

RUDOLF LABAN

SPEAKS ABOUT

Movement and Dance

Lectures and Articles
selected and edited
by
LISA ULLMANN

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PREFACE

This little booklet contains lecture notes and articles by Rudolf Laban which were first published in the Laban Art of Movement Guild Magazines. I have selected these particular ones as together, I feel, they give a fair insight into Laban's conception of Movement and Dance and are in many ways complementary to his previous publications.

The reader might agree or disagree with some of the statements, he might be puzzled or elated by the breadth of vision or even daunted by the heaviness of some of the text. Whatever it may be, the honesty, courage and positive attitude, the clear comprehension of essentials and the penetration into their intrinsic nature which the text reveals cannot fail to inspire.

With this conviction, and only very slightly edited for the present purpose, I hand the following articles over to the wider public so that they may serve as a further source of information about Laban's ideas until more of the many notes and sketches which he left can be published.

LISA ULLMANN

Addlestone, Surrey
August, 1970

EDUCATION THROUGH THE ARTS

(The following is a transcript of the lecture given on behalf of the Laban Art of Movement Centre, at a Conference held by the Society for Education Through Art at the Festival Hall, London, in April, 1957.)

One of the great problems which the theme of this Conference carries in itself, is the question of whether a creative artist, who naturally tends to produce works of art, is able and willing to educate others except by his own example. The reverse side of this problem is whether the born educator is ever in such intimate connection with art as a creative activity, that he becomes able to incorporate into his tuition the ways of education through the arts.

I think that this dilemma can only be overcome if one strictly circumscribes the nature of guidance which has to be given in such education. What kind of tutor do we require for this so urgently needed guidance, not only for our youngsters, but for people in general?

I will try to muse about these problems in taking my own art—the art of movement—as the main example.

In order to understand what education through the arts signifies, we have to consider what the real aim of such Education is, or rather, could be.

It is hardly possible to assume that education through the arts has a direct influence on practical activity and knowledge, useful in everyday life. I think, indeed, that to pretend that any form of external skill or intellectual cleverness is directly conveyed by tuition and guidance through art, is bound to distort and obscure its real value and effectiveness.

Why not say boldly that the art tutor is a guide to the dream side of life? Such clear formulation of education through art is avoided, because the dream side of human nature has very much fallen into disrepute. It is also assumed that the human capacity of becoming conscious of the dream side of our life inevitably leads to some irrational mysticism, which cannot be really mastered and controlled.

Exactly the opposite is, however, the case. Our so-called rational behaviour, and the cleverness acquired and upheld with such enormous effort and superstitious lopsidedness, becomes helpless and hopeless, if its counterpart — the dream life of man — is neglected and almost dreaded. We lose through such neglect the

control of our life, and fall into a state of insecurity which is difficult to remedy.

What is almost entirely unknown is the reality and order of this side of our life, which can, of course, only be discovered in dealing in an unbiassed and unobstructed way with it. And this bold approaching of the dream life is what the artist really does.

The rules of this other side of our nature are, of course, difficult to grasp by our ordinary logic. But such rules do exist, and man is continually busy to apply them, even in his most banal everyday activities. Art is a sublimation and condensation of this piecemeal insertion of the so-called irrational sparks and impulses into all thoughts and actions.

One of the most evident witnesses of this basic truth of the bipolarity of life is movement. It is, even if applied to practical action, charged with dream-like components, which, however, one ordinarily prefers to ignore. But I shall not speak here of the continuous interspersing of all our activities and thoughts with the impulses of the zest of life, without which we would be unable to move a little finger, or to perform even the simplest mental activity. I should like only to remind you that the ordinary and average 50/50 partnership of the awake side and dream side of our life, can become seriously disturbed and unbalanced if one of the two of these fundamental factors of living is disregarded.

Thus we have constantly to feel what we cogitate about, in the same way as we have to cogitate about what we are feeling. Education through the Arts leads to this united and balanced process of living.

It is in the so-often neglected part of this function, in the cogitation about what we are feeling and dreaming, that education through the arts comes to its full right and importance. The tutor of art is therefore a guide to the rulefulness of dreamland in a very specific and hitherto hardly recognised way. If one wants to persevere in the foolish — if not criminal — neglect of one side of one's being, one can of course do so, but with the peril that the whole traffic of life gets upset. A devastating insecurity of the individual, and of communities as groups of individuals, is the unavoidable outcome. Such an unnatural lopsidedness is avoided by understanding movement as the hub of the balance between waking life and dream-life. Movement can be studied like any other reality of existence. One can see its mechanical implications, coming from the instrumental character of our body. The parts of

our skeleton are levered by our muscles in a way not dissimilar from the function of a mobile crane with which we lift and transport merchandise. But in the crane sits a master-mind, the crane-driver, who organises the motions of the crane, enabling this contraction to serve a definite job. We can know all about every single screw and pulley of the crane without being able to drive it by our thinking only. For the driving we need movement.

The body is crane and crane-driver in one well-assembled unit, and this unit follows — knowingly or unknowingly — the invariable rules of bodily and mental motion. As soon as the body is engaged in a seemingly useless occupation we are inclined to say that a person or a being dances.

Dance, not a practical activity, is an art. Like all the other arts, dance has a great number of varieties which are not, however, so clearly discerned as the various branches of other well-known arts, say, for instance, painting. We distinguish designs, shading, colour in a picture, and nobody will confound a hand-drawing with a colour print, or a miniature with a mural or any other product of the pictorial arts.

In doing or seeing dances, we are not so sure of what their real difference in kind consists. At the best, we distinguish ball-room dances or country dances from ballets, but in general we consider these forms all as a general kind of rhythmical movement, produced by a more or less unnatural — or even undignified — exaltation.

Nevertheless, there is great difference of kind, in the diverse forms of the saltatory art, or the art of saltation. Saltation is based on the rhythmical evolution of steps and leg gestures. But there is also the art of gesture, mainly of the arms and hands, and there is the mimic expression of the face and fingers and the eyes, which can evolve in an ordered dance-like way. There is further a difference between the entertainment which the dancing person experiences himself and that which he conveys to a spectator. The art of dancing in which a person or a group seeks, beyond entertainment, a kind of self-expression leads further to the art of movement in which the realisation of our unity with nature is attempted and found.

In self-realisation, there is no more any vestige of showing off, nor is movement here the manifestation of an outbreak of personal mood. The entering into a relationship with the great principles of movement harmony in nature, is almost impersonal and incor-

porates the elements of concentration, meditation and contemplation in their deepest sense. Stillness is here as important as stir, and agile wriggling and jumping about are frequently reduced to a minimum. In the attentive and admiring listening to one's inner musing, the solemn carriage of the body follows a rhythm and follows also definite co-ordinated paths. This wide range of movement activities from uninspired or from inspired working action, through saltation and mime to self-expression and self-realisation covers many stages or sections of a world of inner fulfilment. It leads from the contentment with an accomplished function, to pleasure and amusement and finally to the delight of the realisation of the unity between the individual and nature.

All real art brings these moments of inner fulfilment which are accompanied and followed by a period of bliss, strengthening our sensation of security. Such moments can occasionally become ecstatic, but not as a rule and certainly not as a terminal human aim. The human child is the only young animal which lies on his back and stares into the sky. It takes a long time until the child erects his spine, lifting himself finally up on his feet, not only in order to walk, but also to saltate and sometimes to stand firmly on the earth admiring the creative dream-life of the world.

Beyond the constant insecurities of busy-ness and emotion, in which we are worse off than any other animal, we have the gift of conscious penetration into the realms of art, as the highest representative of our capacity to dream. Guidance in the keeping alive of this capacity seems to me to be Education through the Arts. This is at least undeniably so in all our dealings with the many forms of the art of movement.

THE EDUCATIONAL AND THERAPEUTIC VALUE OF DANCE

Excerpts from an unfinished Article

Let me say this at the very outset. Dance in itself, especially as it is traditionally understood in our time, has no intrinsic educational or remedial purpose. Dance is an art form which can be appreciated and enjoyed either as a spectacle if performed by a professional dancer, or as a recreational activity if performed by a layman. Why its beauty and significance are appreciated and enjoyed is a question, the answer to which (if ever given) will rarely include mention of educational or remedial purposes. The possibility of teaching dancing, or the applied history of dance in schools, is desirable. As one of the subjects of education it can be compared with the teaching of other art subjects such as music, painting, design and modelling. Such teaching will enlarge the horizon of the pupil and will perhaps enable him to admire dances with more understanding. The adult, having enjoyed art education and thus also dance education in his school days, will be better prepared to use one or several of the arts for his recreational purposes with some taste and discrimination. The fact that dance is probably the primary art of man might give it a certain importance and preponderance over the other arts. On the other hand, the often proffered opinion that dance is the only art in which the human being is involved as a whole seems to me to be based on a misapprehension. The fact that in dancing the whole body frequently performs large and largely visible movement does not indicate at all that the whole person is involved. I have seen all too many dancers who throw themselves into the air without any sign of inner participation. On the contrary, such large movements are frequently very externalised, comparable to hollow shells in which not the slightest indication of real life or of an integration of body and mind could be discovered.

Yet there exists a part of dance, and indeed of any artistic expression which, if purposefully applied, can have an eminent education and remedial value. It will be rightly expected that this part of the dance consists of nothing else than visible movement, the quintessence of dance. The trouble is only that though it is very highly valued and appreciated (even in the monetary sense) it is very difficult to catch its real nature. What is the fascinating something which distinguishes the dances of a Pavlova from those of

the members of her company? Why are dancers or artists of the stage or screen of equal or similar fame to Anna Pavlova so deliriously admired and highly remunerated? Is it their outstanding technical perfection? No. There exist many acrobats and acrobatic dancers who have a much more highly-developed bodily technique than those idols of the public and of theatrical managers. If you observe the Pavlovas objectively you will discover that they have a bodily mastery just above average which is often quite lopsided and conventional. Yet, they have this apparently indescribable something. The question arises: is it really indescribable? And the other question: is it a gift of nature, which cannot be acquired, regulated, increased and mastered?

We find this curious part or feature of movement in ordinary life even more frequently than in the art of dancing. Some people move with a very similar if not identical and equally indescribable charm to that of the great artist dancers. When speaking of movement we include, of course, its sources, the inner impulses and efforts which become visible in them. Ordinary people do not apply their "charming" behaviour to any acknowledged or unacknowledged stage technique. They would never dream of dancing in a ballet nor of dancing at all in the sense in which this word is generally used today. And still, I am sure, they are quite conscious of and probably cherish and love their style of movement. They even cultivate it. Now, if this is not the quintessence of dance, I do not know what it could otherwise be. Everybody who dances strives after the perfection of this something. This striving might be subconsciously and clumsily attempted. The dancer might be trapped in that kind of external skillfulness which seems to be indispensable for a theatrical career, but his guiding star is the charm of movement.

However, note well, this charm works best without the slightest addition of the usual dance techniques. We have observed that an old working woman, twisted by rheumatism, can have it as well as a beautiful girl; while the latter has it perhaps less frequently than the burdened factory hand. A man can have it as well as a woman, no matter whether he is an old man or a young man. Again, it might perhaps be found in men more frequently than in women. Another point is that this feature of movement has proved to be an art, because it can be acquired, developed, regulated and mastered. The question is only how, and this is a question deeply concerned with problems which are also those of education and recovery. Education and remedial

measures have a great number of common aspects. Individuals who, for some reason, lack some inner or outer qualities which they need in their struggle for life, have to be helped to strengthen certain powers and functions. It is relatively irrelevant that education develops qualities while remedial measures mostly reawaken lost qualities.

If one would call the humble striving after this radiant quality dancing, I would have to reverse my initial statement. I should have to affirm that dance has the most eminent educational and remedial purpose.

In remote epochs of the history of mankind, dance was once considered as a magic art. This was because of its inexplicable influence, both bodily and mentally, on adolescent development and because of its mysterious effects in healing certain illnesses. Present day educationalists, addicted to fashionable intelligence tests, and doctors who believe passionately in drugs, might ridicule and despise the magic dances which are still to this day connected with the education and medicine of the so-called primitive tribes. And yet the strange power of dance survives all kinds of superstitions, no matter whether they are of magic or intellectual origin.

The re-discovery of dance as a means of education and therapeutic treatment in our time originated undoubtedly from the aesthetic pleasure experienced by some teachers, doctors and industrial welfare workers when watching performances of modern stage dance. They came to us, the modern dancers, at first sparsely, one by one, but later in increasing numbers, to ask "Couldn't you do this kind of thing with our children, our patients, our workmen?" So we did it, and with quite unexpected results. Not only did the children, patients and workmen enjoy themselves, but some of them seemed to be changed in an inexplicable manner. The headmistress of a school in which such dancing had been arranged was surprised that a child, considered to be "dull and backward", suddenly became lively and interested even in intellectual studies. His sudden progress in such subjects as reading, writing and mathematics, where previously he had appeared hopeless, was astonishing.

Another remarkable fact was the improvement in the community spirit of whole classes. Cliques and solitary individuals who had hitherto been competing and quarrelling tiresomely, became friendly and sociable.

A further surprising effect was that the health of some of the children improved. Those physically weak ones who had always had a horror of gymnastic exercise and with whom tonics and other treatments had proved entirely ineffective, became stronger and more vital. Nervous children became less frightened, quieter and more open to advice and correction.

Now, this might seem to be like magic as long as it cannot be explained and it took us a considerable time to investigate the rational background of such effects.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DANCING

(An article from the Laban Archives read by Lisa Ullmann at the Annual Guild Conference, 1959, as the Laban Lecture)

At first glance the Doing and Dancing of man seem to be comparatively unimportant facts in the history of the world. For the life of men—of humanity in general—is in its duration and extent only a transient spark in the fire of the manifold manifestations of existence on our planet. There exist several milliards of living beings on earth, such as plants, microbes, insects, fishes and all the higher animals, while the number of men is very small.

It is true that doing and dancing are general characteristics of life, but life seems to be a relatively rare feature on earth as well as in the universe. In order to maintain themselves living beings are compelled to fill the greater part of their existence with Doing, not with Dancing, although they live in the midst of an overwhelming mass of non-living matter.

