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POWER RELATIONS IN THE DANCE CLASSROOM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Clyde Franklin Smith, M.A.

*****

The Ohio State University
2000

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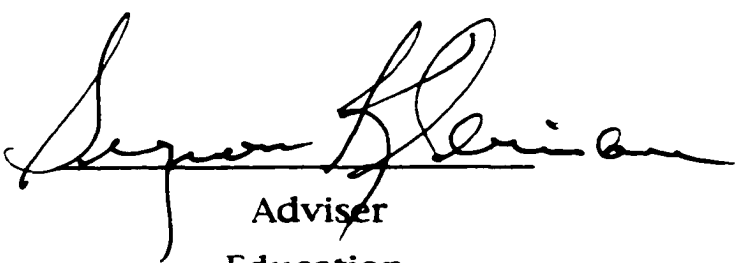

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ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation of power relationships in the dance classroom. Its general focus is the concert dance technique class with a particular concern for professional dance training. The investigation has two primary stages of research both of which are informed by the author's self reflections on his own experiences as a dancer and educator. The first stage draws upon interviews with students who attended a dance conservatory known for the brutality of its faculty. This stage attempts to understand why students considered abusive treatment an acceptable aspect of their professional training. The works of Michel Foucault, Arthur Deikman, Louis Coser and Erving Goffman are used to construct a theoretical network. This network aids the author in both understanding the first stage of research and in applying insights from this extreme case sample to the classroom of a modern dance instructor, Susan Van Pelt, known for her caring behavior. This second stage of research is considered one possible answer in action to the question of how insights drawn from the first stage of research can be applied to other settings which are less extreme.

The investigation as a whole is particularly influenced by Foucault's notion of disciplinary power and by Michel Serres's perceptions regarding the mobility of the researcher. The overall structure of the dissertation is an alternative form based on narrative elements which also reveal the author's own development as a researcher.

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I will always appreciate the responses of the women I interviewed who remain anonymous in this study and for my all too brief collaboration with Susan Van Pelt who also provided real friendship.

I remain deeply grateful to Susan Stinson who helped me become a researcher and who gracefully navigated the transition from mentor to colleague.

And, finally, I must thank my parents for their support before, during and, no doubt, after my odyssey through graduate school.

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PUBLICATIONS

1. Smith, C. (1999). How I became a queer heterosexual. In Straight with a twist. Calvin Thomas, Ed. Champaign, IL: Univ. of Illinois.

2. Smith, C. (1999). Power relations in the dance classroom: Alternative forms of data presentation. In Proceedings of the Inaugural Conference of the National Dance Education Organization. Cincinnati, OH: National Dance Education Organization.

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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Education

Dance

Cultural Studies

Qualitative Research

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PREFACE

The Struggle with Language

This project emerges from my struggles with language: what to say, how to say it, to whom to say it. On the one hand, this work is a dissertation document. On the other, it is an attempt to begin to write a book which might circulate beyond the confines of doctoral committees and bound dissertation volumes in a rarely visited area of the library. The result of this struggle is a sometimes awkward text, one which disperses the traditional elements of a dissertation throughout its body without necessarily becoming a book one would write under different circumstances. My dissertation committee generously allowed me to take a chance with this liminal project, one which is between shores, which leaves both myself and the reader in mid-passage (Serres, 1997). The section of my dissertation proposal presenting my ideas regarding an alternative dissertation format is included in Appendix A. I discuss such issues further in my introduction, but here I wish to speak more generally of the issue of language.

I am torn between producing an elegant theoretical display and a text accessible to a wider audience. Yet I do not hope to reach

a popular audience but more a college educated one with an interest in seriously considering the intersections of such topics as dance, education and society, one which may not be otherwise drawn to the theoretical material with which I work. Even this somewhat limited audience will be limited further by the brute reality of the actual reading interests of educators, dancers and those who may find such topics of interest. In my experience, educational researchers outside the arts generally will not read a book with the word dance in the title unless they have some personal involvement with dance. Artists and teachers are often uninterested in or even antagonistic towards academic research. Furthermore, one must compete with the overwhelming demands on everyone's time as well as the multiple pulls of media in, what I term, the age of "infocontainment."

Further issues arise with the kind of language used. Within academic circles one often encounters nearly as much suspicion of complicated language and technical terminology as one does outside of academia. A specific example involves that of one of my committee members, Patti Lather, whose work in research methodology has influenced me greatly. Victoria Holmsten recently wrote in "My World is Made Up of Stories" (1999),

> As feminist teacher-researchers, I believe that we need to do a better job of allowing our written language to reflect our theory . . . In this essay I work to avoid what I see as the 'theory-speak' trap that Patti Lather (1991) falls into in Getting

> Smart. In an otherwise smart book, full of good insight, she uses a language so embroiled in academic tradition, including heavily embedded sentences, extensive footnoting, and theory jargon, that her work becomes largely inaccessible to all but academics. As feminists, I think we should do better than this in the spirit of our own theory. (p. 40)

At times I too have shared such concerns when encountering dense technical writing. Yet Patti's language is in keeping with her theoretical concerns and Holmsten's work is unlikely to reach a nonacademic audience except for those outside of academia who have a college education and are concerned with teacher-research and feminist thought.

Perhaps more pertinent is the fact that even those of us who speak and write only in English use different forms for different settings and purposes. We vary our language depending on the context and on how we feel like speaking or are constrained to speak, from home to street to classroom to podium. While I always recognized that I spoke differently to my brothers when my parents were not around than when they were, it was Gloria Anzaldua's work in Borderlands (1987) which raised my awareness of the diversity of an individual's language. Here she speaks of the actual dialects and languages that she has learned to use:

> And because we [Chicanos] are a complex, heterogeneous people, we speak many languages. Some of the languages we

speak are:

1. Standard English
2. Working class and slang English
3. Standard Spanish
4. Standard Mexican Spanish
5. North Mexican Spanish dialect
6. Chicano Spanish (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California have regional variations)
7. Tex-Mex
8. Pachuco (called calo) (p. 55)

In Patti Lather's case, though she always speaks English, even her academic language takes multiple forms.

In Getting Smart (1991) Patti is often at the height of sophistication. But Patti is also incredibly gifted at introducing people to the issues that arise when one confronts the theory and technical terminologies of postmodern and poststructural thought. In her classroom introduction to qualitative research (in class discussion, 1996), Patti did a wonderful job of creating graspable entryways to dense theoretical positions while being clear that she was simplifying ideas which are not readily simplified. During a recent university job interview at a regional College of Education, I encountered multiple faculty members who described Patti's visit from years before. A common theme was Patti's ability to speak in ways which could be understood by those outside of the theoretical realms which she inhabits. This example is intended not so much as

a defense of Patti Lather or as an attack on Victoria Holmsten but more as a clear example of how one uses multiple forms of English depending on who one wants to reach and how one wants to speak.

My own struggle with language entails using technical terms from interdisciplinary theory while attempting a translation of the difficult concepts which they reference. In this process I mix things up, using a personal voice, a theoretically minded voice, an analytical voice, multiple voices speaking in the same text, explaining technical terms, using every day words and sometimes sending the reader to the dictionary. I have no illusions that many people without some form of higher education and openness to the concerns of academics will read my work or find it of interest, so I am not writing for a popular audience.

A related issue is the unrealistic expectation for a text to encompass all the needs and desires of all readers concerned with a particular issue. No one book or even one writer's body of work can do justice to the rich variety of perspectives and considerations that can be brought to subjects which concern a wide range of people. Writings emerge from particular settings to address particular concerns, even when the most general or supposedly universal opinions are voiced. No one text can do it all, whether it is doing justice to the issues of race, class, gender, age and sexuality or creating a comprehensively tidy analysis complete with immediately applicable policy proposals. The modernist attempt to create a total work which could explain everything, the encyclopedic bible of

modern disciplinary knowledge, has collapsed under its own weight. In our postmodern world in which we find multiple forms of knowledge competing, colliding, merging and dispersing, our demands for truth must become simultaneously more local and more mobile. Therefore our language must also be specific to the situation and readily transformable within its constantly re-emerging context, even within the boundaries of a single text.

Another related issue of language use occurs when one considers the academic penchant for the third person. I use "I" and I sometimes call people by their first name if I know them well or have interacted closely with them. For some readers my use of Patti's first name in the preceding discussion will be disturbing. But I simply cannot bear to always write in an impersonal voice driven by concerns with objectivity which bypass the actual working conditions and rigorous approaches of specific research projects such as this one. The influence of narrow conceptions of objectivity on the procedures of researchers in multiple fields is never more apparent than when such personal language exposes belief in a scientific method which may not even exist as imagined:

> There are, by now, some very widely accepted 'findings' of thirty years of research on scientific, engineering, and medical practices. . .There are many practices called 'science' by their practitioners, not one such practice; there are many methods called 'scientific methods' by their practitioners, not one such method. That is, each research subfield has its own distinctive

> research practices. Hence, the proper terms are plural: sciences and scientific methods. (Traweek, 1996, p. 143).

I will return to the notion of objectivity though not the issue of scientific method[s] in my introduction. But this is simply a preface and so I will close with the observation that in a world in which "science put its hands on reason and became its exclusive possessor" (Serres, 1995a, p. 428) one should not be surprised when the personal voice is forbidden.

INTRODUCTION

Defining the Project

This study is an investigation of power relations in the dance classroom with a focus on the modern dance technique class as oriented to the aspiring concert dancer. Such a dancer most often intends to join or start a professional touring company. The overall project is based on two primary stages of research. The first focuses on a series of interviews with students who attended a dance conservatory known for the cruelty of its faculty. The insights developed in this initial phase of investigation are then used to consider the teaching practices of a university modern dance instructor, Susan Van Pelt. This aspect of the project had a collaborative element and Van Pelt was actively involved in the research process, though not in the writing. The varied elements I bring together began with studies conducted during my Masters work at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. I have continued to develop aspects of this work throughout my graduate career.

The overall emphasis of this project is on understanding elements of the deployment of power in the dance classroom. Two

primary questions relate to the two major stages of research. The first stage of research is focused on a setting in which teachers regularly treated students with great brutality. The related question is as follows:

> Why did students perceive abusive behavior as acceptable or even desirable?

This question is addressed though not fully resolved in both the earlier studies presented in Chapter 1 and in the consideration of student interviews in Chapter 3. The second stage of research, discussed in Chapter 4, was a collaborative effort with a teacher whose classroom seems quite the opposite. My work with her offers one possible response to my second question:

> How does this extreme setting relate to less dramatic classroom situations?

Because I organize this dissertation around a narrative framework, how I came to these questions is as much a part of this research tale as the questions themselves. Therefore the reader who expects a traditional dissertation format may be frustrated by the fact that sometimes s/he encounters information in a different order than expected.

Typically a dissertation document would be divided into separate sections such as theoretical framework, literature review, methodology, findings and conclusions. Instead I am attempting to tell a research tale, albeit an awkward one, which reveals the unfolding of my process of learning to be a researcher as well as my

attempts to understand power relations in the dance classroom. For the most part I am dispersing the traditional elements throughout the text as they seem relevant to my narrative. This narrative forms a research tale which includes behind the scenes elements normally left out, confined to a preface or told in a separate volume and also chronicles the many influences various individuals had on the work. This approach is in keeping with a general turn to narrative in qualitative research and a forefronting of the presence of narrative in research more generally (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Richardson, 1997; Van Maanen, 1988; White, 1978). Nonetheless I present many of the early elements of a traditional dissertation in this introduction in order to clarify the underlying perspective which runs throughout my work.

Following the introduction are five major chapters including the conclusions. Chapter 1, "Early Studies," tells the story of my initial research explorations focused on interviews with dance students. By presenting excerpts from my first publications and conference presentations I reveal my own emergence as a researcher. These studies also present the varied theoretical materials I seek to connect, in particular works by Michel Foucault, Arthur Deikman, Erving Goffman and Lewis Coser. Chapter 2, "Gathering Tools to Build a Theoretical Network," then considers where the studies took me in terms of theory and method. Here I sketch out my theoretical network, a flexible alternative to a

framework, which allows for greater mobility of thought and analysis than a stationary structure.

This network emerged from the interplay of theory, data, analysis, writing and discussion involved in the early studies and is formed by points of intersection or coding themes drawn from this interplay. Foucault became a primary tool which permeated this network of concepts and themes. In Chapter 3 this network is utilized in reconsidering the Conservatory interviews in light of what they can offer for other settings. Ultimately Foucault's work fuels a heightened suspicion of power in even the most humane classrooms thereby connecting an extreme setting to the "caring classroom."

Chapter 4, "Teacher Talk in the Caring Classroom," focuses on how I took these ideas and a general heightening of awareness from working with them into my work with Susan Van Pelt. At that time Susan taught modern dance technique at the Ohio State University dance department. I entered her classroom at her invitation to see what issues of power would be revealed. As we discussed my observations and her experiences, language, or what we began to term "teacher talk" appeared as a core element of power relations in Susan's classroom. Along the way we talked often and found some ways to write together but our project was ultimately cut short due to other obligations. It now serves as a gesture towards the possibility of relating theory and practice as well as a document of our work together and apart.

This work concludes with "Connections and Possibilities," a brief consideration of how this project might relate to other settings, in particular the wider realm of professional dance training. These relationships are primarily sketched out through short references to related projects in dance studies. These projects, along with a few works from other fields which draw on Michel Foucault's writings, are presented as indicators of possible directions for future work. Ideally this work will take a collective approach as the issues considered are ultimately social in nature. An "Ethical Afterword" follows which relates this work to my desire for the end of academic infighting and, more generally, to a peacefully just world.

Throughout this proposal runs the theme of "emergence." The research design, the questions, the theory, the methods, even the writing, all emerge in process, forming themselves out of a particular context, one that is complex and constantly shifting. An awareness of emergence is necessary throughout the course of research

> because what emerges as a function of the interaction between inquirer and phenomenon is largely unpredictable in advance; because the inquirer cannot know sufficiently well the patterns of mutual shaping that are likely to exist; and because the various value systems involved (including the inquirer's own) interact in unpredictable ways to influence the outcome. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 41)

The notion of emergence is now a common one in qualitative research (Eisner, 1991; Ely, 1991; Meloy, 1994; Patton, 1990). Though different writers emphasize different possibilities, taken as a whole they suggest that emergence may be present in every stage of a project. My own awareness of and working with emergence as a principle permeating the research process also led me to propose an alternative dissertation format with a narrative element. Narrative or story telling seems an ideal way to present the process of emergence in a manageable form to which readers can relate. In many ways my story begins with a problem.

The "Problem"

Qualitative researchers ask meaningful questions that arise from their life experiences. . . The great majority of topics for study and research questions . . . mesh intimately with researchers' deepest professional and social commitments. . . [But] researchers rarely end up pursuing their original questions. . . For most of us, the questions shift, specify, and change from the very beginning in a cyclical process as the field logs grow, are thought about, analyzed, and provide further direction for the study. (Ely, 1991, pp. 30-31)

This study began with a desire to expose abusive teaching practices at a prominent center for dance training I call the "Conservatory." Eventually recognizing that my initial interests were more journalistic in nature, I decided to use interviews with former Conservatory students to address broader concerns regarding power

relations in the dance classroom. Key questions which emerged and accumulated are as follows:

Why do dance students accept and sometimes even expect abusive treatment during elite training?

How do the dynamics of abusive settings relate to more humanistic dance classes?

How can the consideration of this relationship be used to improve teaching practices?

Do our current teaching practices encourage/construct dancers who accept such behavior?

What can be done about such concerns?

Such questions lead us beyond notions of a "Research Question" or problem into terrain worth exploring. In this case it led from interviews with Conservatory students to study of a particular teacher's practices. Along the way my inquiry and questions grew more specific as I discuss in Chapter 3.

I conducted this investigation for multiple reasons. Understanding power relations is a crucial element in creating not just a better dance world but a better world more generally. I have a strongly personal motivation to pursue such concerns which has developed throughout my life and is addressed to some degree in Chapter 1. This is "openly ideological" research (Lather, 1986) in that I do not hide my motivations or personal beliefs and my work is driven by such elements. I believe that research can begin where

each of us are situated, in terrain that we know well. Studying the dance classroom allows me to draw on extensive experience of such settings, to use insider status to my advantage in illuminating specific territory.

Such a project can also be a first step towards intervening in teaching practices at the conservatory and university levels and possibly beyond through teacher education programs. Perhaps this research can be written in such a way as to reach a larger audience of dance teachers outside of academia. Though I would also like to reach educators and readers beyond the world of dance, the unfortunate reality is that such work is unlikely to be considered outside these boundaries. Nonetheless, this study is also intended to have relevance for those who wish to understand the embodiment of power beyond the dance classroom.

This is certainly not the first study to consider the difficult circumstances and often abusive behavior found in the concert dance world. Ballet has been notable for autobiographies and memoirs which depict an often brutal world of physical and psychological sacrifice (Bentley, 1982; Brady, 1982; Gordon, 1983; Kirkland, 1986). Interest in body image allied with medical concerns regarding anorexia and bulimia has been a feature of concerns with elite training (Vincent, 1979). Anthropologists have also looked at the lives of ballet dancers and the structure of the world of ballet, some concerned with power (Aalten, 1997) and some not (Wulff, 1998).

Nevertheless, much more research could be conducted in the land of ballet.

A conference held in 1999 in Toronto, entitled "Not Just Any Body: A Global Conference to Advance Health, Well-being and Excellence in Dance and Dancers," highlighted such concerns in both ballet and modern dance, though its primary focus was ballet. There I presented a paper entitled "Catherine's Body (remembering the Conservatory)" (Smith, 1999b) which drew on my research for this dissertation. Though modern dance has been widely studied and written about by academics, some feel that the oppressive behavior often associated with ballet training does not happen in modern (Abra, 1987). The interview material in this project certainly shows otherwise, though that is not its main purpose. Academic researchers, from positivist to postpositivist have studied the modern dance technique class (Gray, 1989; Page, 1984; Skrinar & Moses, 1988). Some of them have studied alternatives to the traditional modern dance class (Fortin, 1992; Moore, 1978; Zhe, 1979). Others have offered advice on how to successfully participate in technique classes without sacrificing one's mental and physical health (Loren, 1978; Minton, 1984; Pease, 1966; Penrod & Plastino, 1970). So, in one sense, this study takes its place as yet another consideration of dance classes.

However this project is differentiated from most of those just cited in its concern with forefronting power issues. This distinction places it among a growing body of research conducted by dance

educators and researchers working from varied interpretive, critical, feminist and postmodern/poststructural perspectives. In fact, the pilot study for this dissertation, "On Authoritarianism in the Dance Classroom" (Smith, 1998a), was part of a dance education anthology which brought together critical and feminist dance educators entitled Dance, Power & Difference (Shapiro, 1998). Other participants in this gradually expanding discursive network include Karen Bond (1997), Jill Green (1994), Katherine Lee (1996), Isabel Marques (1998), Sherry Shapiro (1999) and Susan Stinson (1993).

Though Dance, Power and Difference groups various research approaches under an openly ideological or socially engaged banner, this mix could also be considered postpositivist. Postpositivism is a broad catchall for forms of inquiry which move beyond traditional notions of science to a wider array of knowledge production from interpretive to feminist to postmodern perspectives. Though some postpositivists would consider themselves against positivism as an objectifying, sterile and overly reductive view of the world, postpositivism as a catchall includes positivist inquiry as simply one approach rather than the most valid form of research. This terminology has been introduced to the world of dance research by Jill Green, most noticeably in a paper coauthored with Susan Stinson entitled "Postpositivist Research in Dance" (1999). Jill drew her initial definition from the work of Patti Lather whose development of the term postpositivism is a key element of her theoretical

discussions of qualitative research in classes at the Ohio State University, where Jill studied.

Patti's influence also signals this study's intersection with and reliance upon educators influenced by and developing various "post" positions who are moving away from strict "oppressor/oppressed" models (Bordo, 1993, p. 23) to more nuanced understandings of power and subjectivity. Such researchers include Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989), Carmen Luke & Jennifer Gore (1992) and Erica McWilliam (1994). I share these researchers' suspicions of the desire to empower or liberate students. We also share a "self-reflexivity that . . . enable[s] us to look closely at our own practice in terms of how we contribute to dominance in spite of our liberatory intentions" (Lather, 1991, 15). Studying power relations in the dance classroom allows me to pursue the development of these perspectives in the field of dance research while contributing to a deeper understanding of classroom practices. My openly ideological postpositivist perspective inevitably guides my methodology. My discussion of actual methods is scattered throughout Chapters 1 through 4.

Methodology

Methodology is best understood as the overall strategy for resolving the complete set of choices or options available to the inquirer. Far from being merely a matter of making selections among methods, methodology involves the researcher utterly - from unconscious worldview to enactment of that worldview via the inquiry process. (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 183)

For the postpositivist the methodological possibilities for research are expanding rapidly while traditional guidelines are in a state of collapse. We are in a time when we can choose multiple paradigms or a "paradigm of choices" (Patton, 1990, p. 39) which

> rejects methodological orthodoxy in favor of methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality. The issue then becomes . . . whether one has made sensible methods decisions given the purpose of the inquiry, the questions being investigated, and the resources available.

As if that were not enough, we seem to be in a "postparadigmatic diaspora" (Caputo, 1987, p. 262), a time when "something more fundamental than a 'paradigm shift'" (Lather 1991, p. 107) is taking place. Researchers find themselves in a

> period of experimentation . . . characterized by eclecticism, the play of ideas free of authoritative paradigms, critical and reflexive views of subject matter, openness to diverse influences embracing whatever seems to work in practice, and

> tolerance of uncertainty about a field's direction and of incompleteness in some of its projects. (Marcus & Fischer, 1986, p. x)

Perhaps uncertainty and incompleteness are here to stay. Amid the collapse of dominant regimes of truth, the growing cacophony of discordant voices and the proliferation of competing discourses we find that

> there may not be one future, one 'moment,' but rather many; not one 'voice,' but polyvocality; not one story, but many tales, dramas, pieces of fiction, fables, memories, histories, autobiographies, poems, and other texts. . . We are not marching in a column toward a common future. (Lincoln & Denzin, 1994, p. 584)

Such a period requires the researcher to make many decisions that were previously preordained by the scientific guardians of progress.

In this project I function as an openly ideological "bricoleur," one who uses "the means at hand" (Derrida, 1978). Denzin & Lincoln (1994) refer to the bricoleur as one who "produces a bricolage, that is, a pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation" (p. 2), a perspective enabled in part by the collapse of positivist hegemony. Describing myself as openly ideological is intended to indicate my political commitments, which are grounded in critical/feminist perspectives. The notion of the bricoleur is not intended to justify a haphazard approach, rather it indicates a rigorous approach which

may involve the adaptation and mixing of methods. This project has resulted in a text which draws on narrative without simply telling a story, that has elements of basic and applied research and yet is incomplete, one which at times attempts a collaborative approach but is ultimately an individual project though it involves many participants.

This mixing of elements is perhaps most noticeable in Chapter 2, "Gathering Tools to Build a Theoretical Network," which discusses my shift from a theoretical framework to a network of theoretical elements. This shift is intended to allow for a mobility in keeping with the trajectory of my research. Such a hybrid approach relates closely to current post perspectives regarding the production of knowledge. For example, postmodernism has a particular effect on my involvement with knowledge production since

> the core of postmodernism is the doubt that any method or theory, discourse or genre, tradition or novelty, has a universal and general claim as the 'right' or the privileged form of authoritative knowledge. (Richardson, 1994, p. 517)

Instead we shift to a "partial, local, historical knowledge" (p. 518) which allows us to proceed "without claiming to know everything."

This shift towards partial, situated ways of knowing relate strongly to issues of objectivity. The traditional textbook ideal of a standardized scientific method obsessed with objectivity has given way to multiple perspectives regarding how a situated objectivity might function. One version which seems appropriate for a rigorous

approach to research in the postmodern is Harding's "strong objectivity" (1993, p. 18), which

> would require methods for systematically examining all of the social values shaping a particular research process, not just those that happen to differ between the members of a scientific community. (pp. 18-19)

Yet the idea that one could examine "all of the social values" seems rather farfetched. Better yet is Donna Haraway's (1991) call

> for a doctrine and practice of objectivity that privileges contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction, webbed connections, and hope for transformation of systems of knowledge and ways of seeing. (pp. 191-192)

This rethinking of objectivity is but one example of how these changes, rather than freeing the researcher from rigor, require a heightened awareness of all aspects of the research process and an ever deepening rigor with great consequences for concepts like validity.

Validity

Validity seems to be one of those research activity categories which has either collapsed totally or expanded beyond recognition. In qualitative research validity has often been taken as a way to ensure that data match the real world, that "we're scientists too!" For the research avant-garde at least, such a notion is collapsing due to the implications of both postmodernism and poststructuralism,

the "crisis of representation" (Marcus & Fischer, 1986, p. 14) and other contemporary difficulties.

