**HOW DANCE EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION CAME TO BE VERY DIFFERENT CREATURES, INDEED.**

by

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*The following paper has its origins in Chapter 6 of my 2000 text A History of Dance in American Higher Education: Dance and the American University, “Discourses on Dance 1930–1940.” Many of the points and perspectives made in this paper, during a decade of wont and fear, when your brother’s gift of a dime could mean the difference between feeding your children or keeping a roof over your head, and when a storm of unprecedented power and savagery was brewing in fascist enclaves in Asia and Europe, dig at issues of identity, place, and association. Many of the questions posed are still with us, the players have changed but the human quest to define, situate, and discover for ourselves what we are* not *are gravitational tugs that don’t really ever go away.*

The most important legacy of the Bennington College Summer School of the Dance (1934–1942), and its successor programs (New York University-Connecticut College School of Dance, and the American Dance Festival) has been the grafting of professional art standards into the academic purposes of the dance curriculum. In the first years of the Bennington program room was made specifically for teacher training. Unfortunately (or not), it was soon apparent to Bennington’s directors and its resident instructors that teachers with positions in higher education were spending a few weeks with Martha Graham, or Charles Weidman (and other similarly luminous artist/teachers) and returning to their campuses as wholly transformed and fully unprepared ‘modern dance’ acolytes.

Where dance instruction in America’s universities had focused on the rhythmic underpinnings of movement and its creative and expressive potentials, after Bennington, dance, according to the program’s founding visionary Martha Hill, was what the foremost artists in the field said it was. Many of those who left for Vermont in the early summers of 1934 or 1935 comfortable in their instructional ‘skin’ came back apostles of modernist, abstract, art dance. Bennington’s leaders understood the dangers of imitating techniques not designed for educational purposes. The artists of modern dance developed their unique training methods to get the dances that were in their hearts and heads, out and into bodies that could bring their visions into existence.

The result of dance educators accepting the Bennington model for their work in college and university programs was a re-envisioning of ‘why dance?’ Debate was initiated on several fronts with the root of discussion centered on academic alignment for dance with physical education or with other arts discipline. The idea that dance education was arts education, and that professional artists might be involved with teaching dance in higher education, was foreign and uncomfortable territory for many physical educators. Issues surrounding these matters were debated at conferences and in professional journals such as *Health and Physical Education (HPE)*, and the *Journal of Health and Physical Education* *(JOHPE)*. The sample of articles, chapters, and texts included here illustrates the range and tone of the discussion on dance and its affiliation with physical education. It was of growing concern to physical educators that the emerging and unique practices of dance they observed popping up in their gymnasia post Bennington did not share their educational philosophies and values. The discussion acts as an important ground against which the subsequent development of dance in the American university 1950–2010 may be better viewed and understood. For dance, as with most American cultural endeavors 1940–1950, were years lost to the social, political, and military circumstances of World War II

Topics of identity for dance in an educational setting was not the exclusive business of scholarly journals. The popular press had its own influence on matters of dance in the universities. Prior to entering the discussion below, two facts should be noted; dance instruction was located in departments of physical education for women, and many of the voices of debate included here are men.

**Dance Observer**

In February of 1934, Louis Horst introduced *Dance Observer*, a magazine that covered the still emergent world of modern dance. From the start Horst took on the role of champion for the modern dance. This was perfectly sensible for Horst and his readers as he was a pioneer in the development of modernist dance. In *Dance Observer* columns and articles, the events of the day were detailed and, to some extent, analyzed. Throughout the 1930s a column on dance programs in the schools and colleges was included, as were regular features on company activities, east and west coast seasons, government/political activities in the arts, individual biographies, individual programs like the Hampton Institute Creative Dance Group, and Bennington news. Featured columns usually listed activities, dates, and -places; who did what and what they planned to do in the future. Articles focused on practical matters such as music-dance relationships, or costuming, and reviewing concert work. However, in its first decade *Dance Observer* rarely engaged in any critical analysis of educational programs or policy. Criticism and commentary in *Dance Observer* was reserved for the politics, choreography, and performance of dance. The editorial focus on performance related criticism, and the forthright nature of the promotion of modern dance, had its own impact on dance in higher education. *Dance Observer* became an important literary symbol of the dynamic new dance and it taught its readership to use a more refined language of dance. *Dance Observer* remained in print until Horst's death in January of 1964 (Soares 1992).

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**Ruth St. Denis**

In 1932, Ruth St. Denis and William H. Bridge wrote an early position paper on dance in academia. Following the breakup of Denishawn in 1931, St. Denis attempted to reclaim a place in the professional and educational fields of dance through solo concerts, lecture-demonstrations, and by writing articles. In an article for the January 1932 issue of *JOHPE*, titled “The Dance in Physical Education,” St. Denis and Bridge argue that dance should not be equated with athletics or the utility of games because dance is "a method of human development superior to all other inventions" (St. Denis and Bridge 1932, 12). Unlike art-dance, popular dance trends of the times ("toe," "tap," "soft-shoe," "jazz," etc.), athletics, and games did not stimulate the emotional or artistic sensibilities of the student nor did popular or athletic dance engage the expressive capabilities of the self through the instrument of the body. St. Denis and Bridge separate activity-based dance from what they felt was the more noble pursuit of educating through movement that is expressive and communicative; and that is found in art-dance.