The whole mass of living matter on earth constitutes an extremely thin layer of mould on the surface of this tiny celestial grain of dust. Other more gigantic worlds show no signs of life at all. For we are told that none of the myriads of suns constituting the milky way and only very few of their planets offer the necessary conditions under which the development of this layer of living mould becomes possible.

On earth this mould consists for the most part of plants. When we see a deer in the forest or an insect in the grass, we become aware of the sparsity of animals amidst the relative abundance of vegetation. Plants are fixed in the soil; their growth, the flowering and producing of seeds and fruits, is their doing. They cannot move or dance except in the involuntary bending and waving of their stems and branches in the wind. Often they twist the ends of their twigs towards the sunlight or towards water, but this is rather a growing, than a dancing.

But all the whirling, creeping, flying, swimming microbes and higher animals are gifted with the power of moving independently and they enjoy their gift for locomotion in two ways: in Doing and in Dancing. Besides the movements they make in the interest of self-preservation, they sometimes express their inner agitation in a way which man calls Dance. In the forests covering great districts of the globe, in the miraculous gardens at the bottom of the sea

and in the midst of the fantastic clouds in the air we are amazed to see all kinds of animals carrying on their life work and on certain occasions obeying some mysterious compulsion to perform seemingly purposeless movements. We understand that an animal cannot exist without its life-sustaining doing, but we are not yet able to explain this curious behaviour which we call dance.

The extreme rarity of matter which possesses the capacity to grow, to multiply, and to make voluntary and involuntary movements, and the still greater rarity of the use of this gift for writing apparently meaningless shapes and rhythms in the air, stands in no proportion to the importance and deep significance which these two enigmatic extravagances of living creatures seem to have for themselves. Man likes to think that he has a role to play on earth which is the penetration of all kinds of mysteries through the activities of his mind. The mystery of his own doings awakens his curiosity earlier and more strongly than most of the other riddles of the universe. Dancing as a factor of social life is in reality a part of his doings and its elaboration marks in fact the first stages in the growth of any civilisation. In the course of its later development dance as an art form has become one of the rarest and most admired flowers of civilised life.

The rarity and distinction of man's power of developing his capacity of free movement into an art is comparable with the rarity in Nature of precious stones, of magnetic metals and of radioactive substances. The functioning of the human mind would not be what it is without the arts; and Dance is the primary art of man.

Doing and Dancing have their common roots on one hand in the mobility of the body and on the other hand in the agitation of the mind. People reveal themselves in their special manner of doing and dancing mirroring in this way the trends of their consciousness, emotionalism and volition.

Doing is purposeful and may be understood as signifying all action by which practical aims are pursued. Doing is thus distinguished from dancing in which the aims pursued appear to the great multitude of our contemporaries as superfluous, or at least of secondary importance. Dancing is not, however, unnecessary for the actual preservation of life, although it seems devoid of any practical purpose. But equally purposeless are all the other arts and spiritual endeavours, which we know today have actually originated from dancing. So also leisure activities, including the joyful play of children, are entirely inessential to the simple pre-

servation of life, but they are essential in the recovery from the strain of Doing.

The purposeful struggle of ordinary doing prevails in work. All our doing in work with its exciting competition and its hazardous uncertainties and fancies has more than one trait in common with dancing and playing. Doing and dancing have in the body, a common instrument and a common medium in movement which are directed by thought and emotion.

The instrument of all human doing and dancing, the body, is constructed and functions in a similar way to an animal's body. There is even a certain similarity between the structure and function of an animal and a plant, otherwise we would not comprehend the latter as living beings. The cell-state of the body is a great co-operative of specialised cell-groups. Every living individual has to submit to the lawful order in which the natural functions of the cell-groups evolve. It can be assumed that the natural laws which prevail in this communal life extend their influence far beyond the realm of purely physical and biological functions.

Man is proud of his unique position on the earth and in the universe. He likes to invest his achievements with a special glory. He is proud of the reasonableness and morality which he expresses in his doings. The veneration of certain ideals, and the valuation of virtues find their expression in the different manifestations of the comprehensive Art of Movement. This to some people seems to be a very acceptable and sufficient excuse for dancing. But is it more than an excuse, is it a real purpose? Beauty and gracefulness as well as heroic self-reliance play a great role in all the dances of man. Dances of love and devotion, dances of intrepid warfare have adorned his early festivals.

Man takes it for granted that such symbolic representations in dance of his inspired doing have their source in the imagination of the mind. He is apt to forget that the cells constituting his body which include his nerve-centres, show an astonishing sensibility and willingness in the performance of their special duties. All the beauty and courage manifesting themselves in man's doing and dancing could not appear without the co-operation and help of these small members of the bodily cell-state. The mind of man, or even that of the animal, cannot do better than follow the wonderful harmony pre-established in the natural function of the living creature. And this is also what happens in man's doing and dancing as long as he is able to understand and appreciate the biological

factors of living. This understanding and appreciation does not result from intellectual knowledge only, because man has no direct insight into the functioning of the cell-state. It is another sort of awareness through which he becomes initiated into the mysterious traffic of life, and this awareness is based on the immediate functional experience of Doing and Dancing.

We may surmise that the cells are just as proud of their special job in the great co-operative of the cell-state as nervous cell-groups are of the role they play in the good functioning of the whole animal. In the same way the leader of a large community will be proud of the healthy functioning of the whole, yet each individual belonging to the community will also be proud of his personal achievements. The single cell seems to be as anxious to display strength, cunning, and skill as the controlling cell-groups.

Nature succeeds in bringing about the necessary discipline and order in the cell-state, by creating an attitude of pride in well-ordered doing which must be based on a certain awareness of an urge towards ideals existing in each single cell as well as in the central mind. Obviously there seems to be present already in the cellular world a long series of what might be called noble sentiments and endeavours. In the dramatic battles which these little creatures have to fight in order to defend their buildings and to secure the freedom necessary for the unhindered performance of their activities, we see a great many heroic actions, much self-sacrifice and mutual help, comparable with similar manifestations in man's social behaviour. We therefore cannot say that the central controlling mind has invented or monopolised any of these virtues or wisdoms. All the possible virtues and volitions exist, and are fulfilled in an exemplary way, in the life of cells. We could, of course, suppose that these noble tendencies are infiltrated from above; that is, the cells learn their pride-modesty, their capacity to be social and energetic from the examples set and the advice given by the governing cell-groups; but alas, this illusion is revealed as such by the fact that the most anti-social mind often enjoys the most wonderfully harmonious and smoothly functioning cell life. Is it not more true that the anti-social governing cell-groups of a healthy and harmonious cell-state have failed to learn from their subordinates to distinguish right from wrong?

Taken all in all, we can say that the economy and organisation and, so to speak, the civilisation of the cell-state seem to run on much wiser and more circumspect lines than those on which most human beings develop. In particular, what seems to be a

natural ethico-moral behaviour of a single cell appears to be socially more equilibrated than that of individuals living together.

In a community actions are unified by the existence of a common aim. The mysterious command which nature gives to living matter is that the existence of the whole must be maintained and, if necessary, be defended at any cost. Furthermore, nature endeavours to effect this with as little friction as possible. The special whims, the laziness and the lust of the single cells seem to be extinct in an organism when the functioning of the whole or of an important part of it is in danger. The immense regenerative power of the body manifested often without much intervention of the controlling mind can be explained in this way only.

Cells follow—there is no doubt about this—their own innate volition. They take, so to speak, personal decisions; we know that the controlling mind can influence them in some details of their functions. Yet the best intention and the occasional help given to them play a relatively small role in their decisions. In healing processes, for instance, we can tune them by drugs or eliminate them by operations, but the essential work must be done by the cells themselves. The doing of single cell-groups and, therefore, also the radius of the will-power of the individual cell is restricted to special tasks, but within the special field of their activities, they seem to function freely. When in the end they lose their courage and initiative, they are replaced by other cells and retire for a rest by means of which they are regenerated and reinvigorated. They are faithfully helped in this restoration by other cell-groups.

It is in these regenerative processes that the volition or the central consciousness of the controlling mind can best intervene. Not only when he receives the S.O.S. signal of some exhausted cells or cell groups, but already before this happens, he can do much to prevent damage. The central control can insert in the time-table of external striving some rhythmical pauses. He can indulge in recreative forms of activity which assist the reposing and healing processes. The controlling mind becomes herewith something like a master of ceremonies of the cell-state. He will best perform the duties of this office in following nature, which provides, besides the recurring and alternating states of waking and sleeping, a great many rhythmical recurrences in the unfolding of life. To primitive man none of these rhythms seems to be as important as the alternating urge of Doing and Dancing.

Animals and savages are instinctively aware of the importance of this basic rhythmical necessity; so are children. But man with a

highly civilised mind, as he refers to himself, very often neglects his duty as a master of ceremonies because he finds no meaning in and has no deeper knowledge of dancing. Nor does he appreciate the importance of the other arts, which derive from the fundamental need of recovery. Sometimes he feels vaguely that the cells of his body ask for a sympathetic interplay and understanding between themselves and the artificially isolated majesty of his control power, but he lacks the modesty, love and vivid hilarity of the simple cell. He indulges in a proud and resentful hatred of his body and thus he also hates dancing. When the connection between the mind and the cell-state of which he is a member is interrupted, the mind can no longer feel what is happening in the community tutored by him. In listening more carefully inside he would find that in dancing as in doing there exists a formidable order and common code of laws without which life becomes meaningless, if not evil. The mind could detect that these laws are given by nature and that he as controller-servant can do nothing but recognise and cultivate the pre-established harmony. He would see that the co-existence and co-relationship of the mind, striving after consciousness, and the basic urge of nature, creating the tangible existence of the body, cannot be severed without annihilating both life and awareness.

Coinciding with the first appearance of the first living mould on earth is the urge to maintain the connecting flow between the manifestations of life and their natural lawfulness by means of continual exercise. In our movements, in all doing and dancing, we become aware of vital and real form, of streaming forces manifesting themselves in the functioning of the cell-state. This awareness differs from the abstractions which the intellect makes in analysing them. The logical, ethical and aesthetic principles, which the mind abstracts from the feeling of unity and strength of doing and dancing, are of secondary and ancillary value only. The real experience is gained in its purest form and to its highest degree in the acts of Doing and Dancing. We are not capable of observing the bravery of our cells and their tendencies towards harmony in the same scientific manner as we do with happenings of our surroundings. But we can feel the stream and the might of noble intentions in the beneficent agitations of our muscles, in all kind of work, and in the joy of dancing.

We do not know how far savages, and children in their first innocence are conscious of the inner urge to move in harmony with the source of life and actually with the whole of the universe.

We know only that, at certain stages of consciousness and civilisation, doing and especially dancing lose their significance as expression of an inner need, and become the slaves of more superficial considerations and desires. One of the signs of such degeneration is that man, in forgetting the importance of harmonising his personality in dancing which gave him his initial strength, starts to neglect the natural laws of real and complex doing in his work. This fact can only be explained as a misinterpretation of natural laws through the pertness of our intellect. Forgetting the real role of the intellect which consists of helping personal and collective existence, man tries to replace the wisdom of the integral cell-state by mental knowledge. Instead of co-ordinating the manifestations of his intellect with the dance of the whole organism, the average adult becomes in such epochs of degeneration more and more sceptical about the natural dignity of life. He is unable to learn from the simple cells constituting his living body, because his first innocence is lost. This is the beginning of a most dramatic struggle between body and mind, which assumes sometimes the terrible form of insoluble conflicts.

In a state of recovered innocence our mind will obviously be compelled to rediscover Dancing and its intimate connection with natural Doing; but, before this stage is reached, there is a long way to go, leading through a dreadful desert of dancelessness.

There will be no familiar symbols of man's inner life in this desert. Objects and living creatures, mountains and forests with the birds sitting on the branches of the trees and flying through the clouds will have lost their meaning. There will finally be no passion, no love, no hatred, no sin, no virtue. The controller mind which emigrates into this solitude will be bored by the matter-of-factness of all things and happenings and so also by the functions of his cell-state. He will find there one thing only, one state of affairs, which he calls motion, the well-ordered circulation of particles. The gay dance of animals and children will give way to an abstract and icy doing of infinitesimal sparks within nothingness. This doing remains to a certain extent a dancing, as through it and from it sprout glimpses of an illusionary picture of the world, a caricature of that which our senses cherish. The picture of the world which the child and the savage take for granted reveals itself to the solitary mind now as a hallucination. This is the loss of the first innocence.

To begin with the cells: the intellect declares that these common building stones of plants and animals are nothing else than a

congregation of atoms. Atoms of living matter, constituting the cells, do not differ essentially from the atoms of inanimate matter. The only difference is that in living compounds the atoms of one element, carbon, play a prominent role. The atoms build up elements which compound into various groupings constituting the different kinds of matter. Atoms consist of different numbers of little sparks, called electrons, which circulate around a central spark like planets around the sun. This is the only reality of existence, the ordered circulation of tiny sparks; the rest is illusion. Between the circulating sparks is nothing: empty space. Empty space prevails to such a degree, that all the small sparks constituting the matter of an adult human body, if piled up on each other, would occupy no more space than would a grain of corn. All the rest is nothing. In the living matter of the size of a grain of corn the greatest part would consist of kinds of electro-magnetic sparks which constitute the atoms of inorganic matter and only the minutest part of the grain of corn, much smaller than the head of a pin, represents living matter, and nobody will ever know what this living matter really is.

If we accept these ideas we can only hope that the homeopathic dose of living matter has the power, whatever it may be, to conjure up all the multiple effects of our individual and social behaviour and creativeness, and with this hope we are out of the dreadful desert of dancelessness. The size and shape of the living substance does not really matter. What matters is that this big or tiny something suffers and enjoys, hates and loves, that it builds up and destroys lives, cathedrals, cities and civilisations. Whether projected into the empty space around us or not, between the sparks of life unfold creations of man like a multi-coloured mist or smoke patterned in this spatial nothingness by the dance of life. The shapes of the dances may be pure geometrical designs, but our imagination surrounds the objects and persons with those cherished contours which have always been familiar to us and which we hope will always remain so.

