

DANCE AND DANCE EDUCATION IN ENGLAND: A BRITISH POINT OF VIEW

The following paper presents an overview of the current situation within the dance and dance education field in England. I do not attempt to provide details of a statistical nature, but aim to acquaint the reader with a climate of thought; one that I feel is paramount at the present time¹. My writing reflects a clear shift of emphasis in the dance education world in England. Dance, where accepted as a worthwhile endeavour within the education system, and justified in the past on psychological and sociological grounds, is now justified by using criteria that are largely aesthetic and philosophical. That is, a view of dance as an art form, is seen to be educationally more worthwhile than other views and justifications.

I suggest that very different developments would occur, both now and in the future, if other aspects of dance became of paramount importance. Consider for example, the types of changes that would occur in the primary and secondary schools with the adoption of an historical emphasis. We would perhaps see a concentration upon the preservation of traditions in dance, rather than the current emphasis upon 'creativity'. One can speculate that a return to a justification on social and psychological criteria would emphasize the therapeutic effects of dancing rather than the dancing itself. A social anthropological focus would stress an understanding of the significance of dances as meaningful systems of signs, that stress communication in a wider social context, and would encourage cross-cultural comparison. It would perhaps lead to the dance being linked with the humanities, linguistics and the social sciences within a curriculum, rather than the arts.

The fact that dance is still only minimally accepted by the academic traditions of universities in England, suggests difficulties involved in the study of dance as an academic subject. I suggest that there is nothing inherent in the dance itself that causes difficulty, but that the view of dance as an art form, and only an art form, does not provide sufficient justification for its inclusion in an academic setting. The production of performers and artists is, in my view, not sufficient. There must be a basis for the development of new knowledge.

Many peoples of the world do not consider their dances as art. The notion of 'art' itself is a concept of Western societies. Yet in addition to dances there are other social events that contain various manifestations of symbolic movement. We would not label them as 'dances' perhaps, yet they are important stylized movement events of a similar nature to those that we do label as dances.² Semasiology, developed by Williams during her studies at Oxford University, presents a mathematically sound model for analysing dance and other movement events by viewing them as symbolic human action sign systems. Her work offers a major breakthrough in the study of human movement, and a sound academic base for the study of dance which more than justifies an academic setting. Whilst agreeing with my English colleagues that aesthetical and philosophical considerations are of importance, I feel that social anthropological aspects, as well as historical, pedagogical and physical aspects of the dance deserve consideration

too. My main point in this paper is an appeal that we be clear what we mean by dance as an 'art' form; as dance educationists, anthropologists of human movement, or anything else, let us be aware of what we select and what we omit, when we adopt one area of emphasis to the exclusion of several others.

Dance as Art or Dance as Education?

It is a source of pride for me, that whenever I meet dance educators in America, their attitude towards dance education in English schools is always one of admiration and envy for our standards, and the widespread acceptance of dance within the education system. I always dread what seemed to be the most obvious follow-up question: "Why is this not reflected in the amount of participation, and the standard of dance activity in the theatre art?" Dance is dance isn't it? "Why is it," I asked myself, "that America has such a proliferation of modern dancers and choreographers working at a professional level, innovating and developing the art, when there is supposedly a dearth of movement and dance activity in the school system?" Why is the problem reversed here in the United States? Are we indeed at opposite ends of the inevitable swinging pendulum, with theatre art at the high point at one side of the Atlantic, and dance in education at the other?

I think our problem on both sides of the Atlantic may lie in misconceptions about what dance as an 'art form' is, and what dance in education is trying to achieve. As I discuss the present situation and current developments in England, I hope those who are involved in the field here may identify some parallels, and that anthropologists may find some interesting comparative data, and intra-cultural problems that are based upon philosophical and conceptual misunderstandings. Should we consider dance as an art and dance in education as being of the same nature, with similar aims and concepts, or can they somehow be different kinds of dance? I hope you will accept this personal point of view in the spirit in which it is offered, and may I offer Poincaré's advice, when he says that to doubt everything and to believe everything are two equally convenient solutions, for both dispense with the necessity for reflection.

A Personal Perspective

The theories of movement put forward by Rudolph Van Laban during the 1940's and 50's in England provide the basis of much of the work in English schools that has come to be known variously as 'modern educational dance', 'the art of movement', 'creative dance', 'dance-drama', or simply 'dance'. The multiplicity of terms reflects a certain amount of confusion that exists over what exactly is involved in this kind of activity.

The introduction of Laban's ideas came about through the enthusiasm of physical educationists for his ideas at the time, possibly as ideas of child-centred education were becoming more acceptable. This led to a situation where in primary schools one often found an undifferentiated

activity, labelled as 'movement' and often heavily influenced by drama and mime. At the secondary school level, dance was often one item among many pursuits purporting to deal with health and fitness, recreation and leisure. In higher education, as a college subject (which in England generally refers to teacher training as opposed to university), it was available to those more knowledgeable and interested in sport than in art; and approved at academic levels by physiologists, experts in bio-mechanics and the acquisition of skills; or examined by drama and English specialists for its suitability on the school curriculum; altogether a bizarre situation, and one hardly making for progress in dance, of whatever kind.

