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## A Comparative Study of the Performer's Empathic Process in the Arts of Interpretation and Modern Dance

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE PERFORMER'S EMPATHIC PROCESS  
IN THE ARTS OF INTERPRETATION AND MODERN DANCE

An Abstract of

A Thesis

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by

Patricia Reddinger Geist

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## ABSTRACT

The present study was designed as a comparative analysis of the performer's empathic process in the arts of interpretation and modern dance. The similarity between the performer's empathic process in both arts provided a method for exploring the utility that modern dance offers the interpreter. It was the purpose of this thesis to suggest that training in modern dance provides an experience in expressive movement which develops the interpreter's ability to empathize with the literature.

The performer's experience in modern dance and interpretation involves an empathic response to stimuli presented within the choreography or within the literature. Examination of various theories of empathy described the performer's experience in both arts. Numerous relationships exist between the performing artists, yet it was the purpose of this study to examine only one of these relationships: the performer's empathic process. Description of this specific relationship suggested that participation in modern dance increases the interpreter's awareness of his own movement. The increased awareness of the body and its movement, develops the interpreter's ability to appropriately express the imagery discovered in a piece of literature.

The thesis explored the empathic process in the art of interpretation, the empathic process in the art of modern dance, and finally, the relationship between the performer's empathic process in the arts of interpretation and modern dance. The empathic process in both arts

was examined with the aid of Paul Campbell's theory of the reciprocal taking of roles and Theodor Reik's four-phase outline of the empathic process. The similarity between Campbell's view of the empathic process in interpretation and Reik's view of the empathic process in psychotherapy allowed for the comparison of the two concepts as they related to the performer's empathic process in interpretation and modern dance.

The thesis developed six elements of communication in the performer's empathic process which allowed for the comparison of the arts of interpretation and modern dance: (1) movement as natural expression, (2) knowledge of emotion through physical nonverbal learning, (3) suggestiveness, (4) tensiveness, (5) space-time relationship, and (6) fusion. The similarity between these arts pointed out the direct utility that participation in modern dance offers for the student of interpretation. Modern dance, by building upon any prior movement experiences in everyday life, broadens the interpreter's movement experiences. He becomes aware of the movement that is natural to him, and it is through this nonverbal knowledge that he develops the ability to organize and control the movement sensations he experiences through the literature.

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To Greg

who through patience, understanding  
and assistance, provided abundant  
encouragement

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## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction to the Problem

The art of interpretation involves a response to the thoughts, feelings, and actions presented within a selected piece of literature. An interpreter achieves a response to the literature through understanding and experiencing of those thoughts, feelings and actions. The interpreter's intellectual, emotional, and physical interaction with the literature is known as empathy. Participation in the empathic process enables the interpreter to communicate, through the expressive use of his voice and body, what he has experienced from the interaction.

Defining empathy in the art of interpretation as intellectual, emotional, and physical interaction with the literature eliminates empathic theories that emphasize only one type of response. For example, Lipps' theory and the kinesthetic theory are two views of empathy which emphasize only one aspect of interaction. The Lipps' theory views empathy as a purely mental activity; emphasis is placed upon the conscious projection of self into the art work. The kinesthetic theory views empathy as motor mimicry; emphasis is placed upon the unconscious feelings connected with bodily actions and muscular

movements.<sup>1</sup> The definition of empathy as intellectual, emotional, and physical interaction with the literature allows the interpreter's empathic experience to be viewed as a fusion of his emotional and intellectual response to the literature; a fusion which occurs simultaneously with his use of the kinesthetic sense.

The kinesthetic sense allows the interpreter to experience the sensation of movement that is associated with the emotional and mental states suggested within the literature.

The kinesthetic sense made possible by an intricate network of nerves and muscles enables a human being to "feel into" and perceive the movement gestures of his fellow man. This sensitive mechanism . . . allows men to empathize with everyday gesture.<sup>2</sup>

The kinesthetic sense is one link between the literature and the interpreter, yet it is a link that needs to be developed if the interpreter is to succeed in empathizing with the literature. Interpretation researchers point out the interpreter's need for bodily responsiveness and awareness of his own movement. Empathy, then, is

<sup>1</sup> Further discussion of empathic theories can be found in the following sources; Kenneth Gompertz, "The Relation of Empathy to Effective Communication," Journalism Quarterly, 37, No. 4 (1960), 533-46; Joyce F. Horton, "The Response: A Discussion of Empathy," in Perspectives on Oral Interpretation, ed. John W. Gray (Minneapolis: Burgess, 1968), pp. 65-84; Robert L. Katz, Empathy: Its Nature and Uses (New York: Crowell-Collier, 1963); Hans Kreidler and Shulamith Kreidler, Psychology of the Arts (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 257-84; Gilda C. Parella, "Projection and Adoption: Toward a Clarification of the Concept of Empathy," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 57, No. 2 (1971), 204-13; Theodor Reik, Listening with the Third Ear (New York: Farrar, Strauss, 1948); David A. Stewart, Preface to Empathy (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956).

<sup>2</sup> Alma M. Hawkins, Creating Through Dance (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1964), p. 4.

the process under investigation, and it is the thesis of this study that through a comparative analysis of the performer's empathic process in the arts of interpretation and modern dance that the value of modern dance as a method of developing the interpreter's bodily responsiveness will be shown.

### Statement of the Problem

The similarities between the performer's empathic process in the arts of interpretation and modern dance suggest the direct utility that modern dance offers the interpreter. It is the purpose of this thesis to suggest that involvement in modern dance provides an experience in expressive movement which develops the interpreter's ability to empathize with the literature through the kinesthetic sense.

### Theoretical Base

It is the role of the performing artist that will be considered in this comparative study of the arts of interpretation and modern dance. Numerous relationships exist between these two types of artists, yet it is the purpose of this study to examine only one of these relationships: the performer's empathic process. Examination of the specific relationship will suggest a direct utility that modern dance provides for the interpreter. In other words, because of the direct relationship, experience in modern dance would increase the interpreter's awareness of his own movement. The increased awareness of the body, of its movement, would develop the interpreter's ability to appropriately express the imagery discovered in a piece of literature.

The empathic process in both the arts of interpretation and modern dance is examined with the aid of Paul Campbell's theory of the reciprocal taking of roles<sup>3</sup> and Theodor Reik's four phase outline of the empathic process.<sup>4</sup> The similarity between Campbell's view of the empathic process in interpretation and Reik's view of the empathic process in psychotherapy allows for the comparison of the two concepts as they relate to the empathic process in interpretation and modern dance.

Paul Campbell, explaining his concept of performance, focuses on the interpreter-audience relationship. By describing performance as "reciprocal taking of roles,"<sup>5</sup> Campbell suggests that the interaction between the interpreter and the audience is essential to the empathic process. The interaction results in a reciprocal taking of roles that allows both the interpreter and audience to evenly share in the process of communicating the literature. The application of Campbell's theory of performance as the reciprocal taking of roles to the interpreter-literature relationship will assist in describing the performer's empathic process in the art of interpretation as will the application

<sup>3</sup> Discussion of this theory first appears in Paul Campbell, "Performance: The Pursuit of Folly," Speech Teacher, 20, No. 4 (1971), 263-74; also discussed in Paul Campbell, "Communication Aesthetics," Today's Speech, 19, No. 3 (1971), 7-18.

<sup>4</sup> The four phase outline is discussed originally by Theodor Reik, Listening with the Third Ear (New York: Farrar, Strauss, 1948), pp. 356-70; and later summarized and explained by Robert L. Katz, Empathy: Its Nature and Uses (New York: Crowell-Collier, 1963), pp. 38-54.

<sup>5</sup> "Reciprocal taking of roles" is a phrase used originally by David K. Berlo, The Process of Communication (New York: Holt, 1960), pp. 130-31; and later applied to interpretation by Campbell, "Performance," pp. 263-74.

of this theory to the dancer-choreography relationship.

A similar view of the empathic process as the reciprocal taking of roles is revealed in Reik's four phase outline of the empathic process which include: (1) identification, (2) incorporation, (3) reverberation, and (4) detachment. Reik's use of these four phases in the technical process of psychotherapy can be compared with the performer's empathic behaviors in the arts of interpretation and modern dance.

### Review of Related Literature

The ability to empathize with the thoughts, feelings, and actions within a piece of literature requires the interpreter to interact intellectually, emotionally, and physically with the literature. The performer's empathic process, therefore, demands involvement of the whole self with the whole literature. Considering the significance of total involvement, the interpreter's need for expressiveness in body as well as voice becomes apparent.

A difficulty exists for the performer when his ability to empathize is limited by lack of expressiveness in body or voice. Contemporary interpretation researchers are concerned with the interpreter's need to develop physical expressiveness in performance:

Bodily expressive reading is not easy to achieve. Students run the extremes of too little and no movement at all to too much--unfocused, fidgety, random, awkward, fragmented. Hands say one thing, but unintentionally, legs and feet another. Rare is the student who has skill to show subtleties of irony or subtext through a coordinated body and

voice. The physical as well as the vocal training of the oral interpreter is essential.<sup>6</sup>

The importance of physical action in performance is reiterated in Leslie Irene Coger's suggestion that it is only through the awareness and development of physical actions that the interpreter will be able to experience literature and share that experience with the audience:

Ideas are expressed through gestures, a look in the eye, a movement of the head, the tensions around the mouth. Emotions are reactions of the body. Exploring a literary work through physical actions allows the interpreter to come to a fuller understanding of its emotions, its ideas, the attitudes and tones within it. This type of exploration allows the reader truly to experience the poem. And, by the expression of the physical action within the conventions of the interpreter's medium, the reader can communicate the literature more completely than by failure to realize its necessity.<sup>7</sup>

Physical action, then, becomes one of the means through which a piece of literature is explored; one of the means through which the interpreter begins the empathic process.

The important point to realize, as Hirschfeld-Medalia states, is that a physically expressive reading is not easy to achieve. We can better understand the interpreter's difficulty in expressing himself if we consider two possible causes for the lack of expressiveness:

(1) the dominance of rational-linear thinking and, as a result, (2) the

<sup>6</sup> Adeline Hirschfeld-Medalia, "Stylized Movement in Interpreters Theatre," Communication Education, 25, No. 2 (1976), 113.