Some of the electronic dances are more lively than others and have surprising effects. Such is the dance in carbon, the element which forms a prominent part of living matter. In this element six electrons dance round an infinitely small central sun. The cotillion of six units seems to stir up the other elements with which it is mixed, so that the whole compound becomes less lazy, less stable, and more able to vary its reciprocal positions and connections. All kinds of cotillions take place in the matter of each single cell: the

sparks dance duets, trios, quintets, etc. and they even perform huge ballets in groups of almost a hundred electrons. In a living body the carbonic cotillions of six electrons farandole through all the groups of cells and electrify them so that their living architecture begins finally to move itself. In a mysterious way the home of a personal volition is born.

The cells of the higher animals and therefore of man differ not so much in their external constitution as in their volition; that means they differ in their aims and in their activities which enable them to fulfil the various necessities of the bodies of which they are parts. Perhaps it should be possible for every form of volition and every idea and emotion to be expressed in some special pattern of dance movement. If so, we have a simple explanation of the use of gestures. Gestures would then be nothing but moving arabesques drawn in the air, signifying and realising intentions, volitions and feelings. Actually in his gestures man changes the positions of his body and his limbs in space exactly as in a stylised way the electrons, atoms and molecules of matter do. So also do the stars, comets, suns, nebulae and systems of milky ways. The whole visible universe is motion, the never-ceasing transience of which contradicts all static reality.

It is clear that when investigating dance we must be keenly interested in the alarming new picture of the world which science gives us. We can, perhaps, assume that human beings when dancing have always had an intuitive notion of this dynamic structure of material existence discovered by science today. For the astonishing similarity between this vision of existence and the actual spatial feeling of a dancer is undeniable. Primitive man and a great many of our dancers and dancing children are obviously compelled by their inner urge to reproduce or to mirror with their limbs the celestial-electronic play which takes place continuously in the matter of their bodies.

Today we are able to observe a great deal of the unconscious tendencies and urges in nature and also in living beings, including ourselves. We can compare the trace-forms of individual movements with the trace-forms of electronic tracks, and find an interesting relationship between them. If we investigate the emotional and the volitional content of gestures we arrive at an entirely new angle for an approach to the mystery of Doing and Dancing. On the way to this very remote goal we must content ourselves for the time being with the clearing up of our conceptions of space, time and energy. We must try to turn to practical use the relics and

ruins of the traditional view of the world. In reducing matter to a play of radiating and circulating sparks, science has, of course, abolished a great many illusions; but at the same time a door has opened for a new and simplified view of the universe. Hence it now becomes possible to understand with our intellect that old prophetic dream of mankind, the unity of mind and body. As both have one and the same motion with only slight variations, we can draw a parallel between this universal happening and dance. The hostile dualism of matter and mind can no more be taken for granted and the study of the awareness of unity in dance gains a hitherto unsuspected reality. A great advantage is that when we rid ourselves of the mistaken attitude of dualism, we are apt to lose our haughty pre-occupation with the supremacy of the mind. We can finally restore to the mind those attributes which it possessed in its first innocence. The intellect from now on will be more easily inclined to call up and serve the hidden aspirations of that part of our structure which it has been inclined to despise and suppress. Once acknowledging the value and the dignity of its sisters, the heart and the blood, the intellect itself will be able to approach the deeper layers of life which are so obviously cared for in primitive beings and in their doing and dancing. It will be revealed to our reason that the tendency towards realising the lawful power of nature is clearly pre-established in all the doings of living beings. We shall understand that the listening inside, to the life of the cell-state, or perhaps to the dance of the electrons within the cells, can make us aware of the difference between harmonious and inharmonious conditions in our behaviour.

Any animal instinctively tries to remedy inharmonious states of the body-mind. There are two ways in which it may endeavour to do this. One way leads to rest or relaxation, and the other way leads to a special kind of effort resulting in motor agitation. Recurring regularly in life is the search for food and sleep. But there exists still another part of the rhythm of life: play. If reason is understood only as food-gathering and sheltering, play lacks this reason or aim. In re-installing the function of play we need not deny that the animal is structurally, perhaps, nothing else than a compound of dancing electrons. We can even see in its individual play an exact counterpart of the play of electrons spread throughout the whole universe.

No animal exists which has no knowledge of and does not make use of some kind of play profitable for both body and mind. We call this play Dancing when it takes certain rhythmical forms

in organised body movement. Most of the higher animals (fishes, birds and mammals) dance. Insects and reptiles dance also. Few dances are so graceful as those of salamanders and lizards. Apes dance alone or in groups. Single movements are repeated, as if the creature would like to impregnate its whole being with the beneficial rhythms and wonderful trace-forms which emerge from the depths of its urge to play and communicate.

Sometimes the animals dance for themselves, at other times for spectators, but the urge to perform the dances seems to be more frequent than the need to see or to show them. This is not to be wondered at, for such a play helps in the first instance the connection of the individual with the source of life, and it is only in the second place a language by means of which individuals can communicate with each other. Such a play for play's sake may well be called "re-creation," a word with a serious meaning. To "re-create" is to create something afresh, something which has been lost or weakened. However, it is not a "re-creation" of the body and its tissues, a kind of putting an engine into gear, but a re-establishment of lost and weakened relations and connections with the source of life.

When the intellect begins to understand how important dancing is and why it is beloved by all living beings, it is to be hoped that man will find it worth while to look upon dance with an increased sympathy. Man must be made conscientious enough to occupy himself with that means of recovery which is so cherished by living beings, namely with dancing.

DANCE AS A DISCIPLINE

(An article from the Laban Archives)

Dance can best be explained by dancing. Seeing dances with a mind opened by personal experience in dance and perhaps by some knowledge of the problems of dance is the next possibility of understanding what dance is and means. To impart knowledge about the problem of dance in words, i.e. to treat dance, if not as a science, at least as a discipline is a third possibility. This is much more difficult to do with dance than with any other human activity. This is so because dance-thinking, or the thinking connected with movement, is almost diametrically opposed to ordinary thinking, thinking connected with words. This is why so little literature about dance exists. Furthermore there exists no generally accepted grammar of dance which could be the rational basis for the discussion of dance. Some people might assume that it would be a pity to rob dance of its spontaneity in establishing a kind of grammar of this ephemeral art.

The sister-art of dance, music, has, however survived the fate of having acquired its own rules of grammar. A basis of the examination of the means of expression of music lies in the science of acoustics.

This science tells us that in hitting a drum, striking a string, blowing a trumpet or playing on any other instrument, the material of which the instrument is made is set into vibrations. The vibrations are imparted to the surrounding air and enter our auditory organs in the nerves of which they are felt as sounds. The pitch of a sound depends upon the number of vibrations during a time-unit, e.g. a second. Higher pitches are felt in connection with vibrations which are quicker or more numerous than those of lower pitches. All sounds of music originate thus in some kind of human body-movement. But musical sounds or tone-vibrations are (except in singing) always elicited from instruments. Dance needs, like singing, no other instrument than the human body. The human voice-organs, looked upon as an instrument, have a great resemblance to a trumpet and their function can, therefore, easily be compared with that of other parts of the bodily instruments. At first glance no physical basis seems to exist which could help us to investigate dance from a purely scientific point of view. I think many people will be surprised that the solution of this problem is in reality most simple. The human body is, as an instrument, nothing else than a complicated system of cranes and levers of various extensions. The

science of anatomy has discovered this fact long ago in one of its branches, movement-anatomy. All the trials which have been made to give to dance a grammar of its own have taken the fundamental findings of movement-anatomy into consideration. In comparing movement-anatomy with musical acoustics we can easily detect some parallels. Acoustics deal with the diversity and the properties of audible vibrations in general, and musical acoustics especially with the peculiarity of sounds or tones to manifest degrees of kinship which we hear and feel as consonances and dissonances. Movement-anatomy deals with the diversity and the properties of levering processes as occurring in the human body, and a movement-anatomy of dance will be correspondingly interested in that kinship of levering processes of the body which play together harmoniously in contrast to those which disagree with each other. The gracefulness and clumsiness of combined levering processes of the body play the same role in dance as harmonious and disharmonious tones in music.

But music is not a chemistry of well-selected acoustic tone-pitches only, nor is dance merely a combination of well-selected levering processes of the skeleton. One additional element which music and dance have in common, and which can be at least partly scientifically investigated, is rhythm. Rhythm can be rationally best explained as an alternation of stresses or more intensive effort-qualities with less intensive ones during the production of subsequent tones or leverings. It may be noted that it is the rhythmical dance of the voice or sound-producing movements of the musician which give the music its rhythm.

The difference between the two arts, as far as physical factors are considered, is only that the musician stresses certain acoustic pitches of tones which he estimates to be important for that which he has and wishes to express in his tone-poems; while the dancer stresses levering-processes of the body with the help of which he wants to render prominent his levering poem.

It is, without doubt, risky or at least crude to call dance a levering poem, but we do not get far if we start with sentimental considerations when putting up principles. This crudeness can, to a certain degree, be lessened if we call the connecting thread of acoustic pitches melody, and the connecting thread of levering acts—what? The trouble is that there exists no collective noun conveying for the lines of movements the same thing as “melody” for the lines of sound waves. It seems not to have occurred to anybody hitherto that lines in space, and especially lines or tracks written

in the air by dance movements, might need a name. Although we are charmed by these movement-arabesques, or find other lines of movement unattractive, we have not, up to now, developed any terms for them.

In investigating the difference between music and dance a little more closely we will see that the neglect to christen the pleasant and unpleasant arabesques written in the air or on the floor is not as astonishing as it might appear at first sight. In observing the great manifold of dances created by different human individuals and races we will find that the stress of dance does not lie so much in its aerial designs of gesture-melodies, as in the sequences of effort-qualities which are clearly represented by the rhythm of movement. Music, however, especially in its European forms, and in the singing of all races, points rather to a stress of the melodious line than of that of rhythm. To call dances "effort poems" instead of "levering poems" is perhaps not much more euphonious, yet it comes nearer to the truth; not always, however, because the famous "nautch" dances of East Indian women, for instance, are in their undulatory character clearly space-melodies. There exists also in the modernised European ballet a great tendency to emphasise the space-melody of levering sequences and to give rhythm a more secondary importance.

So far we have dealt with the mechanical basis of dances only. If we consider them as "poems" they should have also a certain meaning or content. The usual answer to the question of what is expressed in music and dance will equally be, without any hesitation, that both are expressing feeling, emotion and perhaps sentiments. Some people will say that ballet is a kind of dream representation without words, which requires the ballet-dancer to perform actions. Therefore he might be considered as a variation of the actor; a mute actor. To a certain extent this is true. Ballet is a theatrical art, using all the means of scenery, costumes, orchestral music, colour and light which are the indispensable attributes of drama and opera. Dance is in ballet only one of the means of expression, dramatic action being a second one and music a third. Ballet is not a pure representative of dance. In eliminating the action element we seem to be really reduced to the statement that some representation of emotional life is the main scope of the art of dance. The fact is, however, that we are facing here again an unnamed child of human imagination and expression. Very many dances are not emotional at all, even if they awaken emotions in the spectator. The dancer himself is carried by an inner drive,

which has absolutely nothing to do with anything even resembling emotions. Take, for instance, acrobatic dances, which might evoke an emotion of awe for the courage shown by a human being, and perhaps also for the miraculous flexibility of his body. But it is courage and flexibility which are shown and not the emotions possibly connected with it.

The ideas expressed by dance belong to a stratum of the human spirit which should not be labelled as emotion. It is a falsification of a fact, resulting from a lack of collective nouns in our word-language for dance-forms and dance-contents likewise.

Music or tone poems are, to a great extent perhaps, dealing really with emotional content. The effort-poems of dance have mostly other contents. One would be tempted to say that dance reveals a vision of a perfect human existence which is not depicted as residing inside in the realm of emotions only, but also outside in somehow sublimated and real bodily-mental existence. To find a word for these contents of dance, a word so simple as the word "emotion", might be perhaps a task for coming generations (if these generations care more for dance than past generations did). All we are able to do today is to clear the ground and this can best be done here again by comparing the corresponding features of music and dance, this time not so much in respect of the means of expression, as in the use of this means in building up the actual content.

In music the effort-accent is entirely separated from and independent of the melodic line, that means the musician can put his accent where he wants in any melodic or harmonic configuration.

In dance certain configurations of space-lines are connected with certain effort-qualities which are essential and unavoidable if the body follows harmonious space-shape. A rhythmical accent can, of course, also be added in dance to the natural accent even in places where it is not needed bodily; so also can the essential shades of effort be veiled or hidden through some trick of body skill. But the displacement of the natural effort nuance will be felt as disharmony or over-accent in dance. On the other hand, form is not bound to accent; it is only the accent which is bound to the performance of certain forms. The accent (articulative effort) is not inherent in the form (direction) but in the body, performing this form or this and that direction.

In music both accent and form are free also in the execution, because the body does not play here such a great role as in dance.

A well-trained body will be much freer to resist the effort-demand of a form (direction). It will more easily be capable of approximating to what we might call musical demands.

The performing arts of music and dance like to play as freely as possible with the combinations of arabesques and accents, these being an important means of expression. A dancer will often try to illustrate his effort-poem with impossible space arabesques and leverings. This makes the dance mysterious and non-banal. The binding of effort to certain body-space situations shows too much natural material dependence to impress both the spectator and the dancer himself. It is, therefore, necessary to get a technique of absolute freedom from any such ties, although a certain impression can be experienced (and given?) if the body follows body-space evolutions with an exactly natural effort.

There will be two kinds of effects. The free one will be more easily adaptable to freedom in the use of accent and form as in music. (Free here is technically overskilled like ballet). The bound-natural one will be in reality the dance without music (or with percussion, following or counter-pointing the natural effort-boundness of movement created from the inter-relation of accent and form).

One feature, the more or less regular alternation of stress and relaxation, will be always present (also in music) because of the bodily handling of the instruments. Fatigue of continuous stress, or sloppiness of uninterrupted relaxation will otherwise impede effect.

