Body of Knowledge

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Article:

As a scholar in a dance department, I am expected to produce words, not movement, scholarly research instead of choreography. While I have experimented with some forms that mix media, combining spoken scholarly text with choreographed or improvised movement, and presented these at several conferences, I do not think that research must be sung, painted, or danced in order to represent the influence of the arts. In this paper I will explore how my experience in dance is represented in my educational research. That experience includes more than thirty years of being in the audience as well as in the studio. Yet it is the lived experience of dancing that I have found to be most influential in my thinking and writing, and which has provided the metaphors that have helped me to understand my life and my work as a scholar.

I believe that when most people think about the arts as forms of representation they think about form as something external, the product that results from artistic process. For example, choreographic works have a beginning, middle, and end; a cohesive work has a sense of wholeness along with variety or contrast. Choreography students in universities, like students in all the arts, take multiple semesters of courses designed to help them to understand the complexities of crafting their form.

However, artistic form is not only external but also internal. For example, when I teach children the concept of *shape* in dance, I tell them that most people think about shape as what something looks like on the outside — like a square or a circle. Dancers, however, know that *shape* is not only about what something looks like on the outside, but what it feels like on the inside. We make shapes on the outside by what we do with our bones and muscles on the inside; internal forming creates the external form. It is this internal sensing of oneself in stillness and in motion that turns what would otherwise be standing or sitting, walking or running, into *dancing*.

This internal sensing has great significance not only for how one performs dance but for how we perceive the art. If we think about dance as an artistic object only to be looked at, it becomes little more than a moving picture. Certainly an audience does look at dance (and, if there is music, listen to it), but the visual and auditory senses return only a surface view. In order to understand dance, one must also use the kinesthetic sense.[1] The kinesthetic sense allows us to go inside the dance, to feel ourselves as participants in it, not just as onlookers.

The more familiar five senses take us out into the world, to see, hear, touch, taste, smell something out there. The kinesthetic sense, combined with the visual, can also take us out into the world. We use it as we connect with the dancer on stage — stretching so that energy extends beyond the fingertips, leaving the floor and returning silently. We also use it to connect with the Olympic athlete — straining to beat the clock, bursting with exhilaration in victory, or slumping in defeat. It allows us to share the weighty sadness of a friend, the tense anxiety of the unprepared student before an exam. The kinesthetic sense thus contributes to our understanding of what another person is feeling on a sensory-motor level.

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[1] Physical therapists typically use the term kinesthetic to refer to the sense arising from nerve endings embedded in the joints and muscles. They contrast the kinesthetic with the proprioceptive sense, which is related to balance. Specialists in the study of somatics ordinarily use proprioception to refer to all internal sensing. Dancers most often use kinesthetic to refer to the inner sensation of movement and tension; I am using it that way in this paper.

The kinesthetic sense, however, not only heightens our awareness of the other who is *outside* us, but also what is *inside* ourselves. It allows us to notice what we are feeling in our own interior, letting us know when we are stiff or fatigued or upside down, whether our fingers are stretched apart or close together. The kinesthetic sense thus both tells us about ourselves and connects us with others as embodied selves.

Yet the kinesthetic sense, like our other senses, provides only a private experience, and validation of private experiences is problematic. For example, we do not know if what we see when we look at an object or an event is what is there, since the only way we can perceive anything is through our own senses. While we can ask others to describe what they see, words have different meanings to different individuals, and words cannot directly and completely represent our lived experiences.

External validity becomes even more difficult when referring to the knowledge of internal bodily experience, such as what I see when I close my eyes, or whether I feel relaxed or hungry. While technology does exist to measure degrees of muscular contraction, how I *experience* myself cannot be proven true or false; neither can how I experience the world.

