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LOOKING INSIDE THE DANCER'S MIND

Submitted by Lisa Woods
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Looking Inside the Dancer's Mind

Plato saw musike and gymnastike, the culture of the body, as integrally related: they were, along with the cultivation of the intellect, essential components of a complete education....¹

In America today, physical development has become increasingly a priority as health, fitness, and body image are more and more requirements for a good life. Yet none of this emphasis looks at physical training as anything beyond physical; respect for the art of dance has not increased significantly on a general scale. Americans are willing in pop culture to look at physical, athletic ability as a sign of success, as an ideal. Yet, due to long cultural and religious traditions of regarding the body as separate from the mind, as something we carry around with us as a by-product of our existence, Americans are hesitant to look at dance or the use of the body as serious art, as activity which not only reflects or expresses human nature, but defines human nature, is human nature.

A dancer is by nature integrated with the body and mind, ever aware of the mind's inherent discipline over the body yet allowing the body to move with freedom. This integration may be a large part of what frightens and discourages Americans from looking at dancers and treating them like highly evolved, intelligent, and powerful human

¹Bellah, Robert N. and Chris Adams. "Individualism and the arts." Christian Century: An Ecumenical Weekly. Christian Century Foundation: Chicago; vol. 110, no. 20, July 14-21, 1993; p. 703.

beings. Most of us, largely in part from the religion of our ancestors and often our own, segregate the body and the mind as unrelated parts of our existence, without truly believing they should be segregated. We simply have such behavior ingrained our culture. Another obstacle to dance in America is the transient nature of the art form. Only with notation, word of mouth, and now film can we add "any permanency to choreography" or dancing.² This makes a study of dance seem less plausible to those accustomed to studying out of books and memorizing established "facts."

I know and experience dance as human nature, as serious art and as an intellectual activity requiring all of my cognitive abilities. I was always considered a bright child. I began taking dance lessons, singing in church choir, and reading at the age of four. I am convinced that my early involvement with ballet, tap, and gymnastics had a profound influence not only on my dancing abilities but on my intellectual development. By learning structured and codified forms of movement rather than experimenting with creative movement, my life perspective was molded into one which always looked for correct answers and the obedience of rules.

On the other hand, my early musical and literary experiences certainly enhanced my ability to learn movement

²Jowitt, Deborah. The Dance in Mind. David R. Godine: Boston, 1985; p. 121.

forms. My ears were opened to correlate the music with the movement for memory stimulation and my imagination was sparked by the things I read. Essential to this experience is the idea that dance both challenged and contributed to my intellectual development. By examining the dance experience, I would like to introduce and analyze the reality and potential for dancers as insightful beings, powerful leaders, ideal role models, mediums of expression, provokers of thought-leading-to-action³, and performers of complex intellectual activities.

In white male dominated societies/ cultures, the concept of intelligence has evolved in such a way that we can safely argue that achieving a high level of ability in writing, mathematics, the playing of an instrument, or computer literacy entails a high amount of intelligence, of mental knowledge. When it comes to the intelligence required to attain a level of expertise in dancing, our opinions are considerably more varied. In order to establish a consensus on intelligence and dance we should examine what it means to be intelligent, or to possess intelligence; we must look at what it means to be a dancer and how one should define dance; we can discuss the

³Spencer, Paul, ed. Society and the Dance: the social anthropology of process and performance. Cambridge University Press: New York, 1985. p 208 "...dance in the community arts...can help create a climate leading to community action because it helps to generate feelings of strength and can disseminate a collective awareness." p 211 "...dance can be either a conservative or a progressive influence depending on the context, either reinforcing existing ideas or stimulating the imagination."

relationship between dance and intelligence, and investigate how this relates to American culture. Before going any further we must define the term "dancer".

For the confines of this paper I would like to propose a distinction between the "student of dance" and the "dancer". Any participant in a dance class or series of classes, social dancer, or avid dance concert-goer can fall into the first category of the student of dance. In fact, even the best trained professional dancers and most well revered teachers would contend that they will always in some way remain "students of dance". In all fairness to the art form we shall, however distinguish the "dancer" as such: a dancer is one who at any time leads a life in dance as a career. It is these people who are most serious, most intelligent and have most integrated dance with their lives.

Before we discuss the intellectual abilities of dancers, we must discuss the idea of intelligence. What does it mean to be "intelligent" and are there different types of "intelligence?" Most Western thinkers, in the tradition of Kant, Leibniz, Descartes, and society in general would negate the latter question, perhaps unintentionally, by valuing only logical-mathematical or linguistic abilities as those requiring "true" intelligence. Surely this is the prevalent view put forth by the American education system. This trend is most evident in our testing systems, especially the S.A.T., and in our concept of the

I.Q. That dance does not require logical-mathematical or linguistic intelligence at highly developed levels indeed may be true; it is fallacious, however, to conclude that dancers, as a group, do not possess this type of intelligence or to exclude dance from the realm of cognition.

A> The problem with traditional definitions of intelligence:

By no means should one wish to discredit the theories of our great intellectual and developmentalist thinkers like Piaget and Maslow. However, we must allow that these theories have focused exclusively on logical-mathematical thought. In Piaget's case, literature, the artistic mind, creativity, the realm of feeling are not considered.

To be sure, science and mathematics involve sophisticated forms of thinking. But so do literature, art, music, and Piaget had little to say about these. Indeed, these areas of thought prove difficult even to envision in his array of "cognitive domains."⁴

So while Piaget may have been correct within his sphere of concentration, never can we say that he discovered everything about intelligence that there is to find. In other words, Piaget's theory on intellectual development may

⁴Gardner, Howard. Art, Mind, and Brain: a cognitive approach to creativity. Basic Books: New York, 1982. p. 14. Underlining is mine.

be accurate, but certainly not exhaustive.

...Most debilitating in my view is the limited potential of [Piaget, Chomsky, Levi-Strauss'] respective systems to handle creative thought-innovations of the sort associated with major artists, scientists, political leaders, and/or inventors."⁵

But let us begin by looking at dance within a traditional framework. Jean Piaget identified the first signs of intelligence in a human being as the exhibition of motor skills. "...the infant's first motor acts and sensory discriminations constitute the earliest manifestations of intellect."⁶ It is not fallacious to conclude thus that Piaget would concede that a human being's ability to move does require some intelligence beyond the instinctual. It is fallacious to assume that with the next intellectual development in a child, that of linguistic ability and symbol association, the use of motor skills to express intelligence is no longer valid, or that motor skills are entirely developed by the age of two or three.

...once human symbolic functioning has become a reality, the/ motor system becomes forever altered: the flowering of symbolization forges a major chasm between bodily intelligence as it is practiced by humans and bodily intelligence as deployed by other animals.⁷

Why not consider an order of appearance, without a hierarchy

⁵Ibid., p 38. Underlining is mine.

⁶Ibid., p 8.

⁷Gardner, Howard. Frames of Mind: the theory of multiple intelligences. Basic Books: New York, 1983; pp. 221-222.

of importance, or a hierarchy of the complexity of each type of cognition? Any of the of the four ways of coming to knowledge are valid and should never be abandoned.

No one would expect an average child of three to be able to learn and repeat a complex dance of any type, in any culture, any more than one would expect such a child to learn algebra, understand music theory, or read and understand Shakespeare. As a child grows and develops, so do his abilities, when properly channeled, in all of these areas. Motor skills, linguistic ability, symbol association continue to develop in concert through the third and fourth stages of development, concrete operational thought and formal operations,⁸ until the average human being, with proper training, can do all of the above. Dance is no exception to the rule: adult roles require sufficient intellectual development- but the requirements of dance do not stop here.