Effort-poems, as demonstrations of effort-variations, can be read (unconsciously) by the spectator. The main thing is, however, that they should have a sense and a development towards harmonisation because in dance we attempt to represent our vision of desirable effort-combinations in a perfection rarely reached in practical life.

There is no emotional content needed, because this representation will not show emotions but rather ethically desirable values of inner attitudes, such as the perfectly harmonious man or, as a contrast, the abysmally grotesque man.

Effort poetry as such is not yet discovered or acknowledged. We lack even one single word to express that which is shown in this kind of movement-poetry.

It is a higher degree of consciousness which finds out these combinations of ethical situations and elicits them from the sphere of values. The question whether the sphere of values really exists

only invented and built up by man, is a very important one. Conscience and similar inner attitudes seem to show that this sphere really exists outside man's personal configuration. If that is so, this would be a big discovery.

To argue about it would only be possible in the form of the study of movement, or of movements, especially of effort-representations. This is the real discipline of dance in which primitive man excelled. Either the sphere of values itself, or the capacity of man to build it up was discovered and cultivated ages ago. All our ethical ideals and ideas originate from the cultivation of movement by our ancestors.

This has partly to do with religious visions of perfect and more powerful beings. But these beings as well as the whole sphere can be inventions. A realistic outlook upon man as an imperfect animal but nevertheless the most complex creature on earth (i.e. no other higher being exists), does not contradict the existence of a sphere of perfect efforts which have none other than exemplary influence on our imitative sense.

To demonstrate graphically the presence of a sphere or law of harmony in nature is very near to representing the real existence of an ethical sphere of values. In any case, if the longing (and conscience) were a pure invention of man, he would be a terrific being, of superanimal and supernatural dimensions, able to create a world which does not yet exist for itself by direct effort of nature. This faculty contradicts all that science teaches. The 'either-or' is interesting, and a field to which dance research could bring revelations.

Either: man is a being inventing and creating new worlds which are not fantasies only because they influence his behaviour and life.

Or: man is a visionary who sees into the hidden realms which exist outside the world of his real senses.

A third possibility is that man is the collaborator of nature which is in her birth-pangs to create or bring forth this new world, or ethical sphere, which man sees already before she has achieved it. In any case it is the effort-poetry of dance which opens the gates to the new-coming or hidden or planned or man-invented world or sphere of values. And effort-poetry should be cultivated as a means of making possible the easier perception of the facts con-

nected with these visions and of clearing them up to a definite certainty about their nature.

To explain all this as a sublimation (or madness) of sexuality, hunger, power, etc., is of course possible. But then these would gain such a super-beauty of flowering that our actual evaluation of them would seem to be rather poor and miserable. If the wish to be more beautiful (perfect human being) true, just, good, etc., is really only a prelude of effective multiplication or enlargement of individual power, then we must adore this divine madness as the highest flower of nature. To despise it and to think it only a reducing, intoxicating product of an ill-fantasy to which we should not succumb, shows such a lack of taste for liveliness and a disgusting veneration of negativity and of death and annihilation that such beings thinking in this way had better not be born.

Tricks of the veil of Maya* cannot be deciphered by the brain alone. The unifying law of harmony appearing everywhere from the form of crystals to the drives of man, reveals itself as a law of dance which might be taken as the messenger of certainty about those questions of a beyond, which if not solved, torture our soul and distort our life.

* "The veil of Maya": the illusory outer world of external appearance which veils the inner world of true reality.

MEANING

Basic actions, basic shapes, basic meanings of dance movement.

(Excerpt from an unfinished article)

When we speak of the meaning of dance-movements, we do not suppose or intend to explain single dance-movements or dances by words. Many dance-movements have names taken from the technical terms of dance-teaching and others are referred to, for instance, as steps of special national dances, folk dances and so forth. Generally speaking, the understanding of the meaning of dance-movements lies in the awareness of the norm in which movement elements are compounded together in a particular dance-movement.

The main source of this awareness is the experience one gets in the performance of the movements. This experience is something which we can know and memorise, even without being able to give to each detail of it a separate name.

If knowledge is acquired in getting the feel of the movement, the memorising is achieved through repeated performance. Yet to learn a dance step mechanically does not lead to the understanding of its meaning. Something additional is needed which can best be described as the awareness of the vital flow of the movement, i.e. the confluence of movement components. Awareness of this flow can be conveyed by a teacher. It can also be acquired through observation and imitation of dancers who master the meaning of the movement perfectly. The analysis of the constituent parts of the movement, or at least of those parts which are not immediately understood, can be helpful to get the experience of the meaning.

Verbal explanation and study of the source and purpose of a movement might be considered as a further way of perfecting the conception of the meaning of it.

In this respect, it must be realised that it is of little help to say that such and such a movement is the expression of such and such feeling, emotion, passion or other inner activity of the dancer. Dances and dance-movement are much more linked with characteristic traits of personality than with feeling. National dances, for instance, can be of fierce, languid, fiery, proud, voluptuous, gay, melancholic, or such-like character without showing that which we generally call feeling or emotion. National dances have gained their definite shapes and rhythms because a particular configura-

tion of movement elements seemed to correspond through a long tradition to the ideal character of the race in which they originated. Selection and filtering of movement took place which divested formerly real actions of all their concrete usefulness until a true symbolic action resulted. The final form has acquired a definite and new meaning, because we recognise it as a peculiar form of dance-movement cultivated by such and such a race. If we say that this dance form is fierce, proud or melancholic we do not only draw conclusions from otherwise observed qualities of the people of the country, but we see also in the peculiar combination of movement elements including rhythm, something which would be apt to awaken in ourselves a tension understood as being characteristic of a "fierce," "proud," "melancholic" or other personality.

Dance-movement goes, however, much further than words; this can be seen when we apply rather helplessly the word "fierce" for half a dozen or more dances of different peoples. Each of these dances might have a quite independent form and shade of character of which fierceness or another trait of personality is perhaps the most striking general feature. Certain characteristics are often blended with others as, for instance, fierce and languid, fierce and fiery, etc. These mixtures defy any verbal description; the visible and tangible features of the movements are, however, most clearly distinguishable and make an impression and give a feeling of inner experience.

Folk and national dances offer comparisons between our experience and all that history, ethnography, anthropology and psychology tell us about the race or nation in question.

It is more difficult to discern individual dance-inventions which can be seen on the stage or with people improvising dances. The knowledge of the principal differences of dance-form combinations in national dances might offer a key in revealing some basic traits of confluence. Few people, even dancers and dance teachers, are, however, sufficiently versed in this matter to be able to make practical use of their knowledge in the deciphering of meanings of dance-movements. Other ways must be found and can be found in the exact observation of dance-movements of whatever origin.

Modern dance, with its reference to actions, moods and shapes, elicited from the movement elements seen in work, games, sports and also in historic dances, offers a basic way.

It becomes, then, possible to seize the different meanings of different movement-combinations and to understand them even in-

tellectually. The comprehension can be eased if the various configurations of movement elements are recorded in an appropriate notation. No further reference to verbal description of doubtful and insufficient word-substitutes from the terminology of psychology is then needed. Dance-movements will be recognised as entities of their own, while analogies or similarities with national or historical movement characteristics might still play a secondary role in their registration.

The study of the meaning of word-language and of music is a natural consequence only of the fact that all these norms belong to one and the same mind — man's mind — even if they refer to different aspects of it.

If a word should be sought to denote the logic or harmony of movement it might be the term "confluence", because it is the peculiar form of the flowing together of several movement constituents, which gives character to any meaningful dance-movement.

Dance-movement for practical dance purposes, in education, training and performance, can find its material in an ordered description of configurative norms, which all really meaningful movements follow.

A certain similarity between the configurative norms of dance and the norms of harmony and rhythm in music exists, as well as a similarity between dance and the logical norms of thinking and speaking. Dance-logic or dance harmony is, however, a quite independent field of research and practice.

THE OBJECTIVE OBSERVATION OF SUBJECTIVE MOVEMENT AND ACTION

*(Introduction to a demonstration given at the Third International Congress
of Physical Education and Sports for Girls and Women
held in London 1957.)*

Until recently, popular admiration and hero worship were given to champions in the various fields of physical skills without much heed to the methods of training which enabled them to excel so greatly. It has been known for thousands of years that extraordinary feats have been made possible only by those who underwent a strict and arduous training quite beyond the reach of an ordinary mortal. The average individual has never been either willing or able to submit to the rigour of the necessary discipline of training procedures which were frequently shrouded in mystery. Endurance and strength of character seemed to be fabulous qualities and were regarded as of more account than any details of training methods.

With the advent of our present industrial age everything was measured and analysed statistically. Accordingly a change came about, namely in the way in which human efficiency in action was regarded. Efficiency was no longer looked upon as an astonishing example of moral and spectacular value granted by the Gods to specially gifted personalities. Everyone thought that it would be the right thing if he tried hard to raise his standard of efficiency by conscientious drill to the level of a commonly accepted ideal.

Methods of training were undertaken, based on physical investigations and measurements, and this was all to the good because some people, unaware of their latent abilities, developed unexpectedly, with benefit to their health and general well-being. Skill became a kind of virtue and was especially useful for those few seeking prestige and quite frequently also monetary advantage. But an overwhelming majority remained whose achievements still fell far short of anything outstanding. This troubled teachers as well as enterprising industrialists whose aim in their factories was to get as big an output as possible from those with very low general standards.

No amount of physical measurements, observation or training could bridge the gap between the relatively few highly skilled employees and the great masses of more or less unskilled persons.

This fact led to the study and observation not only of skilled actions and movements but also—as a quite new feature—of the normal actions and movements of ordinary men. In this way the objective study of subjective or personal movement habits was introduced—no matter whether such habits were successful or not. The aim was to create for the *average* person (child, adolescent or adult) the possibility of gaining a certain degree of satisfaction in both work and leisure-time activities by matching the form of his activity with his available capacity.

I do not think I go too far in seeing in these attempts the creation of a quite new sympathetic attitude towards men and women as they really are in ordinary life. What was now taken into account was their achievements compared with their personal capacities, instead of comparing their efficiency with that of the few who were admired solely for their personal adroitness in movement, carriage and action.

The results of the new type of training methods based on an objective observation of movement qualities of the average person proved both stimulating and satisfying, since they led to increased personal efficiency and an added feeling of security and, therefore, contentment not only for a few, but for a great many therefore, contentment not only for a few, but for a great many individuals.

Today we live in a transition period, in which much controversy about the value of old and new methods of movement observation obscures the real need for united common endeavour.

Nevertheless the new method of approach which will be demonstrated to you here has been found to be not only useful but indispensable in quite a number of factories, physical education colleges and schools. Observation of the infinite number of individual variations of human effort demands, of course, a discerning eye.

The work of the observer and trainer of which I have been speaking in no way runs contrary to the special coaching required for highly skilled jobs. It is just that he sees this coaching as a special branch of more general and basic training methods.

Since the kind of help given and the method hereby used is based on the detached observation of personal peculiarities a wide range of approaches has been opened. One can either accept the qualities a person shows or one can attempt to enrich and to improve what one has discovered in the individual. In some special cases a training and even coaching for higher skills might be

or whether it has not been discovered, i.e. actually entered, but indicated. In other cases it would be only discouraging to foster a mediocre aping of ideally high standards. Ideals are only a reality when they can be achieved; in all other cases they are empty illusions, but some degree of ease and efficiency in movement and action is available for everyone. In our time it has become evident that the security and satisfaction found in the use of one's natural capacity in the right way can only be fostered by the detached observation of the personal traits of people's movements and actions.

MOVEMENT CONCERNS THE WHOLE MAN

(An abstract of the talk given on behalf of the Laban Art of Movement Guild at the Whitsun Conference, 1958, held at the National Film Theatre by the Joint Council for Education through Art.)

There is a vast research literature concerning the body motions of vertebrates and especially of man. Anatomy and physiology have enumerated and classified all the bones, muscles and nerve fibres active in body motion. As might have been expected it turned out that there is a common pattern in all human beings as all healthy bodies consist of the same skeleton and the same neuro-muscular apparatus which set the articulations of the skeleton in motion.

Valuable as this information is, it does not contribute much to the study of movement if one understands the latter as a unitary function of body and mind.

Here the observation of the artist is essential and it was natural that the practice of dance where typical and individual differences in the use of body motion are so evident, should lead to a closer scrutiny of the form and content of human movement.

It occurred to the composers and producers of dances at a very early stage of their activities, that not everybody is able and suitable to do all kinds of dancing with the same efficiency and effectiveness. There were high and light dances suitable for slender and elongated bodies, while other dances required a certain heaviness and compactness in the lower part of the body.

This is, of course, a very over-simplified division of types, but it is one which is easily understandable by all who distinguish at first sight between slender and sturdily built people. It would be wrong to fall into the trap of analogous differences, say of male and female bodies. Both can be slender or sturdy. Nor is it admissible to ascribe the fundamental difference between high and deep dancers to racial or national distinctions. It is true that the movements of primitive tribes frequently show deep dance motifs, while the so-called civilised communities aspire to a more erect, high dance form. Such rough analogies have, however, no relevance to the prevailing movement character of individuals, who may belong to either sex or to any race.

The difference—of which we can consider here only the two extremes, the delicately poised balance of the high dancer with his centre of action in the upper body region and the broadly based

one of the deep dancer with his centre of dynamic activity in the lower region of the body—has its deeper roots in the inherited body-mind structure of each individual. This is also true of all the many nuances which lie between the two extremes.

It is very probable that the organic carriers of our sense of balance located in the ear have differentiated functions which account for the different responses of motion, with the two basic contrasts, i.e., either preponderantly erect and slender, or prevailingly sturdy and broad movement habits. The analogy with the sense of seeing, and especially seeing colour-distinction, will help us to understand this. Individuals differ in seeing the colours of the surroundings and the two extremes are that their colour-sensation is either warm, of the red-yellow range of spectral hues, or it is cold with a tendency towards the green-blue ones. The cause is, I suppose, that the sensitivity of the little nerve-ends in the retina is stronger or weaker in one of these general directions.