It is only in the last decade that significant developments have been made in clarifying concepts of what exactly is meant by dance as an 'art form' in education, and this has changed significantly the approach and the results, at least in the upper years of secondary school and at the college, and now university level. A new attitude to dance in education has emerged.

I think a précis of my background and education will help illustrate my points and place them in a context. From eleven to eighteen years of age, a large part of my life at high school level was involved in movement and dance. I was exposed to an excellent teacher of Laban's work.³

At this time in England, there were seven specialist physical education colleges, three of whom offered specializations in dance. Several other colleges also offered dance as part of physical education programmes, but were not considered to have as high a standard as the specialist colleges. Other alternatives were Worcester College, and the Laban Art of Movement Studio at Addlestone in Surrey.⁴ No university offered physical education or dance at that time (1966). I invite you to look at an approximation, in transcript form, of the three year course that I then undertook at I.M. Marsh College of Physical Education in Liverpool, and compare the intensity and amount of work covered in only three years (Appendix I, p. 184).

I had an intense desire to study dance further, but where and with what funds? I began teaching, and enjoyed developing dance as a major part of the physical education programmes within the schools, passing on, I hope, some of the joy I had found in moving and creating with movement. My interest in the significance of dance and ritual took me on an eight-month journey to West Africa in 1971, with the intention of studying native dance forms. I spent a fascinating three months with one group in southern Nigeria observing dance and everyday movement, but equipped only with a lot of energy and enthusiasm, achieved little of anthropological value.⁵

My year of study at the Laban centre in London (1976) was entirely different to my expectations, but a very challenging experience. Here was my first contact with dance as a theatre art. Technique was heavily emphasised; dance composition was totally divorced from Laban's work (in fact quite 'anti-Laban', if one can coin such a term). If it was designed to shock the established ideas I had about what a dance was and was not, it certainly achieved its aim. I found myself getting deeply involved in

aesthetic and philosophical issues, and working very hard to gain technical skill in order to perform at the end of the year. My studies in Labanotation began at the Laban centre and have continued here in New York. At last we have the means to become literate in relation to movement.

The Influence of Rudolph Laban - The Man and His Ideas

Rudolph Laban came to England from Europe in 1939, together with several of his fellow dancers, in order to escape the persuasions of Hitler's government, that their art form should reflect the ideologies of the state. Teaching and writing from Dartington Hall in S.W. England, he had a profound effect upon his followers and students who came to study with him. Whilst he achieved marvelous results in terms of the amount of activity he inspired, and of the genuinely creative and innovative nature of his ideas about dance, he seems to have created an almost god-like worship of himself and his ideas that has until recently obscured, or at least delayed considerably, any critical appraisal or thorough philosophical investigation of his principles of movement. This is apparent in that it is only as recently as 1971 and 1977 (thirteen and nineteen years respectively after his death) that books appeared giving accounts of the man, his background and the probable influences that helped form his ideas.⁶

My own involvement with his teachings began, as I have stated, as early as my years in primary school and continued throughout my training as a physical education teacher. Yet always the name 'Laban' was held in mystical reserve and certainly there was no encouragement to think critically of his ideas; only creatively. Enlarge upon, yes; use as a basis for everything in education and life; but evaluate? Sacrilege! Not that the nature of Laban's philosophies themselves advocated this, but to quite a large degree, this was the way a lot of his 'disciples' interpreted his work. "Dance is all culture, all society.....dance is all knowledge," he says in 'The Life of a Dancer'. Such a statement could only have been made by a person seeking unity, attempting not only to break down accepted but artificial divisions of man's experiences, but also to formulate a new concept of man in relation to himself and the world.

Curl (1968) goes so far as to describe the mainspring of Laban's work as a "doctrine that deifies the dance". Bartenieff (who danced with Laban in Europe and came to the U.S.A. when Laban left for England) comments: "Whoever spoke to Laban, at any time, could hardly escape the impression of having met a visionary, a magic conjuror of movement, an abstract mathematician, an architect of geometrical space, a social philosopher and prophet; an educator and a choreographer of new dimensions". Unfortunately, it is just such multi-disciplined output of ideas that has obscured for many the validity of his movement analysis. As Redfern (1972) confirms, "Laban's writings are a perpetual source of paradox and ambiguity". Curl (1971) furthers the issue by saying, "We know from Laban's Pythagoreanism, his Masonic and mystic connections that his half-hidden cosmic philosophy with its fundamental faith in the divine power of movement, could not help but breed a slight air of mystery and with it the dangers to education of an esoteric doctrine, inaccessible to adequate appraisal".

It seems essential then that Laban's philosophical ideas are seen in context. Bartenieff suggests that we remember Laban wrote 'The Life of a Dancer' "...at the threshold of a new time. Before him, between 1900 and 1920, a whole new panorama of theories, ideas and discoveries began to unfold, which he visualized as a common ground for the arts and sciences".⁷ He wrote during a particular period which allowed this experimental revolutionary to make his visionary, ambient statements; encompassing the mystic-magic, the romantic world of neo-Platonism, and the opening fields of biological and behavioural science, as well as the new physics.