Martha Graham once said it takes ten years to become a dancer. Her statement is corroborated by the difficulty of most techniques, the amount of practice expected of a professional dancer, the maturity required to become an effective performer, and the time it takes for our bodily development to synchronize with our mental development. Perfecting a technique ensues at least concrete operational

⁸Gardner on page 356 of Art, Mind, and Brain proposes a fifth stage in Piaget's system: Problem finding-the creative thought of artists, scientists, political leaders, inventors.

thought, a sense of quantity, number, others' perspectives, and verbal definitions.⁹ The ability to manipulate images and objects in the spatial realm requires concrete operations- dance is the manipulation of the body through the spatial realm.¹⁰ An artistic performance requires the analytical intelligence of Piaget's final cognitive stage: formal operations, including abstract thought.

Essentially, a mature dancer approaches a "motor skill problem", or body-mechanical operation, with all the analytical and cognitive powers he or she possesses, as one would with any type of problem or operation. The skills required to learn and repeat a movement phrase are as intellectually authentic and powerful, albeit different skills, as those needed in all types of learning. The ability to dance is an ability exemplary of intellectual development and refinement.

German philosopher Ernst Cassirer, after immersing himself in the writings of Leibniz, Kant, Descartes and others including Einstein, challenged established philosophy with the concept that "reality was created by symbolic forms, that language constitutes rather than reflects reality."¹¹ Key to his innovations in thought was a move

⁹Gardner, Art, Mind, and Brain; p. 10.

¹⁰Gardner, Frames of Mind: the theory of multiple intelligences. Basic Books: New York, 1983; p. 179.

¹¹Gardner, Art, Mind, and Brain; p 43.

away from empiricism toward symbolic activity and a reverence for art. "He recognized that art provided a richer, more vivid and colorful image of reality and offered as well more profound insight into its formal structure."¹²

His legacy continued through philosopher Suzanne Langer and Nelson Goodman in contemporary times. Goodman speaks of an "artistic creator":

...the individual with sufficient understanding of the properties and functions of certain symbol systems to allow him to create works that function in an aesthetically effective manner--works that are replete, expressive, susceptible to multiple readings and the like.¹³

In the past two decades, researchers, most notably Howard Gardner, have introduced to us the idea of multiple intelligences. Gardner, in the tradition of Cassirer, Langer, and Goodman, and through his work with project zero,¹⁴ has developed a continually evolving theory of "human cognitive competence".¹⁵ In several books Gardner establishes his theory of multiple intelligences (MI-theory), based on "abilities, talents, or mental skills".¹⁶ These intelligences were formed out of the results from

¹²Ibid., p 45.

¹³Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 56. Project Zero, of which Nelson Goodman is the founder, is a Harvard group that has conducted basic research in the arts and education since the mid-sixties.

¹⁵Gardner, Howard. Multiple Intelligences: the theory in practice. Basic Books: New York, 1993; p. 15.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 15.

research which focused on persons' abilities to solve problems and to fashion products; these abilities correspond to one's ability to do well in life outside of school.

Gardner lists seven intelligences, with the possibility of more always open. These seven include the logical-mathematical and linguistic types as well as spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences. The first two, briefly, include most of what we learn in schools today: science, history, languages, writing, analytical/critical thinking on literature, and the math sciences. Possessors in abundance of these intelligences should be obvious to most observers: these are the ones who do well in school.

The other intelligences are more difficult to accept at first introduction, but by looking at their applications can be essentially grasped. Spatial intelligence includes navigation, mapping; musical involves the mastery of an instrument, conducting, composition; bodily-kinesthetic intelligence includes total bodily mastery, as found in dancers and athletes, and also the refinement of the manipulation of objects with the hands, as found in surgeons and mimes. These two aspects of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence occur usually in conjunction. Interpersonal intelligence refers to insightful knowledge into other peoples minds, as required in politics and teaching; intrapersonal involves insightful knowledge into one's own

emotional processes. The latter is often expressed in cooperation with another intelligence, e.g. in writings, or else it is difficult to identify.

Gardner establishes his criterion for an intelligence as follows: An intelligence must be universal to the human race, of biological origin, manifest a "clearly defined developmental schedule in children", and vary only with the cultural contexts in which it is found. For example, linguistic intelligence is found in all peoples, in all cultures. For peoples with no written language, linguistic intelligence establishes itself in the cultivation of oration.¹⁷ An intelligence must manifest itself by enabling one to solve problems or fashion products which are of value and consequence to a society (or an individual). Identifiable core operational functions exist for and specify each particular intelligence.

...each intelligence is activated or "triggered" by certain kinds of internally or externally presented information. For example, one core of musical intelligence is the sensitivity to pitch relations, whereas one core of linguistic intelligence is the sensitivity to phonological features."¹⁸

An intelligence must also be "susceptible to encoding in a symbol system."¹⁹ Gardner asserts that the "...basic unit of human thought is the symbol, ...[the] base entities

¹⁷Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 16.

with which humans operate in a meaningful context are symbol systems."²⁰ Universality, problem-solving, core operations and a symbol system are found in all seven intelligences to a reasonable degree. It is important to remember that in Gardner's theory, there is no hierarchy among the intelligences. Deficiency in one intelligence may be compensated for, to some extent, with great proficiency in another.

We will look at bodily-kinesthetic intelligence most thoroughly as first, it is highly, but by no means exclusively, connected to dance. Second, it is often questioned by those looking into the theory, because it is the most foreign to Western thinkers. While taken for granted, "motor activity has been considered a less 'high' cortical function than functions subserving 'pure' thought."²¹ Supporters of the theory have little question of the validity of this intelligence, central to inventors and actors, expressed both in dancers and swimmers keen mastery over their bodies and in artisans, ballplayers, and instrumentalists expert manipulation of objects.

A small, hard object is propelling toward your upper thoracic region at an alarming, potentially harmful rate, e.g. a ninety mile-an-hour fast ball. An intelligent thing

²⁰Gardner. Art, Mind, and Brain; p 40.

²¹Gardner, Frames of Mind; p. 210.

to do in such a situation would be to thrust your body out of the way, or to cover vital body parts if there's no time. An unintelligent thing to do is remain motionless, tensing all muscles and sustaining a direct hit to the ribs, cracking two and possibly puncturing a lung. A person with much logical-mathematical intelligence but little bodily-kinesthetic intelligence might thus end up in the hospital. This is an example of a bodily-kinesthetic problem- how to avoid injury with a split second decision. Other less spontaneous Bodily-kinesthetic problems include expressing emotion through organized movement, playing a game, or devising a new product with one's hands. Bodily intelligence, focused inward, deals with the exercise of one's one body; turned outward, it encompasses physical actions on the objects of the world.²²

Given this overview, one can easily see that bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, as identified by Gardner, is essential to the dancer. However, "intelligences operate in concert" for any "sophisticated adult role".²³ "Dance requires skills in bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and spatial intelligences in varying degrees."²⁴ What Gardner doesn't mention is that inevitably, the more of each of these intelligences a dancer

²²Ibid., p. 235.

²³Gardner, Multiple Intelligences; p 17.

²⁴Ibid, p 27.

possesses, the better his or her dancing, which we will explore later. The reverse also can be established; the better a dancer is, the more of these intelligences he or she necessarily possesses. In addition, it will be demonstrated that a fifth intelligence is essential for any expert dancer, intrapersonal intelligence.