Though many qualitative researchers have attempted to develop an adapted version of quantitative procedures more appropriate to their needs, others

> reject the notion of internal validity that is based on the assumption that a tangible, knowable, cause-and-effect reality exists and that research descriptions are able to portray that reality accurately . . . [and so] it becomes extremely difficult to measure the trustworthiness of critical research; no TQ (trustworthiness quotient) can be developed. (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p. 151)

Beyond producing or rejecting such alternative qualitative concepts as trustworthiness quotient, some researchers feel a sense of uncertainty and "remain unsure as to where the determination of validity lies" (McCoy, 1995, pp. 61-2).

Triangulation, one of the preeminent techniques of validity, is a topic which has affected my approach to this project and which raises important issues for the concept of validity. Denzin (1989) is one of those exploring the possibilities of validity and he has attacked the notion that it is a way of measuring the "same units" (p. 244) from different vantage points because "each experience is unique" and "the same unit, behavior, or experience can never be observed twice." Rather he suggests "seeking multiple sites and

levels for the study of the phenomenon in question." To a great degree, I have started exploring multiple sites and levels in this project, including self reflection on my experiences in dance classes across the United States, interviews with attendees at a particular conservatory who then went to a variety of universities and interviews with and observations of a teacher who has held multiple roles in the dance world.

However, this exploration is also informed by Laurel Richardson's (1997) proposal that the

> central imaginary for 'validity' for postmodernist texts is not the triangle - a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather, the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, mutlidimensionalities, and angles of approach. . . . Crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of 'validity' (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves); and crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. (p. 92)

I am particularly drawn to this combination of complexity, deepened knowledge and increased self-doubt because that relates most closely to my own research experience.

Another approach to validity to which I relate also signals shifts in research goals from "mainly predicting events . . . [to]

whether the intended audience can see new relations and answer new but relevant questions" (Kvale in Patton, 1990, p. 484). Kvale terms this particular approach "pragmatic validation." For, as Eisner (1991) points out, "in the end, it is practitioners, the users of ideas, who must determine whether the ideas that are available are appropriate to their situation" (p. 212, n6). So far, with early papers a number of dancers and dance researchers find the work I am doing to relate to their situations and to accurately describe shared concerns. At my first presentation based on my pilot study, "On Authoritarianism in the Dance Classroom," at the National Dance Alliance's 1996 conference, many dance teachers were inspired to share their own experiences as students and teachers. Furthermore, Susan Van Pelt, my collaborator in Chapter 4, used the same paper in a course on teaching dance. After reading my paper and then observing a technique class the students remarked that they were seeing things very differently, at least for the moment. My concern with power relations in the dance classroom extends to related ethical concerns in research.

Ethics

While the work I do is unlikely to harm the participants there are ethical issues worth considering. For the most part, those who are not explicitly identified should be able to maintain their privacy. Though anonymity can never be assured, it is highly likely for individual respondents. However some dance researchers have easily identified the site of the Conservatory itself due largely to the

near legendary status of what has occurred there in the past. When my first essay on this topic was published (Smith, 1998a), some legal discussion occurred with the publisher regarding this issue and small changes were made in my essay. However I did not agree to changes which I felt compromised the integrity of the research. In the final analysis, the lawyers were placated, the work maintained its usefulness and if the site is identified, so be it. If anything, I have ethical concerns about not identifying individuals engaged in abusive and, at times, criminal activities. I am sure many researchers have found themselves stuck in similar situations.

When first doing these interviews I was concerned with the power dynamic between myself and the respondents. As Kvale (1996) points out, "the conversation in a research interview is not the reciprocal interaction of two equal partners" (p. 126). Though the researcher would generally seem to have the upper hand, in keeping with my interests in Foucault, I tend to view power relations in interviews as less stable, more akin to what Scheurich (1997) proposes. The Conservatory interviews were voluntary, some respondents talked a lot while others did not. When interviewees wanted to talk I followed their lead but also would bring up the questions I had to ask. Generally it seemed like a reasonably noncoercive exchange.

With Susan Van Pelt the relationship was more egalitarian. We had somewhat different needs and were able to negotiate without either of us seeming compromised. The class which was observed,

unfortunately without being asked or forewarned, and which filled out optional questionnaires was only briefly imposed upon. Susan and I had not discussed protocol around the observation and, because I was a few minutes late, Susan decided not to introduce me. I think the worst that could have occurred was the normal reaction of some people at being observed, particularly when they do not know why. No questions were raised at that time and my hope is that no one was unduly disturbed. Van Pelt explained to the class what was happening at their next meeting and I was later introduced when we distributed the questionnaire. Overall, though no project is innocent, I think the respondents had a reasonable experience. In general the experience of doing this project and the response to date have made me feel quite hopeful for the possibilities of this work, though I must also recognize its limits.

Limits and Possibilities

The limits of this study are many and, to some degree, are defined by what I have chosen not to do. This is not a history or an ethnography. It is not an attempt to create a teaching method or curriculum. It is not a study which can be generalized though it can be used by anyone who cares to look closely at their own teaching practices. As an example of a bricoleur's art which utilizes mixed methods it is inherently limited, but many will find it most strongly limited by the fact that it does not address power relations with themes that are dear to them. For example, a friend who is strongly concerned with such issues told me that she could not write about

power and dance without considering gender and wondered how I could not. At the time I did not think to point out that my views of power are strongly influenced by feminist critique as detailed in my pilot study described in Chapter 1.

However I am concerned by the fact that my friend did not mention any other analytical category such as race, class, sexuality or age, all of which could be considered in this study. While in the course of this work I noticed occasional references to such themes, but I did not pursue them and they did not push themselves to the forefront. So this study is limited by the fact that, like any study, I chose to pursue certain avenues rather than others. To some degree I did not pursue such categories as race, class and gender because they currently seem overdetermined and mired in multiple confusing debates which obscure more than they reveal. I also agree with Emily Martin (1994) who states in her work Flexible Bodies: The Role of Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS:

> My fieldwork has made clear to me that the categories of social analysis that we once found so useful to describe our lives - gender, race, class, work, home, family, community, state and nation, science and religion - are no longer sufficient to describe, let alone analyze, the phenomena of the contemporary metropolis. . . Since, under the kinds of wrenching change that I observed during the research, the very borders of the sociological entities such as work, family,

community, and science are often in flux, it did not seem advisable to begin with them as the units of analysis. (p. xvi)

Yet I accept that such a statement will remain inadequate for certain readers and only hope that this work can be useful for them in their own struggles and analyses.

Though this work has multiple limits, as does any work, I remain heartened by the possibilities. Ultimately this is a specific attempt to create and utilize partial, local knowledge in a way which others may find useful. Most notably I am attempting to bridge gaps between theory and practice, between basic and applied approaches to research. The first phase focused on interviews with dancers, discussed in Chapters 1 through 3, could be considered a form of "basic research" whose "purpose is to understand and explain . . . [and] generate new theories or test existing theories" (Patton, 1990, p. 152). The second phase involving the use of insights from the first in a teacher's practice, discussed in Chapter 4, is then a form of "applied research" (p. 154) whose purpose "is to generate potential solutions to human and societal problems."

This effort, however partial, offers one response to the "theory/practice rift" (McWilliam, 1994, p. 26) which concerns "critical educational researchers" who desire "forms of inquiry that seek to change rather than merely interpret the social world of learning and teaching." Though McWilliam seeks to problematize, or raise questions, regarding the assumptions of these researchers, I

share their concern with finding explicit connections between theory and practice and hope this project can contribute to both the development and continued questioning of such efforts.

CHAPTER 1
Early Studies

This dissertation developed from a series of studies which began during my Masters program in Dance and Performance Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNC-G). Here I tell the story of how four of these studies came about and present excerpts which reveal the development of my approach to power relations in the dance classroom. I begin with an essay entitled, "On Authoritarianism in the Dance Classroom" (1998a), which became my pilot study. I continue with an essay called, "Dancers' Stories, Dancing Lives" (1995), which attempts to address some of the failings of that first essay, particularly in regards to how the voices of interview respondents were presented. The third paper, "The Conservatory as a Greedy Total Institution" (1997a), found a middle ground between certain extremes of the first two papers while expanding their theoretical reach. The fourth, "Power Relations in the Dance Classroom: Alternative Forms of Data Presentation" (1999a), presents further experimentation with the presentation of interview material. Taken as a whole these four papers present the development of my theoretical perspective as

well as my approach to research methods involving the Conservatory interviews.

The interviews focus on former dance student experiences at a site, referred to as the "Conservatory," which is a prominent center for professional arts education. Both high school and college students study there and the dance department is divided into ballet and modern areas of focus. In these early studies, the "Teacher" is a composite figure who is used to represent a pair of teachers, one of whom was particularly noted for his cruelty to students. The Conservatory is generally viewed as both an elite setting and a place which is well known for what many would consider abusive treatment of dance students. The specifics are addressed as they emerge in the interviews with former Conservatory students who are named by pseudonyms which they had the opportunity to choose.

Studying Authoritarianism

"On Authoritarianism in the Dance Classroom" (1998a) has become the de facto pilot study for this dissertation though I did not at first imagine where this sequence of events would take me. At the time, this essay was the product of my first course in qualitative research at UNC-G. There I was pursuing a Masters in Dance and Performance Studies and working primarily with dance educator Sue Stinson. Sue was a great influence on my initial understanding of qualitative research practices. She also enabled me to negotiate graduate education while maintaining a connection to my own sense of values. Sue's influence is quite evident in this essay which was a

semester length assignment. Sue maintains, as do many qualitative researchers, that our work is inevitably emergent, that initial questions change, that unexpected findings are often revealed, that writing is a form of analysis, that the process continues beyond any particular product.

This project began with the identification of a research focus, not necessarily a question, which might be meaningful beyond a semester's work. We were required to then write about how our lives had brought us to this topic, whether it simply related to a subject that we had wondered about during our previous dance experiences or had even deeper connections to our lives. Of course, for many dancers dance represents the most important elements of existence. For me, concerns with power relations, or what I then discussed as "authoritarianism," related to elements of my life which preceded my study of dance. Sue's approach to self reflection was a useful first step in learning to develop a situated objectivity, one which clearly displayed my own position in the research process.

The essay reveals that at the time I was grasping for terminology, theories and methods to work my way into a subject which I cared about deeply. The opening section, "How I Became an Anti-Authoritarian," which tells the story of how I came to this project, is autobiographical and lays the groundwork for both terms and theories. In "Useful Theories" I turned to the work of Michel Foucault and Arthur Deikman to articulate my concerns in

relationship to dance technique classes. Though I did consider dance research literature, I did not find work that strongly addressed my concerns. Furthermore I wanted to step outside of business as usual, to initiate the process of "unthinking" (Bush in Morgall, 1993, p. 129) the assumptions which limit what we can imagine as professional dance education. The third section, "Catherine's Story" relates these theories to the story of Catherine a strong critic of and former student at the Conservatory who went on to pursue a highly successful professional career. Most of the essay is included here though the conclusions are particularly brief.

from On Authoritarianism in the Dance Classroom (1998a)

How I Became an Anti-Authoritarian

My arrival at this project followed a long circuitous route which, in many ways, unites my artistic and political activities. I became a dancer in the late 70's and an anarchist in the late 80's. But before any of this I became an anti-authoritarian. . . The term authoritarian, according to Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary (1993), means "relating to or demanding total submission to authority especially as concentrated in a powerful leader.". .

As an anti-authoritarian I am against this "total submission" imposed by authority figures and am for individual autonomy or the power to make one's own choices regarding a situation. This power to choose can and often does include the choice to participate in work directed by another, for example, in the process of choreographing. This can also be a way of learning as in a dance classroom. The issue of consent is important here. I do not necessarily believe an authoritarian situation is produced when we freely agree to do what someone else is telling us to do. The issue of the authority figure recognizing the ultimate autonomy of the individual in a situation is also important. We may agree to let someone else direct a situation and find that they are not respecting our limits. If a person cannot set boundaries in such a situation, because they are not allowed to or because they are emotionally unable to, then an authoritarian situation may occur. Unfortunately such distinctions are not clear cut. There

are more issues at stake and more delineations of meaning to be made, as we shall see in my unfolding story. . .

Disillusionment in Junior High

I think junior high school was the turning point for me. As an adolescent in a violent setting, I found that being good and following the lead of authority figures did not protect me from those petty authoritarians we call bullies. This recollection is my first memory of a series of realizations that stretched from seventh grade to my first years out of college. During this time I discovered that following the rules did not guarantee reward. I found that I did not believe in a hovering male god. I found that the United States Government was not always right and that the prominence of America was built on foundations of blood. Perhaps I knew this all at birth when encountering the doctor, my first authority figure, who immediately hit me. But I cannot claim clear memories of that experience.

For me to reject the implicit validity of the authority figure and clarify when I was being subjected to authoritarian behavior, I had to experience over and over again the betrayal of my autonomy by authority figures. This betrayal happened many times in my dance experience. I so easily remember instances when, in order to be part of a program, I had to study with teachers with whom I would not have studied unless so required. After many years of periodic bouts with abusive teachers, I clearly saw that dance is no haven from an authoritarian world. In fact, it is often a focus for the worst forms of authoritarianism. . .

Dancing With Authority

One center for authoritarian training which I experienced briefly was what I will term, for this study, the "Conservatory". This institution is the same one that the interviewee I call "Catherine" and I discuss in the third section of this paper. References to the Conservatory teachers are combined as a composite figure I call the "Teacher." The Teacher was legendary in the unrecorded oral archives of Conservatory history. Over the years I met many people who studied with the Teacher on an ongoing basis and told horrific stories of classroom abuse. I only had one class with the Teacher during my years of training. At one point during that class he came up to me when my arms were in second position, put one hand on my chest and one on my back to encourage me to widen in my upper torso, and then whispered "I could crush you in an instant" before stalking off. Perhaps now somewhat amusing, this incident was a minor one in the legends of the Teacher.

Certainly by the time I finished my undergraduate dance training, which included attendance at two universities as well as numerous workshops and summer programs, I had many anecdotes regarding the behavior of my teachers, though none quite as peculiar as the Teacher story. I understood the dance classroom to be an ideal climate for authoritarian behavior. The student has already consented to being in a situation where he or she is usually attempting to replicate as perfectly as possible the example and the demands of the teacher. Because most choreography involves a process in which dancers

become what they are told to become, this form of training is often appropriate. With a caring teacher who respects the physical and emotional limits of their students, this experience can be a powerful and positive one, as I often found. However, the situation offers such power to the teacher that this power is readily abused.

Since dancers are generally scantily clad, evenly distributed in space and eager to please, they are easily observed and controlled. A dancer who will not or cannot participate at the general group level is easily picked out. In addition, since dancers are so commonly dependent on the teacher's feedback, any comments or lack of comments take on exaggerated import. I remember when being told I was doing something wrong was a sign that I was worthy of attention. Unfortunately the line between what we as dancers term a correction and an insult can be quite thin.

Though I was quite good at replicating what I was to do with teachers I believed in, I eventually rebelled at teachers who exhibited authoritarian behavior. However, I remember in my first few years as a dancer, I was often drawn to authoritarian teachers and the absolute power they wielded. As I look back, I see that in a consistently authoritarian setting like that at the Conservatory, abusive behavior can continue for years, remarked upon by those who studied at such institutions and yet rarely questioned except in personal conversation. So, as much as I have developed a critique of authoritarian behavior, I also wonder at how dancers, including myself, often participate and even believe in the authoritarian approach. This participation in

authoritarianism means that we cannot simply blame the teacher but must look at what everyone involved brings to the situation.

Anarchism

In the mid to late 80's I discovered anarchism. I was involved in grassroots political work in North Carolina and experienced a fair amount of authoritarian behavior on the part of leadership figures in local organizations. During a brief period in Seattle, I found a publication called "Direct Action" which discussed anarchist activity in the San Francisco Bay Area. "Direct Action" often contained critiques of left politics from an anti-authoritarian position which articulated much of what I was thinking. "Direct Action" also introduced me to a milieu in which an attempt was made to allow for multiple viewpoints without forging a false unity. A concern for individual autonomy coexisted with a belief in collective responsibility. In many ways, I felt that these were my people. As I learned more about anarchists, I found that some did refer to themselves as anti-authoritarians. I also found a variety of viewpoints concerning what anarchism was, almost as many as there were anarchists.

An important aspect of the forms of anarchism that I was drawn to was an articulation of what I had only known of as feminism or woman-centered politics. Though feminism was an important part of my political orientation, the binary gender focus often left me in the camp of the enemy. In anarchism I found a similar focus on anti-hierarchical organization and consensus decision making without the restrictive essentialist stances of many branches of feminism.

Though I eventually found that some anarchists also exhibit authoritarian behavior, anarchism was clearly a philosophy which included my brand of anti-authoritarianism in its eclectic patchwork of humankind.

As a political person of anarchist persuasion, I critique whatever setting in which I find myself. I often notice on the job, at school, in arts settings or in social scenes that people are in some ways complicit with the various forms of authoritarianism they encounter. It is true that, at times, trying to affect our circumstances might cause us to go to jail or lose our jobs in struggles which may not be worth the cost. It is mere prudence to recognize these situations for what they are, duck one's head and prepare for future struggles instead. But I also see a reluctance among my peers and others around me, wherever I find myself, to change what can be changed; instead, people tend to complain outside of the setting and return again to a barely tolerable situation. This pattern takes many forms and seems to be the normal state of being in this culture at this time.

Beyond these mundane situations, we all know of more extreme examples of people who are heavily abused and do not resist, even if we only hear of them by word of mouth or in the news. In the case of students of the Teacher, this abuse was both mental and physical and usually, but not always, focused in the classroom. I wonder why so many students simply accepted such behavior without speaking out. Now I continue my work as an anti-authoritarian in academia with this limited study. I focus on authoritarianism in the dance classroom and

how we as dancers participate in our own oppression. I choose one dancer's experience of the regime of the Teacher at the Conservatory as a practical example. And I wonder how our collusion with petty tyranny makes such extreme cases possible and what we can do to change this state of affairs.

Useful Theory

Upon beginning this project, I thought of the situation of authoritarianism in the dance classroom as one in which teachers hold absolute power over students and through abusive means disempower students, breaking them down and then building them back up in their own image. This viewpoint caused me to look for theorists whose work dealt with prisons, the military, educational discipline, cult formation and brain washing. . . For this study, rather than attempting a literature review, I am taking useful theory and using it to illuminate the situation at hand. I found the work of Michel Foucault in Discipline and Punish (1979) and that of Arthur Deikman's The Wrong Way Home (1990) to be particularly useful in this regard. I begin with Michel Foucault.

Discipline and Punish

References to Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish (1979) appear repeatedly in much contemporary work that considers discipline and/or the body. This book, subtitled The Birth of the Prison, also considers armies, hospitals and schools. The body under discipline is one of the key themes of Discipline and Punish and so this work, as well

as a book of related interviews with Foucault called Power/Knowledge (1980), became important resources for me in understanding the functioning of disciplinary power in the dance classroom.

Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish is a dense text that is in part a historical study. Foucault focuses on the changes in the French system of punishment from the early 17th century to the late 18th century. He identifies this period as one in which the modern prison system was created as part of changes in human activities which also produced modern forms of the army, the hospital and the school. His argument is complex and includes the concept of the subject or self as something that is created rather than existing a priori. Social constructionists have made much use of this material while critics have attacked these same ideas about the subject as well as raising questions about the historical accuracy of Foucault's work.

Foucault's concepts of power, discipline, surveillance and the docile body are useful for this discussion, whatever the faults of Foucault's larger work. Furthermore, though I intend to be clear regarding Foucault's use of terminology as opposed to my application, I am emboldened by Foucault's statement in an interview titled "Prison Talk:"

> For myself, I prefer to utilize the writers I like. The only valid tribute to thought such as Nietzsche's is precisely to use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest. And if commentators then say that I am being faithful or unfaithful to Nietzsche, that is of absolutely no interest. (1980, pp. 53-4)

Power Produces Docile Bodies Under Surveillance

Foucault views power as a force which produces. Power only exists when being put to use, unlike electricity, which is a force that can be stored for use at a later date. One does not hold power rather one exercises power. In addition to Foucault's use of the term power, I use the phrase "power over" to apply to situations in which a person or institution controls an individual or group with all the negative implications of authoritarianism. In Discipline and Punish, Foucault discusses how the military man's body became something that was created through discipline (p. 135). He later specifies that "discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise" (p. 170). Through the exercise of disciplinary power or power over the "docile" body is produced. As Foucault states, "A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (p. 136.) Docile bodies are also the goal of much dance training as dancers become the material for the teacher's or choreographer's vision.

Foucault reveals that surveillance is a key disciplinary tactic in forming and controlling the docile body. According to Foucault, surveillance is a form of observation which is most effective when it is applied to the self. In other words, an atmosphere of constant surveillance must be created by the observer, so that the observed always feels watched. This feeling in turn creates a situation in which the observed ultimately maintains a state of self surveillance whether or not the surveilling power is actually present. The dance classroom,

with its mirrors, watchful teachers and self critical students, is a key site for both the external and internal surveillance of dancing bodies.

Enacting Authoritarianism

Shortly after I began grappling with these ideas, I taught two short movement classes to groups composed primarily of nondancers. There were around 40 students in each class, some of whom considered this experience only a slight remove from playtime while I considered it a serious exploration of movement. At a certain point in one class I realized how vulnerable these people were. In the regular classroom, though I was in charge, the students were sitting behind desks clustered together around the edge of the room. They were normally in a familiar environment wearing everyday clothes which concealed their bodies. In the dance studio they were in an alien setting, wearing more revealing clothing, separated from each other and easily observed.

Though I was teaching from a somatic perspective [i.e. one which values inner sensing over external form], I used traditional techniques of demonstrating and then observing. When I saw students talking to each other or not fully participating, I got their attention in order to let them know I was always watching. I felt these tactics were necessary to be able to lead such a large, disparate group through a focused experience. In short, I was disciplining docile bodies under surveillance or commanding and observing them in order to improve them. I was acutely aware of the potential for abuse in this situation. Though I tried to speak in a caring manner, by the second class this manner was

breaking down. The second class was rowdier and less focused. I was wearing out and on at least two occasions verbally snapped at students. Though I apologized, it was obvious to me that I was sliding along the continuum from caring, supportive behavior towards authoritarianism and power over.

What should now be obvious is that the generally given conditions of dance teaching readily allow for authoritarian behavior. In a situation with perceived discipline problems or simply a teacher in a nasty mood, these conditions readily facilitate authoritarianism. The question of why I or anyone would choose authoritarian behavior must be raised, however this question is too large for this particular study. Following Foucault's lead, I am "not . . . ask(ing) why certain people want to dominate," rather I am researching "at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviors" (1980, p. 97).

Foucault and Agency

I find Michel Foucault's conception of power disciplining the body extremely useful in looking at dance settings. However, critics of this work are often concerned that it presents a model of power acting on bodies without agency, without the ability to act for themselves. Does power or power over actually create human self awareness from a blank slate or do humans participate actively in this process? Foucault, in Power/Knowledge (pp. 162-4), shows that he is conscious of human agency in the form of resistance to as well as complicity with disciplinary power. In Discipline and Punish, he has chosen to focus on

issues other than human agency. What he also makes clear is that power does not merely repress in a negative way but is a positive force in that it is productive (p. 194).

Foucault is looking at how the application of disciplinary power creates the self awareness and even the physical being of the subjected, rather than focusing on how power over can restrict individuals. This argument addresses, in part, my awareness as a dance teacher that my use of power in the classroom produces dancers, for better or for worse. However, because Foucault does not address agency more fully, we must turn elsewhere to begin to understand the dancing being's involvement in this process.

The Wrong Way Home

My interest in considering cults to understand how dancers participate in their own oppression grew, in part, from a comment made by a Conservatory student. He described the Teacher's teaching process as one in which the dancer's ego is broken down and then built back up in his image. In the 80's, as I studied various social and political organizations, I came upon accounts of numerous cultlike groups which were based on psychotherapy or drama therapy. Participants who left told similar accounts of ego breakdown and reconstruction which resonated with this dancer's comments. So, in considering the Conservatory, I readily decided to also consider the literature focused on cults and brain washing and discovered many connections between dance training and cultlike behavior.

In the area of cult formation, I found Arthur Deikman's The Wrong Way Home: Uncovering the Patterns of Cult Behavior in American Society (1990) to be most relevant. Here Deikman focuses on a psychotherapy cult composed of well educated people like himself. He shows how even the elite elements of contemporary American society can enter into cult settings and accept extreme authoritarian behavior as the norm. He goes further and points to the prevalence of cultlike behavior throughout American society. This work became a key resource for me in understanding how dancers participate in their own oppression and how this participation is not aberrant behavior but instead is part of a larger norm.