Elliot Eisner notes that it is only by means of external forms of representation that we can communicate private experience.[2] Words are the most common means of communicating private experience, and I will suggest shortly that verbal language should include kinesthetic imagery if it is to represent fully lived experience. However, symbols other than words often are closer to the immediate experience. In the case of dance, we represent internal kinesthetic experience through movement symbols, using human bodies. As long as the bodies stay at a distance, on a stage or a television screen, we may look at them as aesthetic objects and they may be appreciated. Up close, bodies become more problematic. Most of us, particularly women, do not have much appreciation for our own bodies; even well trained dancers are highly critical of their bodies in appearance if not performance. Our bodies are the source of deep pleasure but also pain and embarrassment. Our responses to other people's bodies are also mixed. We may appreciate their beauty or skill, but also find them worrisome, unsanitary, or threatening. Bodies carry germs and emit odors. They sweat and produce other fluids which are not highly regarded in an age when a pair of rubber gloves must be regarded as part of every teacher's essential gear. I found it interesting that a high school participant in my recent research, an academically gifted student enrolled in several Advanced Placement classes, described her academic courses as "antiseptic" in comparison to her dance class.[3] While dancing is not a mindless activity, the lived experience is highly physical, and this is indeed what attracts many individuals to the field and repels others.

Some forms of physical expression are viewed less ambiguously. Fighting and adolescent sex are dangerous to the futures of our students. The young child's wiggling around is not dangerous, but often seems to get in the way of learning. Most educators appear to want to suppress student physicality, not enhance it; even in the early grades, teachers attempt to train students to sit still and delay bodily inclinations, even ones so basic as going to the bathroom. Most often, physicality is recognized as something that must be managed in order to obtain the best academic performance. Physical education may be regarded as helpful in allowing children to release "excess energy" so that they are better able to use their minds in the important work of school.

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[2] Elliot Eisner, "Forms of Understanding and the Future of Educational Research," *Educational Researcher* 22 (October 1993): 5-11.

[3] Susan W. Stinson, "Meaning and Value: Reflections on What Students Say About School," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 8 (Spring 1993): 216-38.

This body-mind duality in schools has been recognized by a number of theorists.[4] However, even those of us who struggle to get beyond it find ourselves hindered not only by language (how do we write about body and mind without implying that they are two different things which must be joined by a hyphen or slash mark?) but by our own experiences when our bodies seem to hinder our thinking. For example, the body's need for sleep may keep us from staying up all night at our scholarly pursuits; other times we may feel too "edgy" to sit and read. I became aware, at one point when writing this paper, of a knot that had formed under my shoulder blade, forcing me to leave my computer even sooner than my more usual eyestrain. It is easy to notice those times when our physical selves seem to stand in the way of mental activities, and harder to recognize how essential our embodied selves are in thinking.

Eisner has persuasively argued for the significance of the senses in cognition as well the use of the arts in creating forms of representation. However, I find it interesting to examine some of his excellent work on this topic and notice that he does not mention the word "body."[5] It is no surprise that Eisner, coming from a background as a visual artist, should make frequent reference to the eye and use language that calls forth visual images in the reader. It is also understandable, considering the discomfort so many educators seem to feel with the body, that a scholar would choose to leave out words that might stimulate kinesthetic sensation. Perhaps my student informant would say that leaving out the body sanitizes discourse about the senses.

Eisner and Howard Gardner are probably the most influential theorists who speak of art as primarily a cognitive activity, noting that it is not the art work itself, but how we perceive it, that makes it art.[6] I have long been a proponent of recognizing the cognitive dimension in dance education. The dance world is filled by too many teachers who say, "Don't think about it, just do it." The legendary George Balanchine is often credited with stating that he wanted his dancers to be beautiful, like flowers, but not to think. I have felt a responsibility to let the public know that dancing is not mindless work, and to suggest that dance educators encourage student reflection, as well as their own. But there has been a loss to accompany the greater recognition of the importance of cognition in dance. As dance educators have joined other arts organizations in advocating for the arts in schools, and have disconnected from their historical ties with physical education (trends which I have supported), they have also disconnected from the body. The body is reduced to serving as an unfortunate necessity — a tool, an instrument, or a medium like paint on paper. Dance educators often seem embarrassed to speak too much about the body, thinking that to note the physical labor of dance demeans it in the eyes of intellectuals, and to call attention to the sensory, bodily pleasure of dancing makes us seem mere hedonists.[7]