In the cases of the high and deep dancers it seems to be the same, or at least in some way similar if it is true that the sensitivity in the nerve-ends of the balance organs in the ear is stronger either in a vertical or in a horizontal extension. One can observe people's preference to assume at the beginnings and ends of a movement phrase either a vertical slender or horizontal broad attitude of the whole body. Another analogy can be found in music where we distinguish between high-pitched and low-pitched individual voices. Here is also a hint of the possible intermediary shades because we distinguish not only a soprano from a bass, but have established a whole gamut of mezzo-soprano, alto, tenor and baritone between the two extremes. The shades of the movement types have not names so generally accepted, but they are clearly discerned in artistic practice.

I would like to stress that up to now I have not spoken either of movement or even of the function of motion, but only of structural peculiarities which are particularly characteristic of balanced rest. Motion arises at the moment when this balanced rest is abandoned, and the body is brought into a series of positions of disequilibrium between the starting point and the end or stop of the motion. The high dancer will start and stop rather in the vertical, while the deep or broad dancer will start and stop rather in a horizontal extension. How far each of the two deviates during motion towards the other extreme is part of the nature of the dance. We find it aesthetically displeasing and even ridiculous if the deep dancer attempts to be too vertical, and the same is the

case if the high dancer tries to persist in all too broad motions. Both will be awkward in such a performance, which can in practice be used to create non-harmonious, bizarre or humorous dances.

Motion engenders shapes and rhythms which are, on the whole, appropriate to and characteristic of the basic individual range of expression.

As there are in colours contrasts, transitions and relations, so in motion there is a difference between abrupt or smooth changes of directions, shapes and rhythms. The knowledge and experience of the inter-relations of different motion characteristics gives rise to a theory of movement harmony into which we cannot enter here.

It is rather my intention to speak now about the content of motion, which is linked to another complex of innate or acquired tendencies and impulses of man. I suppose that this complex can be most easily made clear if we refer to the different forms of recreational use of motion.

Let us try to investigate the natural impulses of man which lead to different forms of recreation. We shall see later how these recreational impulses are reflected in the every-day uses of motion in work and practical life.

Everybody wants somehow to be competent in certain achievements. This desire for competence has in the first place nothing to do with competition. A person may enjoy running fast without wanting to take part in a race. There exist a host of achievements after which a man might strive, simply because he enjoys his speed, his strength or his versatility. Competition is rather a measuring rod in which the competence of one individual is compared with that of another. One can also measure degrees of competence by abstract means, such as measuring time and distance.

Sports of every imaginable kind are devoted to the development of competence and achievement.

This cannot be said of play. Here a quite different form of impulse, innate in all men, comes into action. An incredible amount of speculation has centred around man's tendency to play. One has mostly, and rightly, stressed the spiritual value of the play function, which is not so easily expressed in one word as for instance competence in sport. Nevertheless, there is in this "hovering over reality" a fundamental characteristic which we can perhaps best call "fairness." Fairness often sets back personal competence or puts it into the service of a group function. People

playing together adapt themselves to a partner or partners and obey and enjoy the rules of the play or games, which they do not want to disturb through an undue stress of their personal ambition and the aim of subjective, often perhaps ruthless, victory.

A third form of recreation can be seen in the performance of artistic creations. The keyword here is probably "creativeness" or serving a creation. An example in which motion and movement are supreme is without doubt the performance of dances. Even if dances have a more play-like character, their order and rules are much more formally fixed than in a game or in free play. What does this mean? The love and interest in the harmonious connections between motions are brought here into prominence and the impulse to create manifests itself in the conviction of an ideal significance of this order, which cannot always be expressed or explained in words.

I have said before that the three basic impulses towards heightened competence, true fairness and a demonstration of the spirit of creativeness, are reflected in practical life. This is clearest in respect of competence which is bound to be present in any work man has to do in the struggle of his everyday life. The difference between sport and work is that in recreation tasks are self-imposed, while in work the task is given by the necessity of outer circumstances. One can, for instance, discern as a human impulse the mental recreation of exact thinking which in practical work may become proficiency perhaps in engineering activities.

Playlike working seems to us a contradiction in itself, but the concept when analysed, illustrates usefully the interaction of fundamental spiritual aims. The carry-over of organised group play into practical life, including its highly desirable quality of fairness, can be clearly seen in the social organisation of groups of people.

It is more difficult, however, to observe the influence of artistic creativeness in practical life. But there is so much evidence of the desire of men and women to express themselves, to fill their lives with a certain beauty and to avoid miserable and unkempt conditions that it is clear that behind all this there is an element of creativeness. More than anywhere else these desires become visible in such manifestations as rituals and ceremonies which are performed in the service of the loftiest aspirations of mankind. Here again the mental forms of creativeness appear unconsciously as in dreams and not in effective, competent speculation.

Looking at the whole range of the innate and acquired impulses of man, one is tempted to search for a common denomi-

nator. In my opinion this denominator is not mere motion, but movement with all its spiritual implication. In movement neither spiritual nor physical values can be left aside. The good man is he who exemplifies in his movement physical, mental, emotional and spiritual values as a unified whole. The practice of body-mind movement in all its variations has to be supplemented by a thorough research into the nature and the ramifications of movement. Historically seen, this has been done for many thousands of years. But from time to time men have been blind in practical matters to the low standard of efficiency of body motions, as well as to the lack of balance between feeling and intellectual judgment in their thinking. They have also over-indulged in play-like enjoyment of certain branches of bodily or mental motion and they have given in to sheer dreaming, abusing thus their creativity in more or less futile illusions.

What has to be done today—and our time seems to stand on the threshold of a new awareness of movement—is to acknowledge movement as the great integrator. This involves, of course, the conviction that movement is the vehicle which concerns the whole man with all his physical and spiritual faculties.

To be able to see this great unity is not the privilege of the artist alone. The natural tendencies and impulses of every single human being are based on this unity which can be lifted out of the treasure of forgotten truth and cultivated in all the various ramifications of life.

THE WORLD OF RHYTHM AND HARMONY

(An abridged rendering of the lecture given at the Annual Conference of the Laban Art of Movement Guild, 15th February, 1958.)

Many people will associate this world, in their minds, with the realm of music. This is quite right so far as one considers the branch of the art of human movement resulting in the production of works which become audible to the ear. Few people realise that all music is produced by movements of the body, vocal or instrumental. These movements are very small and seem, at first sight, to have no other than a practical purpose. Therefore they are more or less ignored, or at least, little observed. We see, of course, some conductors of orchestras who perform almost dance-like movements but the main impression of the listener (who has not even to look at the conductor) is the organised volume of sound which emanates from the orchestra.

One thing is sure: that music introduces us into the world of rhythm and harmony, and guides us within the intricate maze of the roads and landscapes of this world, offering the most delightful vistas.

We rarely see dances without music, but there are moments and passages of dances which let us almost forget the accompanying sound waves. It is in any case less usual and less generally realised that the evolutions of dancing bodies also introduce us into the world of rhythm and harmony, very much as music does. The pleasure which the dancers themselves experience, say, in recreational dances, which are not devised to be seen by spectators, really consists of a penetration into the beauty and wonders of the world of rhythm and harmony. Not only the whole body, but the whole being of the dancer lives in this world, and enjoys its extraordinary vistas in a very complex form. The dancer's everyday outlook upon the world is changed into a heightened sensitivity for rhythm and harmony. He perambulates or whirls about paths which he never would follow in his ordinary everyday occupations. Even if he does some actions which vaguely resemble his everyday work or doings, these actions are never really purposeful in the ordinary sense of utility. The movements are selected and adapted according to their content of rhythm and harmony, which two factors are the main factors of this particular world.

We cannot easily describe in words the roads and landscapes of this realm in the same way as we relate our doings in the world

of our everyday surroundings. This does not mean that the vistas and delights of this world are altogether indescribable, but we have to use special words and special connotation. We recognise and notate the quite real thing which rhythm is, in a different way from other everyday happenings. In calling rhythms wild or soft, frightening or appeasing, we do not give more than a very general idea of the mood they evoke. We have to perform the rhythm with our bodies in order to experience and to appreciate its particular nature and significance.

The same is the case with harmony. The shades and nuances of harmony elude ordinary verbal description. We have to experience it in real bodily-mental participation.

What we can say clearly about rhythm is based upon the discernment of particular combinations of varying speeds and intensities. The speeds and intensities are produced by the dancer or the musician. We may add a word about the emotive mood awakened in us by a special rhythm. This mood is felt by a dancer or musician, by a member of the audience at a musical performance, or by a spectator of a dance. But here we are on very insecure ground, because aesthetic reactions are different for different participants.

Rhythm has an undeniable reality which can be recognised, felt, discerned and produced by everyone who has a rhythmical sense. It is not the same with harmony, which does not seem to be a clearly defined entity, not, at least, in the vague connotation which we usually give this word. In music, harmonious groupings of musical sounds show simple proportions of the numbers of their sound vibrations. Emotionally, their effect is rather quietening in contrast to disharmonious groupings, which show complicated proportions of their sound vibration numbers. All this is scientifically measurable, like the speeds and intensities of a rhythm. But here again, personal reactions can be very different. People who have got used to the more complicated vibrational proportions of modern music, might find it much less irritating than former generations of music lovers have done. We find it hard to understand that in their own time, composers such as Beethoven or Richard Wagner were, by many people, accused of producing almost unbearable disharmonies.

The dancer approaches the problem of the harmony of his body evolutions in a way which is similar to that in music as far as balanced or disbalanced sound groupings are used in it. But bodily balance and disbalance, as seen in dances, are visually of

an obvious reality easily discernible by everybody. One of the main concerns of a moving person is the balance of the body. That means, that in spite of an often most daring mobility, any mechanical falling or collapse is avoided. Clumsiness or inharmonious movement is always due to the lack of the capacity to restore balance. In grotesque dances, the performer might include strangely disbalanced movements, without, however, losing the mastery of them, and remaining able to restore balance if desired.

The quietening effect upon the mind of a harmonious movement is identical with the effect of well-balanced proportions of harmonious sound arrangements in music. The irritating disharmony of sounds is comparable, if not identical with the irritations caused by grotesque movements.

Even if we qualify the general effects of quietening or irritating by adjectives such as sweet, harsh, solemn, shattering and so on, we do not come to the core of the bodily-mental experience of harmony. Every harmony or disharmony has an individual character as has every rhythm. Every harmonious combination has an almost individual unity. The description of this individual aspect of proportion or degree of balance—which can today be determined with exact scientific precision—does not, however, exhaust the content of the experience gained in the performance and enjoyment of rhythms and harmonies in dance and music. There is simply no other means to explore the world of rhythm and harmony than to enter it with full bodily and mental participation.

We come now to the question of whether the exploration of this world is really worth-while and perhaps necessary. The answer is that mankind has always shown the urge to explore this world, and the suppression or neglect of this urge has, very generally speaking, most disastrous consequences. This refers to individual life as well as to whole periods of civilisation. It is true that no individual, race, or period of civilisation can be found which has omitted entirely any attempt or trial at such exploration. Every human being dances or sings, at least in childhood, and all races and epochs have given dance and music at least some place in their recreations and entertainments. But these attempts are sometimes very modestly used as mere sidelines of life and the quality of the exploration of this world lacks, then, real vigour and penetration.

The landscape of this strange world can be imagined as embracing arid and fertile areas, rocks and peaks, and flowery meadows. Cascading rivers of rhythms and harmonies run into

large lakes, under skies which are either sunny or grey with heavy clouds of clustered sounds or movements. Tempests and storms of explosive rhythms may alternate with soft breezes of balanced harmonies. Mysterious caves and precipices are built up below vast forests of luxuriant growths of sound waves and movements. To become acquainted with one little corner of a few rhythms and harmonies does not lead to the full appreciation and enjoyment of the whole realm. There is, perhaps, nobody who has been everywhere, but there are, undoubtedly, people who have been round and have seen and enjoyed a good many of the most animating vistas.

THE RHYTHM OF EFFORT AND RECOVERY

(An article from the Laban Archives.)

For man the relationship of effort and recovery is one of the most important aspects of the great number of rhythmical alternations observable in Nature. It has often been said that rhythm is life. This definition, however, ignores the rhythm of lifeless nature. It would be more exact to say that the biological aspect of rhythm constitutes the clearest and most comprehensive form of that curious phenomenon known as rhythm or the alternation of somehow opposite happenings.

The relationship of effort and recovery needs a closer scrutiny. They are not contrasts which exclude one another.

Effort is generally understood as the exertion of power, no matter whether physical or mental. One says also that the production of some work of art or oratory as a whole represents an effort. Many exertions, otherwise called attempts or trials, which result in struggle, strain and even pain, are termed efforts. It is obvious that labour, toil, trouble of all kinds involve effort.

In contemporary movement-study the term effort is given to the active exercise of any power or faculty. This active power, however, need not be extremely vigorous or laborious. On the contrary, we know today that an effort can take a calm and almost strainless form; especially is this the case when an action is performed with full acceptance of and even enjoyment in the task at hand.

Investigation of human movement has resulted in the distinction of two contrasting inner attitudes with which the effort invariably preceding any movement can be activated. The inner attitude of fighting against something contrasts with the inner attitude of yielding to something, but if either of these attitudes results in a movement, clearly some kind of effort is needed. The effort can be a pure fighting effort or it can also be one of yielding. But some efforts are mixed, containing a fight against some parts of the task and an indulgence in other parts of it. There exists no effortless action or movement—physical or mental—and the effort used with a non-fighting indulgence does not always involve a low degree of exertion. It uses rather a different kind of effort, clearly distinguishable from the fighting effort.

Effort commonly suggests a single action, often with a definite object in view, which is consciously attacked. However, it is clear that in a continued activity the continuation also needs effort; in-

deed it involves a sequence of frequently different effort-qualities. Moreover, in exertions which are neither voluntary nor conscious the same or similar degrees and kinds of effort-qualities are involved as in a conscious action.