<sup>7</sup> Leslie Irene Coger, "Physical Actions and the Oral Interpreter," in Studies in Interpretation, ed. Esther M. Doyle and Virginia Hastings Floyd (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Rodopi, 1972), p. 274.

dominant use of the visual sense in our society. The first possible cause is linked to the emphasis placed throughout the school years upon the ability to express oneself verbally through written assignments and class discussions, thus reducing the amount of time spent developing bodily awareness and expressiveness. As a result, many people find themselves, in adulthood, unaware of their own body movement and behavior. Psychologist Bob Samples refers to the dominance of rational-linear thinking in his discussion of the metaphoric mind. Samples discusses scientific research which suggests that two different qualities of mind exist in opposite cerebral hemispheres. He contends that because the rational mind (left hemisphere) has dominated our thinking, the metaphoric mind (right hemisphere) is suppressed:

Thus with the left hemisphere dominance of our culture and with our language so powerfully prejudiced toward linear time and logical sequence, it is not surprising that the metaphoric mind is suppressed. Holistic thought, cyclical perceptions, and extended networks of relationships all lack the logical, linear precision so compatible with the rationality of Western bias. Specificity is the virtue, ambiguity the vice. Specificity is the mortar of logic; ambiguity the matrix of metaphor. Thus, our patterns and habits of language use prejudice our thoughts toward the rational-linear.<sup>8</sup>

Samples is not suggesting repression of the rational mind, instead he describes the need for an integrated approach to learning. He suggests that "whenever any 'learning' is taking place, all the sensory capacities operate at once. . . . Along with 'learning' in the intellectual sense are all those other qualities of knowing belonging to the

<sup>8</sup> Bob Samples, The Metaphoric Mind (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1976), p. 48.



forgotten and culturally discredited ways of sensing."<sup>9</sup>

Considering Samples' holistic view of learning, the total (intellectual, emotional, and physical) empathic response required of the interpreter is an impossibility unless integration of the metaphoric and rational mind occurs. Samples' description of the integrative metaphoric mode is similar to the description of the interpreter's empathic process:

The integrative metaphoric mode occurs when the physical and psychic attributes of the person involved are extended into direct experience with objects, processes, and conditions outside themselves. The mode requires "getting into it." One's entire body--mind, emotions, sexuality--is called into play. It is a celebration of the total energy of the human experiencing it to transcend the containers we have created with our minds and bodies . . . it is total re-entry into the mainstream of nature.<sup>10</sup>

The need to keep in touch with the senses, the body, is emphasized by Samples. He implies that we lose this sensitivity, essential to "true" learning, when emphasis is placed on "intellectual" learning. The human nervous system remains in an imbalanced state when it is allowed to function on a purely intellectual or psychological level. Development of sensory capabilities allows the individual to integrate mind and body, placing the system back into balance. Bernard Downs, in agreement with Samples' views on education, suggests a physical or nonverbal approach when directing group interpretation. Downs states

<sup>9</sup> Samples, p. 118.

<sup>10</sup> Samples, p. 92.

that "physicalizing keeps the student in the ever-evolving world of direct perception,"<sup>11</sup> thus stabilizing the nervous system.

Another possible cause for the absence of body responsiveness in the interpreter, a cause linked to the dominance of linear thinking in our society, is the lack of kinesthetic and tactile awareness. This lack of awareness, in Donald Salper's opinion, is the result of the twentieth century's profusion of print:

Under the dominance of the visual symbol, there has been a loss of the physical gesturing involved in the spoken utterance, a loss of the kinesthetic and tactile, the sound and "texture" of the heard word, the feel and even taste of the spoken word.<sup>12</sup>

Without an awareness of all kinds of sensory imagery, the interpreter is without one of the skills essential to his art. "The way to the imagination, the highest level of mental experience, lies through the lower levels of sensory experience."<sup>13</sup>

There is no doubt that sensory awareness is essential to the imaginative experiencing of the sensory data found in a literary work. And there is no doubt that experiencing of the sensory data is essential to the empathic process in the performance of the literary work. The questions raised by discussion of sensory processing has prompted the

<sup>11</sup> Bernard Downs, "Directing the Metaphoric Mind," Readers Theatre News, 6 (Fall-Winter, 1978), 16.

<sup>12</sup> Donald R. Salper, "The Sounding of a Poem," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 57, No. 2 (1971), 129.

<sup>13</sup> John C. Eccles, "The Physiology of Imagination," Scientific Imagination, 199 (September 1958), 135-46, as quoted by Marion Kleinau, "Experimental Studies in Oral Interpretation: The Interpreter," Western Speech, 33, No. 4 (1969), 228.

formulation of the following questions: (1) Why is it that some students empathize more easily than others? (2) Can empathy be taught? and (3) Through what methods can a student learn to empathize with the sensory data and then share his experience with an audience?

There has been research into role of empathy in human nature and a number of theorists agree that empathy is not completely automatic; it can be developed. According to psychologist David A. Stewart: "Empathy evolves from personal knowing, but not without effort and discipline. . . . Empathy is indeed as much an art to be cultivated as it is the basis of inference."<sup>14</sup> That the process of empathy requires both effort and discipline suggests that its development varies with individuals. Novelist Arthur Koestler states: "The richer the personality, the more heterogeneous, contradictory, unavowable aspects it contains, the more empathic understanding of others it will be capable of."<sup>15</sup> Another opinion echoing the belief that empathy is not automatic is voiced by psychologist H. A. Overstreet. His statements indicate agreement with the notion that the lack of empathy is the result of our environment:

Our everyday experience, in brief, testifies to the fact that empathy is one of our human potentials and it can go far toward saving man from psychic isolation. Also, however, our everyday experience and the-desperate plight of our world, testify to the fact that empathic potential remains chiefly a potential. Those whom it has genuinely released

<sup>14</sup> David A. Stewart, Preface to Empathy (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), pp. 6-7.

<sup>15</sup> Arthur Koestler, Insight and Outlook (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1949), pp. 259-360.

from immature egocentricity into mature socio-centricity are rare among us. The arrested development of the imagination is, perhaps, the most common tragedy of our human existence.<sup>16</sup>

The alienating effect of our society is a major inhibiting factor which stifles the student's ability to empathize. Mark S. Klyn describes the difficulty interpretation students experience in their attempt to express emotion:

How are we to inspire and stimulate our students to the discovery and public expression of the emotion in literature, when one of the central drives of their society is to teach them to suppress and inhibit such feeling itself, and especially to restrain its public manifestation?<sup>17</sup>

Realization of the empathic potential, along with the notion that the potential varies among individuals, will assist the interpretation instructor in devising methods of developing the interpreter's ability to empathize. Methods devised to develop bodily expressiveness will cultivate the interpreter's empathic ability by increasing his responsiveness to the sensory data within the literature. The integrated physical and mental response to the literature will allow the interpreter to continue the empathic process by communicating with the audience.

Examination of recent articles written by interpretation researchers reveals an increased attention to the development of

<sup>16</sup> H. A. Overstreet, The Mature Mind (New York: W. W. Norton, 1949), pp. 65-66.

<sup>17</sup> Mark S. Klyn, "The Terms of Feeling," Western Speech, 28, No. 3 (1964), 160.

methods of assisting the interpreter in developing an expressive body. It appears that the increased research in the area of nonverbal communication first called attention to the need for developing awareness of movement behavior in performance. "Although the communicative value of the body has long been observed, kinesics is a relatively new field of study [which allows the interpreter to] achieve greater economy, selectivity, clarity, and power. . . ." <sup>18</sup> Kinesics is the study of body movement as related to speech; utilization of kinesic principles will enable the interpreter to share with the audience, his empathic response to the literature.

Specific application of kinesic principles to interpreters theatre is suggested by Leslie Irene Coger and Sharron Pelham. <sup>19</sup> Kinesic principles formulated by prominent body-movement researchers (Ray Birdwhistell, Paul Ekman, Wallace Friesen, Albert Scheflen, and Albert Mehrabian) are defined and then applied to the functioning of the whole organism in the performance of literature. Of particular interest to the discussion of the apparent need for bodily awareness is the reference to random body movements and the negative effect these may impose on performance:

Like the verbally stammering speaker who gives the audience extra sounds, the kinesically stammering interpreter gives the audience extra movements and makes meaning difficult to identify. . . . These random body movements can actually be regarded as

<sup>18</sup> Leslie Irene Coger and Sharron Pelham, "Kinesics Applied to Interpreters Theatre," Speech Teacher, 24, No. 2 (1975), 99.

<sup>19</sup> Coger and Pelham, pp. 91-99.

static in relation to the main communicational context. Such kinesic static interferes with the imaging capacity of the audience. The process of identifying and eliminating kinesic stammer and kinesic static is aided by a systematic study of body movement research.<sup>20</sup>

In an earlier article,<sup>21</sup> Coger suggests methods of aiding the student of interpretation in the development of a responsive body. Her suggestions range from the study of kinesic principles to the use of the Stanislavski method of "trying on" a role physically. The underlying emphasis of each suggestion is the importance of physical action to the performance of literature:

To communicate literature to an audience the interpreter must express the action inherent in the words, adding through paralanguage and parakinesics the totality of the meaning and the complexity of character of the person saying the words.<sup>22</sup>

Experiencing literature through physical action is Coger's suggestion for one method of assisting the interpreter in developing an expressive body.

A similar method of physical exploration is suggested by Adeline Hirschfeld-Medalia.<sup>23</sup> She offers the interpreter a sequential system of training for the development of a coordinated body and voice. The

<sup>20</sup> Coger and Pelham, pp. 94-95.

<sup>21</sup> Coger, pp. 275-85.

<sup>22</sup> Coger, p. 277.

<sup>23</sup> Hirschfeld-Medalia, pp. 111-20.

first step involves introductory body work through the use of acting texts.<sup>24</sup> The next step suggests a move from body conditioning to work with expressive movement.<sup>25</sup> Further suggestions include the study of T'ai Chi Ch'uan (movement exercising the simultaneous use of mind and body) and the study of mime.