But as a person whose professional home has been dance for many years and whose personal home has been my body, I experience thought as something that occurs throughout my body, not just above my neck. Until I know something on this level — in my bones, so to speak — the knowledge is not my own, but is rather like those facts one memorizes which seem to fall out of the brain the day after an exam. Further, the knowledge that comes this way is not just about my physical body or even dance, but about the questions that drive educational researchers as well. My somatic self — the self which lives experience — is necessary in my struggle to find forms that represent my lived experience, whether those forms are presented on stage or in a scholarly journal.[8]

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[4] Linda Brodkey and Michelle Fine, "Presence of Mind in the Absence of Body," *Journal of Education* 170 (1988): 84-99; Madeleine R. Grumet, *Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988); David Johnson, *Body* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983); Laurie A. McDade, "Sex, Pregnancy, and Schooling: Obstacles to a Critical Teaching of the Body," *Journal of Education* 69 (1987): 58-79; Peter McLaren, "Schooling the Modern Body: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Enfleshment," in *Postmodernism, Feminism, and Cultural Politics: Redrawing Educational Boundaries,* ed. Henry A. Giroux (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 144-73; Nel Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992); and Sherry B. Taylor, "Skinned Alive: Towards a Postmodern Pedagogy of the Body," *Education and Society* 9 (1991): 61-72.

[5] Elliot Eisner, *Cognition and Curriculum: A Basis for Deciding What to Teach New* York: Longman, 1982) and Eisner, "Forms of Understanding."

[6] Elliot Eisner, *The Role of Discipline-based Arts Education in America's Schools (Los* Angeles: Getty Center for Education in the Arts, 1988); Howard E. Gardner, *Art Education and Human Development (Los* Angeles: Getty Center for Education in the Arts, 1990); and Howard E. Gardner, "Zero-based Art Education: An Introduction to ARTS PROPEL," *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research* 30 (1989): 71-83.

[7] Leslie Gotfrit discusses the "politics of pleasure" in regard to dancing in a social (club) setting, in "Women Dancing Back: Disruption and the Politics of Pleasure," in Giroux, *Postmodernism, Feminism, and Cultural Politics,* 174-95. While the setting for theatrical dancing is different, many of the issues she discusses are the same.

Of course, just as the choreographer must use other senses in addition to the kinesthetic to create a work, the researcher must draw on other dimensions of the self. I find choreography to be a useful metaphor for research, because choreographers and academic researchers engage in quite similar tasks: they select an idea they find compelling, generate or collect material about the idea, pay attention to it, select from their observations those that appear to be significant, perceive relationships among them, ponder what these might mean, and make something out of the whole process.[9] Along the way, both use sensing and reflecting, internal and external consciousness.

PROCESS AND PRODUCT: RESEARCH AS CHOREOGRAPHY

One of my teaching assignments for the past nine years has been an introductory research course, largely for MFA students in dance. These students, while fairly experienced choreographers, are novices at research. They know that their choreography is about "saying," metaphorically, what they want to say. Their initial idea of research, however, usually involves going to the library to learn what other people have to say, then putting these various comments all together (the academic equivalent of a "routine" in dance), perhaps with a few comments of their own.

While certainly time in the library is an important dimension of scholarly research, increasingly I have found myself drawing parallels between what my students know — choreography — and what they do not — research. In looking for ways to make research meaningful to them, I have become even more aware of the importance of my body in the research process and the importance of conveying more of that awareness in the final product.

My first task is to help my students recognize that scholarly research, like choreography, is *their* work. Their research comes from them just as much as their choreography, even though both choreography and scholarship have additional sources as well.

SELECTING A TOPIC: A MATTER OF PASSION

The initial point at which research arises from researchers occurs in the selection of a topic. Researchers must choose something in which they are passionately enough interested to be willing to invest the labor required. We recognize that an idea has engaged us the same way we recognize an attachment to anything (or anyone) else — we are drawn to it, it occupies our attention, and everything else seems to remind us of it. In fact, we often feel as though an idea has chosen us, and we elect to return the embrace. An idea for research is my companion as I walk to work, do the laundry, sort the mail. The idea for this piece has been interwoven with reaching up to hug my suddenly taller son goodnight, with watching the Winter Olympics, with dancing alongside adolescents. Each of these experiences, and more, has contributed to the development of my ideas.