Deikman explains the willingness of people to follow authoritarian leaders as indicative of a "longing for parents" that

> persists into adulthood and results in cult behavior that pervades normal society . . . a yearning for parents in the most general sense. This longing results in fantasies of wise powerful guardians . . . [which] may be superimposed on people who occupy real positions of authority, success, and power. (p. 2)

This explanation is compelling and based, in part, on Robert Jay Lifton's classic study of totalitarianism and brainwashing in China, Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism (1961). However, Deikman takes Lifton's theories further by applying them to a less totalistic system, in this case the United States. But this is approaching the question of why people are drawn to authoritarian leaders and that is a

question that I am not prepared to answer. My focus here is on the how of cult behavior, not the why, though the difference between the two is often unclear.

Cult Behavior

Deikman identifies "four basic behaviors found in extreme form in cults: compliance with the group, dependence on a leader, devaluing the outsider, and avoiding dissent" (p. 48). He also points to recurring early experiences of people who join cults, which are "interpreted as validating the claim that the leader and group" are "special" (p. 4). These experiences of "transcendence" or the like cause individuals to accept limits imposed by the leader in order to become members of the group. The leader is identified as someone who can provide the experience necessary for the individual to achieve particular goals such as "enlightenment," which the initial experience has shown to be possible. Within the group, members view themselves as an elite and devalue the beliefs of those not in the group.

Dissent is avoided within the group and suppressed forcefully whenever it arises. Individuals "surrender" to the leader since "obedience is the prime virtue in all authoritarian systems" (p. 85). Because "the leader is accepted as having special powers and/or semidivine status," his or her actions are "outside the behavior norms of the ordinary person. As we have seen, similar exemptions from the rules and the accompanying claim to infallibility enables many a leader to perform unethical acts that would otherwise not be countenanced" (p. 79). Clearly the participation of cult members is necessary for

authoritarian behavior to occur on an ongoing basis. Does this participation create authoritarianism or is such participation merely a necessary component that in and of itself does not signify an authoritarian setting? This question is an important one to keep in mind as we apply Deikman's ideas to dance training.

Cults in the Dance Classroom

Just as Deikman points to similar patterns in less extreme situations, so can we apply these observations to the dance classroom, particularly in a setting like the Conservatory. In such a setting, the group consists of the students with the teacher as leader. One is there because one believes that this teacher can provide the experiences necessary to become a good dancer. Surrender to the directions of the teacher is a standard mode of behavior. Those not in the elite are considered lesser beings and looked down upon. While dissent may occur outside the classroom, in the classroom no dissent is tolerated. Because there is often an idolization of such teachers, extreme behaviors are considered acceptable, particularly if the teacher is viewed as having special insights.

I experienced all these elements to some degree throughout my dance career. Certainly as a dancer I felt special, not least because nondancers or outsiders viewed me as special. When in technique class or in rehearsal, I was obedient and thought of myself as the artist's material. My fellow dancers and I were cooperative and complied with our teachers' demands even when we were critiquing those teachers

outside of class. Individuals who did not follow suit were ostracized to varying degrees. Authoritarian or not, the typical setting of most classes I took involved these cultlike behaviors.

Disturbing as these thoughts are, they fall into place quite readily. The dance classroom is a setting in which obedient students present themselves to be improved upon. The teacher has absolute power and surveillance is a key tool for administering that power. While cultlike behavior is found in negative settings, it also occurs with much loved teachers who rule benevolently. Usually these situations are not absolutely good or bad as we see when we turn to specific examples. Foucault's concepts regarding disciplinary power over the docile body under surveillance and Deikman's concepts of basic cult behaviors form my "toolkit" for considering Catherine's experiences at the Conservatory.

Catherine's Story

After a period of reflection on my past and a study of related literature, I interviewed a woman I call Catherine for this study. Catherine is a former Conservatory student who went on to further training and then a professional career in New York City. She is an ideal source for me because she is a successful graduate of the Conservatory who nonetheless is highly critical of her training there. I know much of what I consider to be abusive behavior in Conservatory training, including harsh, demeaning language, to be justified by some faculty and students as necessary for success in the competitive world of professional dance. I wanted to speak with someone who is

extremely successful in Conservatory terms and yet views her Conservatory training as problematic, at the very least. In addition, Catherine's study of somatic practices, particularly Alexander Technique, afford her a broader vocabulary for discussing the long term effects of her experiences than the conservatory trained dancer without such a background.

Of course, Catherine's own interpretations of her experiences are not shared by every student that studied dance at the Conservatory. Some students consider intense assaults on the trainee's psyche to be necessary for them to advance to higher levels of practice. I recall one rationale for such an approach, put forth by more than one Conservatory student, was that if they survived the Conservatory they could then survive anywhere. So behavior that Catherine and I might consider abusive and therefore worthy of condemnation might be considered a gift by another student. In addition, Catherine's own account problematizes a straightforward attack on the Teacher's behavior.

Teenager in Training

Catherine came to the Conservatory to escape her home situation, which she describes simply as "abnormal." In her two years at the Conservatory, one in the ballet department and the following in modern, she describes herself as "young and vulnerable and very depressed." In fact, she feels that "there were a lot of really depressed people there at a really young age." She says that after a year in ballet, her "sense of identity was crushed," as if she was a

"non-human being," because she could not live up to her teacher's "physical expectations." Transferring to the modern department was better for her because "it didn't hurt as bad" and, since she was not a "favorite," she was not targeted for "really psychotic games." She ultimately described the difference between departments as one in which "the ballet thing was sick but the modern thing was twisted."

Catherine left the Conservatory because she was not invited to continue after her second year. She went to another training center largely because the Teacher suggested she go there. He called a teacher at this other school and helped her in that transition. She remembers wanting to stay at the Conservatory, not because she liked it there, but because she "would rather stay there than go home." However, she recalls that she was sent away because she was perceived as "unhappy." In many ways, she is now grateful for the Teacher sending her on, since she was largely unaware of other possibilities. She describes herself then as not being "mature" enough "to know the difference between what is bad for me and what is good for me." In fact, she returned to his sending her on at various points in our discussion, often at moments when her account was most critical of his behavior. Her feeling that he did something "good" for her and that she "didn't really fit into the groove," i.e. that she was the problem, is the clearest example of how Catherine's own interpretation is not a clear cut condemnation of the Teacher.

During our discussions, I maintained a mode in which any such discordant information was merely grist for my interpretive mill.

Catherine concurred when I suggested that because other people could cope with the situation, that did not necessarily mean that the situation was good for them. I also put forth the possibility that sending her away was a form of damage control in that the Teacher saw that Catherine could not thrive on his abusive behavior which would make her a potential liability. In any case, this choice to be "tortured" because she "didn't want to go home" and then being shuttled between institutions hardly sounds like an example of free will or consensual behavior. Yet I imagine that that is as close as many young people get to freely choosing their options.

Constructing Docile Bodies

In speaking with Catherine, I was alert to traces in her account of the docile body under surveillance. In particular, how was the docile body produced in her time at the Conservatory? The basic conditions of the classroom, as I discussed earlier, were evident in her classes at the Conservatory. These conditions involved the tradition of a roomful of young people in revealing clothing obediently following the direction of a knowledgeable teacher who, at least in the immediate setting, was the final and total authority. Students were quiet, responsive and evenly arranged throughout the space. Presumably all were there of their own free will with the shared goal of becoming professional dancers. Most of these details were barely touched upon in our discussions. These conditions are unremarkable and the norm. It is taken for granted that the humans present are docile bodies following orders with the goal of being improved. In fact, to become even more

docile is to become a better dancer in most teacher's eyes. The teacher observes and the students behave as if always under observation.

Each day in the modern department began with a standardized warmup at 7:30 a.m. under fluorescent lighting, which Catherine believes "should be taken out of the whole institutional system" for health reasons because they are "really bad for you." Technique class with the Teacher then began at 8 a.m. Catherine describes the Teacher as always beginning the same way, "taking a deep breath to get everything collected" and then making a sarcastic comment about their inability to rise to his standards. She further describes this opening as a "prelude" which established that, as a student, "you are devalued" and must "bring yourself value in this class, in some form." She states that the Teacher "never started a process from a place that there are seven or eight human beings in the room trying or they wouldn't be there."

Catherine points out that "once you come in and present yourself in that way it's established." She speculates that this behavior was intended "to bring about a strong intense focus" and "present some kind of challenge." This beginning set the tone for the rest of the class. Catherine estimates that over fifty percent of the feedback from the Teacher involved some form of derogatory treatment. So, though one person was not always singled out, everyone was in an environment in which someone was being abused and that abuse could turn on them at any moment.

Tales of Abuse

One obstacle in clarifying Catherine's memories is her lack of specific details. She maintains that she "blocked a lot of it," because "it's the kind of thing where you just want to forget." But more than once she returned to an instance where the Teacher described one girl as looking like a beanbag. This student immediately burst into tears. While this example is certainly the mildest I associate with the Teacher, it resonates surprisingly deeply. As Catherine points out, "if you're like 13 or 14" then "for the next three weeks it's going to be very difficult to let the bean bag image go." In fact, many people would continue to carry such an image with them in their daily lives, thus creating a form of continuous internalized or self surveillance.

Catherine believes that "there was more stuff going on" in more advanced classes which she heard about rather than witnessed. One vivid memory she retained was of a good friend who was her same age but in an advanced class. Catherine remembers this friend, who felt she had established a good relationship with the Teacher and was progressing well, "crying hysterically" because she claimed that he had punched her in the stomach during a contraction. Though Catherine did not witness this incident, she found it to be quite believable in that it fit the general atmosphere established by the Teacher. Whatever the accuracy of specific details within the wealth of oral history, a consistent picture of the Teacher's regime is one of ongoing verbal abuse and, at the very least, the imagined threat of physical abuse.

As I mentioned earlier, such behavior is rationalized as somehow ultimately strengthening the dancer. Furthermore, dancers want feedback, even negative feedback, as it means one is worthy of consideration. In an environment in which much feedback comes in abusive forms, being ignored may at times feel worse than receiving abuse. Catherine recalls that often "people felt ignored, like people wanted attention . . . if you didn't get attention that day or that week then there was something wrong with you, too." Catherine concurs that negative attention is "probably" better than no attention. But more importantly, she agrees that it was a "standard thing" for students to feel that their teachers saw everything and if the student was ignored then nothing they did had been worth seeing. Though I have primarily discussed the psychological effects of abuse, there were also physical effects as well.

Physical Imprints

The Teacher taught Graham technique, one of the more traditional modern dance techniques in its emphasis on attaining specific bodily positions and learning standardized movement sequences. Catherine characterizes the Teacher as not having a clear understanding of how bodies function. She says that "instead of looking at really how to be connected to the floor anatomically, he just let you sit there and grab on for dear life and struggle with it physically." She further describes the daily experience of class as being like "if you can't swim that well" and yet "you're not going to die . . . think about how you [would] struggle in the water." Catherine

considers this struggle an inevitable result of forcing bodies into forms that they are not yet capable of achieving. In fact, she says the experience was "like I had all this movement in my body and I squeezed all my movement to fit my body into a technique." Furthermore, she relates that she "developed terrible muscular habits from that in one year."

This physical experience of her teenage years are still with Catherine in her early thirties. Catherine says, "I think I'll spend the rest of my life trying to let go of this physical imprint." She further describes herself as feeling "physically scarred" and "totally maimed." The lasting effects of her experiences can be attributed to their deeply somatic nature. She believes that the combination of poor training and the "intense and . . . frightening" classroom "setup" was, as she stated, "put into my nervous system along with my muscles."

The difficulty of leaving behind such an experience is startling when one recognizes that Catherine began her study of Alexander Technique shortly after leaving the Conservatory. As a dancer who has a highly sophisticated background in improving her bodymind functioning and releasing the effects of dysfunctional experiences, one might expect that she would find herself leaving those experiences behind quite readily. On the contrary, Catherine says that "that training at that school affected me emotionally and physically in ways that I wish that I could let go of." One only wonders at the effects,

both conscious and unconscious, on those students who did not go on to discover healthier possibilities for the study of movement.

A Little Prison

But what of the larger environment of the Conservatory? Catherine states that, "it's like being in a little prison, that school." She describes the Conservatory as a "whole system" in which "you are regulated." She points out that "you have room checks, you have hall checks. You have the cafeteria that you ate at three times a day, the class, the schedule." Beyond the physical environment, she feels that the Conservatory is "a kind of emotional prison." And this larger prison surrounded "that little room that I took class in every day," which she described in confining and even suffocating imagery as being like "an incubator, or a greenhouse, or a prison" of its own.

Yet Catherine pointed out that most students perceived life outside of class "as a party." She says, "It was like one big party away from home. Especially . . . for a high school student." She recalls that "I did so many drugs when I was there" that "I stayed . . . far away from drugs and alcohol for four years after that." And certainly what I have always heard, beyond the Teacher stories, are the stories of wild behavior on the parts of many students. Perhaps this image of bacchanal does not fit one's image of imprisonment. However, I imagine that this behavior is, in part, a form of recuperation that allows one to release stress and tension. The carnivalesque nature of such behavior forms an inversion of the social order. In such an inversion, students have riotous control over their own lives. As

critics of this sort of Bakhtinian analysis put forth, this release via carnival maintains the dominant social order, rather than fundamentally subverting that order.

The Precarious Elite

Since such experiences of release and abandon did not necessarily relieve distress at the Conservatory, how did students maintain their equilibrium in such a destabilizing environment? One possibility is by producing a sense of elite status. Catherine points out that "it's kind of natural" to perceive oneself as a member of an elite group when one has passed through such a program. Certainly the Conservatory's status as a major center for dance training would support such a viewpoint. In addition, many students considered the Teacher to be "like god." An attitude prevailed that "god is my teacher." Catherine feels that the Teacher encouraged this attitude through his "overconfidence" and his assumption that what he had to offer was "the best." She typifies this attitude as "not, I'm doing the best I can. I am the best. So lick my feet and learn." Certainly the students of such a godlike teacher must themselves feel close to the gods.

However, this elite self image is somewhat precarious. As Catherine notes, "you're totally replaceable." Because one is a minority of those accepted, then one is "privileged" rather than deserving. In fact, Catherine points out that this situation creates an "abusive setup" or "syndrome" that "goes from school through rehearsal on to professional life." As a company member, one faces a director who

can say, "you're lucky to have the job because I could give it to anyone else." Catherine further believes that this situation lends itself to "complaining" about problems which "you never address." Rather, "you take it in" and vent those feelings outside of the particular setting. Catherine feels this dynamic causes dancers to be "a complaining lot of people." Perhaps such a dynamic also leads dancers to consider extreme levels of abuse as acceptable, or even typical, aspects of a dance setting.

At this point we have a rather harrowing account of the educational environment at one center for dance training. While this is only one person's description, it resonates with most of what I hear from both proponents and opponents of the situation at the Conservatory. But beyond what this account tells us of one school are the insights these revelations bring to what many people consider the norms of dance training. Since the situation at the Conservatory is interpreted in many ways, certainly less obviously authoritarian settings are subject to diverse interpretations. My own understanding is problematized by this interpretive diversity as well as by recognizing that I am by no means objective. Rather, I now have more questions than answers and so I conclude with a consideration of where I find myself in this attempt to make meaning out of the complexities revealed by this study.

Closing Considerations

I am now struggling with questions regarding the nature of the traditional dance setting. Have we encouraged authoritarian behavior

in our pedagogical models? Is a setting inherently authoritarian, even if no visible force is present, but obedience is still prized? Does student idolization of exceptional teachers create authoritarian situations? I do not know the answers to these and many similar questions. I do believe that we, as students and teachers, are continually recreating a dynamic that allows for the ready emergence of authoritarian behavior. I also believe that until we analyze our mundane assumptions about what it means to study dance, we will continue to produce dancers and dance teachers who assume that abusive behavior is also a mundane component of dance training. Ultimately, we must find new ways of being in the classroom. These ways would recognize the ultimate autonomy of each participant as well as the relative wisdom of teacher and student. Perhaps extreme situations like that at the Conservatory are not aberrations but are instead indicators of the worn out and destructive paradigms in which we all participate.

From Authoritarianism to Listening to Dancers' Voices

Writing this essay not only allowed me to begin to address an important topic, it also introduced me to the work of Foucault and Deikman which I continue to find useful. However I left behind the subjects of anarchism and the terminology of authoritarianism and abuse. I was not rejecting them so much as attempting to find material which did not require the elaborate explanations which the use of an explicitly anarchist perspective would require or which would not label people in a way which shut down the possibility of change. Calling someone an authoritarian seemed to lock people into particular roles and to lead away from the nuances of power which interested me and which ultimately seemed more useful to pursue. While I think there are times to make such claims and even to point fingers I was becoming increasingly interested in implicating the behavior of all participants in the dance classroom. To some degree this interest was evident by the end of the essay.

A device which allowed me to move away from overly simplified oppressor/oppressed models, was my attempt to describe the makeup of the typical dance classroom. I introduced this model of a situation which is recreated on a regular basis, which arranges people in space for easy observation, which is always under the command of the teacher in my first essay. It remained viable as I continued to consider my experiences as student and teacher, conducted further interviews, looked at classes and pictures of classes, considered alternative approaches and searched dance

literature. This typical classroom forms the "imaginary" of dance technique classes. By imaginary I mean the possible range of ideas we allow ourselves to consider which then form the limits of our imagination. For example, if our imaginary of the dance teacher includes the limit that the teacher is always in control, this means that no matter what alternatives we imagine, our imaginations are always limited by the condition that the teacher cannot share power. This model offers an entryway to discussing how the extremes of the Conservatory relate to the caring classroom led by the beloved teacher who seems to be the polar opposite of the Teacher. But to get there I had much work to do gathering further interviews, developing theories, finding ways of working.

The next essay, "Dancers' Stories, Dancing Lives" (1995), began a process of addressing shortcomings of earlier attempts and exploring the relevance of various theoretical perspectives to my project. In this case, I was particularly concerned with my tendency to cut up and override Catherine's words in my text. This tendency was pointed out by Wanda Pillow, a former student of Patti Lather's then teaching in the Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations department at UNC-G. She suggested I find ways to forefront the respondents' voices and I am grateful to her for so doing.

My first opportunity to pursue this idea came in a research course with Svi Shapiro who was in the same department as Wanda Pillow. This course had a different purpose than Sue Stinson's.

Rather than being an introduction to qualitative research by total immersion in a full-fledged project, Svi's course was more of a philosophical introduction to qualitative research. Our actual assignments were simple self reflections and interviews designed more to reveal the richness of peoples' voices or what one may refer to more dryly as qualitative data. Our final assignment was the most involved but still focused on the gathering and presentation of interview material. We were to interview a few people and present the interviews in some form beyond that of a transcript. While Svi encouraged us to discuss or interpret the interviews, he suggested we avoid any kind of theoretical framework or explanation beyond what readily came to mind. This assignment offered an ideal opportunity to continue my exploration of what I was beginning to conceive as "power relations in the dance classroom."

I interviewed three former Conservatory students who were continuing their dance studies at what I call the "State University." They had a variety of responses and stories to tell and I settled on using two of the interviews whose elements related rather well for the purposes of this project. In interviewing them I took a life history approach which I then used in organizing the paper itself. I attempted to find out how they viewed dance before, during and after attending the Conservatory. I tried to find out why they went, stayed and left. And more generally I tried to elicit specific descriptions of their experiences as well as thoughts about how it related to their lives as dancers. The two respondents whose

interviews I worked with chose the names "Mo" and "Taylor" for their pseudonyms. Each were pursuing undergraduate degrees in dance at the State University and still intended to create careers as dancers. Though I followed their interviews with some discussion and speculations, the majority of the paper was an exercise in arranging their words. Much of this material found its way into later papers included here in Chapter 1 as well as in the discussion in Chapter 3. At this point, I include only a representation of their images of dance before and after study at the Conservatory, which I do not include elsewhere in this form.

from Dancers' Stories, Dancing Lives (1995)

Beginnings

Mo believed she would one day be a ballerina which was part of her image of dance:

> I thought about being a ballerina and then I thought about Broadway. And, you know, Broadway you just think of the lights and the costumes and everything. The same with ballet. You think about the costumes and just being in a company. I don't know. I guess it's an idealistic thing. But when you're little you don't realize those kind of things. It's a fantasy.

The fantasy world of dance also captured Taylor's imagination, in part due to fantasies about herself:

> I've always been attracted by flashy things, especially when I was little. Anything that was flashy and pretty and had lots of color I was just immediately drawn to. . . . My mother had taken us to see The Nutcracker and some different ballets and that sort of thing and I just remember being so dazzled by it. I really just wanted to put on that tutu and just twirl around. She would take us to see a ballet or if we wanted to see a movie or something that had dancing in it and I would come home and just spend hours dancing around the living room saying, "I want to be like this." Because my family has always called me "little princess" anyhow. . . my mother's a social worker and when I was about five and started asking what do you do mom and she explained you know adoption to me and

foster homes and that sort of thing. And I had come up with this idea that I had been adopted and my real mother was a queen and that I was a princess and that she was going to come back and take me. And so I just sort of lived in this fairy tale for a long time and my parents really had to work to convince me that I'd not been adopted.

Taylor revealed that her early ideas went beyond dancing:

I had this fantasy, I actually wanted to be a singer. And I had this dream, I had always had this dream of me being in this red sequined gown with this red boa and singing. But then I realized that I couldn't sing and dancing was actually the next best thing. Because I was always one of the children who liked to be in the limelight a lot.

Beyond their glamorous images of dancers, I wondered what they were getting out of dance in this early stage. Mo states

I love performing a lot. Now class I went to at this point because I had a lot of friends in there and it was like a social time. I mean I danced and I took class somewhat seriously. I mean as seriously as I knew how. But my friends were in there so it was like social time and stuff. But I really liked performing a lot. . . . We did the Nutcracker every year. And it was also a big thing there [at the ballet studio]. I was there for so many years and he'd move you up part by part. I mean I've done every part in that ballet cause I started doing it when I was little you know. And so it's like that was a neat thing too

that made it real exciting. Well what am I going to get to do this year?

Mo also spoke of getting a lot of attention and positive feedback from adults. She downplayed attention from friends her own age because "they don't really care about that kind of stuff."

Taylor spoke of similar as well as additional benefits she received from dance. Earlier, when speaking of her image of dancers she spoke of being in the "limelight" i.e. getting attention. Creativity and self-expression were important as well:

> I was shy when I was with people. But when I was dancing it was like that was my opportunity to express myself in ways that I couldn't in everyday social interactions. . . . I just liked to move around. I mean I was choreographing little dances when I was eight years old and having my parents pay a nickel to come watch them and give them concerts.

Current Images of Dance

Taylor discusses how her views of dance have evolved and what she now enjoys about dancing:

> I like spectacles. . . But I don't think that's what it's about anymore. I think that's just entertainment. I love performing dance as much as I love watching it, watching other people perform it. And I think it's kind of a give and take thing. And it's my way to communicate with other people, I suppose. Right now I'm mostly doing other people's work. So it's just my ability. Look at me, look at me. Which is kind of fun

because I've missed performing. I love to do it. And I think once I start doing my own pieces again, it will be even richer. But I just love everything about dance. I just love everything about dancers and the world of dance. It's just such an interesting group of people.

Her feelings about dance extend to her sense of self:

I feel incredibly special. And I think, I mean, I know that sometimes I just feel like I walk differently than other people walk. I hold my head high. . . When I talk to people around here, "yeah, I'm a dancer." "Wow, you're a dancer!" . . . I went to see one of my friends the other night. He was performing in a band. And as soon as he got on stage he wasn't himself anymore. . . . He was transformed into something that was like untouchable. He's up on the stage. He's up there and all these people are watching that person. They become incredibly special. Especially if they have talent! . . . It's kind of wild once you put someone on a stage under the lights and everything. They're sort of transformed and I like that. I like that feeling that you have to watch me.

Mo and I talked at length about how she now views dance and how that image is mixed in with thoughts about her future:

I think about New York because that's just something that I've always been told. . . . If you want to be a dancer you've got to go to New York. And now I know that that's not necessarily true because there's plenty other places you can dance that

have companies. But the truth is, the biggest congregation is really in New York. . . I think that even if I decide that that's not where I want to be or I don't find a company or anything I like there or I can't ever get a job there I will go somewhere else. But I think it's important for me to go spend some time there and experience what's there. . . I've always been told, if you don't stay in New York at least go to New York at least for awhile and experience it. And then if you go somewhere else, fine, it doesn't mean you're not going to be a dancer. But at least you've gone.

However the magic of New York is beginning to wear off for Mo after spending a summer there:

It really was disappointing. And I think the summer is a bad time too. . . . I was on 14th St. and Graham school is on 53rd and so I had to take the subway everyday. And in the summer it's just so hot and it smells so bad. . . That part of it just sort of takes the magic out of it. But I loved the classes there.

In fact, dance is not the glamorous world Mo once imagined:

I still want to perform . . . but now that I'm so much closer to that goal I have a harder time seeing myself actually doing it. But it is still my goal. That's still what I want to do . . . Cause I've been there [to New York]. And I see all the dancers that are there, you know. And there's so many. And plus, the lifestyle itself makes it a little harder to see. It's not glamorous at all.