B> Approaching dance as an intellectual activity:

...we can define dance as culturally patterned sequences of nonverbal body movements that are purposeful, intentionally rhythmic and have aesthetic value in the eyes of those for whom the dancer is performing."²⁵

Dance techniques are as varied as the techniques are in different sports. In fact, to those who have had no experience in a dance technique class, perhaps sports analogies would help to reach an understanding of the idea of dance technique. "In our culture, the professional athlete is trained in much the same way as an artistic performer and is, in fact, subjected to many of the same pressures and opportunities."²⁶ Athletic prowess may, but is not required to, appear effortless, as in dance, where in even the most pedestrian movements a dancer/ performer can

²⁵Frames of Mind; p. 222. Gardner follows Judith Hanna's definition of dance.

²⁶Ibid., p. 231.

reveal nothing but the illusion of the dance.

Knowing the rules of baseball, understanding the procedure of the game is different from batting technique or pitching technique, i.e. actually playing the game well. Similarly, the order of steps, spatial pattern, and counts of a dance combination are quite different from the technique involved in performing a particular step correctly. A "play" as organized for example in football is akin to a series of steps, or a short combination in dance. A quarterback's skill in throwing accurately as separate from the knowledge to whom he is attempting a pass is similar to the difference between technical prowess and the knowledge of the steps.

The action of ballet....the large reach of all the limbs, the easy erectness of the body regardless, the sharpness of the pointed feet, the length of neck, the mildness of wrists, the keen angle of knee bends, the swiftness of sweeping arms, the full visibility of stretched legs turned out from thigh to toe, spreading and shutting; the figure in leaps, spins, stops in balance, slow-motion deployments, the feet fluttering and rushing and completely still.²⁷

This is all part of the technique of ballet which has nothing to do with the specific steps or the order of steps.

Technique is something in which dancers (and athletes) aim continually for perfection. Key to the perfection of a movement technique is the knowledge of the "correct" way to

²⁷Denby. "Form in motion and in thought." Dance Writings. Robert Cornfield and William McKay, eds. Knopf: New York, distributed by Random House, 1986; p. 563.

perform the movement, including placement or alignment, body-mechanics, and the accent or emphasis of the movement. By placement is meant both the proper alignment of the body and the shape of the movement. Mechanics refer to the physical pathway of movement, or the correct articulation of body parts. The accent* of the movement involves the placement of the musical stress and the prescribed visual effect, including the initiation and culmination of the energy.²⁸ In dance there is something else.

...the mastery of movement in technique class is...a two-pronged training program...dancers must cultivate the body as a powerful responsive instrument, but they must also prepare the part of the 'being from which whatever there is to say comes.' Technique...integrates the rigorously trained body with the full mature psyche.²⁹

A major attribute to the successful dancer is the ability to learn movement quickly.* This includes the order of steps, the counts or music cues, the spatial pattern. The process of learning and repeating movement alone involves four intelligences, as defined by Gardner, on a fairly developed level: bodily-kinesthetic, musical,

²⁸Some dancers are accused of being too technical, or "pure technicians". By this is meant that they lack breath or cannot express emotion or character. Perhaps these are dancers who are perhaps deficient in some of the five intelligences necessary to dancing, yet compensate with an abundance of logical mathematical and/or linguistic intelligence, which can get in the way of the development of the other five. These are still intelligent people and perhaps good, adequate "corps de ballet" or "technical virtuoso" dancers, but not breathtaking soloists, outside the realms of pure spectacle.

²⁹Foster, Susan Leigh. Reading Dancing: Bodies and subjects in contemporary America. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1986; p. 29. Foster quotes Martha Graham.

spatial, and interpersonal, as one must be able to communicate effectively and understand a teacher. Gardner confirms these basic intellectual requirements when he in demonstration uses dance as a sophisticated adult role or activity³⁰.

But a dancer must not only learn and repeat movement, she must own the movement. The greatest dancers acquire movement remarkably quickly and can immediately apply additional layers of meaning, musicality, while observably relating to space, other dancers, and time. A dancer can approach one movement in a multitude of ways and countless attitudes. A movement can be a task, a sensation, an impulse, a reaction. Here is where movement truly becomes the art of dance. The same four intelligences are implicated at more complex levels, plus a fifth intelligence, intrapersonal, which can be invoked at any level of the learning process.

Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is perhaps the most obvious of the intelligences required in dancing. Dancer/choreographer Merce Cunningham said of dance in 1940 "The body defines itself in space and time."³¹ A more apt definition or use of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence as utilized in dance would be difficult to craft. Just as

³⁰see above, page 13.

³¹Mazo, Joseph H. Prime Movers: the makers of modern dance in America. Princeton Book Company: Princeton, 1977; p. 198ff.

words are used to define or express ideas, movements can be used. For one the voice or a pen are the vehicles, for the other, a body. An intelligent, expert mover is one who is a master at defining the body in space and time, or defining ideas with the body.

Dynamics, space, and time-the dancer...keeps these three strands of interest going all the time, for they are simultaneously present in even the simplest dancing. But a dancer who can make the various factors clear at the proper passage so as to keep you interested in the progress of the dance is especially attractive because she is dancing intelligently.³²

Dance gives a structure to movement through space and in time. Music, likewise, can be seen as giving structure to sound in time. A series of steps can be envisioned as similar to a string of notes, connected to each other in a linear movement through time, although space is involved and not sound. With this in mind we shall move on for the time being to musical intelligence.

Musical intelligence includes compositional abilities existing in actual musical thought processes³³; words aren't involved. The ability to inwardly reproduce music is a sign of musical intelligence. Sensitivity to pitch, rhythm, timbre are core musical abilities available to all who are

³²Denby, Edwin. "How to Judge a Dancer": Dance Writings, p. 146.

³³Gardner, Frames of Mind; p. 103.

sufficiently exposed;³⁴ a dancer's understanding must be great in these areas. Dancers must be involved in processing music in at least one of two ways. First, in a "figural process dealing with 'felt' features of groupings and musical intuition."³⁵ Musical prodigies often have great abilities in these areas. The second process is a formal process involving knowledge of theory, e.g. measures, rhythm.

So, musical intelligence in dance can be divided into two areas: one, the knowledge of basic music theory and two, musicality. The first, more concrete aspect translates itself in the dancer's field through an understanding of meter and counts, the stressed beat within a measure, and the motifs or sounds which constitute a "music cue". Musicality, usually coinciding with the above but sometimes occurring alone, is the ability to comprehend the "line" or phrasing of the music and to demonstrate or reveal this line in the dance.

As the dancer steps he can hear the beat elsewhere than in the feet. And he often makes gestures that are visible rhythmic accents....Watching the dancers, one sees this other rhythm of shape.³⁶

Most important is the dancer's knowledge of his or her relationship to the music and how this is manifested in the

³⁴Ibid., p. 104.

³⁵Ibid., p. 110.