Briefly, he was concerned with a view of movement as an all pervasive phenomenon of life. In all his descriptions an essential feature is that of awareness of process. He evolved a view of a person as a tri-partite autonomous being, capable of thinking, feeling and acting, whose gestures are comprised of weight-time-space components. He described these components and classified them according to his view of their use. This classification has given the dance world a way of talking about movement and a framework for exploring systematically those components that he identified. Redfern states (1973) "It is his principles of movement in the classificatory sense that is important, and that if the actual movement material is divorced from many of the explanations and suppositions attached to them, a substantial body of ideas is to be found which are of immediate relevance and usefulness for both the theory and practise of dance as an art". Foster (1977) contributes to this view by saying: "Laban was a catalyst, a man who needed others to pursue the lines of work that he started. An initiator, not a completor". Preston Dunlop adds: "The basic movement themes which Laban put forward are not worded in analytical terms. What analysis has been done in this field has been done by a second generation of practitioners working on Laban's synthesis" (in Foster, 1977). Notice the use of the word 'synthesis' here as opposed to 'analysis'. Laban was a synthesist, a man who searched for and found relationships. Analysis is perhaps not the most appropriate term for his work, neither does 'theories' suffice, for his ideas are not, at least not in the hypothetico-deductive sense.

Many advocators of Laban's work contend that his categorisation can be applied to all forms of movement, including the dance, simply because the human body is used and therefore his terminology and classification is of universal application. That it is culture specific is immediately obvious to an anthropologist. That its interpretations are often loaded with value-laden assumptions of what is 'natural' is also a valid criticism. I personally believe Laban's work to be extremely valuable for the dancer and dance educator in Western Society, and therefore a technique to be absorbed.

Apart from the practical applications of his work to dance, his ideas have been the inspiration for Knust, Hutchinson and Szentpal in the development of Labanotation; and of North, Lamb and Bartenieff in the use of effort analysis as a diagnostic tool.

Ideas that Form the Current Climate of Thought

It is generally felt by dance educators in England today, that dance, if it is to be justified in the school curriculum, must contribute to an 'aesthetic way of knowing'. In explaining this concept, I present the ideas of several dance specialists, curriculum theorists, philosophers, aestheticians and educationists, as well as those of some American dance writers. It is these ideas that I feel together form a framework for the current climate of thought regarding dance education in England.⁸

Let us consider the word 'movement'. By biological definition, movement is a basic characteristic of all living organisms and as such it is essential for the organism's survival. It involves the displacement of one or more parts of the body in relation to the rest and may or may not result in locomotion.

It is possible to outline four major uses of human movement. Functional movement can be a term we use to describe the everyday actions we engage in to provide the basic necessities of life. It is this type of movement which is used in all types of motor skill acquisition be they working or sporting activities.

Second, man's movement may instead be used as a means to aid vocal communication (one has only to witness a conversation between two Frenchmen out of hearing range to realise the potential here). Such movements may be said to be interpretive of inner 'emotional states', and as such, are harnessed to provide characterisation in drama and mime.

A third reason for the urge to move is the need to relieve the feelings of discomfort resulting from excessive use of particular body parts in specialised daily activities. This type of movement may be seen in the context of recreation.

A fourth type of movement experience is that of dance; when movement is used as a means of creating artifacts, i.e., dances, whose formal properties are of intrinsic significance and so command aesthetic contemplation.

The above classification allows much of what is called 'dance' to be 'non-art', depending of course upon one's definition of 'art'. For example, social dances and religious dances fulfil a communicative and recreative role as well as perhaps producing 'art'. If the dance event is a ritual, it could also be seen as functional, if the belief of the people concerned is such that they feel events will be altered by their dancing in a prescribed manner.

So, depending on one's definition, it can be that dance fulfils any of these categories. Most people, I think, would agree with me that all movement is not dance. I now wish you to consider the ideas put forward by one school of philosophy; that dance as 'art' is not necessarily movement; at least not in its physical sense.

Physical And Perceptual Movement

Movement permeates so many aspects of life, we tend to overlook the fact that there may be different ways of conceiving what movement can be. My previous biological definition confined us to the physical. It is important however when discussing dance as an art form to distinguish between movement as actual physical action, and movement seen perceptually; that is, inherent in the aesthetic object.

The language of movement permeates all our discourse in the arts. It is not confined to the arts of movement themselves. In painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry and music, we talk quite naturally of rhythms, tensions, balance and of forces.

Blackmur (1954) discusses the fundamental part that gesture plays in all art. He suggests that in architecture, "a good spine is weightless, springing, an arrow aimed at the Almighty, carrying in its gesture, the whole church with it". In painting, the juxtaposition of lines and colours sets up 'tensions', and strong senses of direction and powerful motion are created (e.g., Picasso's Guernica). Cezanne's still life interiors create a powerful movement experience of "bumping about those rooms, circumnavigating with caution the menacingly angular tables" (Blackmur, op. cit.).