The main difference between exertions and efforts can be understood by comparing the usual meanings of these two expressions. We say that someone is wearied by an exertion, which has thus some repercussion on a person. This person might have made a supreme effort, that means an active exercise of some power or faculty. The effort is connected with a power or faculty, while the exertion is a result of an effort.

If we now consider the idea of recovery, we cannot say that the act of recovering takes place without effort. Recovery found in some leisure-time activity will surely involve effort. It would also be wrong to consider an energetic inner attitude of fighting against something as incompatible with recovery. Many actions in sports of a fighting character can serve recovery. Effort and recovery are, therefore, not contrasts in the ordinary sense, but from a very specific point of view they are opposites which do not, however, exclude one another.

This becomes most obvious if one uses the word recovery to mean restoration from sickness, weakness, fright and such-like conditions. In the restoration of health and inner balance, noticeable effort is not only possible but frequently indispensable. Thus one could say that recovery takes place when the effort serves the healing power and faculty within man himself, instead of being used to deal with the external world.

Some of the uses of the word recovery as technical terms in sport help in the understanding of the relationship of effort and recovery. In rowing one calls recovery the movement of the body and the oar, which, after completion of a stroke, brings the body and the oar into position for the next stroke. In fencing or sparring the act of regaining the position of guard after making an attack is called recovery. Thus one sees that recovery is an indispensable counterpart to an effort consciously orientated towards an aim, and that no recovery is needed or possible without a preceding effort.

Effort used in actions and that used in recovery serve and help each other in alternating with one another in a definite rhythm; they are rhythmical opposites within acts of vital function.

The verb to recover (effort has no corresponding verb) means to regain something, for instance, a lost property. One can become

entitled by a judiciary decision to recover damages. One can make up for something or can retrieve, repair the loss or injury of something. One can recover lost time. One gets something back, and recovers the power which makes further effort possible.

The recovery makes an effort to regain the recoverable. The person making an effort other than that of recovery spends power which has to be recovered.

If the change between effort and recovery were a simple rhythmical change occurring at well-discernible regular intervals, it could be regarded as a waste of time to scrutinize the relationship of these two functions. The complexity of life functions, however, is so great that frequently we are hardly able to discern at the first glance whether an effort-action projecting power into the external world is made, or if a recovery action has been served by the effort in order to regain lost power. Still less sure can we be, at first sight, whether an action is really necessary and of vital importance, or if it is superfluous and works in a way unfavourable for vital issues. The exact observation and efficient use of the rhythm of effort and recovery is therefore a necessity. The purely instinctive or intuitive letting-go of the continuous flow of energy between effort and recovery leads often to crises and catastrophes which civilised man is more and more inclined and perhaps also able to avoid. Movement study and the control of effort connected with it strengthen our conviction that the thorough study of rhythm in general and of the rhythmical to and fro between effort and recovery is indispensable.

The fundamental alternation between effort and recovery which can be observed in work during the day and sleep during the night can give some general hints of the main aspects of life rhythm. But work is not exclusively effort and sleep is not exclusively recovery. Work makes it necessary to use effort sprinkled with recovery, and sleep offers the opportunity of recovery during which, however, a great number of most puzzling efforts of a special kind take place.

Uni-cellular living beings consist of two parts: the nucleus and the cytoplasm. Neither of the two constituents is able to live by itself. The nucleus is unable to nourish by itself, while the cytoplasm without the nucleus cannot reproduce or propagate itself.

The complementary functions of the nucleus and the cytoplasm are indispensable for the continuation of life. It is surely more than a poetic image, if one considers the function of the cytoplasm which consists of procuring food to be more masculine

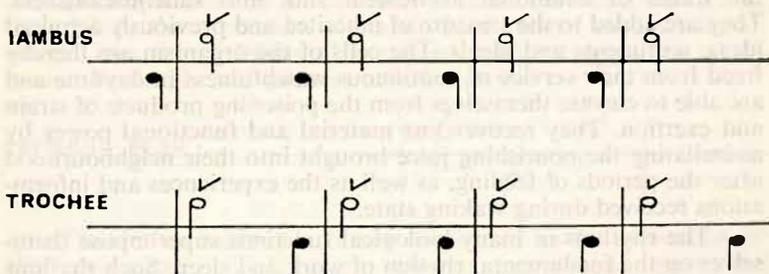
than that of the nucleus, which aims at reproduction and is therefore more feminine.

The structural division of the single-cell living being into nucleus and cytoplasm is demonstrated by anatomy, which deals with the static constitution of the body. Physiology deals with the dynamic order of life functions where the rhythm of metabolism is the main aim of investigation. The science dealing with the whole complexity of life as shown in the correlated shape and rhythm of the structure and function of living creatures is perhaps not yet born, as neither biology nor physiology has risked the decisive step. Such research was inaugurated by the rhythmic intuition manifest in the comparison of the iambic and trochaic measures with their male and female implications. This might well be considered a forerunner of psychology.

If it is assumed that the rhythm of life consists of an alternation of male and female functions as they become visible in unicellular beings and that the co-operation of the two rhythmically opposite poles works on the evolution of the chain of life, perhaps one comes nearest to a definition serviceable for our research on effort and recovery.

Effort-rhythm should be regarded as an essential peculiarity of the flow of energy. One could quote here the very ancient belief most clearly demonstrated in the theory of Greek poetry: that rhythm has two fundamental measures, one of which, the iambus, has a male character, while the other, the trochee, has a female character.

The impression of masculinity and femininity becomes more obvious in longer sequences. If one compares the sequence of iambic and trochaic measures one can indeed feel more impetuosity in the first one and the expression of a more languid mode in the second one.



Contemporary movement study is still in agreement with this intuitively found conviction of the ancient Greek musician, who was at the same time a dancer, a singer-actor, and a poet. The development of biological and psychological sciences throws a new light on the role which the rhythmical antithesis plays in human nature and life. We are accustomed to regard masculinity and femininity as a sexual difference in the structure and function of highly-organised human beings. In the simple form of life no such structural difference can be found. For instance, there exist no separate male and female amoebae, but these primordial animals have two antithetic functions united in the same individual.

In returning now to work in the daytime and sleep in the night it is obvious that the sub-division into these two periods of opposite functions derives from a contrast created by the planetary motion of the earth. The response to light and darkness can be explained in a purely utilitarian way. In principle the search for food is easier in the daytime while it becomes more difficult during the night. It is a well-known fact that many modifications of this general rule seem to contradict the validity of such an explanation. With man the tendency to insert a period of leisure time between work and sleep is more conspicuous. In both periods, that of recreation during a wakeful state and that of rest and sleep during the night, one can see more than the adaptation to the conditions of the surrounding nature. Living beings detach themselves from their surroundings in sleep, and man does a similar thing during recreation. The tendency to acquire new power and energy during sleep is not restricted to a cessation of conscious movement. Waste material accumulated in the body through exertion is sorted out and fresh material destined to be burnt in a coming strain is built up. The harvest of the day's work does not, however, consist of food only, but also of impressions and experiences which become assimilated during sleep. Thoughts and ideas as well as the traces of emotional excitement sink into subconsciousness. They are added to the treasure of inherited and previously acquired ideas, sentiments and ideals. The cells of the organism are thereby freed from their service of continuous watchfulness in daytime and are able to cleanse themselves from the poisoning products of strain and exertion. They recover lost material and functional power by assimilating the nourishing juice brought into their neighbourhood after the periods of feeding, as well as the experiences and informations received during waking state.

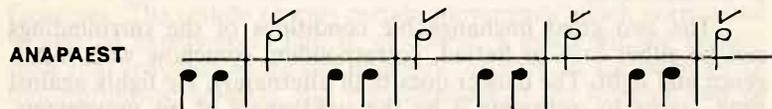
The rhythms of many biological functions superimpose themselves on the fundamental rhythm of work and sleep. Such rhythms

are those of the processes of nutrition, the processes of reproduction, the processes of a vegetative or instinctive kind and the processes of ordering the relations between impressions and experiences. All this is not explicable simply as a complication of the day and night rhythm. Living beings must have had their own rhythmic polarity which has enabled them to respond to the rhythms of the environment. We cannot imagine a living being without the alternating functions of nutrition and reproduction; but the rhythm of waking state and sleep is also of greatest importance, and so is the rhythm of recreative activity, a halfway-house, perhaps, on the route from the waking state to sleep. Dream on the route from sleep to awakening also has its peculiar rhythm.

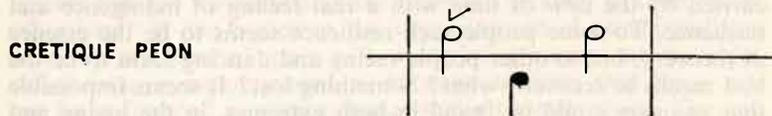
The forms of rhythm which have been preconceived by ancient favourites of the muses, the iambic and trochaic masculinity and femininity, acquire a new face under these auspices. In the complications and variants of these two fundamental rhythms curious reversions take place. Sequences of stresses followed by lightness have been female in the trochee but have a manly character in the dactyl.



In the male sequence of iamboes lightness precedes stress. The similar arrangement of stress shows a more tender aspect in the anapaest.



The sequences and the mixtures of measures which the Greeks have felt as the expression of certain fundamental modes offer an insight into the problems of the relationship of opposites which cannot be simply laid aside as artistic fancies.



The dorian mode, which was considered as the expression of the manly national character, did not comprehend either the

iambus or the trochee. These measures were both relegated to the voluptuous lydian mode of an outspoken feminine character. The lydian mode was not national; it was like the third mode the phrygian imported from barbaric—mainly oriental—tribes.

The dorian mode comprehended besides the dactyl and anapaest the cretique peon, a kind of amalgamated trochee and iambus whilst the anapaest was used in both the manly doric and in the feminine lydian mode.

These rhythms have been performed only during leisure time in recreational activities. They are clearly detached from the rhythms in periods of work and sleep.

The activities of dancing, singing and acting show a fine balance of effort and recovery. It is very probable that the relationship between effort and recovery can best be studied in these fundamental recreative activities.

An amoeba which has the power to emancipate itself from the conditions of its surroundings, by changing its place, by moving away from an unfavourable spot of the surroundings to a more agreeable one, is of course, not a dancer, because the change of position is caused by practical considerations. (If one is allowed to use this expression for an inner function of an amoeba.)

A dancer is moved by ideal considerations in the multiple changes of his positions; and each of these changes is always done in a definite rhythm. He moves not only from place to place, but also from mood to mood. The recovery value of this free activity is incontestable.

The two great unchangeable conditions of the surroundings can be either love or hatred, corresponding somehow with indulgence and fight. The dancer does both alternately. He fights against time, trying to overcome it by the suddenness of his movements. In everyday life also we easily recognise people fighting against time. They are often hasty, having no leisure for anything, and contrast intensely with other people who indulge in time, up to the proverbial laziness of the sloth. These people let themselves be carried by the flow of time with a real feeling of indulgence and resilience. To some people such resilience seems to be the essence of recovery, but to other people racing and dancing seem to be the best means to recover—what? Something lost? It seems impossible that recovery could be found in both extremes, in the loving and in the hating of time—or in the loving or hating of anything else. One comes nearer to the problem if one can detect what has been

lost. It is balance, not the stable balance of immobility, but the dynamic balance of a well-proportioned alternation in rhythmic function. Thus recovery is to be found in the exercise of rhythmic functions trying to balance one another.

When this is applied to the life of a one-celled living being one will see that even if the cellule is immersed in nutritive liquid it will not take in food continuously. The stretching out of a pseudopod, a protuberance of its outer surface, is the sign of the period of feeding activity. Suddenly the animalcule becomes sensitive to the nutritive fluid around it, but there must also be an inner need which has not been there before. A working period starts in which food is caught and absorbed. Then follows a period in which no pseudopods are stretched out. The food is digested and a period of a kind of sleep is inaugurated. It is clear that this rhythmic change is essential, because neither continuous feeding nor continuous abstinence would keep the being alive. But the nucleus is also fed and its special faculty of production, consisting in the dividing of the cell through a twisting movement, is awakened. The working period of the nucleus has started, and if it has divided itself, the whole cell, so to speak, falls asleep, recovering from its effort. But the cytoplasm has to nourish the exhausted nucleus, and the play of stretching out pseudopods and so on starts again.

The basic scheme of the biological rhythm is the same in the most humble amoeba as in the most refined neuron of a human genius. The different species of cellules have a similarity of function throughout the whole scale of living beings. Everywhere there is not only an exchange of material, but also a combination of functions. The cellule repeats certain movements which correspond to age-old experiences. This is, of course, a much simpler process than that involved in human memory, or even in the memory of more primitive animals. But the essentials of the function can be considered to be similar.

One of the memory acts is intimately connected with the attitude of a living being towards space. It has been shown that opposite forms of effort arise from an inner attitude of fighting against time on the one hand and from the yielding to time on the other hand. If one compares the stretching out of pseudopod into a definite direction of space with the twisting movements by which cell-division is accompanied, it becomes obvious that these acts can be understood as contrasting attitudes towards space. The unit of space-time is one of the two great unchangeable conditions of the surroundings of a living being. The direct stretch is the ex-

pression of a fight against space in which all directions but one are avoided. The fight against space contrasts with the yielding to it when in twisting movements several if not all directions in space are consecutively touched. The being is bathing in the ocean of possible space directions, confiding in them, indulging in them, without trying to overcome distance in a definite direction.

Such contrasts are known in the art of dancing. One traditionally discerns the so-called arabesque performed along and ending in a position of a direct line, as if reaching out straight for something. The contrast is the well-rounded movement into an attitude which has no definite target in space, curving the body into a ball-like shape or a vessel around a centre. All dancing consists of alternations of such plastic and linear shapes, with, of course, an almost infinite number of intermediary transitions.

The aggressiveness of a male rhythm is stressed if accompanied by an impact into one definite direction or arabesque. The tenderness and voluptuousness of a female impulse is increased if performed in the flexible shape of an attitude in which the indulgence in space becomes visible.