The study of mime is also suggested by Charlotte Lee and Frank Galati as a method of increasing awareness and control of bodily expression. They state that "it makes [the interpreter] acutely aware of the contribution of each separate muscle to the overall impression they are trying to convey. It demands subtle control and flexibility of the entire body working as a fluid unit."<sup>26</sup> The awareness of the contribution of each separate muscle is cultivated with a variety of exercises offered in James Penrod's text dealing with movement for the performing artist. Penrod emphasizes the need to take note of muscular sensations in order to develop expertise in movement:

As human beings we move constantly and see others moving, but few of us ever really analyze or even take note of the remarkable sensations of motion. However, as a performer, you can become both more expert and expressive by consciously noting the

<sup>24</sup> Hirschfeld-Medalia suggests Jack Clay, "Self Use in Actor Training," Tulane Drama Review, 16, No. 1 (1972), 16-22, as one source that outlines the goals of introductory body work.

<sup>25</sup> The author suggests two sources that list and describe motions divorced from their meanings: Rudolf Laban, Modern Educational Dance, 2nd ed. rev. (London: MacDonald and Evans, 1963); and Rudolf Laban, The Mastery of Movement, 2nd ed. (London: MacDonald and Evans, 1960).

<sup>26</sup> Charlotte I. Lee and Frank Galati, Oral Interpretation, 5th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), p. 74.

physical sensations of your own movement and analyzing the effect of your own and other's motion.<sup>27</sup>

One specific example in Penrod's text requires the student to do a series of exercises with only the hands. In one exercise, the student holds his hands flat, palms facing each other, as close as possible without touching. Keeping the palms close, he begins moving the hands in opposition, up and down, and then in circles until he begins to feel the heat generated by this fast, continual movement. The development of kinesthetic awareness in one specific part of the body assists in developing an overall kinesthetic awareness.

Through the examination of recent articles, it becomes evident that there is increased attention to the development of methods of assisting the interpreter through movement. This attention is also demonstrated in a number of contemporary textbooks; each contains a section dealing with the study of body motion behavior in communication. Lee and Galati discuss posture, gesture, kinesics, and empathy.<sup>28</sup> Included in the empathy discussion is a brief four-part muscle response exercise. It provides an illustration for the suggestion that physical and emotional response are inseparable. Integration of the physical and emotional response allows for a total empathic response. Roloff has a distinctly different way of describing behavior in performance. He

<sup>27</sup> James Penrod, Movement for the Performing Artist (Palo Alto: Mayfield, 1974), p. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Lee and Galati, posture: pp. 67-68; gesture: pp. 68-70; kinesics: pp. 70-72; empathy: pp. 72-75.



discusses behavioral patterning, literary modes and performance behaviors, sound dimensions in performance, gesture and sound derived from the "presses" (expression, impression, depression, compression, suppression, repression, and oppression) of literature, aesthetic determinants of performative behavior, and presentational energy.<sup>29</sup> These discussions provide detailed descriptions of the use of space, time, and force in performance. Bacon discusses kinesics in many sections of his text, with focus on empathy, responsiveness, coalescence, matching, and tensiveness.<sup>30</sup> The chapter entitled "Tensiveness" contains valuable exercises to assist the interpretation student in developing kinesthetic awareness.<sup>31</sup> One specific exercise focuses on sensations experienced along with the emotion of anger:

Act as if you were going to strike out at a table with your fist, in anger. What happens to sensations in your chest, for example? In your throat or neck? In your elbow? In your feet? (And so on.) Now repeat the act, this time with an audible sound that seems appropriate as an accompaniment to the act.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Leland H. Roloff, The Perception and Evocation of Literature (Glenview, Ill.: Scott Foresman, 1973); behavioral patterning: pp. 62-64; literary modes and performative behaviors: pp. 64-66; space and sound dimensions in performance: pp. 66-74; gesture and sound derived from the "presses" of literature: pp. 74-79; aesthetic determinants of performative behavior: pp. 99-104; presentational energy: pp. 104-07.

<sup>30</sup> Wallace Bacon, The Art of Interpretation, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, 1979); empathy, kīnēsthēsis, kinesics: pp. 10-16; responsiveness: p. 38; coalescence: p. 43; matching: p. 38; tensiveness: pp. 41-43.

<sup>31</sup> Bacon, pp. 156-80.

<sup>32</sup> Bacon, p. 161.

The information and exercises provided in these three contemporary texts serve as one method of assisting the student in developing bodily awareness. Researchers suggest that additional methods must be employed if the student is truly to increase his awareness.

The Fall, 1969 issue of Western Speech (Vol. 33, No. 4) contains an article by Marion Kleinau which is significant in the search for methods of increasing the interpreter's bodily awareness.<sup>33</sup> Kleinau proposes an investigation which includes three areas of study: (1) the nature of sensory awareness, (2) personality interaction, and (3) the definition, discovery, and development of creativity in oral interpretation. The discussion of sensory awareness offers thought-provoking questions related to the three areas of study, which in turn, suggest possible areas of research that might provide an answer to the question that has been posed within this paper: through what methods can we assist the interpreter in developing body awareness?

Among other suggestions, Kleinau proposes that information about sensory processes can be gained through examination of the larger muscles of the body. "Much of what happens inside the body is reflected in the musculature; psychologists have, for example, established relationships between muscle tension and various aspects of personality."<sup>34</sup> Kleinau cites a study by Elizabeth Duffy which deals

<sup>33</sup> The article by Marion Kleinau, "The Interpreter," pp. 227-40, directly relates to this discussion. Also included in this issue, devoted entirely to experimental studies in oral interpretation, are two other significant articles: Jerry Reynolds, "The Audience," pp. 241-49; and Katherine T. Loesch, "The Text," pp. 250-68.

<sup>34</sup> Kleinau, p. 229.

with muscular tension as an aspect of personality.<sup>35</sup> Various other studies are cited in connection with the inquiry into the relationship between the activity of the muscle and sense imagery.<sup>36</sup> Of particular interest to the search at hand is the question dealing with kinesthetics:

For example, if a reader verbalizes in kinesthetic terms so that he imaginatively feels motion in space as opposed to imaginatively seeing an object move through space, will he read those passages which contain kinesthetic imagery more effectively than a performer who doesn't verbalize in this manner?<sup>37</sup>

Each of the suggested methods for developing body responsiveness relate to the kinesthetic sense. Development of this sense provides an essential link between the literature and the interpreter; a link which enables the interpreter to increase his ability to empathize with the literature. Through the kinesthetic sense the interpreter experiences the sensation of movement associated with the emotional and mental states suggested within the literature. The art of modern dance cultivates the kinesthetic sense by allowing the dancer to experience and learn from the sensations of movement. Therefore, further analysis of the empathic process in both arts will describe the comparative use of the kinesthetic sense.

<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Duffy, "Levels of Muscular Tension as an Aspect of Personality," Journal of General Psychology, 35 (1946), 161-71.

<sup>36</sup> Two studies cited by Kleinau include: Gordon H. Deckert, "Pursuit Eye Movements in the Absence of a Moving Stimulus," Science, 143 (1964), 1192-93; and R. C. Davis, "Methods of Measuring Muscular Tension," Psychological Bulletin, 39 (1942), 329-46.

<sup>37</sup> Kleinau, p. 231.

### Design of Investigation

This thesis will explore the empathic process in the art of interpretation, the empathic process in the art of modern dance; and finally, the relationship between the performer's empathic process in the arts of interpretation and modern dance. This examination will aim toward an elaboration of the relationship between these two arts which reveals the direct utility that modern dance offers for the interpreter. Revelation of the direct utility suggests that the interpreter could gain from understanding and participation in modern dance.

## Chapter Two

### THE INTERPRETER'S EMPATHIC PROCESS IN THE ART OF INTERPRETATION

The empathic process in the art of interpretation requires the interpreter to interact, first with the literature, and then with the audience. Unless he is able to respond to and interact with the literature initially, he will be unable to achieve empathic interaction with his audience. Empathy is essential to the communication process in the art of interpretation; examination of the communication process that occurs between interpreter and literature assists in describing the interpreter's empathic process. The performance behavior that results from this initial communication allows the empathic process to continue through interaction and communication between interpreter and audience.

The interpreter's empathic process can be explored through a comparison of empathic theory, as described in interpretation textbooks, with communication theory. Contemporary interpretation textbooks include definitions and descriptions of empathy ranging in length from one paragraph to five pages. The variance in length demonstrates the varying emphasis placed upon the ability to empathize. Many of the textbooks begin the discussion of empathy with reference to the literal

meaning of this word--a "feeling into."<sup>1</sup> Bacon defines empathy as, "The process of 'feeling with' or 'feeling into'. . . . readers empathize with persons and things within the poems they read."<sup>2</sup>

Kinethesis, according to Bacon, is important to this process of "feeling into." Through the sensation of body movement, position, and tension, the interpreter can share the literature with the audience. It is the empathic process of becoming that allows the interpreter to achieve a communion between himself, the poem, and his audience. Bacon places emphasis on a "matching" of the inner form of the poem with the inner form of the reader. Even though complete congruence is not possible, the attempt to encompass the experience of the literature allows the reader to become, in a sense, invisible or transparent, so that nothing that he does will interfere with the experience of the poem.<sup>3</sup>

Charlotte Lee and Frank Galati view the interpreter's empathic process as a mental, emotional, and physical projection of self into a piece of literature.<sup>4</sup> The authors stress the interpreter's need for a "flexible, responsive body in order to make full use of all muscles to achieve complete communion from the printed page to the audience."<sup>5</sup> The need for a flexible, responsive body is reiterated by Leland Roloff

<sup>1</sup> Hans Kreidler and Shulamith Kreidler, Psychology of the Arts (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1972), p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Bacon, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Bacon, pp. 38-43.

<sup>4</sup> Lee and Galati, p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> Lee and Galati, p. 74.

in his discussion of the empathic process. Roloff describes the interpreter's body as the major resource for informing the audience of his response to the literature. Through the use of his body the interpreter suggests the stances, the postures, and physical attitudes that are inherent in the literature. The interpreter's performance is:

a form of bodily tone: and the achievement of this body tonality is dependent in a large measure upon the performer's sensitivity and sensibility to language. This capacity to "lean into" the literature, to grasp the elusiveness of the position taken in the experience contained in print is called empathy.<sup>6</sup>

Congruence, embodiment, and leaning into describe a vital task in the performer's empathic process; a task which, in all cases, is dependent upon the interpreter's kinesthetic sense. The kinesthetic theory of empathy, as opposed to Lipps' theory, is preferred by researchers in the field of interpretation, yet Joyce Horton believes that this theory places too much emphasis on one aspect of the empathic process--that of motor mimicry, which involves motor response and muscular reaction.