In poetry too, movement images are frequent. Curl (1971), quoting Spurgeon, says that it is the quality of movement in Shakespeare's imagery which overwhelmingly attracts him throughout. As Curl says, "It is the 'life' of things which appeals to him, stimulates and enchants him, rather than beauty of colour or form or even significance". By introducing verbs of movement about things which are abstractions and cannot have physical movement, Shakespeare gives life to such phrases as:

"I stole a courtesy from heaven,
and dressed myself in such humility
that I did pluck allegiance from men's hearts"

and

"So weary with disasters, tugged with fortune"

In literature and music too, movement images abound. We read of 'flowing' and 'surging' melodies, of 'mounting' harmonies; the music is 'rushing', 'hesitating', 'pausing', 'building up tension', 'exploding'. Melodies are described as 'swooping', 'sinking', 'climbing', 'leaping' and 'falling'. We need to posit the questions: What does the artist or critic mean by these words? Is the movement actual movement or pure metaphor?

Langer (1953) reminds us that sound vibrations in music are "no more like the movement of a simple melody towards its keynote than the actual space a painting occupies on the wall is to the space that can be perceived in its rolling landscape". This 'virtual property' or implicit movement is created. It is something that emerges from the artist's activity and is to be clearly distinguished from the actual physical movement

which is its material basis. In music it seems easy to maintain the distinction. Vibrations in the actual instrument, in sound waves or the ear drum are the material from which music is created, but the perceived quality is a new dimension. In dance however, the physical properties of movement and the perceived qualities tend to become confused. The sheer obviousness of movement in dance has perhaps disguised the distinction.

A concern for universal movement forms, fundamental principles applicable to all forms of movement, have obscured the nature of the aesthetic. Curl (1971) believes that, "The full growth of the genuine aesthetic attitude in movement work, after its initial impetus in education; for which we shall be ever indebted to Rudolph Laban and Lisa Ullmann; has subsequently been stunted by a failure to recognise what primarily belongs to the aesthetic and what does not...Fundamental principles applicable to all forms of movement have, I believe, blurred our vision and seduced our awareness of the distinct and autonomous aesthetic forms of movement; we have been the victims of a great and fertile myth".

The dance may indeed be 'surging', 'ebbing', 'weightless', 'magnetising', 'repelling', 'lyrical', 'aggressive', but there is no actual physical magnetism or weightlessness. As Arnheim (1956) says about the dancer: "One hundred and sixty pounds of weight on the scales will not exist if to the eye he has the winged lightness of a dragonfly".

Mary Wigman (1966) was very clear as to which realm the dance belongs: "Time, strength, space, these are the elements which give dance its life. Of this trinity of elemental powers, it is space which is the realm of the dancer's real activity which belongs to him because he creates it. It is not the tangible, limited and limiting space of concrete reality, but the imaginary irrational space of the dance dimension, that space which can erase the boundaries of all corporeality". "The more perfect the dance, the less we see its actualities", writes Langer (1953).

This body of aestheticians and dancers subscribe to the view that the real realm of the dancer is not the 'space', 'time' and 'weight' of concrete reality, but a realm of purely perceived qualities. They remind us that we cannot talk about movement as if it were a single phenomenon, nor about 'space' and 'effort' as if they belonged to one reality.

Arnheim (1956) gives us some interesting points relevant to teaching and choreography regarding this:

"Visual balance does not correspond to physical factors of balance".

"Visual weight depends upon size - isolation makes for weight".

"Regular shape is heavier than irregular shape".

"Visual speed depends upon the size of the objects".

"Weight is also perceived through colour".

"Speech creates visual weight at the point from which it comes".

"The weight of any compositional element will attract things in the neighbourhood and thus impose direction on them".

The implications for the analysis of movement and the language of teaching the dance are enormous. As Curl says (so lucidly that I quote at length): "Clearly one universal language will not do; we have to spell out carefully the precise nature of the created dimension of the dance and to recognise that this dimension has its own form of awareness, its own concepts and its own descriptive and critical language. It is a dimension not to be confused with actual efforts, actual pressings, actual slashings, actual wringing of limbs and muscles, but a realm of perceived qualities - spatial, temporal, dynamic, rhythmic, emotional, sensory and many more. When we view our undifferentiated language of 'effort' it is small wonder that we have failed to 'distance' our work in dance and have failed to capture the genuine aesthetic experience, hindered as we have been by a jumble of muscular epithets".⁹

The aestheticians' concern with the perceptual movement is not the only concern of the dancer. The physical material is just as important in order to train the body to be the instrument of expression. It needs to be trained with all the scientific knowledge of movement and the human body that we have. An enfeebled physique will be quite incapable of creating those desirable virtual qualities.

Curl believes that the dancer (and dance educator) is committed to three worlds within the unity of aesthetic experience.

1. A world of physical material bodies, animate and inanimate.
2. A world of conscious experience, feelings and perceived qualities.
3. A world of symbolic forms, theories, knowledge.