Mo still likes to dance but states that she is not motivated so much by the positive feedback anymore. She is also not planning to pursue choreography in the near future:

> I just like being out there. I like being on stage. And taking movement and trying to give something to it that's mine. That excites me. To be able to do that on stage, I like. And I like to be able to evoke some kind of emotion out of the audience, no matter what it may be. I don't know, and it's a high, you know. I mean it is. . . . [For me] it's always been about being a performer.

Finding Middle Ground

For the most part I felt positive about how this project, "Dancers' Stories, Dancing Lives" (1995) turned out. I did not assume that Mo and Taylor were able to speak directly to an audience since I had final control, but I did feel that I was able to give their voices more room. Yet I also did not want to be an oral historian, though that can be an important task. I wanted to find some sort of middle ground between cutting up someone's voice and simply recording and organizing what they had to say. I continued my experiments upon arriving at The Ohio State University to pursue a doctorate in Cultural Studies in Education. I began a series of papers which initially drew on these early interviews and added a few more along the way while exploring various theoretical perspectives drawing on the courses in which I enrolled. A survey course in social theory led to my first work with Erving Goffman and Lewis Coser, "The Conservatory as a Greedy Total Institution" (1997a). Here I explored theory which I continue to use and even attempted to make some suggestions regarding dance curriculum.

from The Conservatory as a Greedy Total Institution (1997a)

This paper is part of my ongoing investigation into power relations in the dance classroom which will culminate with my dissertation. The overall project utilizes a form of "extreme case sampling" (Patton, 1990) featuring interviews with former students of a dance conservatory known for the cruelty of its faculty. It began with my attempt to find explanations for why these students endured and often expected abusive behavior when first training professionally. . . In this paper I explore themes from a group of interviews which focus on the dancers' feelings that this training center, which I term the Conservatory, was an enclosed isolated world which consumed their lives. I utilize the related sociological concepts of the "greedy institution" (Coser, 1974) and the "total institution" (Goffman, 1961) to consider implications for professional dance training more generally.

The interviews drawn on for this presentation were conducted with six women who attended the Conservatory as either high school or college students. All six left the Conservatory to continue their undergraduate training in university based dance programs. I quote directly from interviews with a woman I call Catherine, who attended the Conservatory in the late 70s, and two younger women, called Mo and Taylor, who attended in the late 80s and early 90s. Catherine subsequently pursued an extremely successful performing career while Mo and Taylor are still training for their own anticipated careers.

The interviewees described the Conservatory as a place where their daily routine was institutionally established and required a near total commitment of their physical and emotional resources. The intensity of the training left little time for other than recuperative activities. Most of their personal lives revolved around fellow dancers and much time was spent discussing their teachers and other students. The uninviting community adjacent to the Conservatory encouraged students to confine their activities to the campus. Their understanding of dance was constrained by the visions of their teachers. Their sense of anything outside of the dance world was limited and often perceived as unimportant at the time.

This portrait of an all consuming training schedule and an enclosed world relate closely to aspects of both the greedy and the total institution. Lewis Coser developed his ideas regarding greedy institutions, which "make total claims on their members and which attempt to encompass within their circle the whole personality" (1974, p. 4), through study of organizations such as the Jesuits and the Bolshevik Party. Erving Goffman's study of a mental hospital produced his concept of the total institution which

> may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life" (1961, p. xiii).

Though I look at each concept separately, my aim is to bring both together in the hybrid of the greedy total institution. I use these

concepts not to say that the conservatory is a prison or an asylum or a cult, though I find the resemblances startling. Instead I am using these ideas in order to "unthink" (Bush in Morgall, 1993, p. 129) our taken for granted notions about the way things are so that we can more easily rethink how we go about educating dancers.

Goffman contrasts the total institution with what he terms "a basic social arrangement in modern society" in which

> the individual tends to sleep, play, and work in different places, with different co-participants, under different authorities, and without an over-all rational plan.

For Goffman

> the central feature of total institutions can be described as a breakdown of the barriers ordinarily separating these three spheres of life. First, all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority. Second, each phase of the member's daily activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together. Third, all phases of the day's activities are tightly scheduled, with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials. Finally, the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution. (1961, pp. 5-6)

This description of the total institution is readily applicable to the observable social structure of the Conservatory. More telling perhaps is the lived experience of Conservatory students. Catherine stated that

> it's like being in a little prison, that school. There's just a whole system when you're in high school. You are regulated. You have certain hours that you need to be in the door. You have room checks. You have hall checks. You have the cafeteria that you ate at 3 times a day. The class. The schedule. It is a kind of emotional prison.

Mo told me about her schedule as a high school student in the modern dance department:

> Well, it started out, eight o'clock was an academic, nine o'clock academic. Then ten o'clock I'd have technique, modern technique. Then eleven thirty I would have ballet technique. And then one I'd have lunch. Then two an academic, three an academic, four a dance class, five a dance class. And then dinner at six. And then we were expected to go back into the studios and work on what we had done in class that day. And then I go home and try to do my homework. The pressure is hard. It's really hard to be that young and be on a schedule like that.

Goffman explains how the nature of power relations within the total institution are established upon initial entry:

> Staff often feel that a recruit's readiness to be appropriately deferential in his initial face-to-face encounters with them is a sign that he will take the role of the routinely pliant inmate. The occasion on which staff members first tell the inmate of his deference obligations may be structured to challenge the inmate to balk or to hold his peace forever. Thus these initial moments of socialization may involve an "obedience test" and even a will-breaking contest: an inmate who shows defiance receives immediate visible punishment, which increases until he openly "cries uncle" and humbles himself.
>
> (1961, pp. 16-17)

While Goffman is addressing initial entry into the institution, Taylor told of a similar experience of her first encounter with a particularly brutal faculty member I call the Teacher:

> This is my first exposure to modern ever. And I was thirteen and my first modern class and I'd heard horror stories about the Teacher and I was petrified. I mean we all were . . . We were all just scared to death of what he was going to be like. And we went in the class and I was doing something and I started tugging on the back of my leotard cause it started rising up in the back. And I pulled it out and he came up to me and he said, "If you touch your leotard one more time. I'll pull it so far up your ass, I'll split you in two like a chicken and make you bleed." I never touched my leotard again. And then another girl that was in the class was doing the same thing and

so he gave her a huge wedgie and made her wear it like that for the whole class. And this is sort of our introduction to modern.

Such events set the ongoing tone of training at the conservatory as Mo revealed:

> People are at different stages . . . They're all very good but they come in at different points. And what they do is they break you down to nothing. I mean, after my first semester there I felt like I had lost all the technique that I had ever had. I felt like I could not dance at all . . . And they break you down mentally, I guess in a way you feel like that. And then what they do is they build you back up through the rest of your years there the way that they think that a professional dancer should be.

Dancers describe dance training at the Conservatory as always entailing much abusive behavior, usually verbal but occasionally physical. Yet they chose to stay and endure various hardships in part because they believed that the Conservatory would provide them with the necessary training to achieve their goals. In many ways, the Conservatory represented their dreams of being dancers. This belief is an example of the functioning of a greedy institution which Lewis Coser describes as "maximizing assent . . . by appearing highly desirable to the participants." (1974, p. 6) Taylor pointed out that "they sort of make you think that that school is the begin all, end all first of all. And if you want to be anybody, this is the place to be."

But such beliefs were not simply illusions, as Mo explained one of her reasons for staying:

> I saw that every time somebody graduated they had jobs like that . . . You think, well they had to be like me when they were here . . . So I guess that kept me going. And plus everybody that graduated there that I knew got jobs. I mean, good jobs. It's almost like, if they can get me ready for that, you know. That's what I really want to do so if they can really get me ready for it.

As students became accustomed to their environment, the Conservatory began to feel like their only place in the world. As Coser puts it,

> being insulated from competing relationships, and from competing anchors for their social identity, these selected status-occupants find their identity anchored in the symbolic universe of the restricted role-set of the greedy institution. (1974, pp. 8-9)

One aspect of this process entailed being cut off from their former friends. Mo related that

> I had to grow up real fast there. Where I'd call my friends that I'd grown up with at home . . . and they're like oh we ran around in my car last night and got drunk in the car. And I was like, let me just tell you about the day I had. My teacher called me a bitch today, I had the worst fight. And they could just not even comprehend anything that I was going through

> because they weren't. I lost a lot of the friends that I had. Because we couldn't really relate to each other. Because I was maturing a lot faster, well I had to. I was living away from home. They weren't. And just being in that kind of situation. So that was hard.

Taylor concurred:

> I knew I didn't want to go back to the public school because I had changed too much to go back. I noticed that I didn't really relate to my public school friends the same. And I think a lot of that was just the kind of environment, I had to grow up so quickly.

For Taylor this process occurred without her officially residing on campus:

> Even though I was living at home, after like my first or second year I wasn't really living at home anymore . . . I was rehearsing until 11 sometimes 12 . . . and then coming back for class at 8:30 in the morning the next day.

Taylor's situation supports the idea that the conditions of Conservatory training as a greedy total institution apply whether the student is in residence or not. Remembering that such an institution demands one's total commitment and cuts one off from the larger society, we can begin to think of the greedy total institution as a mobile, internalized state of being. What makes this hybrid concept even more useful is to extend it to the total life of the professional dancer from elite education to elite practice. Such an orientation is

clearly suggested by Catherine as she reflects upon her life as a performer in relation to her experiences of the Conservatory:

> I still think of that little room that I took class in every day in high school and think of it as an incubator. Or a greenhouse. Or a prison. And somehow that never left me. That intense room I've been living in for 17 years. 17 years I've put into working my butt off to be as good as I be and that took all of my stuff. I didn't have any really successful relationships with other people because . . . traveling all around the world wasn't really conducive for me to be in a relationship. I didn't have that learning experience fully. There's a lot I feel like I missed out on.

Catherine's metaphor of the "little room" provides another way of understanding the mobility of the greedy total institution as we follow the dancer's career from conservatory to the performing world. Mo has realized, though still training, that life as a professional dancer will be as consuming and restrictive as life at the conservatory:

> I have friends that have gone on and are in companies and stuff now. And you know it's hard. You don't make any money. You're performing all the time, you don't have a social life and all these things . . . And a lot of people that I've talked to that are in companies, they hate touring. That's like the worst part of being in a company they say . . . there's things like being on a plane all day and then getting off and having to

perform in a few hours and things like that that are real hard that make touring not so fun.

Catherine, though still in her thirties, was looking back at a life of enclosure. Though still a relatively young woman, Catherine's reflexivity was deepened due to a major debilitating injury requiring surgery and a multiyear recovery process. When I spoke with her, she was sorting out alternate career possibilities and realizing she had little or no experience in anything other than dance. The greedy consuming of her life by dance left little possibility for other directions. This lack of alternatives brought on by an exclusionary education was also noted by Taylor:

> It's like a little world in its own. And I sort of lost touch with the world outside of that school. Because you're there twenty four-seven. I didn't know anything else. What else am I going to do? All I've done all my life is dance. I don't know how to do anything else. You know? . . . I was talking to someone. I said, I've never even played a sport in my life. I don't know how to play one sport . . . They train people to be stupid dancers in a way. There's not even a typing course offered. There's not a computer course. It's like, this is the only avenue you have if you come to this school.

Such observations raise the question of how we train professional dancers, particularly when we know that the majority will not go on to reasonably paying performing careers. We must consider the possibility that dancers are impoverished by dance as a greedy total

institution. Yet I also want to ask, does the experience of Conservatory dancers suggest possibilities for re-envisioning dance training? Let me consider a few ideas and draw some conclusions while being clear about the fact that I am thinking my way into a problem rather than presenting finalized curricular proposals.

For instance, we must recognize the pleasure in immersing oneself in the world of dance and in a total arts environment. Mo described such pleasure:

> When I first got there it was like magic . . . because you were totally surrounded by artists. I mean you're closed off and . . . you're surrounded by very talented people. . . . You don't get to take advantage of the other arts as far as classwise because you don't have the time. But you know there's always music going on everywhere or people always dancing . . . people all over the place stretching and classes going on like five classes you can hear the pianist from each class. Cause there's so many classes going on at once. Things like that are magic to me.

We might also look at how students of the Conservatory cope with stress. For Mo, coping strategies included finding friends outside the dance department:

> I made good friends there but none of my friends were dancers . . . all the people in dance talked about was dance or people in the dance department or how fat you are or how this sucks or how that sucks. So instead of hearing about that all

> the time . . . I wanted to talk about something else when I went home at night. So I had friends that were visual artists and actors and singers and stuff. And that was nice. That was like an outlet for me. Even though I didn't leave that campus, you know.

Mo also commented on some of the differences between the Conservatory and the University at which she now studies dance.

> I finally realized that the [University] department is not bad. It's just that they don't baby-sit you here . . . [At the Conservatory] they make you take floor barre. They make you take body conditioning. They motivate you there . . . While here [at the University], I think that they just leave all that up to you if you really want to dance. They'll give you classes and they'll give you training. But they leave all that up to you. As far as getting yourself in shape and taking care of yourself and motivating yourself.

Taken together these statements, in relation to earlier comments, suggest that in an atmosphere of total immersion it would be better to loosen both internal and external boundaries which define and compartmentalize the total institution. For example, encouraging interaction between disciplines would help dancers relate their concerns to those of other students. Furthermore the rigidity and excessive demands of the curriculum must be challenged to undermine its greedy total aspects. Rather than controlling and monitoring every moment of the dancer's training we must allow dancers more

responsibility for their own education. To some degree, dancers are trained as if they are incapable of doing things for themselves. By giving them the benefit of the doubt and the resources and support necessary to accomplish their goals, we can begin to move away from this totally greedy notion of training and towards a more fruitful model of education.

Recently I was discussing how departmental programs could be made less greedy and total with Susan Van Pelt, with whom I am collaborating on some related work. She pointed out that one of the biggest obstacles to faculty experimenting with dance programs is the issue of accreditation and attendant curricular requirements. Our discussion made me realize that, if I intend to make concrete proposals based on my research, one of my next steps must be to look at the institutional restraints on rethinking professional dance education. But I also wonder if, in our struggles to validate dance as a legitimate discipline, we have painted ourselves into a corner? Rethinking dance education will inevitably involve reworking institutional frameworks.

Many other complex and contradictory issues are raised by this material. However I must bring this particular writing to a close with the observation that as I discuss this work with dance educators, I increasingly discover that many people are reconsidering business as usual in the dance classroom, from the teaching of technique classes to the overall curriculum of dance programs. My hope is that my own unthinking of the assumptions that I encounter can be part of a larger rethinking of dance education.

Further Experiments

While I was happy with this mix of voices/data, theory and analysis, I quickly discovered that my presentation was somewhat threatening to others. I presented "The Conservatory as a Greedy Total Institution" (1997a) at the 1997 Congress on Research in Dance (CORD) at the University of Arizona at Tucson. There I encountered resistance and defensive responses in addition to a number of requests for copies of the paper. One respondent was concerned that I might be generalizing or claiming that all dance classrooms were greedy total institutions. At the time I did not respond adequately but would now say that, while all classrooms are different, this work is worth considering when looking at any dance class. Another respondent claimed that what I was writing about was simply "bad" teaching with what I took as the implication that a "good" teacher would not have to be concerned about the ramifications of my critique.

This experience raised issues which remain important to this study, in particular, how does one put forth a strong critique in such a way that it is not simply rejected out of hand. Simply criticizing my own practices did not seem to be enough especially when speaking with an accusatory voice similar to that of neoMarxist cultural critics. Nevertheless, my claim that there is a typical approach to technique classes was an attempt to move away from fingerpointing and shift to a more structural level which implicates all dance educators. Such a move is intended to encourage self

critical attitudes which will better enable us to reimagine the possibilities for teaching dancers.

Goffman (1961) expressed similar views in relationship to his own work:

> I feel we will give less praise and blame to particular superintendents, commandants, wardens, and abbots, and tend more to understand the social problems and issues in total institutions by appealing to the underlying structural design common to them all. (p. 124)

With Goffman I was beginning to lose interest in praising or blaming specific teachers and in finding common structural features that pervade dance education. Yet I also reject the reductive belief that underlying patterns determine behavior. Such patterns do exist and are important in considering what occurs in the classroom but human behavior cannot be considered simply a product of these patterns. For this project I have chosen to negotiate these concerns by making various connections to the larger world of dance training while focusing on how the material generated in this study of Conservatory students' experiences can be applied to a particular classroom, as I discuss in Chapter 4 regarding my work with Susan Van Pelt.

By the time I presented this paper at CORD, I had already begun working with Susan Van Pelt and had completed the series of interviews I intended to do regarding the Conservatory. My concern with finding a way to remain mobile and to discover a way to

connect extremes had led me away from attempting an ethnographic portrait of the Conservatory. It was not that such a portrait would be in conflict with my project but it would lead me more towards focusing on a sensational tale which would all too easily be considered an aberration. Instead I wanted to use the notion of an extreme case sample to highlight issues relevant to other settings. To some degree I had what I needed to move on with my project and I was willing to accept that a detailed understanding of the Conservatory, though potentially useful, would not be a part of this project. Though I was working with Susan I also continued exploring the limited sample I had gathered regarding the Conservatory. As I discuss in the next essay "Power Relations in the Dance Classroom: Alternative Forms of Data Presentation" (1999a), I was greatly influenced by a course on writing and qualitative research with Laurel Richardson. This essay continued my experiments with the presentation of the respondents' words.

from Power Relations in the Dance Classroom:
Alternative Forms of Data Presentation (1999a)

These experimental writings combine interview material, observations and quotations from relevant literature. The writings focus on specific themes which emerged during the course of this project. These themes are articulated in pieces which sometimes take on a poetic, collage-like form and, at other times, transgress the established norms for representing interview data through other means. . . Catherine's Body (remembering the Conservatory), focuses on one respondent's thoughts almost fifteen years after her experience of abusive training. It is a poetic arrangement of lines from interviews I conducted with her. It is followed by a three line piece, And Yet, that I consider an extension of the first, offering a sense of hope. . .

[This work] represent[s] the meager beginnings of my exploration of experimental writing forms inspired by my earlier career as a performance poet and by research coursework with Laurel Richardson. Richardson is a sociologist who has become somewhat infamous for a work in which she arranged lines from an interview into poetic form. This work, Louisa May's Story of Her Life (1997, p. 131) "displays how sociological authority is constructed and problematizes reliability, validity, and truth" (p. 165). Richardson justifies her experiments with interview material by pointing out that

> in the routine world of the sociological interviewer, the interview is tape-recorded, transcribed as prose, and then cut, pasted, edited, trimmed, smoothed, and snipped, just as if it were a literary text, which it is, albeit usually without explicit acknowledgement or recognition of such by its sociological constructor. . . The sociologist/poet . . . by violating the conventions of how sociological interviews are written up, [uncovers] those conventions . . . as choices authors make, not rules for writing truths. (1997, pp. 140, 142)

Richardson as "sociologist/poet" is not simply relating art and research but doing artistic research, a possibility that should also inspire those who wish to focus their research interests on making dances. She further explains that

> we usually think about writing as a mode of 'telling' about the social world, [but] writing is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of a research project. Writing is also a way of 'knowing' - a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it. (1994, p. 516)

For me, exploring different forms of presenting data and analysis is a way of discovering new relationships to the material gathered in interviews, recorded in my research journal, collected from theorists. Though my own efforts are a rather simple beginning, they also gesture towards an expanded research imaginary. Such efforts offer

additional ways to bypass our prior assumptions about teaching dance so that we may rethink our approaches to dance education.

Catherine's Body (remembering the Conservatory)

It's what they did to my body. That's where I hold the biggest grudge.

i have things that i can't clear in my body from that time period

I'm supposed to believe I wouldn't have made it if I didn't crash my body into some kind of technique. I developed terrible muscular habits from that in one year.

i just feel totally maimed by that technique

In a certain way you're kind of stranded like you either sink or you swim. So if you can't swim that well . . . think about how you struggle in the water. Class every day was like that for me on a physical level.

i feel completely physically scarred from that school

What happens too is because of the setup of the class being so intense and being relatively, I would say, frightening. Over fifty percent of your class time there was something derogatory at somebody. That got put into my nervous system along with my muscles.

you're totally vulnerable because your body's totally exposed

So when I got into dancing with T. and trying to do Alexander work or anything where I was listening to my body, my body was so tense. Like I had all this movement in my body and I squeezed all my movement to fit my body into a technique.

i think i'll spend the rest of my life trying to let go

of this physical imprint that that school made on my body

I go into this company where there's no designated technique. You're completely responsible for your own body. It was really lonely. Like I remember feeling two years ago, I really started longing for a classroom situation.

these people have made me scared to death to teach

When I think about teaching I would want to set up the most independent situation for the person in the classroom . . . with a support structure and a structure for conveying and sharing as much as I could possibly know with them.

i don't ever want to be responsible for anybody's pain like that

If someone was doing something that looked horrible or doing something terrible to their body, I would want to get to them. If they're doing something terrible to their body it's because they don't know any better and that might not necessarily be because they're stupid. It might be because they came from a fucking shitty place like the Conservatory.

the big question [is] can you ever get from point a to point b
or point a to point c without the terror b in the middle?

<u>And Yet</u>

I'm feeling right now in my life
that I really got to be in beautiful places
with my relationship to my body and my dancing.

The Work Continues

I presented "Power Relations in the Dance Classroom: Alternative Forms of Data Presentation" (1999a) at the inaugural conference of the National Dance Education Organization in 1999 in Cincinnati, Ohio. This essay also included a second experimental text entitled "I See You, You See You: the mirror as a technology of surveillance in the dance classroom" which I save for Chapter 4 where I discuss my work with Susan Van Pelt. During this period I did a number of such textual experiments including "Undisciplined thoughts regarding individuation via surveillance and documentation" (1999c) which is included in Appendix B. I was also continuing to explore various theoretical perspectives including the relationship of science and technology studies to dance technique. A short essay from this time which uses feminist critiques of technology entitled "On Considering Dance Education as a Form of Technology" (1997b) is included in Appendix C. This paper was written while working with Suzanne Damarin in a course on gender studies and technology. However I was to settle on the work of Michel Foucault, Arthur Deikman, Erving Goffman and Lewis Coser as key theories for my toolbox which allowed me to construct a theoretical network.

CHAPTER 2

Gathering Tools to Build a Theoretical Network

From the beginning of this project I took an eclectic approach to developing a theoretical perspective. Initially I looked for theoretical work outside of the field of dance to help me elude obvious ways of thinking. In the early phases I thought of myself as gathering theories in a "toolbox" (Foucault in Eribon, 1991, p. 237) which aided me in developing a flexible, mobile approach which undermined the static notion of a theoretical framework. Many of my early interview questions and coding themes came from these initial theoretical tools. But very quickly this linear development grew complex and the subsequent direction was formed through an interplay of theories and data. In addition, I began looking more closely at dance literature to see how other writers spoke of the technique class. The results of this search are dispersed throughout the overall dissertation text. This process led me to the concept of a theoretical network, one which is flexible and allows for great mobility. The current coding themes used with the interviews in this chapter can be thought of as points of intersections which form element of the larger network. This network includes elements

which are neither visible in this study nor in the limits of my own understanding of this topic.

Theoretical Triangulation

My choice of theories grew initially from my own self reflection. Having studied with over thirty dance teachers, primarily in modern and ballet, I had a great deal of informally gathered data to use in identifying useful theories. This process can be loosely described as a form of "theoretical triangulation" (Denzin, 1989, p. 240). Denzin draws on the work of Frank Westie to discuss one approach to theoretical triangulation which involves selecting from the

> many contradictory propositions already held in the field, a particular proposition or set of propositions, which are relevant to the problem at hand and which appear to make sense in terms of what the investigator already knows about the aspect of society under investigation,
> (Westie in Denzin, 1989, p. 240)

While Denzin expresses concern regarding the limits of "what one 'already knows,'" I feel confident that my lived sample of multiple teachers scattered about the country formed a reasonable starting place.

Denzin proposes that "theoretical triangulation is best seen as a method of widening one's theoretical framework as empirical materials are interpreted" (p. 241). However, his recommendation that one "use all the interpretations that could conceivably be applied to a given area" seems a bit absurd for interdisciplinary

work. While I strive to be thorough, simply gathering the wide range of potential theoretical and respondent interpretations appears to be capable of becoming a life's work. But such are the difficulties of interdisciplinary work in a postparadigmatic diaspora. The largest difficulty being, where does one draw boundaries on one's study? While this problem confronts all researchers, the fluid nature of my approach makes boundary drawing an ongoing, thoroughly embedded activity. Nevertheless Denzin's notion relates closely to my own search for theory and the ensuing interplay with empirical data.