**Lucile Marsh**

Lucile Marsh was a student of Gertrude Colby's. Following her studies at Teachers College, Marsh went on to become a faculty member at Smith College. She co-authored an early text for dance, *The Dance in Education,* with her sister Agnes in 1924. In October 1932 Lucile addressed dance as a fine art in a paper titled “The New Dance Era” written for *JOHPE*. Her title is listed as "Director, the Dancer's Club New York City." In the introduction to her article Marsh writes:

Today, the dance is accepted as a fine art on a par with music, painting, sculpture, and literature. Physical education teachers can feel proud that they have been most influential in bringing this most human of the arts back into life today. Beginning, as they did, with folk dancing, then adding rhythmic, and finally organizing a whole dance program in the schools, physical educators built up a general acceptance of dancing that paved the way for the great modern movement that is now sweeping the country. But there is always danger that the pioneers of one generation may become the conservatives of the next. Physical educators must guard against just that. It would be tragic indeed if they were guilty of standing in the way of the future progress of dance, after they had done so much to bring it to its present eminence. We must all realize before it is too late that a new era of the dance is here and we must all qualify ourselves anew if we are to retain leadership in the field. (Marsh 1932, 23)

Marsh's article encourages a flexibility and progressive thinking in teaching dance that many physical educators may have had a difficult time accepting. Certainly for most physical educators in 1932, the idea that dance was a fine art did not drive their thinking, nor did it shape their teaching. However, in this article Marsh opens with "Today the dance is accepted as a fine art..." Marsh warns the liberal pioneer against turning into the over-cautious, conservative. She wants her reader to know that dance is a fine art, that physical educators are, at least in part, responsible for this and cautions her colleagues not to stand in the way of “the future progress of dance.”

In developing her article, Marsh defends the idea that dance education, like education in the other fine arts, should go beyond attention to craft and its associated recreational stages, and toward education in dance as art expression. She follows this with an outline for a dance curriculum in primary and secondary education that is centered on "interpretive" dancing and the relation of dancing to other subjects in the curriculum. The use of the term "interpretive" in this context may have confused some of her readers; 'interpretive dance" was generally used to describe the approach to dance that Colby's and H'Doubler's disciples were teaching. In the physical education parlance of the day, "interpretive" and "modern" dance were coming to be known as two very different things. Marsh's reference to dance and its relation to other subjects in the curriculum was a fairly progressive point of view for a dance educator writing in the early 1930s. Her perspective that dance is "a finer form of physical education because it is a fine art" (ibid.),and that physical educators must master dance as an art and teach it as such, predicts and articulates a central, and thorny, point in the literature for dance education for the next 30 years.

Following the establishment of the Bennington summer programs the subject of dance and its place in education shifts much more fully toward defining, understanding, and accepting the role of modern dance in education. The "modern movement sweeping the country" mentioned by Lucile Marsh, reached significance nationally as more dance educators and their colleagues attended the Bennington summer sessions. Gradually, the term "modern dance" replaces the more generic term "dance" in subsequent writings.

**George Beiswanger**

In April of 1936, George Beiswanger, professor of philosophy and dean of instruction at Monticello College, in Godfrey, Illinois presented a paper to the "Dance Section" of the American Physical Education Association at the St. Louis Convention. Titled, “Physical Education and the Emergence of the Modern Dance” (*JOHPE,* 1936), Beiswanger asks a set of questions about "modern" dance. First he defines the term "modern" as:

…a convenient tag. Every art is modern in its own day, *if it is alive* [author's emphasis]. The author uses the term "modern" because it serves to remind one of the truth just stated, and also because there is at the present time no more satisfactory term. (Beiswanger 1936, 413)

Following his definition of modern art, Beiswanger asks**:**

Is the modern dance an expression of the basic values and ideals of physical education, or is it a fad, a passing reaction against older and more solid forms of dance? Are its physically demanding techniques fundamentally sound? Are they within the range of the average college and high school girl or do they strain the body beyond the precepts of a sane kinesiology? To what extent can the reaction of the average audience against the modern dance be discounted as a natural response to a new art form, destined in time to be changed into enthusiastic appreciation as the art becomes more familiar? What bonds of relationship are there between the aims of physical education and the purpose of the modern dance which justify the promissory note that the director of physical education gives when she engages an instructor to teach it and extends her cooperation and support? (ibid.)

After this introductory set of queries, Beiswanger states that modern dance:

...is the kind of dance, which results when the goals of physical education are clarified and communicated on a conscious and artistic plane. The modern dance puts into art form the meanings and the philosophy of life for which physical education stands. It is physical education's own dance, its own art. (ibid.)

From today’s point of view, Beiswanger’s comment, “It is physical education’s own dance, its own art” is a hollow statement. Hollow because so few physical educators bought into the idea or made sincere efforts to bring “physical education’s own dance” up to par with sports or recreation. Ever in love with the masculine, physical education assigned art-dance to women, and mixed its practice in with the rest of the activity courses physical education was wont to offer instruction in.

Beiswanger's paper, as it was delivered to members of the Section on Dancing of the APEA (the American Physical Education Association), was an attempt to lend credence to an art approach to dance, and in doing so empower the dance educator in a department of physical education. This was an attempt to bridge what Beiswanger felt was a growing gap between dance and physical educators, exacerbated by misunderstanding, a lack of historical perspective, and perhaps through the phenomenon of Bennington. Through his articulate perspective on modern dance as a "free medium of art," and his erudite discussion of the merits of the modern dance, Beiswanger's article may have added weight to the scale of decision for dance educators as they considered the necessity of recognizing their discipline as something more than activity, as more than recreation, as more than "physical education."

**Mary Josephine Shelly**

Mary Jo Shelly, Administrative Director of the Bennington Summer School of the Dance, was also invited to address the "Section on Dancing" at the 1936 APEA Convention. Her paper titled, “Art and Physical Education - An Educational Alliance,” was published in *JOHPE* in October of that year. In this article Shelly looks "...over the fence at the area of art education, which appears to lie no more than a stone's throw away from our own area of physical education" (Shelly 1936, 476).