These coincide with John Martin's view of dance being concerned with three techniques, those of the instrument (Curl's World 1), the medium (World 2) and the form (World 3). (Martin, 1953)

As Curl says:

"This model.....may help the dance educator (or critic) to recognise more clearly the autonomous nature of the dance dimension as symbolic activity and its intricate web of relations with movement as its material and its perceived quality as its medium."

The Phenomenological Viewpoint

Sheets (1966) takes a phenomenological view, saying that in dance,¹⁰ movement appears as a revelation of sheer force, emanating from a body which appears as a centre of force. "What differentiates movement from dance is that the lived form-in-the-making is created as a sheer form in and of itself and unlike other movement activities (e.g. sports and games) it has no meaning (or purpose) beyond itself". Alwin Nikolais agrees:

"Basic dance is primarily concerned with motion. So, immediately you will say, but the basketball player is concerned with motion. That is so, but he is not concerned with it primarily. His action is a means towards an end beyond motion. In basic dance, the motion is its own end - that is, it is concerned with nothing beyond itself".¹²

For the phenomenologist, it is essential in any descriptive analysis of dance to find an approach that will not shatter the totality of dance into externally related units, but will focus again and again upon the wholeness of the work. Whatever is known of dance it is the immediate encounter which must constitute the foundation of our knowledge. The movement can of course be reduced and analysed apart from the lived experience but the phenomenological view stresses that to gain the aesthetic element in dance we must see it pre-reflectively and that this uniquely dynamic form is (as all art is) more than the sum of its non-objective structures.

When dance is defined as "a force in time and space" (Ellfeldt, 1976) it does not describe the living experience. We do not see separate objectifying factors with no unifying centre. "What we see is something that can perhaps only be empirically written as foretimespace; as indivisible wholeness" (Sheets, op. cit.).

According to Sheets, "Neither dance, nor the lived experience of dance exists apart from the creation and presentation of the thing itself." It is only in the performance that dance attains its being. In her view, once composed, a painting or sculpture exists; it is finished. With music and dance the thing designed must be embodied. Until performed, the dance does not exist.¹² Ellfeldt adds: "Dance as an art form serves a purpose beyond the immediacy of entertainment or spectacular display, recreation or therapy, celebration of national festival or projection of technical virtuosity. The artistic act of the performed dance is a conscious resolution of the choreographer's comment on his world, through the craft and projection of sensitive dancers. When imagination, thought, emotion and skill are converted into this perceptible form - this dynamic image, the work of dance is made available for public viewing."

For the phenomenologist, individual movements have no significance in themselves, they are not signs which denote things, nor are they signals calling for a particular response. They are simply materials for evoking awakening, or stimulating the viewer to respond in an essentially non-vocal way. "It is the formulation, the interaction, dynamics and rhythm of the movement which results in a symbolic image that is presented for the viewer's perception. What you see is the interaction of many actions within a space, with a resulting design of dynamic and temporal elements." (Ellfeldt, 1976). Many contemporary choreographers would not agree with Ellfeldt's views about the dance being concerned specifically with the choreographer's comment on the world, and would emphasise the view that the choreographer is not communicating, but presenting movement in and for its own sake; the movement just 'is'.

Aesthetic Judgments

In English educational theory the whole realm of knowledge is currently divided into a number of logically distinct forms each with their own unique concepts, conceptual structures, and criteria for validity, each providing a unique form of understanding. We recognize historical knowledge, scientific knowledge, philosophical knowledge, moral knowledge and aesthetic knowledge as some of the forms which have been clearly demarcated (the work of Cassirer, Reid, Peters and Hirst). The work of these epistemologists has enabled us to identify more clearly the distinctive character of those forms of awareness and experience. Philosophers such as Reid, Hirst and Peters¹³ hold the view that we adopt different stances or attitudes towards our total environment, and in doing so we gain some fundamentally different modes of experience. Difficulties arise however when we try to talk about these different modes of experience, for we find that their boundaries become blurred and sometimes merge with one another. It becomes difficult to keep apart in any consistent manner our original experience. Ryle calls this myth "The presentation of facts belonging to one category in the idioms appropriate to another" (Ryle, 1963).

For the purposes of conferring judgements and investigating the nature of judgements we need to clarify the boundaries. Again I use Curl's very clear example to illustrate this problem. He discusses how an ordinary piece of stone can be viewed from the following different angles:

- a) Instrumental functions. It may be used as a paper weight, a door stop, an object to throw and so on. It can have a number of purely practical functions.
- b) Historically. One may be interested in its origins; how it came to assume its present form. Such concepts as sedimentary, deposition, erosion, etc., are necessary terms by which we can identify this particular form of knowledge. Any judgements we might wish to make concerning the age, period, and composition of the rock would need to be supported by evidence in these terms.

"We may view the object mathematically, scientifically, economically or even philosophically and in each case we should resort to a number of distinct kinds of concepts, and each form of knowledge would have its own tests and criteria for validity, its own logical relations and its own kinds of judgements, not to be confused one with the other" (Curl, 1973).