³⁶Denby, "Form in motion and in thought." Dance Writings; p. 561.

choreography. Climaxes and low points, melodies, motifs, harmony, dissonance, monophony, homophony, polyphony and sound effects can be acknowledged in the movement by the dancer. If a dancer chooses to contrast or contradict the music, this is a conscious choice which still constitutes "musicality". Music, or more simply, sound, is made to appear to cause a movement, to result from a movement, be united with a movement, or even to be detached from the movement depending on the dancer's approach. "Watching the sweep of the dance momentum, you feel more keenly the musical one, and the visual drama can give you an insight into the force of the character of the score."³⁷ In a more abstract way, musicality is the dancer's relationship to time, ability to manipulate the perception of time, and control of the use time. "...one's sense of timing is...a direct consequence of one's bodily intelligence...."³⁸

Not only is musical intelligence required by the dancer, but years of dance training can develop a musical intelligence. The music a dancer hears in lessons and rehearsals can add up to a gamut of "tonal experiences" which contribute to an understanding of musical direction, conception, and remembered emotional experience. Years of "tonal experience" have the benefits resulting from a link which has been found between listening to music and creative

³⁷Ibid., p. 572.

³⁸Gardner. Frames of Mind; p 230.

skills. Furthermore, a successful dancer must be an "intelligent listener", aware of such musical characteristics as melody, rhythm, harmony, tone color, and "something of the principles of musical form".³⁹ Gardner quotes musician Roger Sessions who asserts that close ties

exist between music and bodily or gestural language...music [can be seen as] extended gesture....Stravinsky has insisted that music must be seen to be properly assimilated: thus he was partial to ballet as a mode of performance and always insisted that one observe instrumentalists when they were performing a piece.⁴⁰

A musician in our culture must be technically proficient on his instrument, must interpret music and "glean the composer's intentions, realize and project one's own interpretations, to be a convincing performer."⁴¹ A dancer does the same when performing to music. Excluding proficiency on a musical instrument, a dancer fits the requirements of a musician in our culture.

Spatial intelligence is incremental to dance on many levels. Movement occurs in space and through space. A lack of understanding of direction, sides and levels will slow any "student of dance" down. A dancer must in addition be a "navigator" within the dance space. This involves the

³⁹Ibid., p. 103-quotes Aaron Copland.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 123.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 111. Incidentally, proficiency on a musical instrument exemplary of both bodily intelligence and musical intelligence.

ability to fit a number of steps within often varying amounts of stage space, perhaps in constant relation to other dancers, as in a line or formation, or in variable relations to other dancers, when moving through space around or between others. The dancer defines the space, the imagined/ projected spatial limitations which may or may not correspond to the actual, physical space. Thus environment is created by the dancer. Likewise, with movement, a dancer demonstrates the relationship between space and time, delineated usually with sound or music, but which the dancer can virtually alter or distort.

Renowned ballerina Gelsey Kirkland reports that she would envision the stage as a giant cat's cradle, and each division of the stage signified something different to her, due to its spatial position.⁴² Such "spatial" thought processes are exemplary of one with spatial intelligence. Kirkland also remembers excelling in and enjoying geometry most of all subjects in school.⁴³ As geometry utilizes spatial intelligence, this corroborates the idea that a good dancer is likely to possess spatial intelligence. Gardner makes a notable observation that engineers often have both bodily-kinesthetic and spatial intelligence.⁴⁴ Dancers use

⁴²Kirkland, Gelsey, with Greg Lawrence. Dancing on My Grave: an autobiography. Doubleday and Company: Garden City, 1986; pp.24-25.

⁴³Ibid., p. 31.

⁴⁴Gardner, Frames of Mind; p, 232.

these same intelligences together in a different way.

Kinesthetic awareness of others in the dance space is different from seeing, hearing, or touching. At least these four senses are involved in the communication between dancers. Assuming the latter three are generally understood, we shall turn to kinesthetic sense and awareness. One's kinesthetic sense is the ability to sense that one is moving, as when inside a car or during an earthquake, outside of visual or aural stimulation.

The group of sense organs that are of special interest in the study of movement are those in the muscles, joints and tendons....It is by means of this movement sense that we can judge the timing, force, and extent of our movements, and adjust ourselves consciously or unconsciously to this information.⁴⁵

By kinesthetic awareness is meant the ability to sense the movement or presence of others in the space, again without seeing or hearing them. A dancer in order to understand space and relate effectively with other dancers must develop the ability to open the kinesthetic sense and trust completely one's self and fellow dancers. A concentration of energy is maintained so that one can perceive one's distance from other dancers. Such a skill is necessary when holding a particular formation while collectively moving through space as well as when gaging the number of steps necessary before one leaps, jumps, slides, falls into a

⁴⁵H'Doubler, Margaret N. Dance: a creative art experience. The University of Wisconsin Press: Madison, 1940; p. 72,

lift. Dancer's must also sense each other's rhythm and energy level in order to enable synchronous movement beyond the levels of meter, music cues, or visual aids. This concept is best illustrated in the ability of some duos who have worked together intensely and are able, facing away from each other in silence, to move synchronously. This sense of the timing or the length of movement requires bodily-kinesthetic, musical, spatial, and a nonverbal interpersonal intelligence.

Interpersonal intelligence includes understanding a teacher/choreographer, especially when posing a non-verbal or bodily-kinesthetic problem, communicating effectively back to a choreographer likewise, and observably relating to other dancers in the space when on stage. The greatest amount of interpersonal intelligence in dance is found in three forms, which we will not go into at length here: teachers, choreographers, and their assistants. The latter often have the special task of having to decipher the movement intentions of the teacher or choreographer with only verbal cues, and thus demonstrate for others what is asked for in movement from one who cannot or chooses not to move adequately.

A cooperation of interpersonal with bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is seen in what Gardner calls "born mimics".

The fact that some individuals prove skilled at this kind of [imitative] learning, but that it is

accorded a low priority, may help explain why many promising young performers and dancers in our culture become alienated from school at an early age...the ability to mimic, to imitate faithfully, is often considered a kind of arrogance or a failure to understand rather than the exercise of another form of cognition which can be highly adaptive.⁴⁶

Gardner suggests: "an emotion-centered acting technique highlights the intrapersonal intelligence, while the... 'surface' [attention to detail] form mobilizes interpersonal intelligence."⁴⁷ This distinction should be applied to dancing as well. Intrapersonal intelligence is involved on the emotional level of dance. "Expression in dancing is what really interests everybody, and everybody recognizes it as a sign of intelligence in the dancer."⁴⁸

A choreographer might begin the teaching of a piece by describing what motivated the piece, what was the emotional basis for the piece and what sort of statement the piece should make. With this knowledge alone a dancer knows something, not about the particular steps involved, but of the quality of the movement: how the particular steps, whatever they turn out to be, should be performed. This knowledge allows the expression or non-expression of emotion that is pertinent to performance, but starts in rehearsal.

It is the dancer's whole function to lead us into

⁴⁶Gardner, Frames of Mind; p. 229.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 227.

⁴⁸Denby, Edwin. "A note on dance intelligence." Dance Writings; p. 204.

imitating his actions with our faculty for inner mimicry in order that we may experience his feelings....feelings he cannot convey in any other way than by arousing them in us through sympathetic action.⁴⁹

Now to return to the idea of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. When occurring in an abundance of the total-bodily or hand-eye type, this intelligence enables one to understand a bodily-kinesthetic problem entirely on the bodily-kinesthetic level. Taking such a problem, learning an excerpt of choreography, one is presented with a physical pattern of movement, e.g. walk upstage to a certain point, stop in first position, open arms to the side and up to a "y" shape, and lower arms. The movement as choreography also involves, motivation, origination, focus, accent, a goal or task, and a specific neuro-muscular process. In dancer/ choreographer Martha Graham:

The crucial bodily-kinesthetic intelligence was represented in the course of its own experimentation, its transformations and retransformations, rather than thought through or encoded in a self-standing symbol system.⁵⁰

One with high bodily-kinesthetic intelligence will perceive and analyze all of these qualities of the movement with no mental process other than a bodily-kinesthetic one.