Shelly was an insightful and politically astute writer and thinker. Both an important member of the APEA and co-founder of Bennington, she was in a unique position to comment on the growing friction between physical education and art-dance as they sought to share common ground, common space, and common resources in education. In her paper Shelly points out that while the dramatic growth of modern dance as a part of physical education has "provoked the greatest agitation since the merits of formal gymnastics split the ranks of the profession" (ibid.). The real issues for dance and physical education to consider come not from their apparent differences, but from their inherent similarity and from outside the field. Addressing the latter issue Shelly writes:

On the side of common adversity, that point of view toward life and learning which regards play as non-essential may be depended on to see art in the same light. In this view the school theater and school gymnasium are manifestations of the same frivolous generosity, and it requires an equal tolerance to spend the taxpayer’s money on paints and music or on hockey sticks and baseball... we in physical education and our contemporaries in art must in all common sense range ourselves on the same side. It therefore behooves us to find and strengthen any reasonable alliance between us. (ibid.)

To make the case internally, as these branches of the field relate one to the other, Shelly argues that dance as art, and physical education as play spring from a human urge to give outward form to internal impulse. While play and art may find different expressions in the urge to give form to each, their tangent has a common origin, and it is this that Shelly thinks members in both fields should remember.

Shelly's argument has great merit, in its unfolding and clarity, and in its synthesis and application to issues in art and physical education. But it also implicitly reminds us that there is in fact "a fence," and that while art and play may spring from a common urge, it is how the urge is manifested, the form taken, that counts. Asking an audience of dance educators to "look over the fence" from physical to art education isn't too much of a stretch, that is really where most of them would like to "go." But asking physical educators to do the same was another story entirely. By this point in time physical education was even more closely aligned with athletics and sport. The practical was superseding the aesthetic in value and orientation; bases were made, balls were hit, points were accumulated; and for the physical educator, measurement was all. The practitioners of physical education were those who were (and are) attracted to utilitarian aspects of movement. The practitioners of dance were those who were attracted to movement's aesthetic, expressive potential. While Shelly's call for those involved in the arts and sciences of human movement to look at the big picture is laudable, the momentum in both movement art and movement science that was accumulating at that time doomed it. In retrospect we must view Shelly as the exception to the rule, as one who could clearly see the art of play and the play in art. Shelly's is a liberal perspective, grounded in inter-disciplinarity. Unfortunately, forces in the university, and in the professions, were moving disciplines toward increased academic specificity. The result in the case of dance and physical education was that the arts of movement as expressed through movement invention and aesthetic inquiry gravitated toward other arts disciplines, while the science of movement, as expressed through the understanding of biological systems and the practice of sport, settled ever more comfortably on its own side of the fence.

**Ruth Murray**

Ruth Murray, a dance educator in the Department of Physical Education for Women at Wayne University in Detroit, Michigan and an important early organizer of the "Dancing Section," added her perspective to the growing controversy between dance and physical education in an article titled “The Dance in Physical Education” written for *JOHPE* in January of 1937. Addressing the concerns of her more conservative colleagues, Murray states:

In the field of physical education, at the present time, there exists no area of activity which has excited as much confusion as that of dance. It is comparable to that historic period in our educational development when certain courageous, far seeing souls proposed a program of natural activities to replace the systems of formal gymnastics that were in place everywhere. We looked upon these people with suspicion and ridicule. Children were dangerous when they were allowed to get out of a line or circle....That is ancient history now. But another formidable foe of tradition, a disturber of complacency, is looming on our horizon. We view it with questioning and alarm. What is this new dance? What is it doing in physical education? (Murray 1937, 10)

Following this introduction, Murray reviews the basic canon of dance history in western culture as that was commonly cited in the 1930s. Dance is the most ancient of arts and the Catholic Church's attitude toward the body caused dance to be condemned as an invention of the devil during the Middle Ages. Folk dance forms evolved into highly structured court dances and court dances led to the rise of the ballet. The essentially static nature of ballet and its 18th century trappings were the reason for ballet's lack of innovation in the 20th century. This history ends with Duncan's contribution to "the modern school." Murray concludes that as a result of misinterpreting Duncan, art-dance was commonly perceived as a "silly, devitalized, and pseudo-artistic pursuit no red-blooded person could possibly enjoy" (ibid, 11). Following this overview, meant to contextualize the rest of her paper for the reader, Murray defines "modern dance" as a term used to equate developments in dance with changes in other art forms in the 20th century. Here, the important theme of her article is fully articulated: that modern dance is art-dance. Art-dance, according to Murray, is concerned with forms, with demanding techniques, with contributions to human expression; art-dance stands alone and is not dependent on other art forms for support.

After making this point Murray returns to the historical record and looks at the development of dance in American education. She outlines this brief history commenting that dance found its first manifestation in education through folk forms and that the practice of folk dances "became the beginning and end of the dance program."Murray comments that folk dances were laundered in education, coming out of the wash as devitalized, "pretty, graceful little affairs" (ibid. 12). Soon, tap dance followed as the preferred form of dance instruction in public education, due to popular demand, with folk dance gradually replaced by tap and contemporary social dancing.

Returning to the developing sense of educational dance as art-dance, Murray outlines what she feels are the important areas in dance education that may emerge out of the influence of modern dance. Murray melds ideas previously articulated by Margaret H'Doubler with perspectives emerging out of Bennington. In Murray's opinion, a new approach to teaching dance as an art demands consideration of rhythmic fundamentals (learning and responding to the relation between movement and accompaniment, analysis of rhythms, tempos, dynamics, and accents); movement fundamentals (experience in the fundamental movements of locomotion, understanding concepts like direction, level, shape, and intent); dance composition (the crafting of movement into conscious form, following ideas for art generation and working with structural devices), and exposure to practice and performance of formal dances, where the student ties all her previous experiences into the act of "doing" the dance; but now she "does" the dance with knowledge and personal understanding.