DATA GATHERING:[10] KINESTHETIC PERCEPTION

Once the idea has been chosen, there follows a process of gathering or generating the raw materials of the work. In choreography, this may happen in private studio time or, if one draws movement material from dancers, during rehearsals. In scholarly research, one may similarly generate material in private, at one's desk, or gather it from others.

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[8] For additional discussion of the significance of somatics in educational research, see Till Green, "Fostering Creativity through Movement and Body Awareness Practices: A Postpositivist Investigation into Relationship between Somatics and the Creative Process" (Ph.D. diss., The Ohio State University, 1993) and Lous Heshius, "Freeing Ourselves from Objectivity: Managing Subjectivity or Turning toward a Participatory Mode of Consciousness?" *Educational Researcher* 23 (April 1994): 15-22.

[9] These tasks do not occur in the linear way in which I present them in the next sections of this paper, but overlap and reappear in often unpredictable ways.

[10] Admittedly, this term is not preferred in interpretive research, but no suitable substitute has yet been put into practice.

Early in my research career I engaged in a good deal of what William Pinar refers to as *currere,* writing reflections on my lived experience of education.[11] My memories of my educational experience, like my memories of everything else, reside in my body. I remember not pictures in my mind, but sensations — even how hot my cheeks felt that day in the third grade when my teacher, whom I adored, humiliated me in front of the class. I felt affirmed in my memories by the words of Madeleine Grumet, who spoke to me when she wrote about

> body knowledge, like the knowledge that drives the car, plays the piano, navigates around the apartment without having to sketch a floor plan and chart a route in order to get from the bedroom to the bathroom. Maurice Merleau-Ponty called it the knowledge of the body-subject, reminding us that it is through our bodies that we live in the world.[12]

So the reflections I wrote were filled with kinesthetic images — of dancing, of rocking babies, of pressing my hands into clay. By reflecting on my own images, I was able to generate a number of important insights, just as Pinar had suggested.

But my use of kinesthesia goes well beyond my own autobiography, to help me connect with others in my work as an interpretive researcher interested in how students make meaning of their educational experience. It helps me to answer that first question I ask myself when I enter an educational setting: "What's going on here?" Currently, my "data gathering" involves spending time in classrooms and conducting rather open interviews with students. Because the classrooms I enter are usually dance classrooms, it is easy to see how the kinesthetic sense might be involved. I am a participant observer, and I do the same movement activities that the students are asked to do, so I know what it is like to engage with them in isolations and grounded weight (part of a unit on African dance at one school), or to work with a group to make a movement sequence and then vary it by using half time and double time.

But the most important of my fully lived experiences are those that can be encountered in any classroom, such as when I use my kinesthetic sense to connect with the seventh grade kids on the back row who are leaning against the wall, not engaged, going through the motions only when the teacher is looking if then). Sometimes the teacher assigns groups for a compositional activity ("make a dance sequence which has the following things in it..."). I stand around with other members of my group, holding back, waiting for someone to say or do something, experiencing awkwardness and boredom when no one does. I compare these sensations to what I know about full engagement and resulting accomplishment, which offer so much more in both momentary pleasure and long-lasting satisfaction. Only then do I recognize how powerful is the culture that keeps kids from becoming involved, and the fear of looking stupid that keeps kids from trying.

It is apparent in coming to this last conclusion that I have moved beyond sensing to reflecting. However, I would miss what was most important if I were not fully living the experience.

In my current research involving middle schoolers, I also experience what it is to feel left out when no one chooses me as a partner, and what it is to feel included when some kids come to talk to me before class, without my initiating the conversation. These experiences connect me to the adolescents in my study as well as to the adolescent in myself.

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[11] William Pinar, *"Currere:* Toward Reconceptualization," in *Curriculum: An Introduction to the Field,* ed. James R. Gress and David E. Purpel (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1978), 526-45.