Theorists of the Extreme

The theorists I eventually drew on most regularly, Michel Foucault, Arthur Deikman, Erving Goffman and Lewis Coser, all studied what can be considered extreme settings. Their work highlights prisons, cults, the military and asylums. All write with an awareness of the connections between these settings and the societies of which they are a part. However Foucault and Deikman, in somewhat different terms, are particularly powerful in not just making connections but in discussing forms of consciousness which permeate society. This focus relates well to the Conservatory as an extreme case sample and the connections they make help me in relating the Conservatory to other teaching settings as well as to larger societal concerns.

Since these theories came out of the study of extreme settings, I should point out that I use them not to say that the conservatory is a prison or an asylum or a cult, though I find the resemblances startling. Instead I am using these ideas in order to "unthink" (Bush

in Morgall, 1993, p. 129) taken for granted notions about the way things are so that I can more easily rethink what happens in the dance classroom. This unthinking is one step in the

> development of means of inquiry that 'denaturalize' the many shifting relations of power in our daily pedagogical work. (McWilliam, 1994, pp. 46-47)

Looking at the dance classroom from its similarities to a prison or cult allows me to denaturalize the setting and see issues regarding power that might otherwise be overlooked if we take the basic dynamics of the typical classroom for granted.

The Typical Dance Classroom

My initial observation based on prior experiences, one which I continue to hold, is that there is a typical form or structure in the concert dance technique class, that is the class designed to create and maintain the physical and mental needs of the contemporary professional dancer. Today any advanced dancer training in ballet, modern or jazz will have been socialized in the ways of the technique class and will often expect to be in class on a daily basis. From children's classes to nonprofessional classes to classes for working professionals certain elements tend to recur. The teacher is in charge and is the final arbiter of appropriate behavior. The teacher talks, the dancers listen and attempt to follow each command as accurately as possible.

The dancers wear revealing clothing and are evenly arranged in an empty room for easy observation. They generally attempt to replicate every movement detail demonstrated or demanded by the

teacher. Usually these activities are done in specific rhythmic patterns as chosen by the teacher and illustrated by accompanying music. The typical dance class centers power in the teacher. The dance student's role is to exhibit explicit outward manifestations of compliance with the teacher's demands. I believe that this situation is so taken for granted that dancers rarely discuss it except when its conventions are violated. Unthinking this element of the dance classroom imaginary, of the limits of how we imagine our classrooms, has become a crucial element in my attempts to understand power relations in such settings.

Of course, the details vary with each particular classroom setting. But over a six year period of involvement with this project, I have yet to find disconfirming evidence of this basic structure in any event referred to as a dance technique class, except for the rare case where a teacher is attempting to consciously rethink such classes. These efforts usually meet with much resistance from students and sometimes other faculty. In everyday dance settings, deviations from the established expectations of both teachers and students are immediately noticed as exceptional. Most disturbing is the fact that a classroom of misbehaving dancers is considered to be a sign of bad students, bad teaching or both while behavior many consider abusive is met with mixed feelings. For example, the Conservatory interviews reveal a full range of responses to abusive treatment. The underlying structure which limits the imaginary of the dance classroom offers an intersection between classes that

range as widely as those of the Conservatory and what I will term in relation to Susan Van Pelt's teaching, the "Caring Classroom."

A key dynamic of the typical dance technique class is what Paulo Freire (1997) terms the "banking" method of education in which,

> instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. . . the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. (p. 53)

While accurate in its linear model of teacher input/student output, this model is also dangerous if used reductively. It leads all too easily to dualistic notions of good and bad teaching, of oppressor and oppressed, though it certainly lends itself readily to describing overt teacher domination of students. While such distinctions have their place, they do not adequately explain the complexities of human relationships.

The underlying structure does forefront and facilitate whatever behavior the teacher wishes to display. It also helps construct an imaginary which limits thought. But there are multiple interpretations of particular situations which lead to a wide range of complications and ambiguities. Ambiguity was quite visible in the Conservatory interviews where, to some degree, the typical dynamic facilitated the normalization of abusive behavior. Within a few lines, even within one line, one respondent moved from condemnation to praise of Conservatory teachers. Another focused on condemnation occasionally pausing to note things for which she

was grateful. A third condemned the behavior of faculty but remained grateful for the overall situation whose trials and tribulations led her to another way, to a life about which she felt extremely positive.

I will return to this topic in Chapter 3 but even these brief comments raise important issues regarding theoretical structures. How can one construct a framework for such a complex situation, without reducing it to a structurally deterministic view which does violence to the complexity of human interpretation, unless it is extremely flexible? Mobility is also necessary if one intends to explore not just one site but open up the possibility of addressing multiple situations. Certainly the idea of a framework could simply be reimagined yet the term ultimately sits in my mind as a stable structure, one which contains an immobilizing tendency towards inertia. So what's a bricoleur to do?

In my case it has been necessary to assemble a toolbox of useful theories in order to construct a theoretical network. This approach was initially inspired by Foucault's statement that,

> All my books . . . are little toolboxes, if you will. If people are willing to open them and make use of such and such a sentence or idea, of one analysis or another, as they would a screwdriver or a monkey wrench, in order to short circuit or disqualify systems of power, including even possibly the ones my books come out of, well, all the better. (Michel Foucault in Eribon, 1991, p. 237)

I was further inspired by the notion of the bricoleur which is used as a metaphor by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) throughout the Handbook of Qualitative Research.

Denzin and Lincoln draw from and expand upon Levi-Strauss's description of the bricoleur as a "Jack of all trades or a kind of professional do-it-yourself person" (in Denzin & Lincoln, p. 2). They describe the bricoleur as one who "produces a bricolage, that is, a pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation." Their feeling that the "researcher-as-*bricoleur*-theorist works between and within competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms" (pp. 2-3) confirmed an approach which I had begun long before I encountered their work. Furthermore, their use of bricolage to describe both a method of working and a result which is a "complex, dense, reflexive, collagelike creation" (p. 3) is clearly in keeping with both the process and product of this project. My assembly of a bricoleur's toolbox began with the work of Foucault and Deikman and later settled upon the addition of Goffman and Coser.

Disciplining the Dancing Body

The act of looking over and being looked over will be a central means by which individuals are linked together in a disciplinary space. The control of bodies depends on an optics of power. The first model of this control through surveillance, efficiency through the gaze, order through spatial structure, was the military camp. (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, pp. 156-7)

As I discussed in my pilot study, "On Authoritarianism in the Dance Classroom" included in Chapter 1, Foucault's work in Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (1979) reads at times as if it used the typical dance classroom as its focus. Foucault's discussion of the production of the "docile" body (p. 138) through the exercise of disciplinary power relates to the goals of both dominating and caring teachers. As Foucault states, "a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (p. 136). He specifies that

> discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise. (p. 170)

Docile bodies are the goal of much dance training as dancers become the material for the teacher's or choreographer's vision.

Foucault reveals that surveillance is a key disciplinary tactic in forming and directing the docile body. According to Foucault, surveillance is a form of observation which is most effective when it is applied to the self. This application occurs when an atmosphere of constant surveillance is created by the observer, so that the observed always feels watched. This feeling in turn creates a situation in which the observed ultimately maintains a state of self surveillance whether or not the surveilling power is actually present. The dance classroom, with its mirrors, watchful teachers and self critical students, is a key site for both the external and internal surveillance of dancing bodies.

Foucault articulates visions of docile bodies arranged in space for easy surveillance, of the production of subjects who internalize surveillance, of the normalization of these processes and modes of being. The appropriateness of this material was quickly brought home when I subsequently took a dance appreciation class into the studio and automatically arranged the students in space, let them know they were watched and enjoyed the activities of those who internalized the appropriate behavior. From the beginning I found Foucault's perspective quite useful in understanding power as a complex, mobile, ever present force in our daily lives.

A major element of Foucault's work, beginning with Discipline & Punish, has to do with shifts in conceptions of power. A dominant theoretical perspective regards power "as power over others" (Kreisberg, 1992, p. 38). Kreisberg, in a study of power and education, states that Hobbes' use of this notion

> combined with . . . [an] application of the mechanistic notions of cause and effect to power relations and his view of human beings as essentially separate, in constant conflict for scarce resources, and in need of imposed order, was to have profound influence on most power theories that followed. (pp. 38-39)

Mills' (1959) statement that "power refers to the realization of one's will even if others resist" (p. 208) is but one restatement of this perspective. Such a "view of power as restricted to relationships of domination is constricting . . . [and] limits our sense of possibility" (Kreisberg, p. 53).

> Kreisberg is drawn to Foucault's insight that in the ongoing interplay of knowledge and power . . . new formations, new correspondences, new techniques, practices, and strategies are always emerging and re-forming. (p. 52)

When I began working with Foucault I found this shift in viewing power to be both liberating and oppressive. The liberation came in discovering an articulation of power more subtle and more accurate than earlier critical/feminist formulations, i.e. an effective tool for understanding power. It allowed me to move beyond the more obvious oppressor/oppressed model implied in simplistic uses of Freirian and other liberatory analyses towards a recognition of both the fluidity and the pervasiveness of power.

The oppressive part came from the deep-seated reminder, something I had encountered before, that power "permeates all levels of social existence" (Racevskis, 1983, p. 93). At the time, in the midst of immersing myself in Foucault's formulations, this realization was both overwhelming and paralyzing causing me to reassess my assumptions about the dance classroom. This feeling of being unable to proceed is one which Foucault (1991) remarks upon:

> When the book came out, various readers - particularly prison guards, social workers, etc. - gave this singular judgment: 'It is paralyzing. There may be some correct observations, but in any case it certainly has its limits, because it blocks us, it prevents us from continuing our activities.' My reply is that it is just that relation that proves the success of the work, proves

> that it worked as I had wanted it to. That is, it is read as an experience that changes us, that prevents us from always being the same, or from having the same kind of relationship with things and with others that we had before reading it. (p. 41)

The overwhelmed feeling was heightened by the seeming absence of a Foucauldian notion of agency in Discipline and Punish. However if one takes a look at Discipline and Punish in relation to Foucault's later work and political activity (Eribon, 1991), one recognizes that his notion of agency is quite potent. Related work includes his History of Sexuality series (1986, 1990a, 1990b) originally published in English in the late 70s and mid 80s and collections of articles and interviews (1988a, 1988b, 1991, 1996). He went so far as to equate the construction of self with art when he asked rhetorically, "but couldn't everyone's life become a work of art?" (Foucault in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 236).

So why do people continue to claim that he does not address such issues? Foucault (1991) suggested that it is,

> partially the result of the old, well-rooted vice of judging a book as if it were a kind of absolute, perfectly elaborated in each of its elements. . . I write books in progression: the first leaves open problems upon which the second one rests; which, in turn, requires another one. And all of that doesn't happen in linear fashion or continuity; these same texts overlap and criss-cross one another. (p. 98)

Perhaps such an explanation is sufficient, though Foucault's English publications often came closely together. But perhaps the

sometimes disturbing implications of Foucault's work also cause mixed feelings.

An example of apparent mixed feelings regarding Foucault appears in the rare discussion of his thought related to dance by a researcher I consider a colleague, Sherry Shapiro. Sherry's recent publication Pedagogy and the Politics of the Body (1999) is well worth reading and draws primarily on theorists other than Foucault. Yet at one point she mentions him for many of the same reasons I do claiming that

> we are all now the children of Foucault, seeing the social world as forever bound in webs of authority and power. Of course, to lose our innocence about the ubiquity of power even in the most liberational of classrooms is to undercut our convictions, potentially at least, about the possibility of genuinely democratic educational spaces. We have also to view our own role as teachers with much more wary eyes. This has certainly been apparent in the important interventions in critical pedagogy by certain feminist writers who have pointed to the hidden uses of power even by those committed to a transformational education. Critical pedagogues arrogate to themselves the superior capacity to decode the experience and meanings of students - a practice that in this account must inevitably reconstruct the hierarchical structures of schools. (pp. 142-143)

Sherry's concerns regarding the excesses of critical pedagogy and her recognition of the need for wariness are indeed benefits derived

in part from the study of Foucault's work. But she expresses uneasiness at the possible implications of such wariness.

Furthermore, Sherry appears to feel that Foucault's usefulness ends there. She claims that work like his objectifies the body and "seems to exclude any notion of what I have called in this book the 'body/subject,' which is to say, the body as a place from which human actions and creativity emanate" (p. 161). Such an interpretation only stands up if one takes a book such as Discipline and Punish separate from other work and then without imagining the possibilities for its use in a struggle to create space for an embodied "practice of creativity" (Foucault in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 237). Foucault, in turning away from notions of authenticity, did not then treat the body as merely an object of disciplinary power. He ultimately maintained that the "practical consequence" of a move away from such notions was that "we have to create ourselves as a work of art."

When I first encountered Foucault I did not pursue his later thinking and initially struggled with feelings of paralysis due to my heightened awareness of power relations. Nonetheless I felt that his explorations in Discipline and Punish and also in Power/Knowledge (1980) could certainly be interfaced with notions of agency. One place I turned for ideas about agency in relationship to oppression was the work of Arthur Deikman regarding the formation of cults which require, at some level, the active voluntary involvement of participants to succeed.

Dance Cult

I drew upon the literature regarding cult formation partly because of comments made by a Conservatory student in the late 1970s. He described the Conservatory teaching process as one in which the dancer's ego is broken down and then built back up in the teacher's image. In the 1980s, as I studied various social and political organizations, I came upon accounts of numerous cultlike groups which were based on psychotherapy or drama therapy. Participants who left told similar accounts of ego breakdown and reconstruction which resonated with this dancer's comments. Upon embarking upon this project I turned to related literature and found Arthur Deikman's The Wrong Way Home: Uncovering the Patterns of Cult Behavior in American Society (1990) to be particularly relevant.

Deikman identifies "four basic behaviors found in extreme form in cults: compliance with the group, dependence on a leader, devaluing the outsider, and avoiding dissent" (p. 48). He also points to recurring early experiences of people who join cults, which are "interpreted as validating the claim that the leader and group" are "special" (p. 4). These experiences of "transcendence" or the like cause individuals to accept limits imposed by the leader in order to become members of the group. The leader is identified as someone who can provide the experience necessary for the individual to achieve particular goals such as "enlightenment," which the initial experience has shown to be possible. Within the group, members

view themselves as an elite and devalue the beliefs of those not in the group.

Dissent is avoided within the group and suppressed forcefully whenever it arises. Individuals "surrender" to the leader since "obedience is the prime virtue in all authoritarian systems" (p. 85). Because "the leader is accepted as having special powers and/or semidivine status," his or her actions are

> outside the behavior norms of the ordinary person. . . similar exemptions from the rules and the accompanying claim to infallibility enables many a leader to perform unethical acts that would otherwise not be countenanced. (p. 79)

Clearly the participation of cult members is necessary for this relationship to continue for an extended period, an example of agency albeit an unpleasant one.

Arthur Deikman's The Wrong Way Home offers a convincing model of how cults operate. This model is especially relevant to the Conservatory classroom, since a dancer must fit in with group behavior which is dependent on the teacher. The teacher, like the cult leader, is perceived as the vehicle for the transformation of the dancer. At the Conservatory, the dancer is part of an elite and though he or she may express dissent outside, when in class, little or no dissent is possible. These cultlike elements are especially facilitated by the enclosed isolated world of conservatory training, which relates closely to aspects of both the greedy and the total institution.

The Greedy Total Institution

The metaphors of the greedy institution and the total institution come from the work of Lewis Coser and Erving Goffman. Lewis Coser developed his ideas regarding greedy institutions, which "make total claims on their members and which attempt to encompass within their circle the whole personality" (1974, p. 4), through study of organizations such as the Jesuits and the Bolshevik Party. Erving Goffman's study of a mental hospital produced his concept of the total institution which

> may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life. (1961, p. xiii)

I hybridized these concepts in a paper entitled, "The Conservatory as a Greedy Total Institution" (Smith, 1997a), which is included in Chapter 1.

In this paper I explore a number of connections between the experiences of Conservatory students and the populations which Coser and Goffman studied. Their work offers insight into the functioning of institutions similar to the Conservatory that help explain why students might accept abusive behavior. The key idea which I continue to use is the hybrid greedy total institution which consumes one's energy through an all-encompassing schedule of demands in a setting which is cut off from the larger society and the participant's previous life. These ideas interface well with the work of Deikman and Foucault and seem to be direct descriptions of

Conservatory life. Most obviously Coser's greedy institution relates to Deikman's study of cults. Goffman's total institution connects closely to Foucault's use of Bentham's Panopticon, the unrealized model of an idealized prison.

For the most part, I draw together Deikman, Coser and Goffman through Foucault's theoretical contributions. I have accumulated theoretical concepts, e.g. surveillance, docile bodies, cultlike behavior, total institutions, greedy institutions, which became tools for use in gathering and reflecting upon data. These tools were pieced together over time and just as their use affected data collection, so too did reflection upon the data affect the ultimate use of particular tools.

Collecting Materials

Data collection took multiple forms in this project. Self reflective data, in the form of journal entries regarding both my own experiences in dance classes and my thoughts concerning the research process, accumulated regularly in varying degrees of intensity. The study takes its overall shape from two phases of data collection which were more clearly demarcated than, yet intertwined with, the ongoing self reflection. The first phase, which I discuss next, involved interviews with Conservatory students regarding their memories of studying there. This sample was chosen because of the intensity of the setting. It highlights elements that can then be used to consider less intense settings. The "select[ion of] information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under study" (Patton, 1990, p. 169) is called "purposeful" sampling.

The Conservatory represents a particular kind of purposeful sample termed an "extreme" case sample from which "lessons may be learned about unusual conditions or extreme outcomes that are relevant to improving more typical programs" (p. 170).

Interviews form a substantial amount of my research data. They also begin to elaborate elements of life at the Conservatory. Nonetheless, while interviewing is an ethnographic method, I am not enacting an ethnography of the Conservatory. Instead I am creating textual data which I will then analyze. While I am focused upon studying former Conservatory students' accounts of their experiences, I do not find it necessary to create a more accurate portrait of the Conservatory for this project. My investigation has led me in other directions the evolution of which I discussed in Chapter 1. An important element of this evolution has been the emergence of the metaphor of a theoretical network which I use to explore the Conservatory interviews in Chapter 3.

Constructing the Network

My desire for mobility has led me to develop the notion of a network of concepts and perspectives rather than a theoretical framework. This approach is in keeping with the intellectual currency of "nomadology" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and "travel theories" (Clifford, 1997; Pratt, 1992). But more importantly mobility is necessary to understand a Foucauldian perspective on power in which power is not a linear construct, clearly beaming down and oppressing, but a more complex, nonlinear phenomenon which emerges from multiple sources, always in motion. I use this

perspective to link other concepts sometimes embedded in more linear perspectives of power but which nonetheless offer insight into the matters at hand. This commitment to mobility is also enabled by Michel Serres's (1995b) exhortation to

> stand up, run, jump, move, dance! Like the body, the mind needs movement, especially subtle and complex movement. (p. 107)

I visualize this network as composed of multiple intersections between theories and data which can then function as coding themes. Yet the dimensions of this network extend beyond the codes explored within this project. I take up sections of the net, traversing its links, sometimes folding it up to directly interface intersections which are otherwise far apart. This folding allows me to move even more quickly and to more readily find connections between my dance experiences, a brutal Conservatory regime, a Caring Teacher's practices, the writings of multiple dance researchers, social psychologists and French theorists.

This network indicates that I am at still gesturing towards ethnography in a postmodern sense which

> moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space. This mode defines for itself an object of study that cannot be accounted for ethnographically by remaining focused on a single site of intensive investigation. . . This mobile ethnography takes unexpected trajectories in

> tracing a cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity. (Marcus, 1998, pp. 79-80)

Though I do not consider this work an ethnography because I do not ultimately spend enough time at any one site, it is a form of,

> multi-sited research [which] is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites . . . Multi-sited ethnographies define their objects of study through several different modes or techniques. These techniques might be understood as practices of construction through (preplanned or opportunistic) movement and of tracing within different settings of a complex cultural phenomenon given an initial, baseline conceptual identity that turns out to be contingent and malleable as one traces it. (p. 90)

This movement through multiple sites required me to negotiate a,

> constantly mobile, recalibrating practice of positioning in terms of the ethnographer's shifting affinities for, affiliations with, as well as alienations from, those with whom he or she interacts at different sites. (pp. 97-98)

Along the way I have felt like both an insider and an outsider which has affected the construction of my theoretical network as I sought to understand such phenomena as student experiences at the Conservatory.

CHAPTER 3
Networking Data

The process of understanding data is complex and ongoing. My analysis focuses on three primary sources: self reflections, interviews with Conservatory students and my collaboration with Susan Van Pelt. The self reflective material emerges in the narrative whenever necessary. The interviews were initially addressed in the papers included in Chapter 1 and are also the focus of this chapter. Chapter 4 will discuss my collaboration with Susan Van Pelt. From the early beginnings of this project the writing process itself has been an important analytical tool but most notably during the creation of this culminating document. While writing, images of nets and networking have slowly become clearer. I now think of myself as connecting diverse material through a process of networking which produces nets of data/theory/analysis which become chapters in a dissertation.

In as much as I hold to an image of a single network of meaning, it is one that is capable of producing multiple nets that can be handled separately. Even these nets must be quite malleable or even capable of dramatic transformation. This metaphorical play

with nets and networks is necessary for me to continue moving. I am obviously inspired by the movement visible in the work of Michel Serres. Yet, unlike Serres, I do not aspire to literature and so must return to the ground of my interview material.

In deciding what to do with my limited data set of interviews or, rather, this group of rich, evocative stories that resist being reduced to neat categories, I am faced with a dilemma. Even worse, the solution I face will inevitably involve even more interesting missed opportunities. In the beginning I imagined a headline winning expose and, at the time, an early respondent dreamed she was to appear on Oprah. From earlier experiments I also recognized the potential for an intense ethnographic portrait or a powerful oral history of the Conservatory. Recently I described my project to a filmmaker friend. He was immediately struck by how great a screenplay could be written from these stories. Perhaps one day some of these possibilities will be realized, whether or not I am involved. For now I must make a more pragmatic choice, one in keeping with my overall goals.

Over the course of this project I have gradually focused on finding ways to connect the experience of Conservatory students to other less dramatic settings. Along the way certain themes have emerged which are as much a function of the theories to which I am drawn as to any inherent truth in the interviews. Key themes remain:

the Conservatory as a greedy total institution, one which is cut off from the world and which consumes the participants' lives;

the Teacher(s) as the center of the Conservatory universe, behaving as if they are all-knowing, all-seeing purveyors of the one best way to become a dancer;

the students as an elite, destined to become the next generation of professional dancers at any cost;

their daily lives ones of sacrifice and struggle and, when pushed to the point of leaving, resulting in tales of mixed feelings from regret to appreciation.

Each of these themes can be considered intersections in my theoretical network, one in which the researcher must remain mobile because meaning itself remains mobile. A question emerges: How does the researcher avoid becoming trapped in the net of intersections, immobilized by the multiple meanings of the experiences of Conservatory students?

To effectively draw a boundary on this stage of my project, I must give up the desire for a final truth and focus upon the immediate needs of this project's trajectory or, rather, my trajectory whose traces form this document. Michael Patton (1990) says,

> qualitative data will tend to make the most sense to people who are comfortable with the idea of generating multiple

> perspectives rather than absolute truth. Tolerance for ambiguity seems to me to be associated with comfort in dealing with perspective rather than expecting certainty and truth. I prefer to remove from the shoulders of evaluators the burden of having to generate TRUTH. (p. 483)

In the sense that it allows me to actually produce a project this assertion is true but a pressure remains to do the most I can with this work, to make it useful and worth the great deal of resources that have gone into its production.

Since I see the Conservatory as an extreme case setting, one whose narratives exceed the grasp of any one theoretical framework or form of narrative, I must make a choice. The key questions for me at this point are as follows:

> Why did students perceive abusive behavior as acceptable or even desirable?
>
> How does this extreme setting relate to less dramatic classroom situations?

To move towards answering these questions I must create a networked display of carefully chosen fragments from the interviews. Whether the net I am working is capable of dramatic transformations or simply extremely malleable is less important than the fact that, at other times, for other purposes, connecting the same material, it would take other forms.

The Location and the Cast of Characters

The following stories take place at the Conservatory, a professional training center for artists including high school and college level dancers in modern and ballet. The Conservatory's dance departments are internationally renowned for producing professionally employed dancers and nationally known, at the very least, for the brutality of its dance faculty.

The six students who formerly attended the Conservatory include five, Mo, Taylor, Salem, Tantiana and Sally, who were attending a State University at the time I interviewed them. Each had studied at the Conservatory in modern dance in either high school or college and each intended to pursue some sort of professional career.

One, Catherine, attended the Conservatory modern dance program as a high school student over twenty years ago, then studied at a State University and subsequently embarked upon a highly successful career in a prominent modern dance company. Both Catherine and Taylor originally entered the ballet department and then switched to modern.