It would be wrong to consider the two extreme attitudes towards space, either as producing recovery or as exerting effort. Both require effort, and recovery originates from the successful attempt to bring them into dynamic balance. One does not speak about space rhythm in general, but uses the idea of space harmony. The simplest case of static space harmony is symmetry. Dynamic symmetry arises, for instance, if the right side and the left side of the body are used successively as, say, in stepping, or walking, or in any other form of locomotion. Space harmony in the deeper sense, however, is achieved only through an alternation of "direct" and "flexible" spatial effort qualities.

The stress in real harmony is laid on the memory content of the balance between the two primeval attitudes as seen in the nutritive (male) and productive (female) function of uni-cellular beings.

The original rhythmical balance can be disturbed, favoured, delayed, and so on, by external factors and the reactions of the living beings to them.

In the behaviour of man a whole scale of rhythms and harmonies can be observed, from the simplest vegetative or instinctive rhythms and harmonies, up to the most complex rhythms and

harmonies of the rationally-experienced relationship between functions.

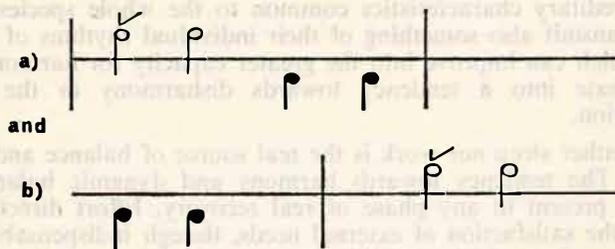
The simpler rhythms and harmonies always tend first to adapt the behaviour (which consists of externalised memory movements) to the facts or rhythms of the surroundings. Thus the rhythm between the wakeful state and sleep is adapted to the planetary motion of the earth and the resulting light and darkness into which the surrounding nature is immersed.

In the higher rhythms (into which harmony as a space-rhythm may from now on be included) the living being aims, not at adaptation, but at domination of the facts and rhythms of the surrounding nature.

All the higher or more complex rhythms are, however, only modifications of the primary or fundamental rhythms. It has been shown that the dactyl and the anapaest are modifications of the iambus and the trochee, but it has also been noted that a reversion of the original male or female character has taken place.

In the fusion of the trochee and the iambus into a cretque peon (see pages 47, 49) no reversion but a loss of the primitive male-female characters has taken place. The Greeks have considered this rhythm as the expression of great excitement, in which man becomes either foolish or pitiable: two moods which are indeed apt to extinguish sexual characteristics.

Greek rhythmology, however, has not stopped with this extinction of sexual traits; in the phrygian mode (a barbaric imported one) the Greek artist-conjurer has used besides the peon two forms of the so-called ionian rhythm:



While the peon was felt to express inner states originating within the human being (foolishness and pitiableness) the two forms of the ionian were used to show the reactions to the over-

whelming impressions gained by outer surroundings, including the manifestations attributed to fate, demons, and gods.

The phrygian mode, in which the rhythms of exceptional inner and outer excitement were combined, has been considered to be of a supernatural character and to be connected with sorcery and spell-binding functions. They are furthest away from the simple male-female contrast and the ordinary life functions of feeding and reproducing.

In a way they characterise two functions of memory, possession or retentiveness on the one hand and evocation and emanation on the other hand.

The conservation of the impressions and experiences gained during a lifetime, which means that which has entered the living being from outside, is here contrasted with the stream of evolutionary happenings originating from hereditary disposition, which means that which has lived for times untold in the inner recesses of the being. Conserving retentiveness is a duty, while evolutionary development is a right.

Sleep arrests the exaggerated tendency and duty to conserve the acquired part of the memory treasure. It liberates the active search for new external impressions which are interrupted. Work and the waking state intoxicate the being not only with the waste material of exertion, but also with an increase of possessiveness and the spell of the duty to conserve the accumulated treasures of acquired memory.

Every living being is driven to give origin to other living beings. The plant in producing its seed, and the higher animals with their extensive and intensive care for their offspring transmit the hereditary characteristics common to the whole species. But they transmit also something of their individual rhythms of function which can improve into the greater capacity for harmony, or deteriorate into a tendency towards disharmony in the next generation.

Neither sleep nor work is the real source of balance and harmony. The tendency towards harmony and dynamic balance is always present in any phase of real recovery. Effort directed towards the satisfaction of external needs, though indispensable for the sustenance of life, infallibly causes disharmony and lack of balance in a contrary but yet somehow similar way to that of sleep. Sleep is also filled with efforts which are, however, hard to control. A kind of connecting link can be found in leisure-time

play, which, like art, is neither work in the ordinary sense nor is it a real dream. Effort and recovery meet in those leisure-time activities or dreams, where the essence of rhythm is practised and experienced. One can see in these activities the real recovery which goes beyond the refreshing of the ordinary action power. Harmonised effort is recovery, but harmonised effort can only be achieved to a relatively small extent in work and sleep.

The ideal is that harmonised effort should penetrate work and sleep as much as possible. But art in leisure-time remains indispensable.

DANCE IN GENERAL

(First of a series of eight open lectures on the History of Dance, given at Dartington Hall in 1939).

When we wish to give a survey of the historical development of a happening or of an activity we must above all try to define what this happening or this activity really is.

During the relatively long stretch of time in which I have been concerned with dancing I have heard and read an amazing number of definitions of the word 'dance'.

Let us begin with the most common explanations. It is said, and I think it was a prominent scientist who first said it: 'dance is rhythmically ordered movement'. All right! But what movement is not rhythmically ordered? Thus any kind of movement would be dance. Such an idea might be accepted but a description in these terms of the development of all motion existing on earth or in the universe would be far beyond our capacity. Old mystics tell us that the universe is nothing other than a dance of the stars around a divinity. Also some contemporary scientists like to express their admiration of the sparkling sky by referring to the rounds of the celestial bodies, or to the miraculous vibrations which seem to constitute all matter, as a dance.

These physical and chemical dances in Nature or of Nature arouse our imagination and we respond to them with feeling and wonder. Not only do we admire the dances we see on the stage, but we likewise admire the dance of the flames in a fireplace, the dance of the water in a fountain, and the dance of the clouds in a storm.

Everyone who has seen the growth of a crystal or of a flower in a speeded-motion film will readily agree that these chemical or natural processes have something dance-like. We see swaying and bursting, turning and unfolding movement and we can recognise harmonious sequences with which one movement follows the other.

And what about the dance of man? Is it something so extraordinary? Have we not heard that even animals have their dances? I should like to read to you one or two descriptions of some scientific observations of animal dances.

The first one was written by a scientist named Appun. "I saw a group of some twenty mountain chickens of brilliant yellow-orange colour, gathered together in a kind of dance characteristic of these

beautiful birds. In the centre one of the cocks executed dance-like movements as he hopped about the open place with wings extended and tail outspread. On the branches of the bushes round about the others sat expressing their admirations of the dancer with the strangest sounds. As soon as one cock was exhausted, he joined the spectators, uttering a peculiar cry, and another took his place".

In Cape York in north-eastern Australia, Maclaren witnessed a dance of the stilt birds. "The birds, of a kind known locally as Native Companions, were long-legged creatures, almost as tall as storks, and with white and grey feathers; and the dance took place in the centre of a broad, dry swamp, from the edge of which, in a concealed place, we watched. There were some hundreds of them, and their dance was in the manner of a quadrille and in the matter of rhythm and grace excelling any quadrille that ever was. In groups of a score or more they advanced and retreated, lifting high their long legs and standing on their toes, now and then bowing gracefully one to another, now and then one pair encircling with prancing daintiness a group whose heads moved upwards and downwards and sideways in time to the stepping of the pair. At times they formed one great prancing mass, with their long necks thrust upwards and the wide swaying of their backs like the swaying of the sea. Then suddenly as in response to an imperative command, they would sway apart, some of them to rise in low, encircling flight, and some to stand as in little gossiping groups; and presently they would form in pairs or sets of pairs and the prancing and the bowing and advancing and retreating would begin all over again".

The psychologist, Köhler, for six years in charge of a special laboratory for the study of anthropoid apes in Tenriffa, maintained in his report to the Prussian Academy of Science the astonishing fact that the anthropoid apes dance.

He told of a female chimpanzee who, when he once appeared unexpectedly, "began to hop first on one leg and then on the other in a strangely excited manner. The hopping was followed by a whirling with arms, outstretched horizontally. Now and then the apes combined a forward movement with the whirling, with the result that as they rotated they moved across the clearing. Sometimes two apes circled around a post. One after the other the rest of the animals appeared, joined the circle, and finally the whole group, one behind the other, marched in orderly fashion around the post. Now their movements changed quickly. They were no

longer walking but trotting. Stamping with one foot and putting the other down lightly, they beat out what approached a distinct rhythm with each of them tending to keep step with the rest. Sometimes they brought their heads into play and bobbed them up and down, with jaws loose, in time with the stamping of their feet. All the animals appeared to take a keen delight in this primitive round dance.

“In these dances the chimpanzee likes to bedeck his body with all sorts of things, especially strings, vines and rags that dangle and swing in the air as he moves about.”

We see that these dances remind us of those of little children, and as far as we can judge, also of the dances of men in the most primitive state of civilisation. The few tribes which today still live in a stone-age state of culture, dance in this way. I like to call this kind of dancing “natural dancing”.

Here I should like to stress a point which seems to me to be of fundamental importance when we wish to talk about movement.

When you evoke before your mind's eye the image of hopping apes, hopping natives, hopping birds and hopping children, you will see above all, birds, children, natives, apes, that is, beings. Your memory will recall the fact that they move, but this will be only a vague and indistinct secondary notion. When asked to tell what these animals do, many of you will answer, “They hop, they hop around in a circle”. But the outline of this circle with its intersecting regular up and down pattern created by the hopping will not be clearly present in your mind. Here lies the difference between the spectator who watches the outer proceedings of a performance and the observer who responds with his whole being to the action it contains. The natural dancer remembers chiefly all the hopping-circling movement and when dancing himself he loses all awareness of his external appearance. He loses more than this. All objects around him vanish, he loses himself in the movement, his whole being becomes hopping-circling, and the action is intensely felt and executed in its particular form.

It is from this point of view that we must try to look upon movement, both actual as well as imagined. This is, of course, not easy, but it is possible.

Let us once more return to animal dances. There exist numerous descriptions of these made many years ago as well as recently. Ancient literature contains many very charming reports, and when

we look around with open eyes we can easily discover such dances and see them for ourselves.

The definition of what is ‘dance’ becomes, however, somewhat difficult. The dance of animals is surely not only rhythmically organised movement but it seems an expression of a state of mind of a living creature.

Let us go into this a little further. How can circling around a post give pleasure to a living being? Can we simply explain this by the effect of dizziness which succeeds all turning? Is it only the intoxication that gives happiness, that brings oblivion of an often felt melancholy and solitude? Or can we discover in the prancings and circlings and in the pattern of the entire play another factor which leads to contentment and joy?

The first being who became aware of such feelings and their possible causes was primitive man. In his dancing he instinctively performed certain shapes and patterns which he felt very intensely. The circle was one of them. Circling, turning, whirling was to him a rhythmical repetition, a recurrence of a happening. This recurrence appeared in both the repeated steps and the repeated emphasis of certain areas in space which he would entwine and fill with his movement, thus giving him a feeling of unity. Dizziness, intoxication, oblivion of time and space, of thoughts, fears and desires were the result of it. The only desire alive in this movement was to fill the space with rhythm and to give to this rhythm its corresponding pattern in space. Of course, primitive man could not have given such complicated explanations, he just accepted the shape as a symbol and worshipped it. The circle, for instance, carried an unconscious expression of his unified feeling and thought. It was, however, not the shape of the circle alone but the circling movement, the actual action, which led to the desired state of body and mind. While such dancing filled people with joy and happiness, and often with intoxication, we are struggling for words to describe such experiences. Shall we characterise them with the dry conventionalism of science, for instance, as states of excitement?

Here I should like to refer to the word emotion which seems to me to express the necessary psychological counterpart of a process described by the word motion. Motion — emotion: these words fit marvellously into my theme. Their obvious affinity is surely not accidental; to me it is significant, and it supports the explanations I am attempting to make. Of course, an intricate

definition of the two words might present some stumbling-blocks, but you will perhaps allow me to employ them in their simple sense. Motion and emotion form a unit for the dancing primitive. The feeling of this unity makes him happy and free, it increases his vitality and allows his emotions to become more colourful.

Is it perhaps simplicity in the way of living which gives us the key to unity? Life and action remain then no more a desire or mere wish but they become an accomplishment, a fulfilment. It is only too obvious that the opposite, namely, to be lacerated and torn into pieces and dispersed in many directions, is a most disagreeable state. A healthy organism likes the feeling of concentrated strength. It is somehow its essence, its natural state, or even more, its ideal state. When acting as a unit man is content, he can be sure of the success of his undertakings. In the course of his activity, unity is not only symbolised but also achieved by the continuity with which he executes his actions. Continuity asserts itself in repetition, recurrence and in the organisation of a rhythm.

However, man does not content himself only with motions and emotions which he has, so to speak, inflicted upon himself. He has also the desire to act upon somebody or something, to influence and to attract other beings and to drag them into the whirl of reciprocal action and reaction. Such is the cause of manifold happenings. At first there is perhaps self-expression. Primitive beings are always enormously expressive and therefore also im-pressive with their movement. But they have, too, the power to attract others and the desire to communicate. Dancing together in groups is, for instance, a result of such an urge.

Why do apes and primitive men so gladly join the rounds of their fellows? Is it the desire for imitation? To say so would be only a vague statement. There is surely more to it than a simple urge to copy an external pattern. Primitive man as well as some animals has a good understanding of the significance of other beings' postures and gestures, often much better than civilised man. I think that anyone who loves dance has such an understanding. When unsophisticated man sees that the other one is content he tries to be the same, and this not superficially or externally but with his whole being. A mere mimicking, that is, servilely imitating the movement, would be an inadequate method of achieving likeness. As we know, art is not the slavish imitation of Nature. Neither is common action the result of people copying one another. This calls for a much deeper penetration into the vital

functions of the common deed. It demands a complete awareness of what is going on and of how the process is effected and affected. The strong need for unity, for instance, not only leads to a continual enlarging of the circle of the dancers until everyone present has joined in, it also demands a perfection of each tiny movement in each small part of the dance. Thus rhythm and the use of the body and its limbs become more and more perfected and co-ordinated in each individual as well as in the whole group.