⁴⁹Gardner, Frames of Mind; p. 228.

⁵⁰Gardner, Howard. Creating Minds: an Anatomy of Creativity Seen Through the Lives of Freud, Einstein, Picasso, Stravinsky, Eliot, Graham, and Ghandi. "Martha Graham: Discovering the Dance of America." pp. 265-309. Basic Books: New York, 1993; p. 299.

A verbal explanation including counts and perhaps imagery may enhance the bodily-kinesthetic response, yet one does not need to go through a verbal mental process in order to understand the body parts to be moved or specific muscles to engage or the force and quality with which to engage them.

If one had to consciously think "engage the intrinsic outward rotators of the hip joint, eccentrically contract the quadriceps, isometrically contract the abdominal, hamstring and gluteal muscles to lift the weight out of the knees, release the gastrocnemius, soleus, and tibialis anterior, causing flexion at the ankle and the knee, while maintaining erect alignment of the torso and head" a "plie" would take five minutes to execute. Occasionally it is essential to go through such an intense analysis of a deceptively simple movement in order to eliminate bad habits, refine technique, and reinforce muscle memory. However, a dancer is able to process all these bodily-kinesthetic problems in lower brain centers in order to concentrate higher brain centers on music, expression, focus, etc. The intellectual ramifications of this phenomena lie in the fact that many dancers do not possess these abilities instinctually but develop them with years of training. Extensive cognitive development is involved which can carry over into other fields of learning.

Muscle memory is a phenomenon which occurs when one repeats a series of muscle contractions in a specific order

until the sequence becomes automatic, in fact, a highly complex reflex. The thought and the action according to human perception occur simultaneously. On top of muscle memory, Roger Sperry speaks of "...cerebration as a means of bringing into motor behavior additional refinement."⁵¹ Movement controlled by lower brain centers becomes enhanced when higher brain centers can articulate movement thought without inhibiting the motor behavior. This is exactly the aim of the years and years of technique class which dancing requires. Gardner quotes acting teacher Constantin Stanislavski, whose insight is relevant to dance. He speaks of "training as a technique for putting the performer into a creative state where the subconscious can function naturally."⁵²

Several every day activities performed by any normal human being are relegated to muscle memory. Perhaps the most universal activity is walking. Walking becomes essentially automatic after at first painstaking trial-and-errors and repetitions in early childhood. Relearning how to walk after experiencing brain damage can be much more difficult than the first time; walking is a deceptively simple-looking movement. Yet most people can think freely on any subject while walking without experiencing great difficulty until circumstances are altered to require

⁵¹Gardner, Frames of Mind; p. 210.

⁵²Ibid., p. 227. Underlining is mine.

concentration.

...in the case of overlearned, highly skilled, or involuntary activities, the whole sequence may be 'preprogrammed' so that it can unfold as a seamless unit with only the slightest modifications possible in light of information from the sensory systems...[e.g., with] pianist, typist, athlete.⁵³

Other muscle memory functions in the Western world include driving, handwriting and typing, all abilities which are normally thought of as requiring intelligence. As there are observable levels of ability in all four activities, (even walking) bodily-kinesthetic intelligence comes to play in these common areas. Muscle memory actions can stimulate higher brain centers while giving us freedom to use them for other mental processes.

...much of what we ordinarily call thinking-routine as well as innovative- partakes of the same principles that have been uncovered in overtly physical manifestations of skill.

Programming of actions at a 'relatively abstract level allows the choice of those particular units of performance which will result in the smoothest possible sequence of activity.'⁵⁴

Dancers train and rehearse until what is seen on stage is controlled entirely by what is known as "muscle memory", as explained above. Muscle memory allows us to perfect techniques and to repeat choreography as virtually spontaneous movement. It contributes to the connecting flow of one's movement. One can dance, express, imagine, without

⁵³Ibid., p. 211.

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 208-209. Gardner cites British psychologist Sir Frederic Bartlett.

thinking about what step comes next. An entire dance is inserted, almost like a computer program, into lower brain centers via repetition and incubation time. (One will remember more after a good night's sleep than immediately after learning it). Ideally, a performing dancer concentrates not on the order of steps being executed, but on movement motivation and all the other aspects of dance. In a performance, steps should thus look completely natural and spontaneous.

...everyone in the audience becomes more attentive when he recognizes a personal impetus in an intelligent dancer's movement....Her motions look spontaneous, /...as if they were being invented that very moment. This is originality in dancing....⁵⁵

Achieving spontaneity in a dance which has been repeated countless times is a complex mental effort, requiring much skill and focus or concentration. "There is an overloading of sensation with feeling tone because the regulating influence of the cortex has been released."⁵⁶ Conscious mind is active in other ways while the subconscious mind handles basic step repetition. "...it is evident that the co-operation of these higher and lower parts is essential for rich emotional experience, integration, and satisfying artistic expression through dance."⁵⁷

⁵⁵Denby, "How to judge a dancer"; Dance Writings, pp. 146-147.

⁵⁶H'Doubler, p. 73.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 75.

Dance may not necessarily involve the second part of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence: the ability to manipulate an object with the hands. This type of intelligence is essential to surgeon, a painter, a violinist, or a skilled hockey player. As mentioned before, the two elements of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence often appear together, as a package deal. Since dancing requires high levels of bodily-kinesthetic intelligence it follows that many expert dancers possess an intelligence akin to that of a surgeon, painter, etc, and vice-versa, at least in potential.

Another way to look at a dancer's intelligence simply to look at dance itself. "An entrechat suits the kind of common sense dancing has, but not any other kind."⁵⁸ In other words, the intelligence of a ballet dancer will be in the realm of ballet; we should look there for our answers. We must "go down deeper into the nature of the creative and artistic impulse itself."⁵⁹ Perhaps other areas of cognition need not be developed by a dancer, but within the problems and crises presented in the field of ballet or dancer exhibit tremendous intelligence as do experts in any other field.

⁵⁸Denby, Edwin. "Forms in motion and in thought." Dance Writings. p. 563. An entrechat is a ballet step in which one jumps straight up from both feet in fifth position, opens the legs slightly, beats the leg that was in front behind the other leg at the thigh, opens the legs slightly again, and lands in fifth position with the original leg in front.

⁵⁹Best, Howard. "Creative Diversity, Artistic Valuing and the Peaceable Imagination." Wheaton College. p. 8.

C> A performing artist's intelligence:

Gardner in Frames of Mind quotes Acting teacher Richard Boleslavsky, whose statement about performance can be applied aptly to dance as well. Stressing absolute concentration, Boleslavsky states, "the gift of observation must be cultivated in every part of your body, not only in your sight and memory...."⁶⁰ Graham's way was to communicate through "emotionalism and magnetism"; her creations were works of "art in which intellectual information is conveyed through the emotions...."⁶¹ Cunningham is described as "one of the great dancers of the world, because he invests each movement and moment with its full value and meaning."⁶²

Dancers who take dance as serious art express emotions and ideas when they dance. Any emotion can be explored. An idea can be purely physical or visual, it can be analytical or philosophical, it can range from very simple to very complex. These emotions and ideas, in some form, must be transmitted to an audience. The process or tools by which one achieves the expression of emotions is quite different and more involved than the emotions themselves.

In order to express an emotion, you have to reach it

⁶⁰Gardner, Frames of Mind; p. 227.

⁶¹Mazo, p. 178.