Murray's article sets another stone in the bridge that dance educators were building toward the idea of dance education as art education. While the article is titled “The Dance in Physical Education” in retrospect it may have been more aptly titled "The Dance in Art Education" because Murray outlines an approach to teaching art-dance.

**Eugene C. Howe**

Eugene C. Howe, professor in the department of hygiene and physical education at Wellesley College, wades into the debate in “What Business Has Modern Dance in Physical Education?” Written for *JOHPE* in 1937. Here, Howe discusses the error in the common assumption of the day that there is a natural or mutually beneficial relationship between modern dance and physical education. Howe states that the idea of dance as art first found its way into the curriculum through the door opened by Margaret H'Doubler when she argued for inclusion of dance as a creative art expression for educational purposes. Howe goes on to say that modern art dance found its application in physical education programs through the activities of educators influenced by their experiences at Bennington. Howe's point is that the conflict bred by injecting art standards into physical education programs was creating situations where faculties became divided and students ultimately were not being served.

An interesting aspect of Howe's article is his strong rejection of ballet (and by rejecting ballet he surreptitiously presents an implied case for rejecting modern dance) as a dance form of merit or of worth in education:

The dance in physical education has always followed the dance of the stage. From the point of view of physical education there are two questions regarding this relationship which need clarification: first, the conditions under which teachers of the dance in education achieve their training; second, the justification of any given phase of the dance as part of physical education.

With regard to the dark ages of modified ballet in the schools we can agree that the first question has become a dead issue. As to the second also, there now appears to have been no reason why the various ballet entertainment troupes which have toured the country from time to time should have ever strengthened the position of the dance as a form of art vital to us or as a part of physical education in the schools and colleges....Its growth has been that of a crystal; beautiful after a fashion, sharp edged, smooth-faceted, and self-limited. Nothing in its origins, its artifices, its snobbery, and its ballet-hoo allies it with democratic education, and the numerous reasons for its unsuitability as a part of physical training are too well known to need enumeration. In education it remains only in a few finishing schools as an "extra" on a par with American French and drawing. (Howe, 131–132)

Following this onslaught on the ballet, "American French, and drawing," Howe returns to the subject of modern dance. He comments on the work of Margaret H'Doubler in training many of the dance educators who were, as a result of H'Doubler's vision, "prepared to integrate it [dance] with other aspects of physical training, physical education, and education as a whole." Interestingly, Howe comments on the "unauthorized bathos" into which the H'Doubler inspired work sometimes fell. He then turns his attention to Bennington and identifies it as the source of the:

...recent adoption by the profession of the leading concert dancers, critics, and counselors as *professors extraordinaire* ...The dance of the 1920s in physical education, though the seed came from the work of the art, grew up in and for physical education; the dance of the '30s in physical education is for and by the concert artists in that he now virtually heads up the activity in a field foreign to his primary interests and about the nature of whose objectives he may, quite naturally and justifiably, be assumed to have no detailed and comprehensive understanding. The situation obviously has possibilities for both good and ill. In the opinion of the writer, the former far outweighs the latter. But it is a situation that calls for comment and the most surprising thing about it is that little from the point of view of physical education has as yet appeared. (ibid. 132)

Howe's perspective is clearly that of the physical educator and he may be commended on his ability to think "outside of the box" when he writes that "Intuition whispers that it [dance] is as ill at home as an etching in a machine shop" in questioning the place of art dance in a physical education program. To relieve this situation Howe asks that his fellow physical educators submit to "some enlightenment and make certain compromises." Howe admits that he and others in physical education have an "increasing delight in quantity as compared to quality, in records as compared with the perfection of movement"(ibid.) Here he identifies the struggle in physical education as it met dance: the desire to be objective while playing host to subjectivity. Like Shelly, Howe recognizes the similarities that exist between the art of play and the play in art, but he also recognizes the different nature of art and play as they are brought to action.

While Howe acknowledges the error of physical education's pursuit of the measurable, he does not take this to task to the degree he does of art-dance as it continues down a path in pursuit of professional standards. We are left to ask, aren't these manifestations of the same desire, the desire to bring any endeavor toward some identifiable end? In the case of physical education an identifiable end was increasingly wrapped up in the demonstration of sport, in dance it was wrapped up in the demonstration of technically challenging, creative movement invention. How different are these desires? Is one more educationally viable than the other?

Howe concludes his article by articulating a concern of physical educator's that dance educators have never really fully addressed: if the dance teacher's interests are in training students for concert performance, don't they have an obligation to carefully consider (scientifically investigate) the implications their methods of training have on student bodies as they push students towards a professional level of skill? This is a constructive criticism that still has merit, particularly in modern dance techniques. In Howe's view, art-dance loses its place in physical education when it neglects to recognize its commitment to understanding its essential nature as physical endeavor.

**Mary Josephine Shelly**

The last of the scholarly articles considered here is another written by Mary Jo Shelly and delivered as a paper at the APEA Convention in San Francisco, in April of 1939. Shelly's paper was later published under the title “Facts and Fancies about the Dance in Education” in the January, 1940 issue of the journal *Health and Physical Education.* Here, Shelly reports on a study undertaken by the Bennington staff to assess the present status of studies in modern dance in higher education. Shelly writes:

Concerning the dance in colleges and universities, the study yields a wealth of information...these facts come from over three hundred institutions and an equal number of individual teachers representing a complete cross section of types, locations and sizes of public and private colleges and universities. (Shelly 1940, 55)

The statistics cited show that in 1939 most colleges offered courses in dance and approximately two thirds of these courses were identified as modern dance. In 98% of sample programs dance was offered through physical education. A small cohort of institutions offered a dance major. Demand for a major program in dance existed in "a considerably larger number" of the sample. Shelly found 27,000 women and 300 men students were enrolled in dance classes. Of 300 institutions polled only 78 made dance classes available to men. Shelly notes that dance clubs on college campuses served dance in the same manner that intramural athletics served women's sport. Most dance clubs in the sample were organized through Women's Intramural Athletics programs, which limited male participation in dance studies (ibid. 56).