[12] Madeleine Grumet, *Bitter Milk,* 3.

I have no guarantees that my experiences are the same as theirs, just as I cannot assume that the relief I felt when Olympic speed skater Dan Jansen didn't fall was the same as *his* relief. Yet it is my kinesthetic sense that I must use if I am to know my relatedness with my embodied fellow participants in my research. The same is true when I conduct interviews with my participants. In the interview, we are two persons, two bodies together in a room. In interviewing middle schoolers, I am often larger than they are, and I am in charge — I set the time, bring the tape recorder, ask the questions. How do I encourage the students to take ownership, to frame their own experiences, to know I truly want to *listen?* In the good interviews, I experience a connection between us that is much like that I feel when engaged in deep conversation with a close friend — using all of my senses, feeling *with.*[13]

These conversations are another way of gathering material for my work. I speak of gathering as though these words existed, just waiting to be plucked by a researcher, whereas actually they are joint constructions between myself and my participants. Nevertheless, these are my raw materials, just as movement themes are the raw material for the choreographer.

This gathering is actually the easiest part of my research, even though it may take quite a long time. Like the choreographer, I generate much more material than I will eventually use in a particular work. The more difficult tasks are selecting out what is *worthwhile,* by which I mean what has the possibility to generate insights, figuring out what it means, and then coming up with a way to construct a cohesive paper that can communicate my process and my insights to others. These, too, are activities that involve my embodied self, in my effort to find the form and content of the work I am constructing.

What makes this process especially intimidating for new researchers, and difficult for all of us, is that we do not even know what it is we are making until we are well into making it. It is like facing a large number of puzzle pieces, trying to figure out how the puzzle goes together even before we know what picture we are making.

As choreographers, my students know this process well, and the courage it takes. They initially go into the studio with some ideas, but without a clear sense of either form or content. (If either *is* initially clear, it often changes before the work is complete.) They pay attention to the movement they have generated, and make decisions about what does and does not fit. This is a time of trying out, false starts, unfinished phrases. Eventually both form and content become clear, but there is a good bit of messiness along the way, a good bit of trial and error. One hopes for patient dancers and for a muse that will speak as quickly and as clearly as possible. But it is indeed an act of faith to go into the studio, trusting that a dance will result from one's labors.

For me, starting to write a scholarly paper is just as much an act of faith, and the process is just as messy. Initial drafts are like improvisation with words — a time of trying out, false starts, unfinished sentences. I experience the frustrations of trying to get ideas down before they disappear, of crafting paragraphs that lead only to a dead end. For me, this part — this most creative part — of writing must be done in pencil, a symbol of its impermanence. It is important not to fall too much in love with my own words or those of my respondents, because large amounts of this material may get thrown away, or at least thrown away from this project when it turns out to be heading in a different direction than originally expected.

My graduate students, who would quickly reject the idea of following a choreographic formula, assume that there is one for writing a scholarly paper, and eagerly ask for it. Indeed, there are some kinds of choreography and some kinds of writing that do use formulas. I remember being taught a formula for expository writing in high school, and it successfully got me through all those essay exams in college. But while an expository formula is effective in conveying information, it is not so useful in conveying interpretive scholarship. Similarly, choreographic formulas, which might create precision drill team routines, do not usually produce very interesting art.

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[13] See Ann Oakley, "Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms," in *Doing Feminist Research,* ed. Helen Roberts (Berkeley: Routledge, 1983).

But the lack of a formula for choreography does not mean that there is no structure. One muddles through, not for the sake of making a mess, but in order to find the *right* structure for this particular work. Similarly, in research one must look for the right structure. In the kind of research I do, there are two kinds of structure with which I am concerned. One is the theoretical framework, and the second is the structure for the final research paper.

THEORY BUILDING: KNOWING IN MY BONEs

A theoretical framework is about relationships — the relationship between ideas and concepts, between the parts of a whole. And a theory is not likely to arise in the form it will ultimately take. Albert Einstein said that, for him, visual and kinesthetic images came first; the words of a theory came later.[14] I often tell my students, in relation to theory, "If you can't draw it or make a three-dimensional model of it or dance it, you probably don't understand it."