A striving for harmony exists not only in the indefinite large but also in the immeasurable small. In Nature we can observe rhythmical recurrence of the slightest pulsation of energy and we can see the most appropriate shape created by the smallest movement. In our time the world of shapes and their harmonic relationships is not as well known as the one of rhythm. It is true we have a certain feeling for the beauty of shapes and forms, but this has somewhat degenerated owing to aesthetic prejudices and probably also to aesthetic indifference. You will realise that I am touching here upon a very important thing which concerns the refinement of aesthetic feeling. To attain this, I think, is a matter of coherence and interdependence with a genuine experience of unity, the same experience which animated the whirlings and hoppings of primitive man. Yet in dancing man can also develop his feeling of form and learn to appreciate the structures, transformations and relations of shapes. This is a fact which we shall thoroughly investigate another time.

The natural urge for balance and harmony is hidden in the slightest stirring of a single part of the body. Each nerve, each muscle, each cell must co-operate to establish the unity of motion and emotion. We observe this attribute of the dance not so much in the patterns on the floor or in the air, but rather in the counter-play of the dancer's limbs and of the various parts of his body.

The ape who with his hopping greeted Mr. Appun when he suddenly appeared, and the cock of the mountain chickens who performed alone, will be a good point of departure to find out something about harmony.

First of all, I am not sure if the hopping ape really greeted the scientist or if he perhaps feared him. The hopping from one leg to the other has different meanings. Primitive men, children and also animals, as we know, perform this movement very often and in different ways and for multiple reasons. I remember one typical case from my own childhood. The impression was so intense that I

still have a vivid recollection of it today. I once boasted that I would never fear anybody or anything. My playfellows had the ingenious and incidentally educative idea to prove the contrary. One night they built a magnificent ghost with little candles as eyes, and they moved with this tall apparition towards me. I can still feel it in my bones and I hopped rhythmically from one leg on to the other, shouting in a sing-song way: "I don't fear you, I don't fear you".

As travellers tell us, pleasure, joy, surprise, anger, fear and many other states of excitement cause natives to move in a similar way. I see in this action an instinctive attempt to keep balance between inner and outer equilibrium. The exaggerated beating of the heart which generally accompanies such an excitement serves, I think, a similar purpose. The essential thing is, however, that the natural impulse to keep the equilibrium is to perform an action, namely, that of hopping, which is an action full of resolution perhaps to fight and stand firm in view of a coming struggle, or to leap up with rejoicing of good fortune.

The significance of hopping with its equilibrating effect stands in contrast to the harmonising experience gained by performing a round—a circle. A circle means expansion, going outside far into the largeness of space. Equilibrium is the tendency to the infinitely small—spatially speaking—to the point. The point as well as the circle are space-forms. Our feeling responds sympathetically to such forms. Turning, circling give us, as we have seen, the feeling of largeness and expansion. Hopping gives us the feeling of smallness and concentration. The rhythmical repetition of the hopping enhances our concentration of a point. Adults, and particularly dignified Europeans of our time, do not hop when excited. They behave as if frozen and stiffened in the centre of their equilibrium. It is very interesting to notice that primitive people worship their gods by hopping, while highly civilised men express their awe of the divine by extremely slow and solemn gestures or even by complete stillness.

An interesting fact which is somehow connected with the feeling of equilibrium is that birds which have the ability to rise up into the third dimension, into the air, generally choose the ground for their dances. Dance is bound to the earth. The flying, skimming, zig-zagging of bees and other insects seem to be a much quieter dance, a dance of patterns, a dream-dance perhaps. Real dance always consists of the change between stillness and stir, between the held equilibrium on a point of support and the gentle swaying

or lively breaking away from it. This play characterises also our conception of rhythm. When speaking about hopping and equilibrium, I should like to remind the dance students of their first trials of standing on one leg expressively. I am sure that they did not succeed without hopping away a little.

The representation of complete equilibrium in which one would think, for instance, architecture and other works of the static arts would excel, such as pictures and sculpture, always shows a counter-tendency in certain sweeping, slanting and curving lines. Such tendencies can be enormously exaggerated as was the case, for instance, in the structures and ornaments of the baroque period. All the dignified and concentrated solemnity which characterised the Egyptian temples was entirely lost in the baroque style and gave way to a mighty swinging of curved and curling lines.

All decors and the costumes of dancers, beginning with the fluttering robes with which, as we heard, the dancing apes bedecked their bodies, give the possibility of accentuating or diminishing the impression of slowness or solidity, of restlessness or calm, of veering away, or of poise.

Can you see that in the first-mentioned definition of dance, namely that it is rhythmically ordered movement, the polarity of stillness and stir was already hidden? The ordering factor of rhythm is the momentary interruption of the flow of movement by a short state of stable equilibrium. Movement itself has the tendency to sway and to continue indefinitely.

The reference I made in the beginning to the mystics who interpreted the universe as a dance of the stars around a god, thus takes on a new meaning. So does the statement of the scientist that in all matter is dance, the dance of the electrons around the central core of the atom. The stillness of the seed in the stone of a fruit expands later into the incredible movement of the growing tree which is reflected in the firmness of its trunk and the network of its branches.

Have we now got any nearer the question why man dances and why these birds and apes and insects dance? Someone might say, first of all I wish to know why matter dances. And it is true that this would be the first question which should be answered. But we must frankly admit that we do not know why. Dance, taken in this wide and general sense, is a fundamental activity of life, of existence, and therefore we arrive at the astonishing result that

all that exists dances, matter and living beings alike, animals as well as man. There is a fundamental urge in Nature to move and in the case of the human being, to move rhythmically if emotion attains such a degree that the inexplicable desire for a unified experience of time and space becomes irresistible.

Perhaps it is not completely impossible to get nearer the solution of the problems: Why does man dance? Why do animals dance? Why are all these dance-like motions in nature? The solution can only be found by studying the history of dance as a poetic and spiritual emanation of man's body-mind.

Poetic people assert that dance is the expression of a soul. We shall not argue whether the doubts science raises about the existence of a soul are more or less well-founded. We are not concerned here with whether the idea of a soul is only an image of something indefinable which animates the living body. Be that as it may, it is a very useful image. Therefore let us speak about soul, or if you prefer it, about mind without any scientific prejudice. We shall also not argue whether animals have a soul or not. I personally, when I look into the eyes of a dog, am convinced at that moment that he has a soul. He loves me, he hates me, he understands me, he trusts or mistrusts me: all that is sufficient to convince me of his soul. There is soul in action, in motion; perhaps it is an action arising from emotion, perhaps it is a kind of dance.

The dance of animals, however, including the inner impulses which drive them to move in a specific manner, both resembles and differs from the dance of men in more than one respect.

Man has very different aims in his dancing. One person wants to forget himself and his sorrows. He dances because dancing causes him pleasure, gives him gaiety and happiness. Another one perhaps dances because he feels stronger and healthier afterwards. In the olden days, philosophers and priests danced in order to acquire certain knowledge about the deeper sense of life. Professional dancers do not dance only in order to earn their living—that is anyway a very questionable affair—they dance because they have a vocation. They have the urge to speak with their movements, to convey something of their inner visions which they believe will be of interest and value to their fellow-beings.

All these motives have no application to animal dancing. The dance of animals resembles much more the dance of matter. In many instances it seems to be an absolutely unconscious activity

which the animal is compelled to perform by natural impulse, while man, even if he does not undertake it consciously, almost always has a conscious response to it. All this appears to give a straightforward and rather obvious explanation of dance. But it is not at all as simple as that. When we search more deeply we find hidden in man's dance an ecstatic state of mind.

Dance is often described as born out of a kind of frenzy, that means, that all dancing involves a change of mental state, a change from a comparative inner quietude and stillness to exultation and excitement. This excitement is connected with or results in that kind of extreme concentration which we call unity of body and mind and in which subconscious awareness of unified space and time is present. In such an ecstatic state the dancing person is nearer to a natural and less conscious life. He is in a state of mind comparable to the one we sometimes experience, for instance, in our sleep, when we seem aware of nothing but a simple feeling of existence. Such is the feeling that accompanies the state of ecstasy.

But man can consciously produce a state of ecstasy, and can work with it to make himself stronger or wiser. By dancing he can express thoughts and feelings and exercise his suggestive power, thus stimulating thought, feeling and action in others. Man uses ecstasy consciously in magic. Then his state of mind is very unlike the one in sleep. It is much more comparable to that of a hypnotist, who consciously enforces in others a sleep-like or ecstatic condition.

When we compare now the poetic language of human dance with the dances of animals, we could simply say: the dance and the ecstasy of man are more active while the dance of animals is more passive. There is no doubt that man's dancing and a great part of all artistic and creative functions are to a large extent based on ecstasy. We must, however, realise the big difference between the involuntary natural ecstasy of the animals and the voluntary or consciously produced ecstasy of men.

The ecstatic power of man can become uncontrolled and perverted. A chief cause of the illnesses of the mind finds its explanation here. Hysteria and madness can be the result of an unnatural and unbalanced use of ecstasy. Ecstasy is a gift of Nature which benefits man and helps to increase his life forces, but he has to know its characteristic qualities and to learn how to harmonise them. Many errors of individual as well as of communal living derive from the contempt and misunderstanding of ecstasy.

When tracing the arts, and above all the fundamental art of dancing through the ages, we can recognise the strong influence which the ecstatic power of man has had on the process of civilisation. The history of dance can give us more than somewhat perfunctory information about dances and dance-steps of the past or about the names and lives of some famous ballerinas. The history of dance is the history of the intuitive life of mankind. It is a deeply touching epic poem on human function which unveils more of the hidden motives of man's aspirations and of his destiny than do many other legends or reports on the facts of the past.

It is true that we can follow only with great difficulty the development of dance throughout the ages. An exact literature of dance history does not exist. All we can learn from books about the dance of the past is a kind of legendary tradition of a few steps vaguely preserved, and there are some descriptions of dances and customs hidden in a corner of a general history of civilisation. It is the task of modern dance science to discover and collect such dispersed information.

We have spoken about the different ways dance is used to achieve certain purposes, such as entertainment, education, means of expression and so forth. The easiest form of a survey is to divide the matter of dance into three parts. These three parts are: the art of dancing, dance education, and the science of dance.

Today dance on the stage is performed in very different ways. We distinguish the theatrical dance with its culmination in dance-drama from another form which is often called concert-dance. The latter seldom has a dramatic form; it is more abstract and lyric. The show-dances in variety and cabarets could be mentioned as another form of artistic dance-work. There are a lot of nuances which are sometimes very hard to distinguish. But they all have a common characteristic, namely, to be performed and to be seen.

As a contrast to this are ballroom and country dances, which have more or less the character of festive dances. They are executed at certain festive and social occasions, and although they serve solely as enjoyment and recreation for the dancers, they should also be included in the art of dancing.

Dance education has two principal forms. One is the dance teaching proper of both amateur and professional stage dancers. The other form of dance teaching has quite a different aim, namely, to assist general education and human development by means of the dance. Each of the two has its own history during the course

of which we can observe continually changing and varying forms of training.

In future, the history of dance will be a part of the science of dance, and will incorporate besides data about historic facts an analysis of principles of movement as a human expression, of the laws of harmony as inherent in dance, as well as of the various theories and methods of dance education.

Dance science and also dance education are as old as humanity. The first form of teaching in primitive times was probably dance teaching. At least we know that in the educational system (if one can call it so) of primitive peoples, dancing played a prominent part and the science of dance was the first wisdom of man. This forgotten wisdom, so difficult to recover, may prove to be one of the most interesting aspects of our considerations in the course of these lectures. Science of today tries, as we shall see another time, to replace the old science of dance with the subjects of rhythmology and dynamics.

We shall also hear about certain experiences which today are gradually being brought into view again from the long-forgotten background of ancient civilisations. Actually, it is contemporary man who, with his new outlook on the art of dancing, conjures up this lost world.

Once again he becomes aware of his dance heritage. It is true that this re-awakening may be partly due to a conscious penetration into his own background. Ethnography and comparative anthropology have found means of reconstructing certain prehistoric facts and have helped to tap a once prodigious source of human experience.

The vast fields of dance festivals, dance mysteries, exorcism, fakirism, dance ethics, education by means of the dance, theatrical performances, and even healing methods by dancing, are, as already mentioned, not yet comprehended in a history in the ordinary sense. The various ups and downs of movement consciousness, the flourishing and dying of many styles of dance, and the many changes of educational methods seem to us to be almost inextricable. It is a jungle of sudden appearances and disappearances, a glistening and colourful wonder-world which awaits exploration.

We must not allow ourselves to be led to the hasty conclusion that our dancing is a simple inheritance from brutish ancestors. Dance is never the end of a development, it much rather seems to indicate the beginning of an unfolding. Historically seen, it is the

springtime of a new period when dancing flourishes. For instance, that was the case in the prehistoric period, a time of awakening and first development of man, who began very soon to understand that dancing is not only a pleasure and an outlet, but that it contains possibilities for self-education.

When we look at the historical development, we see that a period of natural dancing—as I called it—was followed by a period of discovery of the educational possibilities hidden in dancing. The next period tried to explain the deeper sense of motions and emotions. This stretch of time was characterised by a kind of philosophic and scientific interest in motion and dance. The religions of that time used the dance as the chief channel for mythological representations. The greatest parts of rites and ceremonies were based on dance movements. In short, I should like to call this period the dawn of the science of dance. The last step in the development is the artistic and the theatrical dance.

In each period man seems to be enthusiastically interested in the latest stage. He sometimes forgets the existence and the advantages of former achievements. This is a general historic truth, a peculiarity of man's mentality: curiosity for new things, contempt for the old ways.

However, the entire heritage of all that is best in the four stages is still at hand today. Natural dancing, dance education, science of dance and art of dance, are, and will remain, four very valuable achievements of man.