Taken singularly, motor mimicry is an inexact definition of empathy, for it must be remembered that empathy comprises not one, but several dimensions. In subscribing primarily to the kinesthetic approach many in the field have overlooked the probability that the relation between what is done and what is undergone in the empathic response varies from individual to individual. . . . Because of the prevailing tendency to subscribe to

<sup>6</sup> Roloff, p. 69.

one particular theory of empathy, all possible viewpoints have not been considered.<sup>7</sup>

Consideration of Paul Campbell's theory of performance as "reciprocal taking of roles"<sup>8</sup> provides an alternative view of the interpreter's empathic process. Campbell's theory applies to the communication between the interpreter and his audience, yet this person-to-person model can be used to explore the communication process between the interpreter and the literature involving the interpreter's initial empathic response to the literature.

Application of the theory of reciprocal taking of roles to the empathic process in interpretation supports the view of empathy as intellectual, emotional, and physical interaction with the literature. Campbell states that words are not merely symbols for objects or events, but instead are symbols for one's experiences with objects or events. Because of this, he asserts that:

When a listener perceives an utterance in terms of his own meanings, meanings based on his own experiences, he is in a sense creating that utterance . . . thus when two or more people communicate with each other, power is evenly shared, which is to say no one has the power to communicate with another.<sup>9</sup>

In this view of communication, the literature does not supply meanings,

<sup>7</sup> Joyce F. Horton, "The Response: A Discussion of Empathy," in Perspectives on Oral Interpretation, ed. John W. Gray (Minneapolis: Burgess, 1968), p. 82.

<sup>8</sup> Campbell, p. 272.

<sup>9</sup> Campbell, p. 269.



instead, communication is created through interaction between the experiences suggested in the literature and the experiences of the interpreter.

Campbell is suggesting that the communicative process involves reciprocal role-taking in which both the speaker and the listener interact to "bridge the gap between two individuals."<sup>10</sup> A similar reciprocal role-taking must occur between the interpreter and the literature. The interpreter perceives the experiences within the literature based on his own experiences. The interaction between these two sets of experiences requires evenly shared communication. The literature alone does not possess the power to communicate; it is only through the empathic interaction between the interpreter and the literature that the gap can be bridged. Considering this view of communication between interpreter-audience or interpreter-literature as reciprocal role-taking, it becomes clear that Campbell is suggesting that there is much more involved in the empathic process than motor mimicry; the interpreter involves himself in what Kreidler and Kreidler term cognitive elaboration:

An emotional experience is evoked only when the physiological changes induced through imitation are subject to, and coupled with cognitive elaboration. The cognitive interpretations of the physiological cues are obviously shaped by previous experience, but to no less a degree also by the scenes and events described in the literary text.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Campbell, p. 272.

<sup>11</sup> Kreidler and Kreidler, p. 273.

The integration of the experience of the literature and the experience of the interpreter through physiological cues and cognitive elaboration allows the performance to exist, not as an object, separate or outside of the literature, but as a reciprocal taking of roles.

Campbell's viewpoint is supported by examining empathic theories within the field of interpretation. Lee Hudson describes the relationship between interpreter and the literature as interactional.<sup>12</sup>

Cooperation, interanimation, and transaction are listed by Hudson as synonyms for this interactional process. Gilda Parella suggests that empathy can be directed toward one of two places--toward the object (literature) or toward the self (artist-interpreter). Projection, (directed toward self), describes empathy as "an activity in which the self asserts its own identity over the object [literature] instilling that object with the nature of self."<sup>13</sup> Projective empathy, then, could be described as a form of reciprocal role-taking.

The theory of reciprocal role-taking parallels the view of the process as interactional--two people cooperatively communicating. The adoptive view of empathy<sup>14</sup> in which the literature has its own identity and dominates the nature of the process, does not allow for the interaction and cooperation that occurs in the view of empathy as reciprocal role-taking. Horton provides a summary of the empathic

<sup>12</sup> Lee Hudson, "Oral Interpretation as Metaphorical Expression," Speech Teacher, 22, No. 1 (1973), 27.

<sup>13</sup> Gilda C. Parella, "Projection and Adoption: Toward a Clarification of the Concept of Empathy," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 57, No. 2 (1971), 205.

<sup>14</sup> Parella, p. 205.

process through discussion of her view of empathy as an interactional process:

Instead of equating the empathic response with motor reaction per se, perhaps a more valid definition would be a consideration of empathic response as an interactional process which involves the transmission of knowledge and feeling . . . in fully expressing the dimensions of the text, the interpreter must remember that the internal complex rests on an intellectual as well as emotional foundation. No literary work is ever completely emotional, nor is it ever to be considered solely intellectual. Rather, the two are intertwined, and the empathic experience may be viewed as a fusion of these two elements. . . . It is misleading, however, to assume that the oral interpreter-audience relationship is one in which the former directs the empathic response of the latter by superimposing his (the interpreter's) bodily responses.<sup>15</sup>

It is just as misleading to assume that the literature-interpreter relationship is one in which the former directs the empathic response of the latter. In other words, the literature does not direct the interpreter's response but instead the interpreter responds through the integration of his own experiences and the experiences he discovers in the literature. Horton continues by saying:

On the contrary, the interpreter cannot transmit responses, he can only use empathy as a means of catalyzing or stirring up responses. From the standpoint of the audience then it may be said the empathic response is personal and individual. Assuredly, it is much more than overt mimicry.<sup>16</sup>

The interpreter's response to the literature is also personal and

<sup>15</sup> Horton, pp. 80-83.

<sup>16</sup> Horton, p. 83.

individual and therefore, much more than overt mimicry. Whether it be the interpreter empathizing with the literature or the listener empathizing with the interpreter, the main concern is that the empathizer must avoid becoming a vehicle for the mere transference of someone else's experiences and instead become a vehicle for the sharing of experiences. Empathy, as Horton points out, is more than an automatic bodily response directed by someone outside of ourselves, instead it is a mutual sharing of both knowledge and emotion. This view of empathy allows the interpreter to empathize with the literature without surrendering his own individuality to become a vehicle for someone else's experiences.

The view of empathy as reciprocal role-taking is supported in other fields of study. A. H. Hastorf and I. E. Bender, in the field of psychology, state that "empathy is more objective, more cognitive, more truly perceptive of the psychological structure of the other person, a combination of sensory, imaginative and intellectual processes aided by imitative kinesthetic factors."<sup>17</sup> Again, the other person (interpreter) is just as important as the object (literature). David A. Stewart, psychologist, would describe this importance as a recognition: "When something new is known, something new is felt, a creative process is at work, but it does not become an empathic act until more than one person is involved in a way that means the other is recognized."<sup>18</sup> And Robert

<sup>17</sup> A. H. Hastorf and I. E. Bender, "A Caution Respecting the Measurement of Empathic Ability," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 47, No. 2 (1952), 576.

<sup>18</sup> Stewart, p. 96.

L. Katz, psychologist, would agree with Stewart's recognition of the other person:

What we have taken into ourselves now echoes upon some part of our own experience and awakens a new appreciation. We do not interrupt our feeling of identity with others. We allow for an interplay between two sets of experiences, the internalized feelings of others and our own experience and fantasy.<sup>19</sup>

The interplay between two sets of experiences is essential in the use of empathy as a professional tool in psychotherapy. Theodor Reik has developed a four phase outline of the empathic process as it occurs in psychotherapy. The similarity between Reik's view of the empathic process in psychotherapy and Campbell's view of the empathic process in interpretation allows for the comparison of the two concepts.

The four phases of the empathic process in psychotherapy include: (1) identification, (2) incorporation, (3) reverberation, and (4) detachment.<sup>20</sup> It is important to realize that even though these phases describe the empathic process in psychotherapy, through a different application, they provide insight into the empathic process in interpretation. Also, in the actual process, these phases cannot be separated, and do not necessarily follow in the order they are described, instead the interplay that occurs within the empathic process is continuous. The separation of the empathic process into four phases is a method of analysis and not a suggested step-by-step procedure for empathic involvement.

<sup>19</sup> Katz, p. 44.

<sup>20</sup> Reik, pp. 356-70.

In the first phase, identification, a person becomes absorbed in contemplating another person and his experiences. The identification must involve both a cognitive and an emotional response. As Katz states: "whatever the source of this capacity [for identification] it comes into action as part of a response to the other person. If it is only an intellectual effort, made consciously and deliberately, it cannot be said to be genuine identification."<sup>21</sup> In interpretation, this is the phase where the reader contemplates the literary text. Through literary study, the reader allows the text to evoke and activate his own emotional and intellectual responses. Lee Hudson's discussion of perspective individuality provides additional insight into the identification phase: "Perspective individuality first occurs in the intellectual, critical, and emotional insights which emerge from the reader's close and full study of the text."<sup>22</sup> This initial interaction between the literature and the interpreter is essential if the interpreter is to continue the empathic process by incorporating his experiences with his understanding of the text.

Different levels of identification may occur depending on the interpreter's empathic ability; in other words, his ability to respond to the intellectual, critical, and emotional insights discovered in his study of the text. This would account for differences in the performance of a single text. Bacon, in his discussion of matching,

<sup>21</sup> Katz, p. 41.

<sup>22</sup> The phrase "perspective individuality" was used originally by Philip Wheelwright, Metaphor and Reality (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1962); Lee Hudson, p. 27, applies this concept to the communication between interpreter and literature.

states that "it is always interesting, and often highly profitable, to hear more than a single performance of a poem; since readers differ (and bodies differ, and qualities of acts in different bodies differ), performances will in the very nature of things differ."<sup>23</sup> The different levels of identification, therefore, would develop into different levels of performance. As Hudson states, "the various levels in a text are only partially demonstrated in any given reading of that piece. Therefore, the relationship between the written or recorded text and the oral text is not one of equivalence, but one of partial identification."<sup>24</sup>

The second phase in the empathic process, incorporation, expands the identification phase by taking the experience of the other person into ourselves. In the first phase, we identify, we project our being into others, and in the second phase, incorporation, we take the other person into ourselves. Both phases allow the interpreter to sense the reality of the experience of the literature. In psychotherapy these two phases are considered as a means of reducing social distance. This same view could be applied to interpretation. Often the material that an interpreter has chosen to perform, contains experiences with which he is unfamiliar. The first two phases of identification and incorporation will enable him to decrease the distance that may exist between himself and the character or situation described in the literature. According to Katz, "it is not enough for us merely to take

<sup>23</sup> Bacon, p. 158.