For me as well as Einstein, there is a definite connection between theory and the sensory/kinesthetic; *thinking* is an active verb. One particular example that stands out for me occurred when I was working on my dissertation.[15] I was struggling with a very abstract topic: the relationship between the ethical and the aesthetic dimensions of human existence as they related to dance education. All of my attempts to figure out my theoretical framework felt disconnected from the concerns that had initially propelled me into the study. One day, still searching for my elusive framework, I went for one of those long walks that were a necessary part of my thinking process. When I returned, I lay down to rest and instantly became conscious of how differently I perceived myself and the world when I was standing compared to when I was lying down. Within moments I knew my framework, which was based upon a metaphor of verticality (the impulse toward achievement and mastery — being *on top)* and horizontality (the impulse toward relationship and community— being *with).* I noticed how lying horizontal felt passive and vulnerable while the return to vertical made me feel strong and powerful; these feelings offered important insights as to why we value achievement so much more than community. Once I had identified this dual reality in my own body, I found it in the work of others: in Eric Fromm, who spoke of freedom and security; David Bakan, who spoke of agency and communion; and Arthur Koestler, who spoke of self-assertion and integration.[16] While I had read each of these authors previously, I had to find my framework in my own body before I could recognize the connection between the concepts they had identified and the issues with which I was grappling.

Another time, I remember, I chose swimming for a break in between writing sessions. But one memorable day as I swam, I became aware of the excess tension in my neck. Rather than releasing my neck to allow the water to hold up my head, I was holding on as though afraid it would fall down otherwise. This awareness pointed me toward awareness of other situations in which we use unnecessary control — in internal relations within our bodies as well as relations with others — and I again attended within my body to try to understand why. I realized how much we hold on in making the transition from horizontality (the dependence of infancy) to verticality (which allowed us real mobility and independence). Embedded in our musculature, generally beyond the reach of rational thought, is this impulse toward control and the fear of letting go. Again, this is an insight that could not have arisen without attention to embodied knowledge. These incidents, and many others, have convinced me that we can think only with what we know "in our bones," and that attending to the sensory, followed by reflection, is essential in research.

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[14] This idea (in the form of a letter) was published as an appendix, "A Testimonial from Professor Einstein," in *The Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Field,* by Jacques Hadamard (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1949), 142-43.

[15] Susan W. Stinson, "Reflections and Visions: A Hermeneutic Study of Dangers and Possibilities in Dance Education" (Ed.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1984).

[16] Eric Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1941 I; David Bakan, *The Duality of Human Existence: Isojation and Communion in Western Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966); and Arthur Koestler, *Janus: A Summing Up* (New York: Random House, 1978).

CRAFTING THE CHOREOGRAPHY OF REsEARCH

The second kind of structure I must deal with in my research is the structure for the final product: the form that will ultimately communicate the content of the research, telling the story of where I started, where I ended up, and how I got there. Traditional scientific research has a formula for this; if one does a dissertation in science, there is little question about what Chapter II will be.

But, as I tell my students, in other kinds of research this is not all that clear. The "Review of the Literature" does not necessarily go in Chapter II; it may even be woven throughout the paper, so that voices already in the literature speak in response to newer voices. "How do you know where to put anything? How do you decide?" my students ask. I tell them everything goes where it fits best; the choices are usually aesthetic ones, not unlike those they make in choreography. For myself, I even find that seeing ideas in space helps during this process; my living room floor becomes the stage, as I spread out the parts of a paper and rearrange them, seeing what looks right, sensing what feels right.

Unlike traditional choreography, of course, the building material for this structure is words. Since I am trying to tell a story of lived experience, I look for words that do more than communicate abstract ideas. I want to use sensory-rich images in hopes that a reader can feel the words and not just see them on the page.