When asked if dance educators felt there was adequate undergraduate preparation for teaching in dance, the response was overwhelmingly negative. Shelly concludes her remarks on the results of the survey by stating "the present, and so far as one can see ahead, the future fate of dance in education rests in the hands of physical education."

After reviewing the data in her article Shelly rhetorically asks, "Where do we go from here?" She recognizes the debate on the issue of dance in physical education that had unfolded over the previous decade, and paraphrases the sentiment common among physical educators with a dislike for modern dance:

...modern dance, which seems to be assuming more importance than any other kind of dancing, is ugly, morbid, and unchildlike. Look at the professional dancers, what do they know about education? And again, is the modern dance not a lop-sided development in physical education because only the women are interested in it? (ibid.)

Shelly addresses these questions from the perspective of one who has experienced her singular position as physical educator and administrator of the most successful symbol of the dynamic of modern art-dance. In Shelly's responses to the questions posed the reader detects a tiredness and frustration with the sameness of the complaint, the lack of evolution in thinking, and the lack of resolution. As it reads today we sense the challenge the field of dance education faced in the days leading up to World War II. The future of dance studies rested in the hands of colleagues who didn't like what modern dance looked like, and whom were suspicious of professional dancers teaching in their programs. Many were struggling for academic recognition of their own perspective in athletics and sport; for measurement, rules of play, for bases made and balls hit. What were they to do about an art located in a corner of their gymnasiums that challenged their conservative sensibilities, that refused to be pinned down long enough to be measured, and that expressed the feminine in a world in love with the masculine?

**John Martin**

In his text, *Introduction to the Dance,*John Martin includes a chapter on "Dance in Education." After citing the benefits of dance in the curriculum in light of its merits as part of a progressive education, Martin raises the question of dance as art or exercise rhetorically asking; "Is it exercise, then, or art…If it is exercise, what is it doing with emotion? If it is art, what is it doing in the gymnasium”( Martin 1939, 292)? Martin poses his questions and then proceeds to answer them; "...it is both these things and at the same time neither of them” (ibid.). He then presents a progressive, liberal justification for considering dance as both exercise and art, and for teaching it in both contexts. In the dance education program, Martin considers the dual nature of dance a part of its attractiveness in education.

Following this part of his chapter, Martin turns to a discussion on the growing influence of professionalism in college dance. While Martin was no apologist for the inclusion of dance in physical education programs, he does write:

In the meantime that [the physical education program] is where dance has found itself placed, and there is no reason to disturb it until it can ultimately be made an independent activity around which education in general centers. There is however, every reason to advocate its better treatment. There can be no doubt that the majority of physical educators are unqualified to teach it. (ibid. 300)

Regarding this latter phenomenon, Martin pins the physical educator’s reticence on the fact that dance has become patterned on 'the systems of the professional dancers":

This is a perfectly natural thing to do, to be sure, for in a subject so comparatively new as the expressional dance, with no tradition whatever within the field of education itself, where is one to turn to for guidance except those few artists who best exemplify its principles? The mistake lies not in the sources that have been turned to but in the application of what has been found there to the purposes of education. It is a common experience to find classes of youngsters being taught exercises taken directly from the studio of some celebrated concert dancer, or perhaps even several sets of exercises from several different studios. (ibid. 300–301)

Martin's point deserves our attention: a large part of the problem physical educators have with modern dance is based on the dance educator’s imitation of professional techniques at the expense of educationally sound, scientifically studied, movement experiences in dance. The blatant imitation of concert dancers irritated the physical educators as much as did the professional artists presence in the gymnasium. That dance educators were so ready to imitate was coming from within their field, not from outside it. Blaming physical educators for not "understanding" dance or for not "treating it better" could, in large part, be laid at the doorstep of a thoughtless imitation. Martin suggests that the relationship between the professional dancers and the educator be reversed; that the professional come to the educator to learn to teach; "But such a result is not likely to be even within the bounds of possibility until the educator quits going to the professional dancer for routines" (ibid. 303)

In retrospect, Martin's writings on the issues peculiar to dance education in were pretty much on the mark: dance will remain a part of its parent discipline until it establishes its own educational center. Dance educators had to build their own educational foundation. They had to stop blaming physical educators for not understanding them, and stop imitating their glamorous cousins in the professional world.

**Margaret H'Doubler**

The success of Bennington's influence, and the subsequent turn of some dance educators toward professional attitudes and standards in college programs was not lost on Margaret H'Doubler. H'Doubler viewed an encroaching professionalism with concern. The consummate educator, H'Doubler responded to change in the field in her third, and perhaps most widely referenced tract, *Dance: A Creative Art Experience,* published by the University of Wisconsin Press in 1940.

H'Doubler's preface to this volume clearly raises her concerns and situates her perspective on the substance, value, and future for dance education and the dance educator:

In essence, *Dance: A Creative Art Experience* is a discussion of the basic aspects and enduring qualities of dance, which are within the reach of everyone. Its main purpose is to set forth a theory and philosophy that will help us to see dance scientifically as well as artistically. In this respect it parallels certain phases of my earlier book, *Dance and Its Place in Education*. In a few instances material from the earlier book has been included here in an expanded form. But the purposes of the two are different.

Many excellent books concerning professional dancers and their contributions to the art have recently been published. For this reason, and because there seems to be a need for presentation of dance from a more general point of view, there are several of its aspects which I do not attempt to cover. There are no descriptions of dances; there is no discussion of trends as such. Nor is there any reference to individual dancers whether of yesterday or of today.