⁶²Ibid., p. 200.

some how, to know it, feel it, embody it, be it. You must have quite an amount of intrapersonal intelligence to pinpoint an emotion, extract an image or idea which brings you to this emotion, and have the image and the emotion "on call" for you to access at the precise moment needed on stage, in rehearsal, while choreographing. Suzanne Langer explained this idea as follows:

The dancer's actual gestures are used to create a semblance of self-expression, and are thereby transformed into virtual spontaneous movement, or virtual gesture. The emotion in which such gesture begins is virtual, a dance element, that turns the whole movement into dance gesture....The conception of feeling disposes the body to symbolize it....It takes precision of thought not to confuse an imagined feeling, or a precisely conceived emotion that is formulated in a perceptible symbol, with a feeling or emotion actually experienced in response to real events.⁶³

This is acting, but with no words. Any truly good dancer is necessarily a good actress. Martha Graham, noted for her impressive acting abilities as well as her dancing, once said "I don't want to be understandable, I just want to be felt."⁶⁴ Graham pinpoints here an important and highly complex problem which must be solved by a dancer- an interpersonal and intrapersonal problem revealed in cooperation with bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. This problem is the expression and transmission of emotion-

⁶³Langer, Suzanne. Feeling and Form: a theory of art ...; Scribner: New York, 1953; p. 181.

⁶⁴Gardner, Howard. Creating Minds. "Martha Graham...." pp. 265-309.

Langer's virtual emotion- to an audience through movement; "making motion evoke emotion".⁶⁵

To express something even relatively simple such as the pure joy found in movement (as opposed to the themes of the American Revolution, Puritanism, exploitation, and the abolition of slavery in American Document by Graham, 1938⁶⁶) requires incredible commitment and understanding of the self by the dancer. Such a dance can explore joy in freedom of movement, in the freedom given to us in the ability to move, in the range of possible movement, the beauty of human movement, the magnitude of what the human body can do, and so on. A dance, no matter how lively, bouncy, and visually pleasing cannot transmit pure joy to the audience without the performers expressing and "virtually experiencing" joy, as an imagined feeling which literally affects how the dancers move. The dancers must truly feel joy, embrace joy, access joy, and relinquish any pain their selves might actually be in, physical or emotional.⁶⁷ To do so the dancers must answer for themselves such questions as: What is joy? What events have brought them joy? How does joy

⁶⁵Mazo, 154ff.

⁶⁶Ibid, p. 171.

⁶⁷Langer, p 182. Langer quotes J. Sittard in translation from an essay he had published in 1901, "Die Musik im Lichte der Illusions-Aesthetik": "The basis of real greatness in an artist is, after all the power of identifying himself with every emotion, even one which is alien to him and in which he does not fulfill his own being." In application to dancers, this statement reiterates that a dancer must relinquish their real emotions and take on assumed, or "virtual" emotions on stage.

manifest itself in one's bodily sensations, inner and outer movement, and movement quality? One might create a story-line or scenario to elicit proper responses in movement quality.

Therefore, a dancer's ability to convey ideas and communicate artistically lies in large part in their capacity to achieve self-understanding, intrapersonal intelligence, in order to be a vessel for emotion, as much as in their capacity for movement.

What has not impressed cannot be expressed. A properly functioning mind is constantly receiving impressions, associating them, refining them, selecting and releasing them, and so transforming them to better serve its purpose.⁶⁸

In dance, the mind's discipline over the body, including feelings, is what dancers train for, the definition of the art.⁶⁹ A dancer must be able to open his or her mind, heart, soul, completely to all emotion and experience, yet shut out everything but the particular moment on stage when necessary. The concentration necessary to necessitate that the observer, too, concentrates on the object of expression is immense.

The play of virtual powers manifests itself in the emotions of illusory personages, whose passionate gestures fill the world they create—a remote, rationally indescribable world in which forces seem to become visible....hearing and kinesthesia

⁶⁸H'Doubler, p. 70.

⁶⁹Langer, p 182 "...all these emotive contents are different from the feelings, moods, or emotions, which are expressed in the work of art as such, and constitute its 'vital import'...."

support the rhythmic, moving image, to such an extent that the dance illusion exists for the dancer as well as for the spectators.⁷⁰

Here is a phenomenon most prevalent in modern, westernized society, "...the artistic discipline imposed by the presence of passive spectators."⁷¹ It adds a particular edge to the responsibility of the performer. "The shape of the individual's inner experience...will also have the unique, magnetic power of transmission which makes it possible to draw other persons, the participating spectators, into the magic circle of creation."⁷²

A dancer must allow the body to feel and express emotions, in a sense take over, as the symbol itself of the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, yet always be in control of the body, to reign it in and manipulate it to perform exactly as it is compelled to perform. The dancer must be both impulsive and calculated, simultaneously.

Herein, I think, lies the source of that peculiar contradiction which haunts the theory of balletic art—the ideal of a behavior at once spontaneous and planned, an activity springing from personal passion but somehow taking the form of a consummate artistic work, spontaneous, emotional, but capable of repetition upon request.⁷³

Intrapersonal intelligence is indeed essential for a successful, effective dancer.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 195.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 204.

⁷²Ibid., p. 207ff. (Op. cit., p. 21.)

⁷³Ibid., p. 178.

"Projection in serious dancing is a mild, steady force...."⁷⁴ A dancer/performer is consciously expressing emotion, creating, imaging movement motivation, qualifying movement, listening to and "riding" the music and music cues, and tapping into and communicating with the space and other dancers who might be on stage or projected. Thus this process, the process of performing, involves (bodily-kinesthetic), spatial, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences. The expression of emotion in movement requires the origination of movement from emotion and stage presence, something akin to acting without words. Emotion is recollected and yet responded to anew. Creation is involved in the creation of a dance, the creation of a character moving through a world or environment perhaps along a story-line. "The 'ordeal of expressiveness' begins when the choreographer must objectify internal external experience in crafted movement, but the dancer then replicates the process in transforming the self into danced character."⁷⁵

Motivation and movement qualities arise out of the events or specific references within a dancer's story-line, or scenario. This story-line is constituted of images, memories, experiences, and current realities from a dancer's life which elicit the particular response a choreographer

⁷⁴Denby, "How to judge a dancer." Dance Writings; p. 147.

⁷⁵Foster, p. 29. Foster cites Martha Graham.

intends. This response, and not the particular images, is what an audience intercepts and by what perhaps a personal response or deep understanding⁷⁶ is triggered in an audience member. A story-line can be constant or change with each performance; however the dancer responds anew each time and here spontaneity is achieved. While performing choreography one works for spontaneity, conveying to and engaging the audience, creating atmosphere and environment, bringing the space to life.

D> An experience for everyone:

Bodily expression and the knowledge of the body is very important to most non-Western cultures. Gardner cites Bali as the best example of a society which devotes care to their bodies, resulting in graceful, artful individuals. "The Balinese learn virtually nothing from verbal instruction."⁷⁷ "...in India...awkwardness is virtually a sign of immaturity."⁷⁸ "[the body]...is also the vessel of the individual's sense of self, his most personal feelings and

⁷⁶"deep" here is meant to refer to understanding in one's inner-consciousness, perhaps deeper than that which can be put into words.

⁷⁷Gardner, Frames of Mind; p. 234.

⁷⁸Ibid, p. 235.

aspirations, as well as that entity to which others respond in special way because of/ their uniquely human qualities."⁷⁹

In many cultures, dance is a viable tool for the education of their children⁸⁰. Cultures who do not include dance as a part of everyday life miss a large part of this integrating form of education. We have to go back to Greek times to find a Western belief in the equality of the body with the soul/mind and the importance of bodily expression.