Another manner of approach is to view the object aesthetically, in which case our interest is not in origins or causes, but in its own intrinsic qualities. Thus in the case of the stone we might be interested in texture, roundness, smoothness, sharpness, hardness, colours, etc. The concepts we should use in describing would be concepts of shape, pattern, form, design. These then are the concepts appropriate to the aesthetic form of awareness, they connote perceptual characteristics. An important distinction in the aesthetic form of awareness is that, "Unlike the other modes we have mentioned, all of which require some indirect supporting evidence; the aesthetic mode is direct knowledge, knowledge

by directly perceivable qualities of the object as it presents itself to our senses." (Curl, op. cit.) 'Aesthetic' is a term almost universally associated with 'art', but aesthetic perception is not limited to art products. It may occur as delight and approval of nature, food, games, daydreams, companionship or even the exhilaration of being in a crowd. It appears however that there are relatively few controversies about aesthetic judgements in anything except art (probably because it is pointless to criticize clouds, shells or sunsets!), but there are great conflicts in the field of art. Our concept of what is of aesthetic value changes according to the time and the place, although some seem to be perennial. The principles of classical Greece are no more or less 'aesthetic' than those of the contemporary world, they are simply different. "With new perspectives, increased concern for the individual, churning social changes, fantastic scientific and technical discoveries, changing value systems, and old, as well as newly acquired prejudices, the artist of today seeks new significance beyond the readily observable reality, beyond the nicely packaged rules of Greek unity - coherence - symmetry. He considers form as the shape of content, the medium its own message" (Ellfeldt, 1973).

The word 'aesthetic' comes from the Greek 'aisthetikos' meaning perception or feeling, or 'aesthesia' meaning to perceive or to look at objects of interest. It is often considered to carry emotive and evaluative connotations as if 'aesthetic' automatically implies good. The term on its own is purely descriptive. The attachment of 'value' where applicable would clarify its use.

It is difficult to sift out purely aesthetic criteria for evaluative purposes. In many areas of dance, judgments other than aesthetic ones come into consideration (in the realm of teaching, for example). It is aesthetic criteria, vital to the concept of art, that cause most confusion.

We can approach dance from any of the above mentioned forms of knowledge. We can look at it psychologically in terms of its motivational and therapeutic effects, or its sociological function, its historical and anthropological aspects. We could even approach it morally (as 16th Century puritans condemning dance activities did). Our judgements in each case would be in accordance with the appropriate concepts and criteria.

Some examples are again taken from Curl to illuminate this point:

- a) A dance recital judged 'good' because of good box office takings is being judged on economic grounds.
- b) A moving performance could be considered to have 'done a lot of good' because it had promoted better standards of behaviour in the community. This judgement is a moral one.
- c) A dance relating to social and political reform if considered successful is judged on social-political grounds.
- d) A dance considered to have given people new knowledge and considered 'good' on this score, is being judged on cognitive values.

If however we judge it to be good on account of its own intrinsic qualities of form, design, unity, harmony, intensity, complexity, etc., then our judgement is aesthetic. It is by these intrinsic features, characteristic qualities, that we identify the aesthetic. This view coincides with Sheets' phenomenological viewpoint regarding the need to look pre-reflectively, in order to experience the aesthetic quality inherent in the form. "The aesthetic awareness leads to a knowledge which is different from propositional knowledge, its objects are not agreed symbols, but open unconsummated symbols." (Reid, 1969) Trying to 'understand' by paraphrasing in words (or in terms of movement analysis) is to look at dance as physical movement only. Perception of the dance form and feeling are likely to be frustrated.

The view these writings present is that dance as an 'art form' can claim legitimacy within an educational institution if it contributes to an aesthetic awareness (that is, if we accept the forms of knowledge previously mentioned). Dance as part of the school curriculum in England has often failed to fulfil this function. A survey completed by the Schools Art Council in 1973 of 347 secondary school teachers found that there was considerable confusion concerning the aims of dance education, which my own research in 1976 confirmed. A historical viewpoint shows that the use of Laban's material has led to dance being justified on the grounds of its psychological and sociological benefits to the child. Instead of contributing to an aesthetic way of knowing, of giving form to feeling and being an end in itself, dance has been used as a means to an end. A further misunderstanding has arisen because of the link with physical education. This is not to deny that dance is of course physical, but as I hope we can agree, this traditional link has led to justification in terms of physical benefits, yet another extrinsic criterion and misconception of the nature of dance as an art.

An open-ended view of education is concerned with the development of knowledge and understanding in the individual. Activities considered to be worthwhile are selected from the culture and curriculum theorists argue from many angles as to how such education should be achieved. Perhaps education is best planned not only in relation to 'knowledge', nor solely the needs of society, nor only the needs of the individual child, but in relation to all three. Hirst's 'forms of knowledge' identifies aesthetic understanding as a logically distinct way of knowing. Reid supports the idea of artistic creation and aesthetic understanding as providing an ongoing exploration into meaning, which is unique as a form of knowledge:

"Not an insight of head or intellect only, but the total feeling of body and mind organism" (Reid, 1969). The arts have a special role to play, engaging the so-called 'subjective' areas of experience when so much of education is concerned with 'objective' knowledge. Witkin in his book "The Intelligence of Feeling", says, "If the price of finding oneself in the world is to lose the world within oneself then the price is more than anyone can afford". In his terminology 'subject-reflexive feeling' is giving form to a feeling, a process that he considers essential for development. Engaging in learning through the medium of the arts allows this to happen, in his view. He does not mean cathartic self-expression, but symbolizing emotion into expressive form. To make a personal response

is considered the most elementary affirmation of the life of an individual, creating a sense of person and personal responsibility, much more than developing verbal and imaginative skills.