Rather, this book is designed to show that dance is available to all if they desire it and that it is an activity in which some degree of enjoyment and aesthetic satisfaction for all may be found. If we can think, feel, and move, we can dance. In presenting dance from this point of view I have made an attempt to show its nature and conditions. From a knowledge of these conditions the reader may evaluate for himself the trends in contemporary dance; he may distinguish according to his own understanding between those phases that are evanescent and those that are lasting.

If dance is to be brought into universal use, if it is to help in the development of a more general appreciation of human art values, it must be considered educationally. The future of dance as a democratic art activity rests with our educational system. Not everyone can avail himself of studio training, and even those who can afford such training will find that few studios are interested in this aspect of dance. One of the ways dance can reach everyone is through the schools. Expression through spontaneous bodily activity is as natural to the child as breathing. This inborn tendency to expressive movement provides a reliable equipment with which to build a vocabulary for artistic dance expression. If every child in every school from his entrance until his graduation from high school or college were given the opportunity to experience dance as a creative art, and if his dancing kept pace with his developing physical, mental, and spiritual needs, the enrichment of his adult life might reach beyond any results we can now contemplate.

Dance considered from this standpoint can be of great social value, but to achieve these results we must bring it within the reach of the laity. It must be a vitalizing experience to them. Dance's power of civilization has always been felt whenever it has been experienced as a control over life in giving artistic form to its expression. This element has proven to be an enduring and vitally important power in the cultural life of all ages. It is for us today to rediscover this power and seek its influence. Only when dance is communally conceived can it exert a cultural influence.

When a people possess such a dance spirit, many artists will rise from the ranks to carry dance to its highest unfoldment. Without this broad knowledge and belief, our artists will be few. The development of genius needs a sympathetic and understanding public just as much as the public needs the artist to realize and give back its dreams. As a growing and struggling art, dance needs above all the philosopher-scientist-artist, and in turn he needs a sympathetic public informed on the value and meaning of art. (H’Doubler 1940, ix–xi)

H'Doubler's comments are clearly aimed at proposing a compromise to the issue many of her colleagues were dealing with throughout the 1930s. Like Martin, H'Doubler's perspectives support a need for education *between* activities influenced physical education and professionally influenced art-dance. The philosopher-scientist-artist must instill in students a life-long interest in the creative, expressive body. H'Doubler clearly qualifies the dance educator as the "philosopher-scientist-artist." In this identity sequence the educator's grounded perspective (philosophy) is of foremost importance, followed by her working from a rigorous conceptual framework (science), and by evolving her creative vision and interests (art). *Dance: A Creative Art Experience* goes on to develop H'Doubler's argument in subsequent chapters.

Not only does H'Doubler cover territory she addressed earlier in *Dance and Its Place in Education*, making the case for her centrist educational philosophy and approach, she also reaches toward the art side of the issue by presenting her practical theories on the subject of training the dance artist. Here we have H'Doubler's opinions on developing the student's "technique," the pursuit of physical expressiveness and virtuosity, and composition, rules for using dance as a medium for art expression. One of the more important points H'Doubler makes in *Dance: A Creative Art Experience* is a call for attention to the intellectual-physical relationships that must be recognized and activated in developing the motor and creative skills necessary to art express through dance. H'Doubler's idea of the "knowing subject and the object known," in retrospect, is uniquely her own. It seems to have challenged, and in turn been confronted by, both generally accepted notions of dance, and the foibles of human nature.

H'Doubler asks her readers—educators, students, and public alike—to intellectualize dance in a scientific manner. While the work and product of the modern dancers who, for the lack of a better term, had come to represent H'Doubler's "pedagogical competition," was conceptually inspired, they were not inclined toward scientifically deconstructing the expressive act, nor the expressive body. For instance, consider the work of Doris Humphrey. Humphrey settled on the idea of exploring the dynamic of movement as this was reflected in the individual's struggle with gravity and balance, as "the arc between two deaths" metaphorically referenced establishing and moving away from balance. Humphrey established this point of view and explored its ramifications in designing technical exercises and choreographic statements, but did not seek to establish empirical, scientific truths about the neuro-physiological apparatus necessary to achieve and perceive balance, nor did she go to great lengths to understand the relationship between the rhythm of movements and balance. Had H'Doubler used the same metaphor as an educational reference for dance her inclination would have been to analyze the phenomenon of balance scientifically and then use her understandings to begin to work creatively. Such an approach demands a consistent discipline of mind and conceptual creativity in designing an individual approach toward using such information educationally.

Unfortunately most dance educators (then and now) were not as intellectually disciplined or as scientifically curious as H'Doubler. H'Doubler was altruistic in her expectations that others were of like mind, or even similarly adept at philosophically contextualizing and scientifically deconstructing the corporeal-creative act. And, as a result of her interest in approaching dance education in this manner, H'Doubler's writing had become "thick" with nuance and implication. Extraction of H'Doubler's meaning and implication for the ideas presented in *Dance: A Creative Art Experience* demands a rigorous intellectual focus and patience from her reader. There is a metaphysical quality to this work. H'Doubler's attempt at range, density, and depth demands constant attention and interpretation. She was not always successful in communicating the substance of her thinking in a clear manner. Consider, for instance, the following short passage on "technique':

Although the will is of importance in the expressive act, it can never be a substitute for the impulse for expression. The will is ever present, but blended with the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual actions in a perfect unity. This blend of mental forces results in a kind of super intelligence that knows the effect before it starts the cause. This cooperation with the other mental faculties is one of the secrets of success. The will can control and guide, but never can supply the impulse to expression except as it serves mental concentration. In this capacity it holds the mind to the idea in hand, directing and restraining impulses until they become diffused through the whole organism. It collects a scatterbrain and makes an artist of the artisan. (ibid. 92)