...anthropological evidence suggests at least the following. Dance can reflect and validate social organization. It can serve as a vehicle of secular or religious expression; as a social diversion or recreational activity; as a psychological outlet and release...Dance can serve an educational purpose....it can be used to embody the supernatural.⁸¹

In our own culture, children and adults who learn to dance are participating in a heritage for which nothing else can substitute. Other art forms, with the exception of music, may require some acknowledgement of forerunners but do not require the historical basis which dance does promote, a teacher- student- other students relationship. Dancing produces an individualism which does not exclude society. Without this background we have no similar training or

⁷⁹Ibid, pp. 235-236.

⁸⁰Spencer, p. 211.

⁸¹Gardner, Frames of Mind; p. 223.

socialization for young people to gain a knowledge of total community. This sense is incremental to the adjustment of those children who perhaps have not found a niche in school or who have not received much needed support from parents or other role models. The support inherent in a community of dancers can somewhat fill this hole in one's inner structure. Sports promotes an I/they or we/they perspective, while dance (and to an extent music) promotes only a "we" perspective. Competition does exist in the arts, but the majority of performing artists would contend that to be the best is an unrealistic and counterproductive goal⁸²; to achieve one's personal best and produce fine art are both realistic and productive goals.

Competition is the process of becoming better than I once was in the company of others...not to beat each other but to stretch each other...winning is just a secondary artifice. Looking at artistic action this way, we can readily see how the pursuit of excellence intersects with creative diversity...we search for a universal sense of quality.⁸³

In sports, numerical data can verify an athlete's status as "the best in the world" (although in reality this too would be difficult to prove); dance is unsuitable for such numerical definitions of excellence.

It appears that in many cases, without the arts,

⁸²As one teacher put it "no matter how good you are, there is always somebody somewhere who is better than you." The reverse of course is also virtually irrefutable.

⁸³Best, "Creative diversity...."; p. 9.

especially dance, individualism proves an over-ridingly negative phenomenon, especially in its association with many of America's continuing problems including a widening gap between rich and poor and racism. "Me first" is emphasized, rather than "me, uniquely". "Individualism has a positive side, however. It emphasizes our responsibility to be true to ourselves, to find a way of life that is authentic and valuable."⁸⁴ Striving always to out do others is often destructive where striving to do one's best through development in an art form or other venue is rarely if ever destructive. To develop in an art form, including dance, one must approach it intelligently and apply much knowledge to it, resulting conversely in the enhancement of one's cognitive abilities. It is virtually impossible to apply oneself in a dance class, learn a new dance form, learn and perform another's choreography, or open oneself up to truly experience a dance concert without gaining some new knowledge, improving one's sensibilities and sense of self.

Both the integration of body and mind* and the integration of the individual to society are key processes in the dance education. Dance is ideal as both an energy source and an energy channel. Dance builds both individual and community awareness. Dance can be a teacher and an educational tool. A collective dance effort would fill out much of what is lacking in many American's sense of culture

⁸⁴Bellah and Adams. "Individualism...." Christian Century; p. 703.

and community. American modern dance is a truly great and uniquely American innovation in which all Americans should take pride. Education and involvement in this tradition should be an incremental part of our American understanding. American patriotism, if it yet exists, should value highly our dance heritage.

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A Few Words on Dance Aesthetic

No great art is purely emotional or purely intellectual, but art in which intellectual information is conveyed through the emotions has tended to be greater than its counterpart.

Joseph H. Mazo, in his book Prime Movers: the making of modern dance in America, (p. 178) is comparing a Ben Johnson to a Shakespeare, a Doris Humphrey to a Martha Graham. My dance aesthetic is not the aesthetic of Graham, even more it is not that of Humphrey. However in praising Graham, Mazo illustrates well an important part of my dance aesthetic, "emotionalism and magnetism" are used to convey feelings and to communicate ideas. The body moves with intensity. But first...

Dance is movement. Dance is the moment of stillness between the movement. Dance is movement created for aesthetic pleasure for the spectator and/or the participant. Dance is a revelation of kinesthetic awareness, an exploration of motor-sensorial thought, of the consciousness of motion. The awareness of movement, the decision to move or not to move, and how to move, with what muscles, limbs, body parts, in what direction, with what focus, not to complete a task, not to serve a function, but to move in

order to experience the sensation of movement--that is dance. I do not dance when I straighten my back to relieve tension. I do dance when I straighten my back to satisfy an impulse to move. Moving can be a source of aesthetic pleasure for the mover herself--that is enough; that is dance, that is art. "Aesthetic pleasure is not beauty alone. It can be beauty. It can be understanding. It can be recollection, identification, harmony, dissonance, resolution, the crisis before resolution, sacrifice, generosity, peace, silence, breath, humania.

Dance is an expression of the self, of human nature. Movement is an action; it can be a product; it can be therapy. When we move in dance we express movement. Communication can be on a purely sensori-motor level. In kinesthesia alone there is value. One can find dance almost anywhere, but dance is most valuable when it is most intentional. Although one might find dance in the grace of a person's walk, or in the rushing sensation of a hockey player gliding across the ice, this is not as valuable as when one finds dance in a technique class, or on the concert stage. It is the mover's consciousness of their movement which makes dance valuable. Only then is movement dance--for the mover. The consciousness and the intention is what makes expression possible.

Dance is universal. Dance is the development and enrichment of the body and soul. Dance is the articulation

of muscles and the refinement of motor skills. In dance one cultivates the body, the physical human existence, and in so doing cultivates the human person, mind, the cognitive abilities. As Merce Cunningham said, "The body defines itself in space and in time." With energy, these three elements have been established as the components of dance. The body is the instrument which conveys these elements, which with consciousness become dance. The body is the essence of dance as an integral part of human nature and human existence.

Adding space, time and energy to movement makes movement dance. Extracting space, time and energy from movement makes it dance. In both cases there is a consciousness behind the action which creates the art, the dance. The movement itself becomes a created product.

With all this in mind, one must remember that dance is about movement. Dance should explore all possibilities of movement and revel in the freedom and ability to move. Extremes of movement and stillness are important. Dance is expression in movement. If one wants to express something artistically and call it dance, movement (or consciousness of the absence of movement) is an essential. Movement should be the focus, not some other aspect of a production. If another focus is primary, perhaps the production needs another name for its art form.

Dance is control over the body, in time and in space.

A love and passion for movement creates dance--pedestrian, athletic, artistic, and daring. To revel in movement is to dance. A dance should explore and extend one's abilities and dynamic range; it should expand physical, emotional, and mental boundaries; it should ask the dancer, the human to take risks, to rise above the ordinary, to excel. Technical prowess, aggressive use of the body, intention/ motivation/ movement sense, groundedness, power are all vehicles and goals which dance should exploit.

The ideal dancer/ performer is one who exhibits technical brilliance, who brings intensity to her roles, who exhibits love and passion for her art, who shows complete generosity of her self to the audience. From this dancer nothing a choreographer asks is out of the question or too much. Never would she, as a dancer, challenge the choreographer; only were her identity and personhood at risk would she confront her choreographer. An ideal dancer knows her place is to fulfill her own art within the art of the choreographer. This dancer dances with magnitude, power, and volume, but can be vulnerable, insignificant, and powerless.