<sup>24</sup> Hudson, p. 27.

in the experience of another or to get the 'feel' of what the other person experiences,"<sup>25</sup> the interpreter must involve himself in the third phase of the empathic process.

The third phase, reverberation, allows the interpreter to come to a deeper understanding of what he has incorporated. "What we have taken into ourselves now echoes upon some part of our own experience and awakens a new appreciation."<sup>26</sup> This phase can be compared with Campbell's concept of reciprocal role-taking. If we accept Campbell's suggestion that words are symbols for one's own experiences, then we can understand how something familiar is evoked by our interaction with literature, regardless of whether we have actually experienced what is described in the text or not. In other words, through reciprocal role-taking the interpreter is able to integrate the experiences suggested in the text with his own experiences. Reverberation requires cognitive elaboration, the process of filling in details according to one's own experiences. Cognitive elaboration is "not merely a response to external reality, but is an interpretive activity, an activity that is part of the nature of the individual. That activity can . . . be fairly described as a species of listening to oneself."<sup>27</sup> Bacon also describes the interpretive process as listening to both the literature and oneself:

<sup>25</sup> Katz, p. 43

<sup>26</sup> Katz, p. 44

<sup>27</sup> Campbell, p. 266.



Literature asks us to feel concepts, to feel the act of cognition . . . [Words] do not feel and say the same thing to all readers. But as they say and feel to you, you begin to participate in the matching of inner forms, yours and the poem's. If you listen, you respond. Some of your response is dictated by the structure that is the body of the poem; some of your response is dictated by the structure that is you. But in the matching of form with form, in the creation of presence, something new is always created. You and the poem participate in an act that is genuinely creative.<sup>28</sup>

Through cognitive elaboration, through filling in, the interpreter deepens his understanding of himself and, consequently, reaches an understanding of the thoughts, feelings, and actions suggested in the literature. In support of the idea of empathy as understanding, Gompertz states:

Empathy as here conceived is not just a putting of oneself in the others place as one casually sees the other, or as one is infected by a stray emotional feeling. Effort and imagination, choice and deliberation, and therefore creative selection are required by the empathic act. . . . To empathize is not only to feel, think and act like another person but also to learn how one differs from him.<sup>29</sup>

In effect, reverberation is a phase of understanding, of learning about oneself and others.

In the fourth and final phase, detachment, the person withdraws from involvement in order to place his understanding in perspective. Detachment can be compared with the process of aesthetic distance:

<sup>28</sup> Bacon, pp. 39-40.

<sup>29</sup> Gompertz, p. 535.

"distance is produced by putting the phenomenon, so to speak, out of gear with our practical, actual self; by allowing it to stand outside the context of our personal needs and ends--in short by looking at it 'objectively'."<sup>30</sup> Kreitler and Kreitler describe distance (detachment) as it occurs in the process of experiencing art:

Apparent detachment is thus a side effect of an intense, multi-leveled personal involvement in the work of art . . . distance is a factor inherent in the very act of experiencing art fully and uninhibitedly. . . . It seems therefore, that a certain kind and amount of inhibition is built into the very act of experiencing art. . . . Experiencing art is a more complex process, first because the observer empathizes simultaneously and sequentially with more than one figure, and secondly, because the observer not only empathizes but also responds emotionally to his own experiences and to the presented contents.<sup>31</sup>

In the detachment phase the interpreter withdraws from his involvement in order to place his understanding of the text in perspective. Lee and Galati's discussion of aesthetic distance assists in describing the detachment phase as it occurs for the interpreter:

The principle of controlled intensity is sometimes referred to as "aesthetic distance." It means, in the words of the old theatre axiom, keeping a cool head over a warm heart. It is a matter of increased control and not lessened intensity. Emotional intensity must be strong when the material demands it if the interpreter is to draw a suitable response from the audience. Yet this intensity must be kept under firm control, so that the audience will respond to

<sup>30</sup> Edward Bullough, "Psychical Distance as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle," British Journal of Psychology, 5, No. 2 (1912), 89.

<sup>31</sup> Kreitler and Kreitler, pp. 282-83.

the emotional impact of the material, not to the performer's extreme sensibility.<sup>32</sup>

Detachment, then, is a matter of control, not of lessened intensity. And it is through this control that the interpreter avoids becoming a vehicle only and succeeds in his reciprocal taking of roles in the empathic process.

Kinesthetic response is a part of the interpreter's empathic response. It is through the kinesthetic sense, as well as the other senses, that the interpreter perceives or identifies the experience within the literature. But the interpreter continues beyond motor mimicry by incorporating these literary experiences into his own experiences. Through cognitive elaboration the interpreter fills in the details that have been left to his own imagination. Reverberation allows the interpreter to move back and forth between these two sets of experiences, interacting, sharing, exchanging roles with the literature. Finally through artistic detachment, he may place the process he has undergone into perspective, which provides him with the understanding and control necessary for the performance of a literary work. The next chapter reveals that the kinesthetic response is also a part of the dancer's empathic process. Exploration of the dancer's empathic process provides a description of the kinesthetic sense as it is used and cultivated in the art of modern dance.

<sup>32</sup> Lee and Galati, p. 364.

## Chapter Three

### THE DANCER'S EMPATHIC PROCESS IN THE ART OF MODERN DANCE

Dance has been a part of practically every culture from ancient times to the present. The development of dance as an art form began with ballet, which, from its beginning, has been made up of highly specialized techniques. The choreographer is guided by these techniques when choreographing a piece for a performance. The modern style of dance grew out of and away from these highly specialized techniques. The modern dance revolution came into being during the early 20th century as a revolt against the highly formalized bodily postures and movements of ballet. Beginning with Isadora Duncan, considered the founder of modern dance, its chief aim was the free and natural expression of inner emotions. Many of these new artists, "could feel the value and necessity of freeing the body from unnatural and even harmful demands of a highly specialized technique and gave important place in their systems to the study of natural rhythms . . ." <sup>1</sup>

From these beginnings, modern dance has developed into an art in its own right, advancing a number of theories which have contributed to

<sup>1</sup> Jane Winearls, Modern Dance: The Jooss-Leeder Method (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958), p. 13

the body of knowledge concerning movement. Horst and Russell describe what they feel is the benefit of the modern dance:

The pioneers in modern dance and their successors recaptured the relation that the primitive has to his body--an intimacy with the muscle tensions of daily movements which had been lost to modern men. This is not at all the ballet dancer's awareness of line, of speed or balance, and dramatic portrayal of role. It is, rather, an inner sensitivity to every one of the body's parts, to the power of its whole, and to the space in which it carves designs. The great quest was to find ways to attain these sensitivity and manners in which to discipline it for communication.<sup>2</sup>

This "inner sensitivity" is the sensory awareness that is essential for any artist. It is through the senses that knowledge has its beginnings; the senses provide information about the environment, which the artist recreates or interprets through his art. In the art of modern dance, the use of the kinesthetic sense is vital, because it is this sense that allows the dancer to perceive or "feel" movement. Philip H. Phenix explains that dance is one of the only arts where this sense is dominant:

The pivotal role of dance among the arts is due to the fact that the kinesthetic element, which gives sensuous reality to aesthetic perception in all the arts, is deliberately and systematically cultivated in the art of dance. For this reason dance may be

<sup>2</sup> Louis Horst and Carroll Russell, Modern Dance Forms: In Relation to the Other Modern Arts (San Francisco: Impulse Publications, 1961), p. 17.

regarded as a preparation or condition for participation in all of the other arts.<sup>3</sup>

The kinesthetic sense is used naturally. Yet, because of the infinite amount of stimuli that are received through our senses, it would seem that through focused attention on one sense, we could become more conscious of what is being perceived. Just as a person can look harder or listen more intently in order to improve perception through sight or sound, the dancer must feel what he moves. He must organize these kinesthetic sensations of movement into a form that communicates his response to the environment.

Organization of the kinesthetic sensations is an essential aspect of the dancer's empathic response to the choreography. Explanation of the dancer's empathic process is gained through four areas of discussion: (1) cognitive processes in motor behavior, (2) explicit, as opposed to implicit, awareness of movement, (3) Campbell's concept of reciprocal taking of roles, and (4) Reik's four phase outline of the empathic process.

Examination of one aspect of cognitive processing that occurs in motor behavior describes the operation of the kinesthetic sense. The brain handles these movement sensations, just as it handles the other sensory data. The intellectual processes are called upon in order to learn from these movement experiences. This movement information is

<sup>3</sup> Philip H. Phenix, "Relationship of Dance to Other Art Forms," in Dance: An Art in Academe, ed. Martin Haberman and Tobie Garth Meisel, 2nd ed. (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia Univ., 1970), p. 12.

then stored for later production of movement within what is termed the standard. Every movement experience is stored within the standard, "which is an integrated store of movement information."<sup>4</sup> How efficiently the dancer performs depends upon the amount of information contained within the standard. The dancer develops the standard through instructions, knowledge of performance results, and sensory feedback from kinesthesia and vision. "The standard is not only important for storing information about the skill but is also important for controlling movement while actually executing the skill."<sup>5</sup>

The idea of the schema, roughly equivalent to the concept of standard,<sup>6</sup> plays a central role in describing human perceptual-motor performance. The role of schema is described as:

. . . defining the general characteristics about the movement that must be organized to meet specific environmental demands as well as the goal of the performer . . . schema represents properties of movement sequences, like spacial patterns, that are encoded [into the central nervous system where they are stored] and are applicable to a rather large range of specific movements with respect to a particular goal.<sup>7</sup>

It is important to realize that the memory must not be thought of as

<sup>4</sup> Ronald G. Marteniuk, Information Processing in Motor Skills (New York: Holt, 1976), p. 182.

<sup>5</sup> Marteniuk, p. 182.

<sup>6</sup> For further discussion of schema and standard, see Marteniuk, pp. 181-85.

<sup>7</sup> Marteniuk, p. 183.

"reduplicative or reproductive in nature."<sup>8</sup> Memory in movement is constructive, in that past experiences allow the performer to design and then produce a movement which will meet the demands of the specific situation.