What is H'Doubler saying here? She is talking about the disciplined use of "will" in support of educational-artistic growth. While "will" cannot replace inspiration in developing a more sophisticated and nuanced artist—one cannot will an impulse toward expression, intellectually forcing inspiration—when will is at ease with that which inspires (i.e. the emotions, the spirit) then will, coupled with inspiration, and in harmony with critical awareness leads toward a sort of prescient reversal in the traditional concept of the linear 'cause and effect' continuum in thought and creation. The super-intellect, represented by a marshaled will and inspiration rises above the plodding wondering of "what might happen if I do this" to anticipate effect. The use of will as a sort of supervisor for a sustained-conscious-intellectually managed-inspiration "collects the scatterbrain and makes an artist of the artisan." Yet this understanding is not immediately apparent in H'Doubler's passage. One has to think and use "will" to focus understanding in reading her writings. Unfortunately dancers in this culture have suffered, and yet fancied themselves; resisted, and yet often bought into the notion of being "scatterbrained." Dancers have sometimes cast themselves in this light: inspired, yet intuitive; savants of the body, in touch with what is felt, resistant to intellectualizing the responsive body through "over analysis." Resistance to analysis is not without practical merit in the experience of dancers, athletes, and others desiring control of the body. Any teacher of physical activity will tell you; think too much *in action* and you'll get in your own way. This maxim takes effect at different points for different students. Some are able to simultaneously think and 'do,' while others start to think or analyze and motor skill is impaired. An unfortunate result of a caution with analyzing while in motion may be a spillover effect of caution into other realms of a considered practice in dance-art making. Thus, a cultural reluctance among dancers (and many dance educators), to readily engage in theorizing feeds into an anti-intellectualism that has traditionally shaped the thinking of many in the field.

And so, while H'Doubler's treatise was considered an important text for those who would champion dance in the academy, its infusion into the "trenches" occupied by the majority of faculty and students, and its substantial application in the field was limited. Because *Dance: A Creative Art Experience is* so analytic, and its application demands a longitudinal discipline of mind, its substance wasn't easy to access. H'Doubler's writing makes for difficult reading, and because H'Doubler remains the liberalist and never establishes a style; everything remains conceptually referenced and beyond the imprint of individual taste. Culling meaning and reference from H'Doubler's text necessitates the individual reader's personal investment in understanding, contextualizing, and activating what H'Doubler is saying. The reader has to personally engage the text's message through individualized commitment. H'Doubler does not 'tell' anyone how to 'do' anything; only what must be considered. To a population used to being told what to do and how to do it, and fearing an intellectual approach to their dancing, the message of H'Doubler's text was, for the most part, lost to a wide audience. H'Doubler's writing has a tautological nature that causes its message and substance to flatten out and become circuitous, repetitive, and numbing; sometimes incomprehensible. Yet, strewn among the amorphous, and ethereal wanderings, and pseudo-philosophical justifications, are adages that attest to her great revelations as an educator:

Man fashions as he knows.

Technique transforms experience into the form of its expression.

We are our own laboratory, textbook, and teacher.

Science certainly cannot make art, but it can contribute to a truthful art. (Wilson 1981, 1)

Even though the substance of H'Doubler's messages may not have been widely and regularly referenced, H'Doubler's contribution to the literature through *Dance: A Creative Art Experience* was reaffirming and important at this time. Dance in higher education was still the province of women's physical education and H'Doubler's conceptual "voice" was a welcome addition to the troubling trends and discourse of the decade, as perceived by the wary physical educators familiar with her message and critical of a 'carte blanche' acceptance of modern dance in their programs.

**Walter Terry**

The last article considered in this chapter is one written by an important dance advocate and concert critic of the day, Walter Terry. *I Was There* is a compilation of articles and editorials authored by Terry during his professional career as dance critic for the *Boston Herald* (1936–1939); *New York Herald Tribune* (1939–1967); and the *Saturday Review* (1967–1976). On occasion Terry would take a look at the variety of issues for dance in and outside the academy. He addresses matters related to dance in higher education in *Collegiate Dance*, an article published for the *New York Herald Tribune* on June 9, 1940. Here, Terry critiques the (then) current state of dance in American higher education. This article provides us with a sense of what the tone of discourses on dance outside the university were concerned with at the beginning of the new decade, and after the impression of Bennington had been firmly felt. Terry's article is an interesting place to end discussion on dance as an educational enterprise because, unlike the academics commenting on the growing rift between dance and physical education, Terry is not politic in his message. Shooting "straight from the hip," and not pretending to disguise his bias he illustrates the intellectual, even emotional, gap that existed between academic advocates for dance and those who were either unimpressed with dance, or were at odds with its independent, and (they may have felt) often self-aggrandizing nature. Those who counted themselves among dance's champions, of whom Terry is certainly one, framed its study and practice as a foundation for healthy living, a positive "mold" for character development, and as a conduit to a better humanity and even a higher consciousness:

Collegiate Dance

June 9, 1940.

You'll find the word dance in the catalogues of almost every major American college. And what does that word suggest to you? One person will summon memories of the exquisite and unreal Pavlova, another will think of the strong and sometimes ferocious qualities of the modern dance, some will remember the exotic motions of an Oriental St. Denis or the unhampered sensuousness of a Duncan, others will find that the joyous physical gusto of the folk dance comes to mind. There are, also, a great many people who assume that "dance" means social dancing or, on a plane of great skill, tap.