The State University represents multiple institutions which house dance departments with professionally oriented dance majors. The teachers include the following:

the Teacher, the most brutal of all the faculty,

the Disturbed Teacher, an emotionally distraught modern faculty member,

the Ballet Teacher, one notable example.

Teacher Stories

Stories regarding Conservatory teachers form the most extreme memories of former students and are at the core of student experiences. Such programs are ultimately defined by the quality of the faculty, in particular, the quality of the dance technique classes. These stories focus on technique classes though students took other classes with faculty members. Most dramatic and numerous were stories regarding the Teacher, the most brutal of our cast of characters.

Sally recalled her first encounter with the Teacher on a preliminary visit after being accepted into the Conservatory's modern program:

> I went downstairs . . . to where the dance office is . . . and that's when I walked into the Teacher. . . and started talking abut the program a little bit. . . He said, "Well, you know you have to be tough to go here. You have to be tough. Are you tough?" . . Just scared me to death. This towering man, "Are you tough? Are you tough?' Sure I was tough, you know, shaking in my shoes. And then he said "Well, when are you auditioning?". . . I said, "I've already been accepted." He said, "OK, then I'll see you in the fall" and walked away. I was kind of like, mmmm, what am I doing? That was it, got in the car and drove home.

Taylor, initially attending the high school ballet program, describes her first class with the Teacher:

I was thirteen and my first modern class and I'd heard horror stories about the Teacher and I was petrified. I mean we all were. All of the girls in my ballet class . . . we were all just scared to death of what he was going to be like . . . I started tugging on the back of my leotard cause it started rising up in the back. And I pulled it out and he came up to me and he said, "If you touch your leotard one more time. I'll pull it so far up your ass, I'll split you in two like a chicken and make you bleed.". . . I never touched my leotard again. And then another girl that was in the class was doing the same thing and so he gave her a huge wedgie and made her wear it like that for the whole class.

Such initial encounters and humiliation rituals set the tone for study with the Teacher. Sally recalled physical intimidation as well:

There were a couple of times this would happen. . .The arm would go up like you were going to get smacked . . . he never hit anyone. But he was very, when he would give corrections or something he was very rough. He would go push you or something like that . . . But he wouldn't hit you. . . I remember one class, it was my sophomore year, he got so angry. And he went like this to hit a friend of mine and then he turned around and went "bam," he hit the wall. Like as if you were fighting with someone.

However Tantiana claims that he did indeed hit students, but "not like really hard or anything." As Sally summed it up, he was the "most horrible teacher in the whole wide world."

But such encounters also occurred with other teachers including ballet faculty. In fact, Taylor's first Conservatory experience was with the Ballet Teacher when she attended a summer session as an audition:

> She really stayed on my case the whole summer. . . She was yelling at me the whole time I was doing one certain combination. "No, it's not right, it's not right, it's not right." You're trying to do it and you're trying to figure out what's not right and she's screaming in the background because that was her nature to yell over the piano. So the pianist is trying to play louder than she is. . . It frightened me more than anything. And I think I was also a bit embarrassed that she was focusing all this on me. So she made the rest of the class watch me do it alone. And kept saying, "No, it's not right, it's not right, it's not right.". . . Then she tells me in front of the whole class that I have an attitude problem and that I need to fix it or else I'll never get into the school.

Varying levels of disturbed behavior were the norm with other Conservatory teachers as well, including the Disturbed Teacher who Salem described as

psycho. . . She almost turned me into a psycho being in her class every morning. I mean having to see this woman's face every morning was just like unbearable.

Taylor relates a notable moment from the Disturbed Teacher's classroom:

> She was teaching a class one day and she just turns around to this guy . . . She said, "Why are you looking at me like that?" And he said, "I'm trying to watch you. I'm trying to learn the combination." She said, "I am so sick of you looking at me. You have some kind of attitude problem. You just sit there, looking at me like this. I'm sick of it. If you don't want to take my class, get out." And he was like, "I'm sorry if it looks like that. I was just trying to learn the combination." She went, "Whatever." She goes back and she starts doing the combination and she stops, snap. "And you know what else, I'm really sick of this," and she just starts going off. . . I mean, like, screaming and yelling and we're all just kind of standing there. She goes, "All right, do the combination." And the next minute she's laughing . . . I mean, it literally was like watching a schizophrenic.

Yet, in the case of all three of these teachers, various students developed affinities for them. Tantiana described the Disturbed Teacher as "my best friend." Taylor described the Ballet Teacher, who hounded her during her first summer, in similar terms:

> She became my closest ally there. . . She really sort of took me under her wing. . . I know I really worked for her so that I would never be in that position again. . . And I still write her. We still talk.

Students even came to terms with the Teacher. As Salem put it, "you get used to a teacher like the Teacher real fast and joking around about stuff like him yelling at you." Taylor related:

> Actually I learned that his bark was worse than his bite. And he didn't really seem to intimidate me as much anymore. You know, I just thought he was kind of funny. He didn't really bother me. I thought, deep down he was probably a pretty nice guy. You know, he just liked to be a jerk when he was there.

Tantiana seemed to regard him even more strongly:

> But then it almost seemed like my second year, like he almost became a father figure for some odd reason. . . You know you got by with the first year. He's actually going to show some kindness and all that stuff. He'd actually joke around with you every once in a while.

In general teacher stories focused on outrageous incidents and mixed feelings regarding students' relationships with their teachers. Multiple students related that, though they did not belong at the Conservatory, it was an appropriate place for students who felt comfortable with the sort of thing. At some point most expressed problems remembering because they had blocked memories of so

much of their experience. But all recounted that verbal abuse of students was a regular phenomenon in most classes, whether directed at them or fellow classmates.

Surveillance

In addition to outright dominance and abuse, surveillance was a key disciplinary feature of students' Conservatory experience. Of course, it's the dance teachers job to watch students. And if a teacher does not observe a particular student and make periodic comments regarding the student's behavior then the possibility arises that the student is not worth looking at, a point which Catherine corroborated:

> People wanted attention too and that is an issue. Like if you didn't get attention that day or that week then there was something wrong with you too. . . It was a never ending situation.

In addition to daily classroom observation, surveillance was also heightened for various events. Tantiana recounts:

> I just remember every single day it felt like an audition. The worse thing was juries [which happened once a semester]. I hated juries with a passion. Having all those teachers all the faculty modern and ballet sit in front of the class and watch us. With pen and paper just ready to write down anything they saw.

This "never ending situation" extended beyond the classroom to life in the dorms, where most of the students resided. When I

asked Sally if she alway felt watched she said, "Yeah, don't eat a candy bar in the hallway." She also related that after a particularly eventful weekend in the dorms,

> Monday morning in class the Teacher would say something about something that happened that weekend and how in the world did he know? . . . They would know who was involved with who. They would know who did what that weekend. It was amazing. It was like . . . little video cameras.

The Teacher's knowledge was clearly the product of other students' observations. As Catherine note, "I did usually feel on display [in the dorm rooms]. Like I was being observed."

Not surprisingly such an environment fostered various forms of internalized surveillance. In addition to typical teenage self consciousness, dancers spend a lot of time looking at themselves in mirrors which cover one or more walls and learning to scrutinize every detail. Catherine says it made her very "self critical" and she feels that

> I could have been a much happier person if I just like slightly was less self critical. Cause you can get self critical to a point where you're self conscious. . . And that was the thing that was really hard to differentiate between after leaving that environment. . . The self consciousness that I developed as a habit, a pattern in my thinking made it really difficult to be on

my own. Because I was still condemning my capabilities on my own.

Sally described a similar quality of self criticism that also remained with her after she left the Conservatory. She describes the experience in even harsher terms that

> just because of your frustration with the technique you're starting to think that everything that you're made up of is wrong but it's not. . . it's kind of hard to explain. It's a really internal thing, this whole outlook that you're ugly but not in the sense of like what you look like. Oh my face is ugly . . . you start to go, oh like what I'm made up of is ugly. My personality is ugly.

This sense that one's very being was just not good enough was heightened by the fact that teachers attacked students personalities as much as they attacked their physical abilities.

Enclosed, Consumed

Such elements of Conservatory training were heightened by the greedy and total aspects of the setting and schedule. Students were physically enclosed and their daily lives were consumed by life as Conservatory dancers. For Salem, who grew up in the same town as the Conservatory, the separation was so strong she described it as a way to leave town because when you go there you are basically somewhere else. This sense of being removed from the regular world was part of what gave the Conservatory a special feel. For Mo, it was a magical place:

> When I first got there it was like magic. I mean this was like part of the magic of dance because you were totally surrounded by artists. I mean you're closed off . . . you auditioned to go there. So you're surrounded by very talented people. . . You know there's always music going on everywhere or people always dancing. Just that atmosphere is magic to me.

But it was also a very demanding place, even if the teachers had not been verbally attacking students on a regular basis. Mo described a typical student's schedule:

> It started out, 8 o'clock was an academic, 9 o'clock academic. Then 10 o'clock I'd have technique, modern technique. Then 11:30 I would have ballet technique. And then 1 I'd have lunch. Then 2 an academic, 3 an academic, 4 a dance class, 5 a dance class. And then dinner at 6. And then we were expected to go back into the studios and work on what we had done in class that day. And then I go home and try to do my homework.

Of course, this schedule was not quite as rigorous as that of the more advanced students who were participating in performances. They added weekend rehearsals and performances to the demands on their time.

This enclosed, consuming atmosphere helps to explain why students would accept the extreme demands and vicious behavior of

faculty. Sally made the connection to cults without any prompting or related questioning on my part:

> There's no dance companies around to compare yourself to. You're so isolated. And you can't even get off the campus. It's like they can do whatever they want because you're so confined within this space. . . It's like someone that's raised as a born again Christian or whatever. And thinks that's there's no such thing as Buddhism and there's no such thing as another god. Like those people who are, like all those cults or whatever. Like children that are raised in those situations don't know any better.

Since students are cut off from the outside world, they do not become aware of other possibilities beyond Conservatory training. Since they are training so hard, they tend not to develop other skills. A lack of awareness of other ways of doing things contributes to accepting what one is given without questioning. Not learning about the outside world eventually transforms it into an alien place, as Taylor described when asked why she did not leave until she was forced to by injuries:

> It felt like kind of a security blanket. . . It's the only thing you know. And anything outside of that becomes really more scary than what you're in. I mean leaving that school was more scary to me than staying there. . . It's like a little world in its own. And I sort of lost touch with the world outside of that school. Because you're there 24-7. I didn't know

anything else. What else am I going to do? All I've done all my life is dance. I don't know how to do anything else.

Many of the students described themselves as having to "grow up fast" or as "maturing quickly" due to the combination of extreme training methods as well as the exposure within the student population to extremes of behavior heightened by their isolation from the outside world. Such changes also tended to separate them from their former friends, who could not relate to what they were experiencing on campus. As Taylor put it, "I knew I didn't want to go back to the public school because I had changed too much to go back." Though most reported positive relations with their families, Catherine also related that she would rather stay at the Conservatory than live at home, due to conditions in her family. These revelations provide additional reasons for students accepting the cruel behavior of teachers.

Catherine, without references to prisons on my part, offered a compelling image of life at the Conservatory:

> It's like being in a little prison, that school. . . There's just a whole system when you're in high school. You are regulated. You have certain hours that you need to be in the door. You have room checks. . . You have hall checks. You have the cafeteria that you ate at three times a day. The class. The schedule. . . I still think of that little room that I took class in every day in high school and think of it as an incubator. Or a greenhouse. Or a prison.

The Brutalized Elite

The consuming isolation of the Conservatory also contributed to the normalization of extreme conditions by emphasizing the elite status of the enterprise and, by extension, the elite status of the students. This status was what brought students to the Conservatory in the first place, as Tantiana noted:

> The school had a reputation. That was one of the reasons I wanted to get in in the first place and I was so excited that I got in there cause I had heard time after time so many people in companies now are coming from the conservatory. . . I don't know if it was an ego thing exactly because I don't think of myself as having a big ego. But it was the satisfaction that I had made it into something that was, quote, "the thing to be in." So I think that's what held me on the first year.

The elite status encouraged students to believe if they could hold on they would be able to realize their dreams. Mo saw getting in as a major accomplishment which would lead to sure employment:

> I just wanted to get to the Artschool . . . I just thought that if I got there, you know, that was the big thing. That was like a dream of mine in itself just to go there.

Her expectations were in fact based on reality:

> I saw that every time somebody graduated they had jobs like that. And . . . when you look at their fourth year and how they were. You think, well they had to be like me when they were

here. To a certain extent, you know. So I saw that too. I mean, I saw like the end before they graduated and what their level was and that's where I wanted to be at. So I guess that kept me going.

In addition to being inspired to "hang in here" because of their goals, to some degree, once at the Conservatory, the feeling of just trying to survive became a central motivation. For some, the fact that they had made it through the initial months allowed them to believe they could continuing maintaining for as long as they needed to.

Their elite status also added to outside pressure to stay. Taylor mentioned this external motivation:

> I think there were a lot of expectations in terms of my family. Not necessarily my immediate family like my mother. But, you know, grandparents and relatives and friends who know that you go to school there. You're something special. You're doing something that no one else is doing. I felt like I would really be letting them down if I didn't stick with it and go through with it.

For Sally there was pressure to stay, at least in the early stages, from her immediate family as well as the expectations of students and faculty:

> My parents, they were very supportive but they have very high expectations of myself and my sister. I couldn't let them down. . . Plus there was no such thing as leaving school. And if

you left North Carolina, then you really failed. . . [In terms of] everyone's perspective. . . And if you left by your own will you were weak. . . But when you're there, there is the only place you're supposed to be. Like it's the best school.

The idea that the Conservatory was the best place to be was, as Sally also relates, reinforced by devaluing contrary opinions:

> There was . . . an unwritten rule that we weren't even allowed to have an opinion on something. It was just their way was best. And it was best and it would always be best. We should not only not voice our opinion but we should throw 'em away. And just forget that we even had that and take on theirs.

This cult-like restructuring of beliefs fit well with the feeling of at least some of the faculty regarding what Catherine described as a god-like attitude on the part of the teachers:

> There's the overconfidence. Like the gods. You know, I am God. This is the all. What I have to offer you is the best. Not, I'm doing the best I can. I am the best. So lick my feet and learn. . . People thought that they were like God. God is my teacher. They really think that.

And who would want to leave a school populated by such faculty? The elite status of the teachers only offered further confirmation of the elite status of the students. For Salem, this was the first time she had been part of a group with such a positive status:

> When I was in high school we were always like outcast. So [I was] part of a group but it was an outcast group. But this was

like the majority. And it was really different being a part of the majority. And so that changed a lot of things.

There were many positive aspects to being a member of an elite which allowed the students to accept their teacher's behavior and encouraged positive reception of behavior that ultimately they did not enjoy. The mixed feelings they felt afterwards indicate, in part, the profound power of their status and their desire to be professional dancers.

Feeling Mixed

Mixed feelings and conflicting interpretations were a part of all the responses. Though clearly the respondents had conflicts while at the Conservatory which made it more difficult to leave, I was particularly struck that even Catherine, over twenty years later, still had mixed feelings. In addition, one should bear in mind that only Tantiana and Sally chose to leave based on their feelings about the Conservatory. Mo and Taylor both left because of injuries. Students could only return each year if asked and both Catherine and Salem were told they could not come back.

Though Catherine condemned the behavior of her teachers, she also expressed gratitude for not being asked back:

> In a really good way they said, "Oh we don't want you to come back here because you're so unhappy." I could never figure that out. . . And I'm so happy they directed me away. I mean they did direct me away cause I wasn't old enough or strong

enough emotionally to figure out that I was capable of getting out.

After having critiqued many elements of Conservatory teaching, in talking about leaving Catherine made a number of statements that were self-deprecatory:

> I think I was unable to be molded, on one level. And I think I struggled really hard and I think that they affected me really badly. But . . . I didn't like really fit into the groove there.

This element of *they hurt me but I am somehow to blame* surfaced repeatedly with different respondents. It was often juxtaposed with an expression of gratitude. In Catherine's case they did, in fact, help her gain admittance to a competitive State University where a former colleague of their's held great power. And ultimately she came back to finding a way to blame herself:

> I'm just really happy that at least they reached out enough at that point because it was obvious I didn't know the difference between something that's negative and something that's positive.

Numerous students made comments along the lines that while this style of teaching was bad for them, it was appropriate for others, which undermined their often vehement and well stated criticisms turning them into personal complaints. As Mo put it:

> I feel like they didn't mess you up. Either you go there and you can deal with it or you can't. And you find out that's the

way they train. And if you're not the type of person for that situation, go somewhere else.

Their statements also often contained contradictory perspectives, sometimes in close juxtaposition. For example, the previous statement by Mo was then followed by her comment that

> I think I went through a lot of things there that they did do to me. You know, and I'm not even realizing a lot of those things until now.

Contradictory juxtapositions often connected gratitude and critique, as in Salem's comments:

> I'm really glad I went there because it gave me a really strong background. It probably made me a little demented about some things.

Another example comes from Taylor who seems to be resisting her critical impulses by characterizing them negatively:

> When I was talking to someone about doing this interview, I said I'm not going to make this a bitch session. I'm going to try to be objective about it. I know that a lot of really good things came out of it.

This sense of something good having come out of the Conservatory experience was also expressed by Sally, even though she consistently held to her critique of Conservatory teachers. After telling the faculty she was leaving the school, she decided to make a final attempt at communication:

> That night I sat down and I wrote this letter to them and . . . I thanked them for what they had given me. Because even though the situation wasn't really good . . . I wouldn't have been able to see where I wanted to go if I didn't go through that bad situation. . . It's changed me. It's like a pendulum. I had to go to here to find here.

Tantiana's explanation of gratitude regarding what she learned is similar, yet seemingly self contradictory:

> They probably were my two darkest years I guess. But I wouldn't take it back just because I learned so much of how the dance world is and what it's not. Well they make it out that once you graduate and you start your own it will be really dark and dismal and it's all competition. Which to some point it is and it depends on where you go. But I don't believe that any more. I think more there's always something out there for you that you can fit into. That you don't have to mold yourself into. There's more.

My impression of this statement is that once she left she discovered that there were more options and positive possibilities. I remain puzzled as to why she then credits the Conservatory experience with informing her of what the dance world is about when her beliefs are now the opposite of what she felt she was being told. In any case, this discussion of options brings us to the last topic I will consider in relation to these interviews, that of an awareness of possibilities on the part of Conservatory students.

Possible Futures

Yet another element in why students accepted cruel behavior was the fact that they were not necessarily aware of options. To some degree I have touched upon this in the greedy/total institution section. Though they had a variety of dance backgrounds, the Conservatory was their first experience of what they considered professional training. Once there they had fairly limited exposure to the range of possibilities. They had limited education about dance beyond what they were practicing. The Conservatory's academic element has always been described as somewhat of a joke by students and even the study of dance history was fairly limited. Furthermore, the students had very little exposure to modern dance before attending the modern department. Their training at the Conservatory seemed to define much of how they viewed both modern dance and professional dance training.

Nonetheless they did have visiting faculty as well as one faculty member who brought in alternative approaches, though one student described this faculty member as being capable of negative behavior as well. Still Tantiana found her helpful and inspiring in her introduction of what she describes as Eastern derived practices. Tantiana was also inspired to attend the State University because of two visiting artists who described the students and faculty there in a positive light and encouraged her to consider going. Since leaving the Conservatory all of the students have discovered and are considering a wider range of possibilities for dance practice. So,

though they all carry negative remnants of their Conservatory experience, all are continuing to dance and finding hope for the future.

For Sally, this hope helped her to decide to leave the Conservatory, in part because of experiences she had before attending the school. Nevertheless her Conservatory experience had undermined her previous discoveries:

> I knew I disagreed with a lot of the stuff the Teacher was talking about. . . Always in my heart I knew that I never believed him and that I was always trying to convince myself but I never believed. And that was the main reason I left. And that was the scariest thing because I didn't know why I was leaving. But I knew I couldn't stay. I knew that there must be something else out there. But I was like, I can't believe I've gone this far with dance to only come to this place. And to only find this really angry world of people. And scared and mad. Everyone was so mad. And I thought you know if this is supposed to represent what the whole dance community and dance world was to be I didn't want to be any part of it. And I knew it wasn't though. Like I knew it couldn't be that way. That there was some hope. That there were good people out there and there's good in dance. So I left. It was really scary.

Of all the Conservatory students I interviewed Sally appears to have been the clearest, even in her confusion, about what she needed while at the Conservatory. Her faith that there was something more

sustained her and allowed her to leave without being forced out. Unfortunately that was not enough for the other students with whom I spoke. I find these stories troubling and worth returning to at another time for other purposes. But for now I must prepare to move on to the next phase of my trajectory.

Moving Elsewhere

In closing this chapter, in folding up this net and traveling on, I return first to the question of why Conservatory students put up with behavior I can only consider abusive. Clearly there are multiple overlapping possibilities which do not suggest a direct causative factor but rather a series of factors and facilitating elements which interact in a nonlinear manner. The major factors revealed by my approach to these interviews are as follows:

Students had only a limited understanding of what was possible or even expected in the dance world and took the Conservatory environment as a norm based on their lack of experience.

The greedy, total aspects of the situation facilitated this normalization of abuse by cutting off the outside world and consuming their daily existence leaving little room for the consideration of other options.

The students' desire to become part of an elite meshed with the Conservatory's reputation and self-image as a center for elite training thus causing them to accept abusive behavior as a necessary part of their training.

The elite image also resulted in the feeling that they would be failures if they left which was regularly reinforced by faculty pronouncements and, at times, by a belief that simply surviving the experience would be a form of success.

Their mixed feelings regarding their treatment, produced in part by the above factors, made it more difficult to decide to leave and, afterwards, to condemn Conservatory practices thus reducing the possibility that they would later act to help end such practices.

In keeping with my narrative approach, let me put this another way.

Students came to the Conservatory with mostly limited backgrounds. It was an opportunity which presented itself, an opportunity to transform, to become part of an elite, to become a sparkling entity worshiped by crowds from afar. Each knew something about working hard and realized or soon discovered they would work much harder. They took the new conditions of their lives for granted, not realizing that there were other routes to where they were traveling. Or knowing somehow there were other possibilities but soon discounting them because their new teachers devalued all other routes as being inadequate, ridiculous, for losers.

They lived in a place which was cut off from the rest of the world. They devoted themselves to practices which consumed their daily existence. Soon they found themselves cut off from their families and friends, as much a result of the site and schedule as of

the fact that they were becoming something different. Their daily lives were difficult and some days were more difficult than others. Their teachers dominated their daily lives, freely treating them with whatever cruelty seemed to strike their fancy. Yet the students often believed that it was for their own good, that their teachers really cared and that if they could just survive, they would become the dancers they dreamed of being.

Even after they left because of injuries or exhaustion or exile, they carried deep traces of the Conservatory experience in every level of their being. They were not sure what to think of it all and they certainly could not agree on what had happened. One did not condone her teachers' behavior but liked to be pushed and might even go back. Another was sure she did not like what happened but wanted something similar minus the cruelty. A third was not sure what to think. She was not happy under such a regime but could not believe she could be happy without one. Another seemed to take it lightly at times but had blocked most of it out. Still another felt a strong range of emotions and would never go back but was deeply grateful for having gone. And the only one who had gone there years ago still carried it with her, the traces etched like deep scars that might fade but never disappear.

Some maintained contact with former teachers. Others felt sympathy or pity for people who they now recognize as deeply troubled. Anger and disbelief were common. All had some level of

mixed feelings for what occurred, some even felt gratitude for an experience which changed them by forcing them to make hard choices about their lives. Most revealed that they had blocked memories of their experiences.

So why did they put up with it? For so many reasons and more. Because it seemed like the only thing to do perhaps. Or perhaps because it seemed like the only thing that could be done until they were forced to leave by choice or circumstance. Perhaps there are even better reasons no one has yet considered. I answer in this way to indicate the complexity of the situation though my explanatory outline at the beginning of this section remains my strongest argument. A deeper understanding would require, at the very least, further work with a larger sample of interviews with students from more diverse backgrounds. Nonetheless this project has given me more than enough information to turn to my question regarding how this situation relates to other settings which may be less extreme but no less complex. I present one possible answer in action in the next chapter, where I discuss my collaboration with Susan Van Pelt and consider the differences and similarities between the Conservatory and the Caring Classroom.

CHAPTER 4
Teacher Talk in the Caring Classroom

Although my conception of the Conservatory study shifted from expose, to ethnographic study, to extreme case sample, I knew early on that I wanted to relate it to dance study more generally. I considered a variety of options, including a more developed series of self reflections, a textual analysis of literature related to dance training and interviews with dance teachers prominent in academia and professional performance. By a stroke of good fortune I was introduced to Susan Van Pelt, then a dance instructor at the Ohio State University. Susan's interest in my work led to our collaborative exploration of power relations in her classroom which ultimately focused on what we decided to call "teacher talk." Our use of this term and my characterization of her class as a "caring classroom" are meant to convey our working language rather than to refer to other education researchers who have used such terminology. Although our collaboration was ultimately cut short due to lack of time, we were able to explore some of the possibilities of applying and developing the perspective described in the preceding chapters.