Performance in modern dance demands an implicit awareness of the body as a spatially present totality. The body schema encodes the spatial patterns that compose a piece of choreography. In other words, through implicit awareness of himself in any experience, a dancer understands an experience as a whole. It is when the awareness of body becomes explicit that the dancer reflects on the body as an externally related system of parts and is unable to experience the dance as a totality. The dancer, when performing a choreographed piece, should conceive of himself as a whole, as a design in space, not as a collection of individual moving parts.

Explicit awareness is evidenced in the dancer who emphasizes technique in performance, instead of integration of mind and body in the expression of objectified emotions. Technique is important for communication; the body needs to be articulate. Technique becomes the dancer's vocabulary, yet it is the creative imagination which produces memories that can be organized and expressed through movement technique:

. . . the dancer can perform his movements to express or reflect what the creative imagination has formed from his emotional experience . . . as he executes his movements, due to feedback, he also becomes the recipient of the sensations of his own movements and their

<sup>8</sup> Marteniuk, p. 183.



associative feelings objectively and subjectively.<sup>9</sup>

It would seem that through movement experiences, a person accumulates memories that can be stored and used as insight into movement expression in other situations.

The insight gained from past movement experience assists the dancer in developing empathy in performance. Description of the dancer's empathic process is possible through its comparison with Campbell's concept of reciprocal role-taking. In the view of communication between dancer and choreography as reciprocal role-taking, the choreographed movements are not merely symbols for objects or events, but instead are symbols for one's experiences with objects or events. When a dancer perceives a movement in terms of his own experiences, he is in a sense creating that communication. The choreography, therefore, does not supply meanings, instead the communication is created through interaction between the experiences suggested in the choreography and the experiences of the dancer. The dancer's empathic process becomes reciprocal role-taking when the dancer and the choreography interact in order to communicate through a modern dance performance; the performance becomes an integration of two sets of experiences.

Further explanation of the dancer's empathic process is possible through its comparison with the four phases that constitute Reik's

<sup>9</sup> Margaret H'Doubler, "A Dance Educator Speaks," in Focus on Dance IV: Dance as Discipline, ed. Nancy W. Smith (Washington, D.C.: National Dance Assoc. of the Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 1967), p. 48.

theory of the empathic process.<sup>10</sup> Reik describes the initial phase of empathy as identification; a person becomes absorbed in contemplating another person and his experiences. If we view choreography as representative of this other person and his experiences, then identification begins for the dancer when he attempts to get a clear visual image of the choreographic patterns. He experiences the movements individually, finding the "feel" of these movements through space. "At first every movement must be the object of conscious control and attention," states H'Doubler, "otherwise the correct habits that will free our minds for higher purposes will not be established."<sup>11</sup> It is only through a sensitivity to all body parts that the dancer can begin to incorporate these movements into his own rhythm, his own experience. "Artificial movements achieved through imitation have little value to the student of dancing . . ."<sup>12</sup>

The student must develop his abilities through the discovery of his own body parts and the difficulties that he, as an individual, encounters. This is essential to the second phase, incorporation, where the performer takes in the experience of the other person, (choreography). The qualities of movement, of form, that the dancer becomes aware of in the first phase are now incorporated into his own experience:

<sup>10</sup> Reik, pp. 356-70.

<sup>11</sup> Margaret H'Doubler, The Dance (New York: Harcourt, 1925), p. 58.

<sup>12</sup> H'Doubler, The Dance, p. 59.

Once the desired movements have been discovered, they must be so organized that the newly formed whole answers to the mind's need for ready comprehension . . . to assemble, relate, and integrate his materials into a final expressive whole.<sup>13</sup>

It is in the incorporation phase that the dancer codes the incoming sensory stimuli which he receives while rehearsing the choreography. He then stores these kinesthetic sensations into what is termed the "motor short-term memory,"<sup>14</sup> which will be eventually transformed into performance. "Muscle memory,"<sup>15</sup> is the method by which the brain stores these kinesthetic sense impressions and that allows a dancer to perform intricate patterns of movement without conscious thought. This releases the dancer from focusing extrinsically on body, so instead he is able to experience intrinsically what is occurring between his experience and the experience suggested in the choreography.

At the third stage, reverberation, the dancer begins to understand, as a whole, the movements he has incorporated. The choreographer has organized into an art form experiences symbolic of his response to the environment. As the dancer empathically responds to the work of art, familiar associations are evoked by his interactions with the choreography. Pauline Kroner, dancer and choreographer, describes the empathic response as it occurs for the choreographer who creates and

<sup>13</sup> H'Doubler, Dance: A Creative Art Experience (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1962), p. 140.

<sup>14</sup> Marteniuk, p. 185.

<sup>15</sup> H'Doubler, The Dance, p. 60.

then performs his own creation. The double knowledge Kroner refers to is similar to the concept of reciprocal role-taking:

In the creation of art, he must analyze his own experience, seeing it objectively even as he is feeling it subjectively. He tries to be at once the viewer and the viewed. When he understands his own feelings, he can create something consciously about that understanding. He must re-establish how he felt within the experience in order to perform it with complete conviction and utter truth. Then he has a double knowledge. This is vital to art, the integration of the subjective and the objective. With such understanding, one can communicate.<sup>16</sup>

Essential to the art of modern dance as a communicative art, is the dancer's ability to involve himself in reciprocal role-taking, not with technique, free of emotion, but with his own elaboration--his own experience. The emphasis must be placed upon a mutual exchange of experience. The choreographer offers his experience through the form of the dance; the dancer offers his experience in the interpretation of that same choreography. The dancer increases his own awareness through understanding of what he discovers in the choreography:

He learns to put himself in the place of the other, physically and imaginatively. He learns to project his movement from the viewpoint of the other. He achieves a transcendancy of self--an illumination through discovery and a sense of becoming . . .<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Pauline Kroner, "Intrinsic Dance," in The Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief, ed. Selma Jean Cohen (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1966), p. 82.

<sup>17</sup> Marcia Thayer, "Nonverbal Learning Aspects of Dance," Focus on Dance IV: Dance as Discipline, ed. Nancy W. Smith (Washington, D.C.: National Dance Assoc. of the Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 1967), p. 51.

Reverberation is a phase of understanding, of learning about oneself and others.

The final phase of empathy, detachment, occurs when a person withdraws from involvement in order to place his understanding in perspective. Detachment is achieved in the dancer's empathic process when he has the ability to perform the movements while objectively communicating the integration of two sets of experiences: his own and those suggested in the choreography. Exhibiting confidence and control the dancer transforms an emotion or idea into a symbolic, physical phenomenon.

The dancer's inner sensitivity provides the nonverbal knowledge of emotions which is essential to the empathic process. The kinesthetic sense enables the dancer to "feel" movement; these movement experiences are then stored in the standard or schema for later use. In this way the dancer increases his empathic skill with each added experience by integrating this nonverbal knowledge into his schema. Additional nonverbal knowledge is gained by the dancer through implicit awareness of the body as a whole, instead of as separately moving parts. Finally, introduction of Reik's four phase outline of empathy allows for analysis of the dancer's empathic process. As the dancer experiences each of the four phases, he begins to integrate his subjective and objective response to the choreography. These responses are then performed and shared with the audience as a continuation of the empathic process.

The following chapter compares the performer's empathic process in the arts of interpretation and modern dance through the description of six communicative elements which exist in both arts. Examination

of these six elements, essential to the performer's empathic process, points out the similarity between the arts; a similarity which suggests the direct utility that modern dance offers the interpreter.

## Chapter Four

### THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE PERFORMER'S EMPATHIC PROCESS IN THE ARTS OF INTERPRETATION AND MODERN DANCE

Any attempt to compare two arts is a difficult task: difficult in one way because each art uses a different medium, and difficult in another way, because different vehicles are used in the expression of that medium. The difficulty of the task is reduced, however, when comparing modern dance to interpretation because both arts use the body as the vehicle of expression. The body-as-vehicle in the performance of both arts requires a similar fulfillment of two distinct roles (choreographer-dancer; writer-interpreter). This initial similarity between modern dance and interpretation provides a basis with which to explore six associated elements of the communicative process involved in both arts, and the effect that these elements have on the performer's empathic process. These elements include: movement as natural expression, knowledge of emotion through physical nonverbal learning, suggestiveness, tensiveness, space-time relationship, and fusion. The similarities suggest the direct utility that participation in modern dance offers the student of interpretation.

The comparison begins with examination of the role division in both arts. A theatrical performance of modern dance occurs through the

workings of two roles. The initial role is that of the choreographer who creates the concept and develops movements that express the concept. The choreographer is the creative artist--creating the form of the dance piece. The role of the dancer is to perform what has been created by the choreographer. The dancer becomes the interpretive artist, a creative artist who communicates what is suggested in the choreography.

Similarly, two roles must come into play in the performance of literature. The role of the writer is to create, through language, a work of literature--he is a creative artist. The role of the interpreter is to perform the literature; translating language into a behavioral act.

The human body becomes, for both arts, the vehicle through which the symbols are transformed into performance. Gesture is the result of the transformation. According to Bacon, "The whole reader is a gesturing agent. Thoughts, words, movements of the body, impulses in the mind, tensions and relaxations, attractions and repulsions--all are profitably thought of as gesture."<sup>1</sup> Bacon describes gestures as being both audible and visible or verbal and nonverbal, because, in his view, movement is vocal as well as physical.<sup>2</sup> The interpreter intensifies basic gesture through the coordinated expression of voice and body. "Functioning concurrently with verbal-language, kinesic behavior can reinforce or it can contradict the verbal content. When body

<sup>1</sup> Bacon, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Bacon, pp. 71, 186, 189.



language reinforces the message of the spoken language that it accompanies the redundancy seems to intensify the strength of the message."<sup>3</sup>

The dancer has only the body to gesture with; physical movement provides the material with which the dancer gestures, nonverbally. The dancer intensifies basic gesture through stylization and/or musical accompaniment.<sup>4</sup> "Choreographic enhancement, or stylization, extends the emotional expressiveness of the gesture. The dance has not merely added form to the movement, it has intensified the meaning of the movement."<sup>5</sup>

Gestures are the result of this transformation; how completely the interpreter or dancer is able to transform and intensify nonverbal or verbal symbols into gestures is dependent upon their ability to

<sup>3</sup> Coger, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> Music and movement reinforce and complement one another in a modern dance performance just as voice and body reinforce and complement one another in an interpretation performance. Yet in dance, the music can be selected or composed to complement the movement or the movement can be developed to complement the music. It is important to realize that modern dance and music exist as separate arts and the choreographer has a choice of whether or not to make use of music in the performance of the choreographed piece. Even though the use of musical accompaniment predominates, the art of modern dance can be analyzed and discussed without specific reference to the use of music. For further discussion of the relationship between the arts of music and modern dance refer to Philip H. Phenix, "The Relationship of Dance to Other Art Forms," in Dance: An Art in Academe, ed. Martin Haberman and Tobie Garth Meisel (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia Univ., 1970), pp. 9-14.