As Rose Polsky holds, a dancer has responsibilities. These include to "express the intention of a dance," in movement, of course, to use imagery and make sense of the movement. Perceiving the many "layers which live in each

moment, simultaneously" in a dance, such as "the overall shape of the movement, direction, line, focus, rhythmic shape, energy, texture, quality...." is the work of a mature performer. A dancer must also be aware of her character, environment, and her relationship to other dancers in the space, all of which should be altered as needed for each dance. Mind, spirit, infinite possibility, imagination must all be "integrally involved in the movement."

Polsky has tapped into the crux of the dance aesthetic of persons like Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, and many others including me. Dance in which the dancers adhere to these "responsibilities" is dance which interests me, dance which is of most artistic value to me. Mazo quotes Graham speaking of dance as not "'a literal or literary thing, but everything a dancer does...has a very definite and prescribed meaning....inside the body is an interior landscape which is revealed in the movement.'" (p. 189) I add to this my preference for athleticism, visual interest, dynamicism, technical brilliance, innovation, as well as this incredible integrity. I feel a dancer can and should bring these standards to any type of dance. I feel meaning in dance can be non-verbal, purely kinesthetic "meaning," which is understood on the kinesthetic level. In other words, I feel movement is valuable as "a vehicle for meaning...[and] as an end in itself," because movement in itself can have meaning.

By athleticism I am speaking of a physicality which preempts theatricality, but does not rule out theatricality, and is always backed with emotion and intention. This dance is never about being pretty or even glorifying the music. It can be breathtakingly beautiful and exquisitely musical, but it is corporeal, sensual, human, tactile. It can alter the present, time, the year, the century, but it is palpable, real. Music, or the use of sound, is of equal import to the movement.

In dynamicism one approaches extremes of energy. Also inherent is the coherent force of change. By this is meant variety and flux, coupled with going to the full potential of each movement. If a full potential is not reached, this must be intentional.

Mazo speaks of Cunningham's dancing as "intensely physical, predicated on his personal rhythms and emotions at the moment of creation. It is not based on music, but on human rhythm." (p. 204) In some ways I find this a beautiful statement; however I feel human rhythm is in music as well as in movement and that music should always be considered along with the movement. I would apply Cunningham's "intense physicality" in probably a very different way than he has.

I find great value in movement, in even great technical feats. As Edwin Denby says in his article "Forms in motion and in thought" from Dance Writings, "An entrechat suits the

kind of common sense dancing has, but not any other kind."

(p. 563) I agree, but I would take it further. I believe that there is great meaning in physical accomplishments which seem to surpass the humanly possible. Yet they have to be done in a certain way, not physically or shape-wise, but with integrity, intention, passion, impulse, love.

The Dance Aesthetic of Lisa Sutton

Lisa Sutton's dance aesthetic is one based on the love for and joy of movement. It is a ballet-based modern with some Limon elements and rhythmic play. She enjoys movement that is free, full of breath, includes some tricky weight transfer, and has intermittent rushes and sweeps. She keeps away from opposition, tension, or conflict. Music is very important to Lisa; she creates dance to music and music cues; she gets inspiration from music.

Choreographers who come to mind when I think of Lisa's work are Lori Bernie, Isadora Duncan, and in some ways Doris Humphrey. I know Lori's dance last year at LMU was Lisa's favorite piece and the ideal type of movement to her. Duncan was known for her free, flowing movement, her dedication to great music. Humphrey's use of group design was, I think, quite different from Lisa's, yet the arc, fall and recovery are parts of the movement styles of both women. Lisa's use of shape and diagonal positioning of the body is also reminiscent of Humphrey's style.

Lisa's great love for movement, and the joy she finds in movement are both quite evident in her work. She wants movement to feel good and to be pleasing to watch. She aspires to the beautiful, to fulfillment of an ideal. She

contrasts weightiness with lightness, yet leans toward the light; her movement fluctuates between the earth and the sky, but reaches for the sky while it accepts the earth. Space for her is air, atmosphere. Most of all, Lisa wants to fly. Her movement pushes forward through space with the hopes of achieving a take-off. Yet her movement is very human and feminine; it never gives up; it is filled with hope as well as joy and resilience.

Lisa's dance aesthetic is one in which emotion is all-important. Her movement has a theatricality not in a dramatic sense, as in Martha Graham's work, but in the sense that her movement is made for the audience as well as the dancer. Some of her movement is motivated by the way it feels, some by the way it looks, yet never is the feeling behind the movement contrived. Her theatrical approach is one of great integrity and desire to communicate, to convey something to the audience. She expresses a playful sensuality without being naive or childish.

Finally, Lisa's style is to choreograph "on" dancers. She purposely selects movement that will highlight her dancers' abilities and coincide with their movement preferences in some way. She is able to work both as a dictator and a collaborator.

Memories of LMU

Freshman year I came here with not a clue about what I really wanted from dance. I knew that I wanted to devote a great deal of time each day to dance. I knew I wanted to be in the faculty concert. It wasn't so much confidence that carried me into those auditions with conviction, but it was ambition. I knew I had a lot to offer a choreographer and I felt I had to be in those pieces. I had great desire. Now I think I must have been quite funny, and yet I'm proud of myself for knowing what it took to get into a place where I could grow. I was very lucky to have that chance. I think anyone with my attitude could have taken my place. It amazes me how petrified I was in most other areas my first few weeks here, but how I felt completely at home in the studios.

By sophomore year at LMU I felt I had proven myself to an extent and was finally feeling appreciated. I had a great many ups and downs. Doing Scott's piece and Stephanie's piece I think helped my growth immensely. First and second semester I was receiving a great deal of good feedback from people like Thais and Rose, which meant more to me than one could imagine. I had a very difficult time with back and shoulder problems and was very desperate for a while. Getting past my back problems was quite elating,

which carried me well into junior year.

Working with Rose on "Two Songs" was a tremendous physical, mental and emotional challenge. I don't know if anything again will make me so nervous or feel as much pressure as I did doing that piece. "Half and None" was a tremendous, intense experience as well, but having already been through the process of doing a solo once, and feeling the progress I had made did make it easier, although again the pressure was intense.

It's very funny that these last two months seem to have been the one's of the most growth for me. I feel different, almost like a different person. Maybe my conviction, my belief in myself has returned full force. Somehow through the concerts and being tremendously busy and profoundly sad, I was able to find profound happiness and peace. I felt myself creating art in the concerts. I never doubted myself, I just gave generously of myself. It is not that I am all-confident or that I think I'm anything spectacular, I just felt my responsibility on the stage. If I don't give everything then someone else deserves my place.

Lady Walquer, Dawn, Rose have all been wonderful, especially this semester. Their words resound throughout my life. I think what got me through everything finally was Lady, telling me "I believe in your belief in yourself." I'm certainly not through everything yet, but I am convicted, resolved to get through.

Questions

- Will I find a place outside of school where I feel I am truly contributing, participating in the world of dance, in the world of people?
- I crave intense communication, interaction with other people. Will I attain this?
- *-I do dance for myself, but I need to share my art with others, and I need others to share their art with me. Do I have to change dramatically my presentation of myself to others in order to do this?
- Why am I alone? I do not want to be alone. Is it fear of intimacy, insecurity, am I too self-absorbed, or do I have to be alone now so that I can get to where I need to be?
- I really do want to help others, to affect other people in their lives. Is this realistic for a person like me?
- Will my generation be able to revitalize the dance world, professionally, educationally, artistically? Will dance truly become the art form of the 21st century as I feel it should and will? Will everyone recognize the value of dance as a means of bringing us into an integral, more human consciousness?