This choice to work with Susan Van Pelt was unexpected and grew out of a suggestion on her part. Susan and I met at the 1996 Annual Conference of the Congress on Research in Dance held at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. We were introduced by a mutual friend, dance critic and researcher David Gere. Upon hearing about my work, Susan suggested I visit her technique class at the Ohio State University, where she was then teaching and I was working on my doctorate. In her ongoing quest to improve her teaching she thought I might be able to offer her some useful insights. Our paths had not previously crossed but I soon discovered that Susan was highly regarded as a teacher and choreographer by both faculty and students. A caring teacher concerned with disciplinary rigor but not at the expense of her students' psyches, Susan seemed to be at a polar extreme from the practices of conservatory teachers. The timing of our initial encounter was extremely fortunate and a turning point in this project.

Such an occurrence is another example of emergence in the research process, when "unforeseen opportunities [appear] after fieldwork has begun" (Patton, 1990, p. 179). Patton calls such events "opportunistic sampling" but the predatorial feel of that term inspired me to substitute my own "serendipitous" sampling as a more accurate label. Since making that choice I have found other researchers speaking of serendipity, most notably Valerie Janesick

who terms such opportunities the "O. Henry virus" (1998, p. 63) from the unexpected events and surprise endings in his narratives.

Susan's suggestion to visit her class opened up more than a direction in which to apply a critique developed in an extreme case analysis. It also offered a concrete opportunity to consider whether or not the conservatory simply offered "bad teaching," as one respondent has suggested, or whether the Conservatory allowed for the revelation of issues pervasive in contemporary dance training. What began as a simple invitation expanded into a lengthier investigative dialogue which was indeed serendipitous.

The Ohio State University (OSU), the setting for Susan's teaching at the time of our collaboration, is widely considered one of the top dance departments in the country. While it is not a conservatory, it shares many of the features typically associated with conservatory training. These features include a demanding schedule, faculty who have worked with internationally renowned dance companies and a general expectation that students are preparing for professional careers. However the program also includes a possible focus in dance education, usually not part of a conservatory setting, and all of the general curricular requirements of an internationally renowned university. While a student's life at OSU might be consumed by dance, they have to attend classes in other departments that take themselves as seriously as does the dance department. Particularly important for this study is the fact

that OSU does not share in the Conservatory's reputation for harsh treatment of its students. At that time Susan was teaching technique classes for majors and so was an important participant in student education.

Susan and I first met over coffee where we found many points of agreement in our attitudes regarding dance and education, including an awareness of the difficulties of shifting the basic dynamics of the technique class. She had been integrating yoga into her class and was trying to focus the work on the dancer's experience rather than the teacher's demands. We identified two particular areas of focus for my classroom observation, her integration of yoga into the technique class and the power relations present in that class. The following document was produced for a course on Folklore and Performance Studies which I was taking with Amy Shuman. It describes my classroom observation and initial analysis with a focus on language or teacher talk, though this focus emerged from our work following the observation. This excerpt is taken from a larger paper entitled "Classroom Performance and the Language of the Dance Teacher" (1998b). It contains various technical terms which are not cited but to which I have added clarifications for when they do not seem obvious in context.

from Classroom Performance
and the Language of the Dance Teacher (1998b)
Observation Summary

On February 2nd, from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm, I observed one meeting of the most advanced modern dance technique class in the department with one third undergraduate and two thirds graduate students who were all dance majors. They met three times a week for two hours each time. They spent the fall quarter with another teacher and would switch again in the spring. . . This particular setting was a large, well lit dance studio with a place for belongings in one corner and an area for the musician in another corner. One wall was covered by mirrors and two other walls had ballet barres running around them below shoulder level. Most of the space was empty.

I arrived a few minutes late and class had just begun, so the space was filled with dancers a few feet from each other. There were eighteen students, one teacher, one musician and myself. Because I was late, Susan did not introduce me and I did not find out until later that she had not announced my observation role. I knew a few students in class. I sat in the corner where belongings were kept and generally tried to be as unobtrusive as possible. I later asked Susan to explain my presence because I think people should know why someone was sitting in the corner, watching activities with which they were deeply involved while madly scribbling notes for two hours.

The Performance

Susan finishes a discussion of energy and tai chi when I slip in and take my place in the corner. She continues with the class by demonstrating the warrior, a yoga stance. After discussing the anatomical underpinnings of this posture she begins verbally directing the class into the stance. Her voice is clear and gentle and she speaks of feeling "buoyant" as she lightly bounces with the posture. Susan walks around the class talking the whole group through the pose, stopping occasionally to give individual feedback. She asks the group, "Are we breathing?" and continues around the room.

As Susan works the class into another posture, the musician arrives late and drops a drum as he is getting organized. Susan greets him in a friendly manner. Continuing with the group work, Susan talks continuously and introduces an image focused on the skin. As she continues to talk the skin image gradually fits into the overall flow of her directions. Bringing the group together, Susan talks about and demonstrates the original pose, then connects it to a movement phrase they have been working on.

As they do the phrase, Susan lightly snaps her fingers to keep time. She continues to give verbal information. The quality of her voice is soothing and matches the movement. Susan also works her way around the room to give individual attention which appears encouraging. The class moves on to another phrase and Susan continues with an individual focus. At these moments her voice is

quieter and clearly focused on the individual. For a brief while, Susan does not talk and the class continues in silence.

The musician finally joins in with a drum and they do the phrase again. For much of this run Susan continues talking while they move, weaving in more of the skin imagery. Again she gradually switches to individuals, giving them hands on feedback as well as focused verbal communication.

Susan starts a series of phrases on the floor with a sitting, rocking bit which she says is inspired by a "clown" image. She works on it with them and then follows up with another sitting phrase. Along the way the musician interjects a question about Alwin Nikolais, a famous choreographer. Susan talks throughout this section though the dancers seem to know this movement already. Her talk includes more skin imagery. Susan stops and tells a story about a famous dancer that is somehow inspired by this phrase and then they go on to one last floor combination. She gives various images before they do it and then lets them proceed without her talking. Susan goes "whoops" in a friendly way with a dancer's mistake.

For a while they work in partners which Susan initially directs. But for the most part they work on their own in pairs, observing each other, discussing what seems appropriate. Susan then has them go back to a combination to which this work relates. At one point in discussing something in the combination she states, "you can do whatever you want, but I'd like to see . . . " The quality of her voice matches the movement, though this time it is not gentle and flowing.

She continues to talk as they do the combination, sometimes emphasizing the rhythmic accents, sometimes presenting more information.

They do another combination and when that comes to an end, Susan is still working with an individual. She says, "Do what you need to do then we'll come to standing." The students respond differently, some relax or stretch, others talk or leave for a moment.

They now do more individual work with a yoga pose, a handstand against the mirror or wall. One student discreetly reveals that she is having her period which we all discover because Susan hollers out something about not needing to do this if you are having your period. The student then yells out, using her own name, "---'s having her period!" There is general laughter and the class continues working on the handstands with varying degrees of success.

They begin a standing phrase and I leave for a quick break because I am burned out on viewing. What seems clear to me by this point is that Susan is an empathetic teacher clearly concerned with the students' success. Furthermore she has successfully integrated this work into her own movement, so that what she discusses is also illustrated physically. The students are focused, hard workers who seem able to handle the demands of the class. On the other hand, it is nearly impossible to have a sense of their response to Susan's performance because they are also busy performing their roles as good dance students. Their response is clearly backstage behavior

[i.e. not visible publicly or in the space of the classroom] which I will not be able to discern during this observation.

When I return they are finishing another standing combination. Susan gives an individual feedback while the class waits and then begins introducing a new combination. The movement is bound and harsh, not enjoyable to look at. Susan says it is inspired by her stressful five hour layover in the Detroit airport the day before. The music is loud and Susan does not talk while they first run the phrase. She then talks through the combination without music to clarify details. The group runs the phrase half at a time. Susan then gives them more feedback and has them work on reversing it. She briefly interrupts this process with her "changing sides lecture." She suggests that they learn the actions rather than the words. But then her example is of words, "downstage, upstage" which is different from left, right but is not about simply learning nonverbal actions.

The first group tries reversing it all the way through and encounters difficulties. Susan stops them, laughs and does it with them. Both groups run the phrase multiple times. Susan rarely talks except for occasional quick reminders or accents. She does most of her talking between phrases. The class runs over a bit and, after having the second group finish the phrase, she apologizes for holding them late saying, "We'll work on it next Wednesday." The class ends with the obligatory applause, common to such classes.

Talking About Talking

What became the central issue for me was Susan's use of language, her talking both to the group and to individuals. This issue or theme was one which emerged during my observation and I quickly focused my most detailed notes on this aspect. Part of what caught my attention was the sheer volume of Susan's talking in the initial stages of the class because, at times, she was talking in ways that I found troublesome when I was a student. Often during the early warmups, when the students seemed to be doing movement phrases they already knew, she would continue to talk in a very detailed manner. As a student, this style of talking always felt intrusive and kept me from focusing on my own internal process at a time when the activity was ostensibly about that process. As an observer, my personal perspective caused me to key into this aspect of her talking and to wonder if she was talking too much. However, I also noticed that she used language and her voice in multiple ways, often matching her vocal quality to the quality of the movement.

A fairly obvious aspect of language use is that Susan does most of the talking. The moments in which other people speak are rare and bounded in specific ways. This dynamic is in keeping with the traditional technique class. However, the manner in which Susan deals with these atypical moments are an aspect of her performance as the caring teacher concerned with classroom alternatives. Susan responded to the musician's noisy lateness and his questioning interruption of the class in a friendly manner which nonetheless kept

boundaries around those intrusions. Her response could be interpreted as a form of face saving [for the musician's sake], rather than responding negatively to what seemed to me to be intrusive behavior. However my interpretation is based on traditional views of who speaks in class.

Other examples of both face saving and of others speaking also relate to Susan' performance of the caring, alternative teacher. In at least two instances Susan responded to people's mistakes in a joking manner which saved face. With one student she went, "whoops," and with one group she laughed in a friendly way. These responses were the performance of the caring teacher. The moments in which students could talk to each other, as when they worked in partners or when she told them to "Do what you need to do," were part of the performance of the alternative teacher. A more traditional setting would not include partner work and students would not be allowed to talk to each other. Typically if a student is receiving individual attention when the rest of the class is not working it constitutes a tiny pedagogical performance to which students must pay close attention.

Even the moment which revealed a faux pas on Susan's part, was handled in a gentle manner. Susan's announcement regarding women with periods was followed by a student's frame break. This shifting dynamic was comical and Susan went with that shift. Almost immediately the frame of Susan directing students in their work

returned and this restored frame could actually be perceived as a coproduction of Susan and the students. In fact, most of this performance is a coproduction because both the teachers and students are simultaneously performers and audience for each others' performances. A successful class is one in which all such performances succeed. Though the musician enters into this equation, his performance is a minor role. It is a success when he does not interrupt and rather works more as a visible part of the production crew, helping things run smoothly.

Even in trying to talk about those other than Susan talking, I find myself discussing her use of language. Susan's talking can be divided into two categories of address, to individuals and to the group. The talk to individuals was such that I could not hear it. It was designed to be personal and not to be a performance for the group as a whole. The group directed talk allows for much more analysis because I could hear it. Beyond the earlier examples, some of which blur these two categories, Susan's group talk is quite complex. I will discuss it in terms of . . . [two] categories: general information . . . [and] directive speech.

The categories of general information and directive speech are sometimes difficult to distinguish. I think of general information as points when Susan emphasizes details which the dancers then use as they will. Directive speech involves actual direction of what the dancers are doing and often includes a direction of the workings of their consciousness or attention. Both categories can include the

same kind of information from anatomical details to imagery of various sorts. General information tends to be given when the dancers are not moving and directive speech occurs while they move, yet these distinctions are blurred at times. Though Susan uses them in different ways, each partake of similar classroom dynamics. In the dance classroom, students must typically attend to and respond to every utterance of the teacher. Therefore whatever form Susan's feedback takes, students must listen. This dynamic is illustrated by a frame break [i.e. an action which breaks out of the normal pattern of behavior] which occurs in relation to the category of general information.

At one point in the class, Susan is explaining a movement and says, "You can do whatever you want, but I'd like to see . . ." This moment is one which forefronts the conflicts between Susan's performance of the alternative teacher who does not give orders and the established frame of the technique class. This statement must ultimately be ignored because good students do what they are told. Susan's statement results in a frame break which is dealt with by an immediate return to business as usual with the students doing exactly as she suggests.

The use of directive speech, or speech which guides the internal process of the dancer, raises other issues of power. Such speech typically involves a series of utterances which basically tell dancers what to think about by giving them detailed directions while they move. Directive speech differs from general information which might include

specific reminders while moving but would not include an ongoing flow of directions. Directive speech is generally used to aid the dancer in fully accessing movement. Such speech seems to have emerged with alternative practices of dance instruction and is intended to support the shift from external signification to internal process. My growing belief is that directive speech, rather than humanizing the classroom, becomes a powerful form of direction and control.

Comparisons to the Conservatory

This single observation immediately raises points of connections with classes at the Conservatory. Their similarities derive largely from elements associated with the typical dance technique class. Both take place in a facility designed for dance which facilitates the organization of bodies in space doing the same thing at the same time. The teacher directs the process doing most, if not all, of the talking. The teacher is the ultimate source of authority and the students' conduct themselves according to traditional guidelines with variations based on the specific teacher's lead.

Some of the similarities also relate to the typical classroom. Though the Conservatory teachers, in particular the Teacher, most often enacted brutal regimes, Susan was the epitome of the caring teacher. Based on additional discussions with students, it is clear that Susan's easy rapport is not just due to her having a good day. Students know that she exhibits a consistent kindness in her dealings with them. Yet these contrasting performances both fit the traditional classroom in that it is the teacher's prerogative to set boundaries on their own behavior.

However certain differences also reveal ways in which Susan was attempting to undermine traditional dynamics, if only for a brief moment. In particular, Susan's comment that "You can do whatever you want, but I'd like to see . . . " was a gesture towards the possibility of independent student activity. Though, as I noted,

typical classroom dynamics tend to undermine such a statement. A related moment was the injunction to "Do what you want to do." Again this statement is grounded in the teacher's power but the wide range of ensuing actions suggested that given this statement, students had learned to do what they wanted, at least within broader boundaries than normal. In addition, moments in which students worked together gave them a certain amount of autonomy. In terms of language use, they could speak to each other without Susan's direct observation. Furthermore, the joking moments between Susan and the students and musician indicated a sense of play which pushed the classroom structure towards a more open-ended potential.

Beyond the Classroom

After my observation of the class, Susan and I went to lunch for a debriefing session. We discussed some of my initial perceptions and she explained what she was trying to do at various points in the class. We met again about a week later and continued our discussion. I followed up on some issues I had not gotten to in our debriefing and we dug further into themes from our previous discussion. Between these two meetings I had introduced the idea of our collaboration on a survey for her class. My interest at this point was in focusing on the issue of teacher talk in the caring classroom. Susan was particularly interested in other themes, which interested me as well. We decided to focus the survey on four general themes based on my observation and our ensuing discussions which

constellated around yoga, talking, touching and the more general issue of what makes a class "click," as Susan put it.

Thus began a process which ultimately involved multiple forms of data collection in relation to this specific class and to our experiences of teaching movement classes more generally. My work during this time was influenced by both the Folklore and Performance Studies course with Amy Shuman and qualitative methods courses which I took with Patti Lather and Laurel Richardson while working on this phase of the larger project. I discussed Laurel Richardson's influence in the final paper presented in Chapter 1. Patti Lather's influence was also strongly felt during this time in that it introduced me to an expanded view of research methodology and fieldwork methods which helped prepare the way for the form of this dissertation. In particular, we were considering multiple forms of data collection which inspired me to attempt a wider range of collection methods that I might have otherwise.

These multiple forms, combined with the Conservatory interviews and my self reflections, indicate two of Denzin's (in Patton, 1990) "four basic types of triangulation . . data triangulation . . . [and] methodological triangulation" (p. 187). Especially relevant is Denzin's (1989) notion of "between-method, or across-method, triangulation" whose "basic feature will be the combination of two or more different research strategies in the study of the same empirical units" (p. 244). In this case, the empirical unit would be

the technique class which this study has considered from a wide variety of angles.

In addition to the initial observation, Susan and I had multiple discussions and created a questionnaire for the class I observed. I did a document analysis of the studio space. At a certain point, in order to record our dialogues, we began a series of research reflections via email. We eventually cowrote a proposal for a conference presentation which was turned down and ultimately went unrealized to our lack of time for working together, thus drawing our collaboration to an end. From the beginning Susan began paying attention to and exploring alternatives to her teaching practices using observations generated through our research. Her own reflections were recorded in her emails and in my notes regarding our conversations which have continued since the official end of our collaboration.

This rich collaborative effort resulted in a wide range of documents in addition to the paper describing Susan's classroom performance. Patti Lather's expanded notion of fieldwork methods included a view of document analysis which allowed me to consider the object as document. As part of my observation I logged the range of objects which were present in the room and considered their role in the teaching process. In particular, I noted the omnipresent mirror which covered much of one wall. The mirror is a key element in most dance studios and I eventually turned my notes into an experimental text entitled, "I See You, You See You:

the mirror as a technology of surveillance in the dance classroom," which became a section of the paper entitled "Power Relations in the Dance Classroom: Alternative Forms of Data Presentation" (1999a).

from Power Relations in the Dance Classroom:
Alternative Forms of Data Presentation (1999a)

I See You, You See You
the mirror as a technology of surveillance in the dance classroom

A relation of surveillance . . . is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching. (Foucault, 1979, p. 176)

In Western concert dance training the studio is the primary site of activity. The stage comes later and then only intermittently. Most of the dancer's time is spent in the studio where the mirror is omnipresent. When there is no mirror, someone always wishes they had one. The studio is incomplete without a mirror.

Part of my analysis will focus on the mirror which is a constant reminder to the dancer of surveillance. The mirror is objective. The mirror does not lie.
(from my research journal)

When a dancer begins to train, s/he first encounters the mirror as a tool which allows for the observation and correction of minute details. While the mirror may reflect one's vanity, more often it functions as a reminder of inadequacy. All too quickly the dancer's work centers on the mirror's reflection, displacing bodily experience.

Are dancers too often working to achieve an image of what they think dancing is, rather than achieving an understanding and an experience of the dance? (Van Pelt, 1996, p. 11)

The mirror is also a tool for the teacher, offering multiple vantage points for observation. Pedagogical vision is enabled by the even dispersal of dancers in an empty space, who wear revealing clothing, who do the same thing at the same time. They are docile bodies under surveillance, their detailed activities designed by the teacher to replicate his/her beliefs about what is acceptable in the dance class.

This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised . . . constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism. (Foucault, p. 197)

Such surveillance is eventually internalized if the dancer is to succeed and have a professional experience, if not a career. The mirror facilitates the process of internalization which coexists with simultaneous self observations. These overlapping modes of surveillance create an endless feedback loop of fractal complexity.

Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. (Foucault, p. 201)

The mirror turns the studio into a Panoptic site where surveillance becomes part of the dancer's daily life. Because most dancers are women, this mobile surveillance links with social discourse regarding the female body. Not only is the mirror on the wall at home but media representations, conversations with friends and other forms of social feedback interweave with one's dance life and one's self perception.

There are two images, then, of discipline. At one extreme . . . the enclosed institution . . . at the other extreme . . . a functional mechanism that must improve the exercise of power by making it lighter, more rapid, more effective, a design of subtle coercion for a society to come. (Foucault, p. 209)

There are multiple reactions to this state of affairs. Exposes are written and dance departments start the season with lectures on eating disorders. Somatics, a catchall term for practices which oppose the objectified body and propose the bodymind as subject, is increasingly incorporated into dance training. This emerging paradigm suggests that bodily knowledge is no longer to be found in one's mirrored reflection but in one's experience of the movement.

This [introduction of somatic techniques into dance training] presents new challenges for the modern dance technique teacher, as many of these modes of learning encourage self-correcting or self-observing skills, experience not effect, internal not external feed-back. (Van Pelt, p. 17)

This shift in dance education is epistemological, from knowing by seeing to knowing by feeling. Yet this work is also about revealing inner processes to the teacher's vision through subtle movement cues and about increasing the sophistication of the dancer's internal surveillance. The mirror remains on site. It is transformed and dispersed, reappearing in other configurations, further facilitating epistemologies of surveillance.

"Psychology--all of it--is a branch of the police; psychodynamic and humanistic psychologies are the secret police."
(Paul Richer in Kvale, 1992, p. 118)

Further Fieldwork

After the classroom observation we continued to meet and developed our survey, the next stage in our collaborative work. The following description and analysis of the survey process comes from a paper written for Patti Lather entitled simply, Observation and Survey (1998c).

from Observation and Survey (1998c)

The Survey

We met again, a few days later, and struggled to clarify the questions. We ultimately settled on the following, which included statements from Susan' perspective:

1. I draw from Iyengar style yoga to support my teaching of dance technique. How does this help or not help you?
2. I give various types of verbal directions and suggestions during different parts of class. Sometimes I choose not to speak. How does my talking/not talking affect you?
3. Please comment on touch, both in my teaching and in our partner work, as an element of your classroom experience.
4. I believe the culture of a class is influenced by the teacher's delivery, the type of information being delivered, the movement material itself, the music, the weather, and the student's health and emotional state. As I teach, I intuitively and/or intellectually track all these levels, and strive for a sum total experience that "clicks." What makes a class "click" for you?
5. Any further comments or additional thoughts?

We distributed this survey to eighteen students on Monday, March 3rd at the beginning of Susan's technique class. We both talked briefly about the survey emphasizing that it was voluntary and that it would help us greatly if they responded. We explained that I would be using

the information for a class project and that further collaborative work or work by Susan would result. A student volunteered to provide her mailbox for students to leave the completed surveys which I would pick up at the end of the week. On Friday, March 7th, I collected six surveys. . .

Considering the Survey

The responses to the survey include evidence which contradicts, corroborates or supplements the observation. Since we did not pilot the survey, it is difficult to be sure if our questions could have been framed more productively. However the richness and relevance of the responses convince me that our collaborative struggle over the wording was generally successful. In addition, one of the six students who responded took my verbal request to comment on the questions themselves seriously and said the following at different points:

> Good question.
>
> I have thought about this a lot in the last year.
>
> The questions on this survey have been very interesting to me as a student and as a teacher.

The first question asked for responses to Susan's integration of yoga into the technique class. All six responses were positive and mentioned specific ways in which yoga was helpful. Students reported increased flexibility and strength as well as more specific discoveries which they felt improved their dancing and self awareness. Many of the comments suggested that part of Susan's success has to do with

the information and images she imparts verbally while teaching the postures.

There were only two suggestions for changes. One student proposed facing away from the mirror, in part to avoid perceiving the body as object. Another student felt that, rather than using yoga as a warmup, other movement should occur before such intense stretches. One student here and in the following question mentioned that Susan demonstrated an integration of this material in her own teaching, which I consider a form of rhetorical support for the use of yoga in a dance technique class.

The second question dealt with Susan's use of language during class. This question evoked more divergent responses. To varying degrees, respondents all complimented some aspect of Susan's talking, from her "very good" images to her "verbal cues . . . [which were] soothing and helpful." Yet, of these six, one suggested that yoga practitioners "would find many verbal directions sort of distracting" though s/he found them "so necessary." Another suggested that Susan's use of multiple images was "sometimes an overload when ongoing." A third commented that "the not talking is invaluable" because "too much information will make a person crazy." S/he and two others valued both the talking and the silence. Though no one was condemnatory, only one simply responded positively.

Touch as used by Susan and in partner work was the focus of the next question. These responses were mostly positive, suggesting that touch helped clarify both self image and understanding of particular

movements. Two students also included discordant elements. One mentioned that s/he found touch useful but understood "that it can be uncomfortable for some." Another also found it helpful but sometimes "too much" when it was "unexpected" and s/he was intensely involved with sorting out a yoga posture. One student felt Susan's use of touch was "different and better" than other teachers because of related "verbal information" and the "opportunities . . . to talk about it immediately after."

The fourth question focused on what makes a class "click" or come together as a whole for the student. Responses varied widely and generally consisted of lists of elements important to that individual. One student felt that whether something clicked or not was a polarity which s/he did not focus upon because "life is far too dynamic." All of the other students included attributes of the teacher as important while only three included comments regarding other elements such as fellow dancers, music or the physical space. One student desired, among other things, "a sense of community involving interaction, eye contact, and communication between members of the class (not always facing front)."