<sup>5</sup> Selma Jeanne Cohen, ed. "Introduction," The Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1966), p. 7.

empathize with the work of art. "Empathy," according to Bacon, "is a kind of gesturing of the reader in response to language signs."<sup>6</sup> The body, therefore, is the vehicle for gestural expression of the empathic response in both arts.

The major difference between modern dance and interpretation occurs when considering the medium that is expressed through the vehicle of the body. Sensory awareness lies at the base of the artistic creation in both arts. Through the senses the artist experiences his environment and translates that experience, through a chosen medium, into an art work. Words or verbal symbols are used by the writer to create a literary form. In modern dance, movements or nonverbal symbols are used by the choreographer to create the choreographed form. It is important to realize that words are not the most natural medium for expressing the emotions which have been experienced simultaneously through more than one sense.<sup>7</sup> The writer must present these simultaneous impressions serially through words:

Many real life experiences which a writer attempts to recreate are filled with actions and events which occur simultaneously. But the writer, because his medium of expression is verbal language, must present experience serially.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Bacon, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> W. M. Parrish, "'Getting the Meaning' in Interpretation," Southern Speech Journal, 33, No. 3 (1968), 182. Even Parrish, author of one of the oldest and still popular interpretation textbooks (Reading Aloud 4th ed. New York: Ronald, 1966), realizes that words are not the most natural medium for expression.

<sup>8</sup> Joanna Hawkins Maclay, "The Aesthetics of Time in Narrative Fiction," Speech Teacher, 18, No. 38 (1969), 196.

The interpreter, then, has the benefit of both verbal and nonverbal expression, which allows him to experience and recapture these simultaneous impressions in performance. The interpreter's task becomes one of "translating the language into a behavioral act."<sup>9</sup> The relationship between modern dance and interpretation becomes more pronounced when considering the significance of nonverbal aspects of performance in both arts. The importance of nonverbal communication in the art of modern dance is obvious: "For dancer and choreographer alike, the medium of movement is as natural a language and as intimate a means of inner communing and outer making as are words for the writer and tones for the composer."<sup>10</sup>

Expression through movement is natural to both arts. And it is this first similarity that suggests one of the benefits that the interpreter would gain through participation in modern dance. In the art of modern dance, however, movement exists as a pure form of nonverbal communication. Dale Leathers, nonverbal communication researcher, would support the suggestion for instruction in bodily expressiveness through movement:

We have studied communication by oral and written discourse intensively and we assume that we will improve our capacity by practice. In contrast, most of us have not studied communication by movement intensively and systematic instruction and practice in facial expression, gesture and posture

<sup>9</sup> Roloff, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> George Berswanger, "Chance and Design in Choreography," in The Dance Experience, ed. Myron Howard Nadel and Constance Gwen Nadel (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 87.

seem almost forbidden thoughts. The need to know what we communicate by movement and to improve this capacity should be evident . . . communication by movement is probably the major source of meaning in interpersonal interaction.<sup>11</sup>

Participation in modern dance offers more for the interpreter than "systematic instruction." It offers an opportunity to explore through movement, through the kinesthetic sense, a nonverbal empathic process that is similar to that of interpretation. "In dance one must turn to the basics: nonverbal symbology, the spatial . . . energy and force--the physical knowledge of emotion."<sup>12</sup>

The knowledge of emotion, as realized in the body, is essential to the interpreter. The expression of emotion through the body, essential to both arts, provides a second similarity. In the art of interpretation, as in modern dance, the performer must communicate with the body, emotions he has never physically experienced. The empathic process in both arts requires that the performer involve himself in reciprocal taking of roles; the interpreter with the literature and the dancer with the choreography. The physical nonverbal learning of emotion that is cultivated in the purest form in modern dance can be applied to the art of interpretation.

Because dance must use movement of the body, it is an extremely physical art which develops and gives

<sup>11</sup> Dale Leathers, Nonverbal Communication Systems (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1976), p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> Bella Lewitzky, "Humanizing Education Through Dance Experience," in Focus on Dance VIII: Dance Heritage, ed. Carmen E. Imel (Washington, D.C.: National Dance Assoc. of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 1977), p. 77.

kinesthetic stimulation, but in dance the body appears to transcend its physical limitations and communicate metakinetically [beyond the movement that is visible on stage]. Thus dance transcends everyday existence and may reveal new meanings or insights. Movement evokes feeling; the forming of movement serves to articulate feeling. Nonverbal learning through dance, then involves both the physical level of learning and the feeling level of learning.<sup>13</sup>

The interpreter's nonverbal learning through dance increases his ability to empathically respond to the physical gesture inherent in language. The physical and feeling level of learning developed in the body through modern dance provides the interpreter with the ability to transform and intensify the physical gesture, suggested in the literature, into performance.

The third similarity between modern dance and interpretation, one that provides additional application of nonverbal learning through dance, is that both are symbolic arts. The gesture that results from the transformation of verbal and nonverbal symbols is suggestive rather than explicit. Suggestion exists in the literature; "it is a technique by which the writer says more than he seems to be saying; a form of economy in the handling of words. . . . Statement by indirection rather than direction, with implicit rather than explicit pointing."<sup>14</sup> It is the ambiguity in language that allows for literature's varying effect on different readers. And it is through a suggestive rather than an explicit gesture that the interpreter is able to capture the

<sup>13</sup> Thayer, p. 50.

<sup>14</sup> Bacon, p. 555.

ambiguity that exists in the literature. Dancing, like interpretation, is a symbolic art, "reduced to the most essential, to the allusion rather than the direct statement."<sup>15</sup> This similarity points to the value of modern dance training for the interpreter, as opposed to mime or acting exercises, in that there is a more direct correlation in the use of suggestive gesture. Through suggestiveness in the art of dance, "an idea is touched upon in the briefest fashion . . . by the merest flash of suggestion reminiscent of mood or real experience, they [dancers] lead the spectator to develop the idea with the help of his own associations."<sup>16</sup> Suggestiveness is essential to the art of interpretation in that "it is this sense of hovering between possibilities that gives such literature much of its life, its tensiveness."<sup>17</sup> It is suggestiveness in both interpretation and modern dance that provides tensiveness in performance.

Tensiveness, experienced in both arts, provides a fourth similarity. According to Bacon, tensiveness exists in literature as "the quality of elasticity, of tautness, that produces the sense of ongoing art. It results from the interplay of meanings involved in the word-symbols. . . . The interpreter, in his felt sensing of this state of tensiveness in the text, seeks to embody it in oral performance."<sup>18</sup> Bacon suggests that tensiveness can be viewed as

<sup>15</sup> Walter Sorell, The Dancer's Image: Points and Counterpoints (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1971), p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> Horst and Russell, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> Bacon, p. 199.

<sup>18</sup> Bacon, p. 556.

"muscularity." Through sensory awareness of the muscularity of the literature, the interpreter can match his own muscularity with that of the literature. The empathic process of the interpreter allows him to experience and translate the tensiveness suggested in the literature into performance. In modern dance, tensiveness is described as force or dynamics. "The choreographer controls the dynamic flow [tensiveness] of the dance through a sensitive organization of movement tension."<sup>19</sup> The writer experiences a similar control as he organizes the words into a literary form. Doris Humphrey, choreographer and dancer, defines the dynamics of choreography:

I think of dynamics as a scale extending from the smoothness of cream to the sharpness of a tack hammer. And the whole scale is subject to endless variations in tempo and tension; slow-smooth with force; fast-smooth without tension; fast-sharp with tension (like pistol shots); moderate-sharp with little force (rather blunt); slow-smooth without tension (dreamy, sluggish, or despairing) and so forth.<sup>20</sup>

Through the empathic process, the dancer must respond to and embody the dynamics which exist in the choreography. Both literature and choreography contain muscularity; both interpreter and dancer contain muscularity. The empathic process in both arts involves a full sensory response which allows the artist to match his form with the form of the work of art. For the interpreter this matching must be audible as well as visible; while the dancer is able to concentrate his efforts on the

<sup>19</sup> Hawkins, p. 35.

<sup>20</sup> Doris Humphrey, The Art of Making Dances (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 97.

visible matching of forms. The interpreter's participation in modern dance provides him with the experience of focusing his efforts on the visible matching of forms.

Tensiveness (force, dynamics) is expressed in space and in time (rhythm). This space-time relationship becomes a fifth similarity between the arts of dance and interpretation. Both the literature and the choreography suggest time and space that must be expressed in performance. The literature suggests time through the rhythm of the words and also in the amount of time that it occupies. Space is suggested in the visualization of the scene and the movement that must occur within that created space. Similarly, time is suggested in dance through the rhythm of the body as it performs the movement. Time is also suggested in the music selected to accompany the choreography. The body moves through space; in different directions and on different levels (horizontal, vertical, diagonal). The elements of space and time together with tensiveness form a relationship which is a part of the composition of the literature and the choreography and which must be expressed in performance through the empathic process. The interpreter's attention to space and time is described by Roloff:

The performer of literature is an expressive artist who utilizes the media of time, space, and sound to communicate intuitive insights of literature, and in so doing generates a sense of inevitability of experience from the symbols inherent in the printed word.<sup>21</sup>

Roloff describes the functioning of the body in performance as sounding

<sup>21</sup> Roloff, p. 18.



and moving. Tensiveness becomes the result of these forces occurring simultaneously. Space, time and dynamics are described by dance critic John Martin, as dimensions of the dance performance:

All motion exists in three dimensions of space, time, and dynamics, and these must be considered not alone in their separate characters but also in the fusions and overlappings which give rise to such secondary phenomena as rhythms, and phrasing, sequence and counterpoint.<sup>22</sup>

Fusion, a sixth similarity, effectively describes the wholeness that must be achieved in the performance of both arts. By "matching" himself with the work of art, a performer can achieve this fusion. It is "the process of matching the acts of the poem with the acts of the performer--the body of the poem with the body of the reader,"<sup>23</sup> that allows fusion to occur. A similar matching is necessary between the dancer and the choreography. "To be with it," are the words Hanya Holm uses to describe this fusion:

With the mastery of forms and shapes come belief and enthusiasm, in other words, the dancer achieves "to be with it." By that I mean not letting the moving body mechanically execute the action without the motivating pulse, giving the heartbeat to the action with no pretention but total participation. A heavenly awareness of being a whole and the experience of oneness gives the satisfaction of genuine presence. Believe what you do and let the doing be with honest communication. "To be with it," is the alpha and omega of communication, economy, endurance, sparsity, honesty, conviction, belief,

<sup>22</sup> John Martin, Introduction to the Dance (New York: W. W. Norton, 1939), p. 61.

