

As I am a student, I can speak about the Way and Aim of the Dance Teacher and Choreographer only as I conceive it through a limited amount of time and experience.

My early education I have from a private English school, where I found strict discipline from my teachers, a great emphasis on work, and a deep tradition in Britain's past. Here, I studied for eleven years, dressed in a green and black uniform, and at the age of nineteen entered University, when I had the opportunity for the first time to wear civilian clothes or "civies". Once in University, I enrolled in a Physical Education course, with plans to become a Physical Education teacher. But as I began the course a tremendous and unaccountable restlessness overtook me, and after one week of study, I turned to literature, in which I graduated three years later. My classes consisted of often 200 students, usually making any close contact with the professors impossible. I was one of 10,000, with a number instead of a name. During these years I learned to memorize, analyze, criticize, but never to create. I would sometimes draw and paint, but as my work often was abstract, or "didn't look like anything in real life", it was meaningful only to me. In composition, or writing, I was guided to write from my experience and not from my fantasy - but I early found another means of creation - in motion.

As a child I invented a large structure of rope and wood, on which I learned acrobatic tricks by swinging, hanging, pulling, turning and twisting on the ropes. Then came a passion for athletics – running, jumping, swimming, skating, playing basketball, tennis, badminton, hockey and hurling the discus and javelin. Here, for the first time, I met a teacher who believed in the potential of the individual. He would hand me a long javelin and say, "Nature has given you a strong arm – now go out in the field and see what you can do". So, I went, and began to discover how my body could move. Often my imagination took hold of me. At sunset, alone in the midst of a vast expanse of fields and hills, I would try to send the javelin hurtling through the clouds to burst the sun – and on its fall, would run like a savage to pick up my spear. Here, I was free – a kind of wild Amazon, alone in my sometimes violent world. But here, also, I watched the movement of the trees, the birds, insects, clouds, and wondered. Sometimes I would become one with Nature, and move my body with the branches of the trees or the wings of the birds. One day, my teacher watched me from far away, and, coming to me, said, "You must decide whether you want to be an athlete or a dancer". I was truly surprised, as I never thought I was dancing – just playing the games of my fantasy. But I did not forget what he had said, and soon began a search for a teacher who could help me – and so I came to Mary (Wigman).

As my own early struggles in education were for freedom of expression and creation – although I was at that time unaware of it – it is to such students I would especially like to be of help as a teacher. But before discovering what and how I would like to teach, I have had to find my way as a student. My way has been a long process of self-discovery, through the creation of my dances.

I came here to Berlin, frightened by such an enormous change in environment but instinctively sensing that here was the centre and the starting point for my work. From the beginning I was driven to take hold of my imagination to bring my ideas to communicable forms, through my dances. My early dances have not been good – only necessary stepping stones in development. I was able to continue, as each dance I lived in and loved at the time of its creation. It has always been difficult for me to realize the failure of a dance – and in this I have had to teach myself to leave what is not good – although not forgetting my mistakes. As I think back, now, I have to admit that my worst dances have been my greatest lessons.

The dances themselves have been a way of discovery into myself, first as a human being and dancer, and in time as a teacher and choreographer. The first dance I created, several years ago, concerned the conflict I often felt as a child – in the pull between good and evil. Through this dance, I realized that I was both good and evil, and that it was at my will

in life to choose between them. With the help of primitive African music, a bright yellow and black costume, and a snake to match that I moulded from clay, I tried not only to create a dance, but subconsciously to resolve this very basic problem of life. In such a way, I am able to trace through the development of my dances, the parallel development of myself as a human being. Without this knowledge I could not teach and help other students along a creative line.

As regards the teaching of technique, I can only believe that the dance teacher must have experienced movement through his own body, before being able to truly understand the problems in technique of a student. In my own body I have had two problems to solve - first to rid myself of a very muscular athlete's body, and then to develop the muscles and placement of a dancer. As a result, I am very much aware of the difference between the movements of the athlete and the dancer - having experienced both, and count it as a valuable physical experience for teaching.

My way has always been to work from the inside to the outside, and this I must apply to both teaching and creating. In a truly experienced improvisation, I begin with eyes closed, and from a slow inhale of the breath which initiates the first movement of the muscles, allow the movement to grow organically. Similarly, my mind is concentrated to fulfill each thought, and to control the simultaneous movement of the body. So it is my way to create - from

the inner experience to the outer form – and to teach. By experiencing the problems of the student – and not merely subjecting him to a preconceived system, a teacher can remain alive and exciting to the student, just as a dance remains alive – through the constant release of energy. But the teacher must be open to receive as well as to give – as Anna, the teacher of the Siamese King's children said, in "The King and I", "By your pupils you'll be taught".

In my eyes, part of the teacher's strength lies in his mere constant presence, like a rock, not moving, but standing firm. The Book of Changes writes –

It is not I who seek the young fool:

The young fool seeks me.

In other words, the youth himself must be conscious of his lack of experience and must seek out the teacher, and so the teacher must wait to be sought out.

In my life I have discovered that in the moments of greatest defeat and seeming weakness there rests the opening to the greatest strength. Last year, in this school, when I was at a point of despairing of ever making a good dance, I received news of a very painful tragedy. My forces of resistance depleted, I experienced a kind of death, but in that death was granted a new life – in the unexpected birth of my first real dance, the drowning of Ophelia. The dance literally fell into me – a gift.

In my last year of University, I was in the process of writing my final examination, Greek and Roman history, when my mind went blank. I had not slept for nights, and had overstudied for this exam. After the first hour of writing, I suddenly knew nothing more, and could only put my head down on my desk and wait. I abandoned myself to absolute passivity, and in that moment, I experienced the knowledge I was seeking as standing outside of myself I wrote very simply for the rest of the paper – but knew that the essence of what I had to write had shown itself to me – again a gift.

By constant efforts to create solo dances for the past two years, I have gained a little insight into this phenomenon of passivity in the creative process. Practically every dance, good or bad, I have created during this time, has gone through a certain development:-

- first = the inspiration and idea
- second = the initial motive in movement
- third = the organic development from the first motive
- fourth = the frustration that the whole thing won't work after all
- fifth = the giving up
- sixth = passivity – the letting go of active forces
- seventh = the subconscious growth of the dance in the inner self
- eighth = the return to the work of the dance
- ninth = the return to the original inspiration
- tenth = the development of the inner eye to the outer eye, and the performance