The final stage of research is, for me, the least enjoyable, because by this point all the important discoveries have been made. This is the time for editing. In choreography, editing requires standing away from one's work in order to look with the most objective eye possible, or listen with the most objective ear, as though it were not one's own offspring. In my writing, I have to get similar distance — I do it by typing the penciled words I have birthed into the computer; the hard square lines of the typed letters make them look as though they could have been written by anyone, and allow me to be more critical. I remember the advice of my dissertation advisor — "Kill the little darlings" — by which he meant that sometimes we have to cut those parts with which we are most in love. Editing is difficult whether I am cutting words or movement; I must sever my intimate relationship to what I have written, freeing it to go into the world without me, like an almost-grown-up child who needs to be made ready to leave home.

CONCLUSIONS:

It is no surprise that those whose past included extensive dance experience should draw on that experience in whatever work they go on to do. If I were a mechanic or a beautician, I would probably also find connections to dance. But what does the experience of dancers have to do with those who do not know themselves as dancers and choreographers? Is it like an exotic culture, an interesting oddity but of no particular value to others except as something to gawk at in a journal article? I expect it is only dialogue that can let us know if our own experiences, whether expressed in art or in a scholarly paper, are idiosyncratic or if they resonate with others.

My conclusion at this point is that, while not all of us are trained dancers, we all have the capacity to attend to what we are experiencing on a body level. We can allow ourselves to use all of our senses as we live in the world with others and try to understand them and be present with them. In our research as well as in our teaching, perhaps we can follow the guidance of Martin Buber, who described what it is to "feel from the other side" in words that I can understand within my body:

> A man belabours another, who remains quite still. Then let us assume that the striker suddenly receives in his soul the blow which he strikes: the same blow; that he receives it as the other who remains quite still....A man caresses a woman, who lets herself be caressed. Then let us assume that he feels the contact from two sides — with the palm of his hand still, and also with the woman's skin.[17]

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[17] Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man,* trans. Maurice Friedman (Boston: Beacon, 1955), 96.

Beyond *feeling* from the other side, we can also attempt to communicate beyond our own boundaries — not only "antiseptic" abstract ideas, but lived experience, by means of a language rich in sensory images, including kinesthetic ones.

While all of us can do this to some extent, we can do it better if we develop our senses as well as the capacity to form a variety of symbols to represent our experiences. This, of course, is one argument for including all the arts in education.

However, it does not answer the question of why we should do this — particularly why we should attempt to cultivate the kinesthetic sense and use kinesthetically rich images when other senses may seem more "respectable" in scholarly discourse. One answer is that it will allow us to perceive more clearly, understand more deeply, the embodied others who are subjects if not participants in educational research. Further, it will allow our readers to understand us better. Much educational research, free from examples or sensory images, is unintelligible to teachers and the general public, as well as to our students.

One might ask, of course, why it *should* be intelligible to those outside academe. Certainly much scientific research is not understood by the general public. There may be some ideas for which a rich sensory language is not appropriate — ideas which cannot be pointed toward by means of an image or clarified by means of a concrete example. If there are, I would guess that there are not many. Far more often, I fear that we limit ourselves to purely abstract, disembodied language as a way to exclude those who have not yet undergone the rigors of graduate school. In this regard, I was moved by the statement by Patricia Hill Collins in the Preface to her work *Black Feminist Thought.* Collins wrote,

> I was committed to making this book intellectually rigorous, well researched, and accessible to more than the select few fortunate enough to receive elite educations. I could not write a book about Black women's ideas that the vast majority of African-American women could not read and understand. Theory of all types is often represented as being so abstract that it can be appreciated only by a select few. Though often highly satisfying to academics, this definition excludes those who do not speak the language of elites and thus reinforces social relations of domination. Educated elites typically claim that only they are qualified to produce theory and believe that only they can interpret not only their own but everyone else's experiences. Moreover, educated elites often use this belief to uphold their own privilege.18

In moving beyond abstract language to use language that touches readers on a sensory level, I hope to make my work accessible. In making reference to the kinesthetic sense, I hope that readers will not only be moved but move — to take action instead of hiding in the safe confines of theory. Such movement may ultimately be the most significant reason to embrace the sentient body in educational research.

Notes:

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[18] Patricia H. Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1991) xii.