<sup>23</sup> Bacon, pp. 37-38.

etc. Whatever the stir is that a dancer may evoke is valuable to the empathy with which communication can be achieved.<sup>24</sup>

Empathy is developed through fusion, through matching--or by being "with it." The empathic process in both arts requires "effort, imagination, choice and deliberation and therefore creative selectivity . . . to empathize is not only to feel, think and act like another person but also to learn how one differs from him."<sup>25</sup> Both arts require reciprocal taking of roles as the performer shares his experiences with those suggested in the literature or the choreography. It is only through the performer's development of empathy with the work of art that the empathic process may continue by fusing the performer, the work of art, and the audience.

Through exploration of six elements of communication in the performer's empathic process, the arts of interpretation and modern dance have been compared: (1) movement as natural expression, (2) knowledge of emotion through physical nonverbal learning, (3) suggestiveness, (4) tensiveness, (5) space-time relationship, and (6) fusion. The similarity between these arts points out the direct utility that participation in modern dance offers for the student of interpretation. Modern dance, by building upon any prior movement experiences in everyday life, broadens the interpreter's movement experiences. He

<sup>24</sup> Hanya Holm, "To Be With It," in Focus on Dance VIII: Dance Heritage, ed. Carmen E. Imel (Washington, D.C.: National Dance Assoc. of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 1977), p. 61.

<sup>25</sup> Gompertz, p. 53.

becomes aware of the movement that is natural to him, and it is through this nonverbal knowledge that he develops the ability to organize and control the movement sensations he experiences through the literature. Modern dance assists the interpreter in becoming physically articulate. In other words, "we say that he learns to move by moving to learn, because he cannot coordinate his movements in any other way."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Eleanor Metheny, Movement and Meaning (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 101.

## Chapter Five

### IMPLICATIONS AND SUMMARY

#### Implications

The implications of this study include a need for research designed to advance understanding of dance as a tool for the interpreter. Research projects could be designed to support the theoretical proposition explored in this study: involvement in modern dance provides an experience in expressive movement which significantly increases the interpreter's ability to appropriately express meaning through kinesics. For example, both experimental and control groups could be required to perform a short reading before and after a set period of time. Both readings would consist of a short piece of prose or poetry and subjects would be rated on their physical expressiveness by a panel of judges. Within the set time period, the experimental group would participate in modern dance training. Examination of results would determine if there had been any significant increase in physical expressiveness. A number of questions could be asked based on results of such a study, concerning what type of benefit the experience of modern dance provides and to what extent these could assist the interpreter. Other research projects could be designed to test specific aspects of expressiveness rather than the general overall expressiveness that the sample project, described above, would investigate. The

elements of space, time, and force could be focused upon in interpretation research to determine specific advantages for the interpreter.

The second implication to be considered is curriculum development. The value of modern dance for the interpreter explored in this study suggests the addition of modern dance to the college curriculum as part of the education of the interpreter. The addition of a one or two semester course such as "Dance for the Interpreter," would allow the interpretation student to gain the benefit of movement training through qualified instruction.

One outline of study could focus on space, time, and force. Appendix A contains an outline of the elements of space, time, and force offered as one possible method of organizing the content of a beginning modern dance class. In such a course, specific reference to the elements as they are found in literature would reinforce the movement education. A final unit in the course could focus on imagery in literature, thus providing a direct correlation between the two arts. Through experimentation with modern dance movement related to the literature, the student would become familiar with the nonverbal symbolic action of the piece. It is important to realize that the learning that occurs in this type of modern dance training is sequential, one element builds onto another. By the end of the course the student would be synthesizing the elements of space, time, and force in order to create a whole--a form that could be performed. The course would not be made up of separate unrelated activities for increasing awareness; it is in the process of creating, working toward a performance goal that bodily awareness would be gained.

A semester or more would be necessary to allow the interpreter enough time to develop and integrate the concepts. The introduction of each new element or concept, requires experimentation with several related activities. Several weeks, set aside at the beginning of the course, are used to explore the general parts of the body and to experience the action of the muscles at work in each of these parts. These activities assist in limbering and loosening built-in tension, while increasing general body awareness. Attention is focused on breathing, allowing the students to listen to the rhythm of their own breathing and then comparing that rhythm with the rhythm of other students. Body alignment is explored, each student determining his center of balance and then discovering where the other parts of his body should fall into place from that point. Combining these two areas, work could then begin on general relaxation, the instructor working with each student to find tension spots and then helping them to loosen and relax these areas. Focus on specific areas of the body allow students to experience the muscles working, for example, neck, abdominals, lower back, arms and upper body, waist, and legs.

After this two week session, work would begin on activities related to each of the concepts found in the outline. General body work is still retained as a ten to fifteen minute warm-up. Appendix B contains an example of a one hour session as part of a one semester course.

If it is not possible to offer a course exclusively for the interpretation student, a course in modern dance (from another department) could be required. Regardless of whether or not the course

is directed specifically toward the interpretation student, because of the similarity between the arts, the application is direct and immediate. The advantages of a separate course should be apparent; a two to three week unit incorporated into a semester interpretation course would not allow the student enough time or experience to develop and synthesize the concepts into a final performance. A separate course would provide the quantity and quality of time necessary to develop awareness of the kinesthetic sense that could be utilized in the interpreter's empathic process.

### Summary

The performer's experience in modern dance and interpretation involves an empathic response to the stimuli presented within the choreography or within the literature. Examination of the various theories of empathy assists in describing this process and its comparative use in the arts of modern dance and interpretation. Explanation of Reik's four phase outline of the process of empathy in psychotherapy explores the comparison of this psychological tool with the empathic process in both arts. This four phase outline includes: (1) identification, (2) incorporation, (3) reverberation, and (4) detachment. Campbell's concept of reciprocal taking of roles as mutual performance of empathic behaviors provides a new dimension aimed at clearer understanding of empathy in performance.

Nonverbal behavior research indicates a need for the development of body awareness. Recent interpretation research offers suggestions for developing the interpreter's body awareness (kinesics, mime, stage

movement). The similarity between the performer's empathic process in the art of interpretation and the art of modern dance suggests the direct utility that modern dance offers for the interpreter. The comparison of these two arts is focused on six elements of communication: (1) movement as natural expression, (2) knowledge of emotion through physical nonverbal learning, (3) suggestiveness, (4) tensiveness, (5) space-time relationship, and (6) fusion. The comparison of the elements related to the empathic process in dance and interpretation indicates that the benefits gained through participation in modern dance as a performing art, may be applied directly to the performance of literature.



APPENDIX A

Outline of Study for a Course in  
Beginning Modern Dance

## APPENDIX A

Outline of Study for a Course in  
Beginning Modern Dance

- I. Force: movement quality, (dynamics)
  - A. Vary amount of energy expended
  - B. Release energy in different ways
  - C. Achieve different qualities
    1. Sustained
    2. Percussive
    3. Vibratory
    4. Swinging
- II. Space (design)
  - A. Spacial Balance
    1. Vertical Planes
    2. Horizontal Planes
    3. Diagonal Planes
    4. Total movement design
      - a. Symmetry
      - b. Asymmetry
  - B. Direction in Space
    1. Path
      - a. Straight
      - b. Curved
    2. Direction
      - a. Forward
      - b. Sideward
      - c. Circular
      - d. Backward
  - C. Dimension in Space
    1. Communication of intent
    2. Range of movement
- III. Rhythm (time)
  - A. Duration: Sequence of time intervals
    1. Even rhythm
      - a. Intervals of equal length
      - b. Changes establish a steady-regular flow of energy
      - c. Tends to be restful
    2. Uneven rhythm
      - a. Combination of long and short intervals
      - b. Irregular pattern of change
      - c. Tends to be dynamic and interesting
  - B. Pulse
    1. Must keep pulse regardless of duration
    2. Emphasis on certain pulse beats establishes accent

APPENDIX B

One Hour Lesson in a One Semester

Modern Dance Class

## APPENDIX B

## One Hour Lesson in a One Semester

## Modern Dance Class

WARM-UP

These exercises would help the student to experience the sensation of muscle action as the muscles work to move the body from one position to another.

- Exercise 1: Breathing (one hand on chest, one hand on diaphragm)
- Exercise 2: Sitting on floor, feet flat together, bow head over, relax, then straighten back up (2 times)
- Exercise 3: Head and neck  
on back, touch chin to chest, turn head right and left and back center and down (involves muscles at front, back, and sides of neck)
- Exercise 4: Abdominals  
on back, stretch arms forward from chest, lift head and torso until tightening of abdominal muscles, then lower body to floor, feeling each part of spine touch floor.
- Exercise 5: Lower back  
sitting, feet flat on floor, arms stretched forward, bend at waist, lengthening and relaxing the muscles of the lower back, grasp feet, return to original position.

LESSON

Quality of movement can be controlled in two ways:

1. Varying amount of energy expended and,
2. By releasing energy in different ways.

By controlling the amount of energy and its release the dancer can achieve different qualities of movement:

1. Sustained: energy released evenly and continuously
2. Percussive: energy released suddenly, sharp, jerky
3. Vibratory: energy released in small spurts, great rapidity, regularity
4. Swinging: impulse and rhythm allowed to continue until energy is depleted.

- Sustained: exercises with slow push -- pull action .
- Percussive: exercises with sudden thrusts (arm, twist of torso, explosive jump)
- Vibratory: exercises with shaking (excitement, suspense)
- Swinging: exercises to feel impulse, moment of suspension

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