The diversity of approach is reflected in the collegiate dance to such a degree that a plea for recognized standards of dance education would probably be tossed aside as the ravings of a dance faddist. During the last few years I have frequently discussed the evils which mark the educational dance, pointing out that one college grudgingly offers the dance because of student demand, another because it is a good substitute for calisthenics, and still another (and this rarely) because its directors recognize the power of the dance as a molder of character as well as a valid mode for artistic, physical and emotional expression. (Terry 1978, 68)

Following this introduction, Terry outlines the results of a survey of "120 American colleges and universities asking a few simple and direct questions about dance courses offered in each of the institutions." **32** Were Terry’s datathe same asthose referenced by Mary Jo Shelly in her 1940 article *Facts and Fancies about the Dance in Education* (above)? Neither cites the other in their writing. One indicator that Terry and Shelly did not share data resides in the fact that in his survey Terry asks five questions and provides a place to add additional comments. Paraphrased, they are:

1. Is the dance a credit course?

2. What techniques are offered?

3. Are classes offered in Physical Education, Drama, or in a dance department?

4. Is dance offered because its directors believe in its benefits, student demand, or a combination of both?

5. What do you believe are the benefits of dance training? Is it focused toward preparation for a professional career? Physical development? Better health? Cultural growth? Do you believe dance molds character?

6. Additional comments. (ibid.)

Terry's survey is a thinly disguised attempt to prove what he suspects is wrong, yet true, about how dance education is viewed by many academics. "Statistics may be dull, so I shall make mine as brief as possible...Only half the letters were answered, and it is natural to assume that silence meant the lack of any dance courses."

Of respondents:

Fifty three colleges offered the modern dance, forty seven colleges gave folk dancing, thirty four colleges presented ballroom, thirty two taught tap, three presented Denishawn, two offered ballet, two gave Dalcroze Eurythmics, five taught clog and several offered courses entitled "basic rhythms." All these courses overlapped, with some institutions presenting several techniques while others presented only one.

In fifty seven of the colleges the dance came under the direction of the department of physical education, at Colorado College it was directed by the music department and at Adelphi College it boasted its own department. Benefits resulting from dance training were extremely varied. Physical development, health, cultural growth, recreation, dance appreciation and character molding all had their adherents. Some institutions stated that calisthenics could take care of physical development and health, and that cultural growth was the goal of dance. Others snapped their professional fingers at culture and upheld the recreation aspect.

Here are a few of the examples of diversities of opinion, not healthy variances, but completely opposed dance viewpoints. Mabel Lee, director of dance at the University of Nebraska, says: "I certainly would not say that the dance molds character. That is absurd. Just as absurd as to say that football molds character." Lehigh University finds that the dance fosters "facility in the amenities of social intercourse." Only ballroom is available there, of course. But at Connecticut College for Women Elizabeth Hartshorn, dance director, finds that the contemporary dance stimulates desire for activity, integrates the body and the mind, leads to appreciation and acquisition of beauty in human movement, increases sensitivity to environment, develops interest in the other arts as well as the dance, develops poise and self-assurance and accuracy. (ibid. 68–69)

With regard to the comments attributed to Hartshorn, when read today, had Terry added "...and does not promote tooth decay," to the list of the benefits of dance Miss Hartshorn suggests, her reported response to the question of the benefits of dance would have taken on a bit of the 'tongue in cheek' a skeptic may feel such claims merit. The bias here is unmistakable, and its tone was not an uncommon trait in newspaper accounts of the time. However, the strident advocate's role in support of 'cause' is not as common in today's journalism: "increases sensitivity to environment... develops poise and self-assurance and accuracy?" One is left to wonder exactly what these phrases mean. The tendency to couch the benefits of dance in glowing and universal terms is not uncommon among dance's advocates. Such praise may, however, speak differently to skeptics and suggest a discipline unsure of its real value in education. We may suspect that the student benefits from study in dance to the degree suggested, but what proofs have we, then or now? Regardless, Terry's comments and tone encapsulate the subtext and general tenor of discourses between two camps circa 1940: "either for dance or against dance, 'and ne'er the twain shall meet.' "

Interestingly, Terry mentions professional preparation as an outcome of dance education training. Overt attention to that idea, while in some circumstances attended to, was still years away from large-scale acceptance and was not yet central to the mission of most dance programs in 1940. He may have recognized an implicit new goal of dance education at that time, especially the kind of program that followed the influence of Bennington. Terry also anticipates another future issue at the front end of this article, couching this request as the ravings of a faddist; he mentions the need for "standards." Programmatic standards for dance education were increasingly in need of clarification, but this would not be dealt with in a substantive manner for another thirty five years. Finally, as an interesting aside, Terry quotes Mabel Lee, an early leader in the organizational history of dance in higher education. Lee's important role in the history of dance in higher education cause her remarks, as quoted above, to ring with a certain degree of irony.

The debate over the evolution of dance from what physical educators felt was the non-confrontational, educational dance of the 1920s to the modern, provocative, and often perplexing, art-dance of the 1930s, in large part sparked by the Bennington Summer School of the Dance, fed scholarly discourse in the field of physical education throughout the 1930s and into the early years of the 1940s. At one point or another most every perspective and point of view had its day in print. Very little was resolved but the stage was set for the academic struggle that would consume dance educators for the next several decades as they continued to search for an identity for dance in American culture and in the American university. But, because the social and political issues of war dominated the middle years of the 1940s, this discourse was put on hold until the 1950s.

To understand the evolution of dance in the American university in the years following World War II, we must not only consider the points of view of individuals but also the beginnings of organized activity for progress in dance education. From the 1930s to the 1980s the history of dance in the American university, reflecting changes in American educational and business circles, becomes much more influenced by the efforts and activities of organized groups of like-minded individuals. Organization leads to pressures for specificity and standardization: the organization serves a certain clientele, and gravitates toward standardized practices. Standard practice may be in shared opinion, in the creation of a product, or in an approach to problem solving. The slow struggle toward standards for educational dance, called for by Walter Terry, began in the discussions and sessions of the first national, professional organization for dance educators, the National Section on Dancing of the American Physical Education Association (NSD of APEA); formed in the dark winter of the first years of the great depression, and in the face of great internal resistance, by some very persistent women dance educators in 1930–1931.

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