Reid sees art as having a dual role. It is one of the modes by which an individual seeks to recognise and organise his relationship with his environment, and it is a means of communicating in society. Langer says, "There is nothing non-educational about creating a dance, it is the total engagement of the individual in which he perforce encounters himself in depth, utilises the fullness of his resources, draws upon past experience and knowledge in which his discrimination and sensitivity to form are in fact tested as creative intelligence" (1953). It is necessarily connected with growth of the individual, self realisation and socialisation, yet these are to be seen as bi-products in aesthetic education.

"When concentration is on the student's social, intellectual or emotional development, the student suffers, because what she thinks she is doing (i.e., dancing or making dances) is not what she is actually doing" (Redfern, 1973). To over-look the vital engagement and labor necessary in making dance and concentrate upon group interaction, or individual growth, etc., is to nullify the dance.

Dance as an 'art form' cannot be justified as contributing to education if it is simply therapeutic, enjoyment producing, or a means of socialisation. It must contribute to a "differentiated understanding of experience, to the building up of an increasingly refined and structured awareness of the world and ourselves within it" (Redfern, 1973). Because of the metaphysical nature of much of Laban's writing, much of the activity that went on in the English schools was justified on its sociological results and psychological benefits rather than on the grounds of art and aesthetic understanding. The educational institution however may wish to fulfil this function of socialisation, using movements for therapeutic reasons, etc. My argument is simply let us be clear about what it is we are engaged in, and not just wallow in vague misconceptions about what we are doing. My own work has been particularly concerned with clarifying some of these concepts both with teachers and educational bodies. The heightened activity in dance over the last decade at the top end of the secondary schools led to the formulation of C.S.E. examinations appearing in dance and related subjects.¹⁴

As the concept of dance as an art form became more clearly established, university acceptance began in a limited way. London University at Goldsmiths College accepted a B. Humanities degree (dance plus one other subject) in 1977. The Laban Dance Centre offered its first B.A. degree in 1977. B.A. degrees in the Performing Arts can now be obtained at Nonington College, Middlesex Polytechnic, Leicester College and Chelsea College of Physical Education. Leeds University has an established department of Human Movement studies where an M.A. degree is offered.

Interestingly, and in great contrast to the United States, dance in the theatre world was almost totally separate from that of educational dance until the mid-'sixties.

It is important to understand that apart from this kind of movement and dance work in the education field, professional training existed privately. The classical ballet world is a very organised structure, for there is a system of teacher training through the R.A.D. and the I.S.T.D.¹⁵ Sets of examinations for children from 5 years up to professional standards of technique are adhered to pretty rigidly in small ballet schools all over the country, offering not only ballet but tap, character, ballroom and 'modern' (which appears to be a cross between modern stage cliches and eurhythmics). Until the last decade, for aspiring professional dancers there was only the extremely competitive and vastly wasteful streaming into the Royal Ballet school or the Rambert school, or one of the 'stage' schools in London, generally not of a high standard either in terms of technique or in terms of the curriculum they were offering (they appear to aim at feeding the needs of the stage, television and cabaret circuits).

It was not until 1966 that Robert Cohen electrified the scene by arriving in London and creating, under the funding and guidance of Robin Howard, the London Contemporary Dance Theatre and its accompanying full-time school. Graham technique was taught, and imported teachers such as Jane Dudley, from the U.S., were in charge of the programme. The London Contemporary Dance Theatre had a tremendous impact; were, and still are very popular (for here were men really dancing in an exciting contemporary way), and Graham technique became a must for all would-be dancers. At first affluent, the L.C.D.T. provided a lot of creative stimulus by bringing in visiting artists and choreographers from Europe. Unfortunately this initial stimulus seems to have disappeared and there has been a period of stale choreography (a personal opinion), a lot of wastage through injury, and disappointment because of few openings in the company for the new dancers. This has, however, had the effect of injecting many small groups of dancers in and around the London area, and is feeding regional areas with such groups as Moving Being in North Wales and the E.M.M.A. company in the midlands. The Laban centre is now also contributing performers to these companies.

Space does not permit me to enlarge further in terms of the professional theatre developments.¹⁶ I hope the shift of emphasis I referred to is now clear. In England the aesthetic and philosophical emphasis currently in vogue persuades us to put 'dance in education' and 'dance as a theatre' art on one continuum. In conclusion, I repeat that this emphasis excludes a vast number of equally important considerations when considering the study of dance. New and rapidly developing perceptions will appear in future articles for this Journal.

