likely impossible, yet questioning the rhetorical nature of cues and impulses within practice may serve as a useful tool for increasing the efficiency of communication between partners. This I leave as a question to be asked physically within a partnering practice.

Conclusion

Understanding partnering as a rhetorical situation provides a framework by which to detect and analyze the subtle and intricate movements and cues that contribute to shared, embodied

understanding between each moving body, whether the situation involves a dyad, trio, or a large group dynamic. The greater aim of this research is to contribute to the practice and training of dance partnering as a rigorous mode of communication, stemming from the firm belief that such an approach facilitates potentiality, freedom of expression, as well as an ability to exemplify connection in and outside of studio practice and performance events. This framework may be useful for interpreting partnering in a didactic setting, especially to promote specific articulation to satisfy one's own aesthetic fancy, be it technically virtuosic or otherwise. It may also, however, promote self-monitoring that can be inhibitory to expression. Cognitive psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky suggest a model of decision-making as a Two-System, wherein System One is quick-thinking and impulsive, and System Two is slow, rational, and self-reflective.[xl] Training in partnering may begin as a System Two process, with slow, serial processing of cues and impulses, and become a System One process once principles become embodied. For some, the transition may be fast, and for others may take many years that it might not seem worth it to continue. Kahneman and Tversky suggest common heuristics that act as cognitive biases, the discovery [herusis] of which harkens back to Aristotelian rhetoric and the necessity of attending to the situation in the moment. Plato himself suggests that philosophy (i.e. the love of wisdom), begins first with wonder [thauma] and continues with discovery. The ability to be curious within partnering lends itself well to philosophical investigation of how best to communicate with the partner in front of you.

Perhaps, however, the Two-System approach is too reductive for a complex process like partnering. Nevertheless, a significant lesson from cognitive neuroscience is the notion that "practice makes permanent" [xli] – meaning that if our practice is always self-monitoring, then we become really good at self-monitoring, making it difficult to be "in the moment". Yet, by practicing this type of metacognition, we can gain articulation that can be quite freeing. This is not a paradox – to achieve the freedom of expression that can be technically virtuosic is largely a question about the way in which we practice attending to relevant stimuli. As Elgin notes, "by attending to and reflecting on our emotional responses, the situations that trigger them, and the orientations they give rise to, and by assessing the opinions they generate, we have resources for developing more nuanced and more accurate responses".[xlii] If we hope to achieve a connection that emerges from attending to relevant stimuli and responding in a way that is appropriate to context, a rigorous physical practice is simply a necessity.

Notes

[i] Kennedy 1992a

[ii] Sheets-Johnstone 2015

[iii] Foster 2010

[iv] McFee 2000

[v] Kowalzig 2013

[vi] Roses-Thema 2008

[vii] Pflugfelder 2012

[viii] Scott 1967

[ix] Ibid.

[x] Birdwhistell 2010

[xi] Meaningful in this context refers to gestures that literally carry meaning, such as a thumbs up to connote success or a wave to connote hello or goodbye. A gesture counts as meaningful if there is a group agreement on what it means.

[xii] LeMesurier 2014.

[xiii] Kennedy 1992b

[xiv] Elgin 2008

[xv] Ibid.

[xvi] Burke 1969

[xvii] Slingerland 2007

[xviii] Lorca and Di Giovanni 1998

[xix] Hawhee 2002

[xx] Bitzer 1968

[xxi] Ibid.

[xxii] Ibid.

[xxiii] Ibid.

[xxiv] Ibid.

[xxv] Ibid

[xxvi] Walters 2014

[xxvii] Elgin 2017

[xxviii] Elgin 2010

[xxix] Pflugfelder 2012.

[xxx] Blair 2012

[xxxi] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 2006.

[xxxii] Bitzer 1968

[xxxiii] Ibid

[xxxiv] Ibid.

[xxxv] Ibid.

[xxxvi] Goffman 1978.

[xxxvii] Bitzer 1968

[xxxviii] Ibid.

[xxxix] Elgin 2008

[xl] Kahneman 2011

[xli] Willis 2010.

[xlii] Elgin 2008

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