Brenda Farnell

NOTES

1. I wish to draw attention to my choice of title, in order to emphasize that I here present a personal point of view, which, although it may agree with many of my colleagues in England, also differs substantially from the opinions of many. I do attempt in my paper, however, to distinguish between generally held opinions and a view not widely held.
2. See Joann Kealiinohomoku's essay, 'The Non-Art Of The Dance' in JASHM Vol.I No.1, Spring, 1980, and Kaeppler (1978) in Williams 'Anthropology and Art' (1980).
3. I refer to Mrs. Jean Harrison, a member of the Manchester Laban group, I believe, and to whom I owe my love of, and dedication to, the movement world.
4. The Laban Art of Movement studio was in Surrey under the leadership of Lisa Ullmann until her retirement. In 1976, under the direction of Marion North 'the studio' (as it was known) moved to London, adjacent to Goldsmith's College, London University, and became the Laban Dance Centre. Marion North is head of both dance departments, but the Laban Centre maintains its independent status. The change in title reflects a significant change in emphasis.
5. I realise now with frustration how much better equipped I would have been had I studied anthropology and notation before attempting this, but did not know where or how to acquire those skills at that time. Nevertheless I had a fascinating year of travel experiences in a very different world that contributed greatly to my awareness of the human condition in general and filled me with questions about the language of dance and its functions and meaning within societies.
6. See, for example, Foster, 1977.
7. At the time of going to press, I do not have exact references for Bartenieff's statements. These are taken from various articles in the Laban Art of Movement Guild magazines that are in my files on the other side of the Atlantic.
8. Much of this material is abstracted from my study 'the evaluation of dance as an art form'. As well as exploring the theoretical issues briefly referred to in this paper, the study included a country-wide survey of C.S.E. examinations in dance and related subjects, with suggestions for evaluative procedures based on more relevant criteria. (Unpublished special study. Diploma, Laban Dance Center, 1976-77).
9. Curl does not hold the view that movement analysis work is invaluable but suggests that there is a massive task of classifying, identifying and re-allocating of concepts, now necessary.

10. Throughout this section I use the term dance to mean the 'art form', i.e., idioms of dance current in Western theatre.
11. Quote from Ellfeldt, Magic to Art (1976, p. 194).
12. This is interesting. Does the music 'exist' outside of its performance when it is written in a score? Will the dance be considered to exist if a Labanotation score is available?
13. These are familiar names in the current debate amongst curriculum theorists in England with particular reference to 'forms of knowledge'.
14. C.S.E. Examinations (Certificate of Secondary Education) are taken at 16 years of age. This system is unique in Britain in that it is a teacher devised and controlled system. That is, individual teachers may make up their own syllabus content and examinations, which are then subject to approval by regional boards. This is in contrast to the traditional G.C.E. Examinations, also at 16 years, which are set and examined by university examination boards.
15. The initials stand for Royal Academy of Dancing, and Imperial Society for Teachers of Dancing.
16. For those interested in further details of a statistical nature and for more details of dance activity in the private sector I suggest an exhaustive survey recently completed by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

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APPENDIX(1966-69) Outline of Curriculum

<u>First Year Courses</u>	<u>Credit hours per week</u> <u>1 academic year - 35 weeks</u>
Physiology	3
Anatomy	2
Kinesiology	2
Movement Principles (Laban)	3
Improvisation & Composition	3
Music for Dance (rhythm & accompaniment)	2
Dance Education (Teaching methods)	1
Performance & Repertory	1
Educational Dance, Modern	4
Human Biology	2
Creative Gymnastics	2
Swimming & Lifesaving	1
Games & Field Sports - Tennis, Hockey	5
Introduction to Educational Psychology (Learning: Individual Differences)	4
Health Education	1
Growth Development of the Child	4
Biology	4
 <u>Second Year Courses</u>	
Advanced Physiology	3
Advanced Applied Anatomy	3
Principles & Practice of Education	6
Movement Principles (Laban)	3
Improvisation & Composition	3
Music for Dance (rhythm & accompaniment)	2
Dance Education (teaching methods)	1
Creative Gymnastics	2
Swimming & Lifesaving	1
Games & Field Sports	4
Biology	4
Folk Dance in Europe	1
Dance	8
 <u>Third Year Courses</u>	
Principles & Practice of Education	6
Principles of Teaching Skills	2
Dance	8
Biology	4
Movement Principles	3
Improvisation & Composition	3
Dance Education (Teaching methods)	1
Performance & Repertory	4

APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

Teaching Practice - all compulsory.First Year

- a) 2 weeks continuous directed observation and teaching in Nursery School (2-5 year old children).
- b) During the first year summer semester - 1 hour each week teaching in grade levels 6-12 years.
- c) 2 weeks continuous directed teaching in summer vacation at end of first year in grade levels of children 6-12 years.

Second Year

- a) During second year continuous directed teaching in Autumn semester in Liverpool school (6-12 year old children).
- b) 2 weeks directed teaching in secondary school during Spring semester (12-18 year old children).

Third Year

- a) First three weeks of Winter semester of third year partly directed teaching in Secondary schools (11-18 year old children).
- b) 5 weeks of summer semester teaching in secondary school (12-18 year old children).