The additional response to the last question included praise of various kinds for Susan, a no comment, an assurance that the class "clicked," a note of thanks and further suggestions. One asked for more feedback on a particular issue. Another suggested attention to aspects of dancing which go beyond "knowing the steps and the choreography." A third voiced appreciation for the repetition of

material which allowed this student to "use that material for what my body/brains/emotions need to use it for."

Relating the Data

Besides the largely positive feedback regarding Susan's teaching, there is much to consider here that relates to my observation and our discussions. The mixed response to the talking question is of particular interest to me as it correlates with my concerns regarding the direction of internal process. In particular, I wish we received a wider response to the survey to see what would emerge from the rest of the class. At the very least, we can note a sense of concern that focuses on the talking I coded as directing internal process and we can see that silence is useful. Susan explained the directive talking as, in part, a way of making sure that people are having a full experience. It is clear from the responses that these six are having rich experiences and that less ongoing directive talk might actually support their work.

The usefulness of much of Susan's talking is clearly indicated. Beyond the positive responses to the talk question, we see that other questions revealed talking as helpful in both clarifying the work with yoga and in supporting the use of touch. For these six students, Susan's use of language needs only certain adjustments in relation to the specific activities. In fact, since our initial discussions Susan has indicated that she is experimenting with classroom talk which shows a form of catalytic validity [i.e. the research has inspired further action; Lather, 1986] emerging in our work.

An interesting theme which briefly appears is that of vision and relationship to the front. Two students suggested not always facing front or facing the mirror, one of whom also desired more eye contact with other students. This theme relates to both Susan's writing and my own document analysis. Yet it did not appear in my observation because I stayed in one place, next to the mirror! Since the mirror only covered one wall, my vantage point precluded that aspect even though I understand the mirror to be a key part of the technique class. This theme also indicates that a question about such issues would be useful in future surveys.

Another appropriate question might concern how students view technique classes. Responses would help contextualize other statements by these students. However, as Susan and I discussed, much of what we would ultimately want to discover would require interviewing rather than surveying. We successfully limited ourselves in the survey yet allowed for evocative responses that could lead to a wide range of interview questions. In addition, we have discovered that short, open ended surveys are worth doing, especially when grounded in particular observations or other data.

Collaboration Ends Yet Dialogue Continues

At this point we had envisioned a variety of possibilities for further work. However this collaboration was ultimately cut short by our lack of time and Susan's move to Ohio University where she now teaches. We did continue our dialogue via email and at one point met to work on a proposal for a performance oriented presentation of our work to date tentatively titled, "The Performance of Power via Teacher Talk." We described our work together and then, in a single paragraph, attempted to communicate what we imagined we would create:

> Our presentation will playfully juxtapose reflection, dialogue, data, questions, dancing and performance art in an episodic manner. We will talk about "talk", we will do "talk", we will decode "talk" and we will use props and post-modern choreographic devices to highlight what we consider crucial aspects of understanding the deployment of power in the dance classroom via teacher talk. Because we consider the act of teaching to be inherently performative, shifting from moment-to-moment, we think that this project will be quite appropriate for "The Art of the Moment." In addition, our approach to our presentation as a performance will enable us to forefront such issues rather than simply describing them.

Unfortunately our proposal was not accepted and did not pursue the project largely because finding the time to work together was

becoming increasingly difficult. However our dialogue on such topics has continued. In closing this chapter, I will draw on my research journal and our email dialogue to describe some of what we learned from all this activity and where it might take us.

The Power Play Project

Our work together went through various stages but throughout we shared a commitment to look closely at our assumptions and to continue to question each other. This ongoing dialogue was, in many ways, the most important aspect of our project. Prior to our collaboration, working mostly alone, we each had considered issues regarding our teaching and had developed a great deal of awareness of our practice. We had also experimented with the implications of that awareness. Together our awareness expanded and our learning escalated.

A useful tool for this awareness work was the perspective enabled by my developing theoretical network to which Susan added. It gave us something to play off of and to use to question our assumptions beyond our personal impressions. Of course, it was initially composed through my use of others' work and my own work prior to meeting with Susan. Yet it also served as a sort of third party or mediator between our positions. It expanded, adding new points of intersection as our dialogue continued. As we began our work, I thought of our collaboration as the Power Project. At some point Susan inserted the notion of play into our dialogue and soon we were calling it the Power Play Project. Susan desired a more

playful element in the exchange of power which characterizes education. Her addition is important in that it opened our theoretical network to a wider range of intersections. Though the notion of power as a form of play informed our thinking, we did not pursue it to any great detail. It primarily surfaced in our presentation proposal and in largely unrecorded elements of our dialogue.

While we discussed many subjects, the topic of teacher talk took center stage. This staging occurred in part due to the direction of my own needs at the time. Yet it also was providing the richest source of data and the widest range of possible questions and concerns. In looking back over our work I see that a theme of talk as a form of control characterizes much of our data and discussion. Of course, control of others is a traditional way of thinking about power. My initial observation notes of Susan's classroom revealed a predominant theme of teacher talk as a form of control. Our early discussions sparked the most energy around this element. In writing about her teaching as a performance, I characterized much of her language use as directive speech which guided the actions and inner sensing of her students.

The survey responses indicated mixed feelings about Susan's talking. As noted, the voluntary nature of the survey may have eliminated the more neutral or negative responses. Even so, though students often found Susan's talking useful, there were also indicators that at times her directive speech could be too much. Of

course, the teacher as the one in control is a basic dynamic of the dance classroom. Students who have not begun a process of questioning the underlying dynamics may also be more limited in their critique of the form such elements will take.

As noted, Susan and I found this to be a productive area to consider. We both began to explore our uses of language in class. In particular, Susan focused on dance technique classes in later quarters while I experimented with the tai chi classes I was teaching at OSU. Our initial explorations were focused on raising our own awareness and experimenting with small aspects of our language use. One example that we shared was our tendency to say too much, though it manifested in different forms. I should note that, though a tai chi class is not the same as a dance technique class, there are many similarities. The teacher is in charge and the students attempt to replicate the exact moves of the teacher. The students are more or less evenly arranged in space for ready surveillance. They generally do the same things at the same time. However tai chi classes allow for more open ended sessions than do technique classes. References to my work in tai chi are more an indicator of other possible applications of this work, rather than a major aspect of this report.

We both agreed that long explanations in the classroom slowed the pace of things, sometimes to a standstill, and seemed to undermine student work. This tendency was particularly an issue for me in my tai chi class. Because I was working with beginners I

was faced with both introducing a specific discipline and with considering underlying movement issues. At the time I tended to explain things in long expository chunks. I began experimenting with more focused statements directly related to movement sequences. This approach seemed to improve student performance as well as keeping me more focused and connected with the students. Yet, in terms of power, it simply shifted its application.

Susan's version of this dilemma was to direct an ongoing stream of directive speech while students danced. My concern with this practice was that it gave little or no space for students' own thoughts or self-directive speech. Since these students were more advanced, most with many years of training prior to attending OSU, they did not need to be directed at every moment. Susan and I did not at first agree on this issue, in part because she truly intended such talk as helpful support, but she was open to experimenting. As she began to explore simply talking less in class she found her own comfort level increasing. What this did for the students would require further investigation which we did not conduct.

While these experiments are rather small, they did significantly affect our awareness of classroom dynamics. We found ourselves noticing our use of language more consistently and continued to experiment with bringing our use of language in tune with our emerging awareness of the play of power in the dance classroom. It seemed clear to us that we were not attempting to give up control of our classrooms. If anything, we were simply shifting how we

controlled our classrooms to create space for more independent student activity within general limits which were sometimes made visible and other times allowed to remain tacit.

This limit on our play with power is a key limit of this second phase of study. To some degree, to conduct a technique class means to have a teacher in charge. On the one hand this is a function of the imaginary of the technique class, perhaps even a definitive aspect. We also found that most of the students with which we worked required an education in moving beyond typical working methods. They sometimes seemed at a loss when required to be self directed and did not always seem to appreciate the opportunity.

For example, tai chi class offers multiple opportunities for students to work independently or in small groups while the teacher interacts more individually. With a more advanced group, one socialized into the discipline of tai chi, this can be a richly productive time. Such a method can accommodate different working styles and create additional space for the deeply motivated to excel rather than being held back by the pace of the group as a whole. Yet in the early stages of a beginning course this tends to be a difficult situation. My experience has been that students quickly stop working, stand around and talk about other things. My first encounters with this phenomenon often degenerated into placating or snapping at students. Yet in a more advanced setting this behavior may also emerge. However, with a group that generally

works hard and seems clear about their motivation, I am more comfortable accepting such behavior as recuperation on the part of students. Of course, such a description should arouse suspicion in any reader who is also influenced by Foucault.

Discipline and Punish (1979) is particularly important in raising awareness of the process of socialization into a discipline. However both Susan and I, over the course of this project, became quite clear that we were indeed introducing or continuing work with students in a particular discipline. In essence, we felt that the disciplinary element was an important part of our work. So we used the ideas of Foucault and others for what we found useful and moved on when specific work did not give us what we needed. Not until after our collaboration did I find out more about Foucault's (1988b) later stance that, in keeping with our interest in power play, holds that

> power is not an evil. Power is strategic games. We know very well indeed that power is not an evil. . . Let us also take something that has been the object of criticism, often justified: the pedagogical institution. I don't see where evil is in the practice of someone who, in a given game of truth, knowing more than another, tells him what he must do, teaches him, transmits knowledge to him, communicates skills to him. The problem is rather to know how you are to avoid in these practices - where power cannot not play and where it is not evil in itself - the effects of domination which will make a child

> subject to the arbitrary and useless authority of a teacher, or put a student under the power of an abusively authoritarian professor, and so forth. (p. 18)

So though Foucault is used more for purposes of raising suspicion, he moved on to explore other elements of power. This helps explain why he also enjoyed teaching in a rather traditional manner.

During the time Susan and I worked together, we discussed writings that influenced us. In particular, we talked about the work which initially formed my theoretical network and work in dance education and cooperative education which influenced Susan. But ultimately we relied on our developing dialogue to pursue our experiments. In looking back at our email dialogues, I find the most interesting elements to be Susan's articulation of our discussions. This interest is only partly a function of the fact that I was mostly clarifying ideas with which I had already been working extensively. Susan's discussion of her use of language in relation to her feelings about power revealed an awareness of fluidity and shifting boundaries that did not rely on French theorists or postmodern qualitative researchers. Not that she was naive or uneducated by any means, but it was powerful to see these ideas emerge from someone who was not socialized in the disciplinary circles within which I functioned.

Much of Susan's email based articulation related directly to thoughtful self-reflections on her experiences in and hopes for dance study. For example she expressed the hope that she was

teaching so that I'm not needed. . . it's teaching how to be in this power relationship (both parties) while at the same time constantly relinquishing it (both parties) - So I know this is a delicate and non-fixed system we're searching to define - one full of paradoxes. I'm often aware of that while I am teaching.

She also suggested a rough "outline for this pedagogy we're researching:"

1. Putting Cards on the Table
2. Being Aware of What's Happening
3. Not Getting Stuck

. . . It's like (1) here we are in this power relationship and here we go - do this and do this and it's a familiar relationship and everyone pretty much buys into it but the difference is, we're going to notice it while it happens a bit more and as we notice it, it will change, and the power relationship, once named begins to shift around and (2) being aware is the next step and perhaps a bit uncomfortable and [we] have to find new systems to support this shift and then (3) not getting stuck is where it's really important that some new power relationship, possibly more subtle and subversive as you've suggested, not replaces the old one, but that there remains a fluid dialogue, with landmarks - I'm thinking landmarks within a more fluid learning environment might be times where one person, usually [the] teacher, does have knowledge and information to

impart (albeit loaded with personal experience and reference points and cultural bias), or a landmark might be baselines of respect, or consensus building.

Susan's point about being uncomfortable is important. We both experienced the discomfort of attempting new approaches which, for whatever reason, did not work out. She also articulated concerns other teachers have expressed about the unpleasant behavior that sometimes emerges when students are given more room to make behavioral choices:

> If we are suggesting a shift in power positioning in the classroom, then there also will be the possibility of students (do we need a new word here?) having their own conversation and not being with the program. Can one present ground rules for a class - i.e. "behavior" that is useful/not useful for both the students and the teacher?

When I presented my first paper on this topic, one teacher described the disrespect she experienced when she taught in a caring manner. Though I did not learn further specifics of her story, her comments elicited numerous nods and murmurs of assent from those present.

Another book which I discovered after our collaboration that seems quite relevant is Ira Shor's When Students Have Power: Negotiating Authority in a Critical Pedagogy (1996). He too found that when he diligently created space for student input into the planning of their class, that disruptive and counterproductive behavior emerged. One useful approach to which he fully

committed was consensus building, which Susan has considered for future classes:

> I'm getting an idea to start my class next quarter with some kind of consensus building activity to arrive at such ground rules together. Things about talking, touching, attendance, clothing . . . it could be interesting for them to have to think through what is important.

Susan also related indications of the fact that as we become more aware, much of our old behavior becomes less acceptable, even when students do not necessarily find it an issue:

> my technique classes have regressed to some old talk too much, boss too much, uptight thing that's no fun. or maybe I'm just more aware.

In my own case, recently I have found myself apologizing for behavior that students had not even noticed or interpreted in a negative way. Since I am not an overly apologetic person in class, these moments were highlighted as reminders that it is often easier to take the more comfortable route, since a wide range of teacher behavior is quite acceptable. In any case, the work with Susan raised many questions regarding power relations in the dance classroom as well as many possibilities for further work. Before turning to my closing remarks, I will share one more extract from an email message of Susan's:

To Question - to pose questions to the students with the goal to have them be self-reflective and to turn their attention to their learning not just doing what I tell them - THIS IS KEY.

CONCLUSIONS

Connections and Possibilities

The last chapter ends in process, with two educators in midstream having left one shore and heading for another. In keeping with this sense of movement, I do not feel it is appropriate to present in closing neatly packed findings and proposals. In part I am in agreement with Michel Foucault's (1991) statement:

> My role is to address problems effectively, really: and to pose them with the greatest possible rigor, with the maximum complexity and difficulty so that a solution does not arise all at once because of the thought of some reformer or even in the brain of a political party. (p. 158)

This stance is in keeping with Foucault's comments regarding the desirability of temporarily paralyzing responses to Discipline and Punish (1979). To some extent, it is an expression of a strategy for keeping radical thought from being immediately recuperated and effectively disabled.

But this statement is about more than the elite play of ideas. Foucault indicates that those affected should be involved in any decision making process:

> The problems that I try to address . . . cannot be easily resolved. It takes years, decades of work carried out at the grassroots level with the people directly involved . . . I carefully guard against making the law. Rather, I concern myself with determining problems, unleashing them, revealing them within the framework of such complexity as to shut the mouths of prophets and legislators: all those who speak for others and above others. It is at that moment that the complexity of the problem will be able to appear in its connection with people's lives; and consequently, the legitimacy of a common enterprise will be able to appear through concrete questions, difficult cases, revolutionary movements, reflections, and evidence. Yes, the object is to proceed a little at a time, to introduce modifications that are capable of, if not finding solutions, then at least of changing the givens of a problem. (1991, pp. 158-159)

Foucault's description of his role sounds grandiose, particularly outside of the French social milieu. Yet it resonates with my strong feeling that everyone affected by particular proposals should have a say in their creation. By this statement I am not suggesting that everyone's voices should be heard with final decisions made by some elite group. Rather I believe that all involved should have power in the decision making process. The difficulties of such an approach are many but would also be part of building a truly democratic society. So this project, which I will now briefly review,

has not been about gathering evidence for steadfast conclusions or policy proposals, though it could contribute to such an effort. Rather it is an attempt to help change the "givens of a problem" by reconsidering the taken for granted elements of the typical dance classroom.

Summary

I began with an interest in the Conservatory, a setting renowned for the cruelty of its faculty. Over a period of time I collected a small group of interviews with former Conservatory students who had continued their training at State Universities and either planned or pursued professional careers. The Conservatory functioned as an extreme case sample which highlighted issues worth considering in other settings. It also allowed for the use of theorists who focused on similarly extreme settings such as prisons, cults and asylums. In particular, I found the work of Michel Foucault most useful. His perception of power as involving a wider range of processes than simple domination aided me in raising suspicions regarding more caring classrooms.

An important issue for me was understanding why Conservatory students accepted and sometimes even desired abusive treatment. While this issue was never fully resolved, a key component involved the typical dynamic of the dance technique class. The central role of the teacher and the ceaseless devotion of students appear to produce dancers who are conditioned to accept a

wide range of teacher behavior. This issue is particularly crucial in elite settings which seek to create professional dancers. The transformative nature of this enterprise and the powerful desires of students often justify behavior that would be unacceptable in more mundane settings. This concern with a typical dance technique class facilitated my shift of focus from a study centered on the Conservatory to a multisited study of the dance classroom. In addition to ongoing self reflections, I initiated a collaborative study of the caring classroom of Susan Van Pelt, a much loved modern dance instructor.

With Susan I explored multiple forms of data collection and presentation. This process had actually begun with the Conservatory interviews which I interfaced with a variety of theoretical perspectives while producing a diverse range of texts. Along the way I reconceptualized the theoretical framework as first a toolbox and then a theoretical network. This maneuver allowed for a mobility which facilitated connecting my experiences, Conservatory life and Susan Van Pelt's classroom. These connections and interfaces helped Susan and I explore power relations in classrooms which many would consider a far cry from the Conservatory. While we found obvious differences, we also found numerous similarities, many of which related to my notion of the typical dance classroom. Though our project remained incomplete we found ourselves formulating a notion of power play which ultimately reconnected this work with Foucault's formulations

of power. This process has led me to a place where, rather than being prepared to make specific curricular proposals, I am enabled to make multiple connections with other projects and point out possibilities for future work.

Projects and Possibilities

There are multiple projects which focus on reforming or reformulating the way elite dance education is practiced, many of which are referenced in the introduction. I would like to close by discussing a few of these in more detail including how they relate to connections between work in dance studies and work elsewhere. In considering these studies I must point out that my citations are in no way complete. Over the course of this project I have come upon articles, books, dissertations and conference proceedings which relate in some way to my topic from a wide range of fields including dance studies. Here I am focusing upon work which most closely relates to my concerns and indicates possibilities for group work as well as individual research. Ultimately I believe that the issues raised in this study must be addressed by collective approaches to educational research and practice.

Of the range of research directly related to the dance technique class, the work conducted by Sylvie Fortin is perhaps most relevant. In addition to her dissertation (1992), Sylvie has presented and published a variety of papers (1995) which consider specific teachers' efforts to integrate somatics into technique classes. Such efforts emphasize internal sensing and

improvisational explorations over the external form usually emphasized in technique classes across specific genres. As her subjects relate, these efforts often met with resistance from both students and faculty. One key reason for such resistance is the tradition within dance training of separating dance technique from classes where improvisation and internal exploration occur, even in more progressive curricula. More often somatic practices are used as supplements to standard technique classes. While somatics can be recuperated by traditional practices, at the same time this field contains a body of work with great potential for reconsidering the dance technique class. The continually growing popularity of such practices throughout society suggest that the implications of this work can connect the dance world to populist concerns with health and personal growth.

The emergence of somatic perspectives in the field of dance is also related to the development of dance medicine which draws on medical/anatomical knowledge and sports medicine. A fairly early entrant on the subject of such reform is L. M. Vincent's Competing With the Sylph: Dancers and the Pursuit of the Ideal Body Form (1979). In addition to reformist concerns with healthy practices based on medical research, Vincent takes a fairly surprising aesthetic stance and includes a discussion of how his own perspective changed as he worked with dancers over time. Vincent expresses concern over eating disorders and the obsession with

thinness that still characterizes so much of the dance world, particularly for women.

In the course of working with elite dancers and being confronted by the intensity of their quest for an extreme state of thinness, Vincent's own aesthetic values shifted:

> Over the past few months I have witnessed my own subtle transformation as part of the dance audience: more often now am I distracted uncomfortably by an angular line of a dancer who is too thin. And a common question - 'Wouldn't it be better to be five pounds too light than five pounds too heavy?' - which I once answered overwhelmingly in the affirmative, elicits a different response. . . To modify our aesthetic sensibilities may take a conscious, individual effort; we should not depend on the arts or fashion to help us adjust our vision. (pp. 134-135)

Vincent's stance is one which suggests obvious connections between the dance world and the growing concern in society at large over eating disorders and obsessions with body images. While these issues also affect men and Vincent is male, they appear to disproportionately and more dramatically affect women in our society. Such issues offer the possibility of a wide range of discussions with coaches, feminists, health educators and cultural activists which still seem to be somewhat faltering in the dance world.

An important genre of writing which addresses dance practices are the various manuals designed to aid the beginning and sometimes the more advanced dancer in getting the most out of his or her dance experience. A particularly relevant one to this discussion is Gigi Berardi's Finding Balance: Fitness and Training for a Lifetime in Dance (1991). Berardi wrote her book partly in reaction to the wave of memoirs by ballet dancers who spoke of the abusive treatment so prevalent in the elite world of professional ballet, in particular Suzanne Gordon's Off Balance: The Real World of Ballet (1983). However, instead of adding fuel to the fire, she desired to show that there were older dancers still working and that "you don't have to be a 17-year-old anorexic in a professional school to be a dancer" (p. xvii). Her work not only seeks to show that there are alternative paths to being a successful dancer but that there is still more to be done and that dancers must take a proactive stance in their careers that goes beyond working hard and getting one's face in the spotlight.

In addition to concerns with healthy physical practices and picking a good teacher, Berardi's unique contributions are her thoughts concerning the need for dancers to become more politically involved in their own field. Though she recognizes the difficulties of such a stance, her mention of such possibilities as unionizing raises important issues that one rarely hears dancers speak of and even more rarely during their professional training. Her approach suggests connections between the world of the dancer

as cultural worker and the situations of other performing artists as well as workers more generally. While unionization may not always be a practical solution, the awareness of the dancer as worker, as the one who makes the production of dance possible, can only raise important questions and connections between dancers and other workers.

The work of Sherry Shapiro in Pedagogy and the Politics of the Body (1999) brings together issues raised by both Vincent and Berardi and places them in the context of critical pedagogy. Though her own experiments are more directly related to choreography, Sherry's work raises issues of great importance for dance training more generally. Her approach to practical explorations of liberatory theory relates to that of Brazilian dance researcher Isabel Marques (1998) whose direct involvement with Paulo Freire's attempts to reform education in Sao Paulo are quite powerful. Sherry and Isabel offer connections to critical pedagogy and related efforts in the arts explicitly focused on social justice.

My own concerns with social justice and postmodern theory have led me to explore the possibilities of developing a Foucauldian critique of dance practices. In the course of this exploration I have encountered a broad range of writings by researchers from different disciplines who use Foucault's contributions in useful ways. Since much of this work did not make its way into this project, I simply want to mention a few sources which indicate the possibilities for Foucault inspired discussions between fields. Most notable is the

wide-ranging projects of feminists across disciplines. One anthology which indicates the influence of Foucault, though not specifically focused on his work, is entitled Feminisms and Critical Pedagogy (Luke & Gore, 1992). This collection registers the impact of such thinking by some of the leading figures in the field.

Another anthology which relates Foucault and education more directly is Foucault's Challenge: Discourse, Knowledge and Power in Education (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998). It indicates additional uses of Foucault in education, especially where the body is forefronted. Other fields which forefront the body suggest further possibilities. Foucault, Health and Medicine (Petersen & Bunton, 1997) gathers interdisciplinary studies related to health and medical research. Sport is also a field which has registered Foucault's impact. One volume which suggests a Foucauldian ethic for elite athletics, clearly relevant to professional dance training, is Debra Shogan's The Making of High-Performance Athletes: Discipline, Diversity, and Ethics (1999). I regret not being able to address her thoughts more directly.

I mention these books not to claim that they are the most important ones but rather to indicate some of the work which indicates the usefulness of Michel Foucault's contribution. As I hope my project has shown, Foucault offers a great deal to dance researchers and educators. Beyond direct use of his writing, it also offers ways of connecting the field of dance studies to work across disciplines. In France, at a particular time, Foucault helped connect

researchers with activists. While I do not anticipate a more popular reception of Foucault in the States, I do think his thought is useful to those of us who do not intend to remain bound by the strictures of academia. In any case, I am inspired by his example.

There are numerous other dance educators, researchers and choreographers who are doing valuable work which offers connections to other academic fields as well as social movements of all kinds. In making dance education less of a total greedy institution it is crucial that we network beyond our immediate constituencies to find relationships between our efforts and the efforts of other who share our concerns. Such a process will require us to leave our comfort zones, to enter into unpleasant dialogues and to spend too much of our precious time away from the dance activities which inspired us in the first place. Yet what may seem like an unfortunate reality could be our greatest strength.

Many people outside of our field find dance as inspiring as we do. Many people who do not call themselves dancers love to dance. In moving beyond familiar territory, I believe our practices will ultimately be strengthened. Numerous dance researchers, educators and advocates have already given many years to both local and national efforts to improve the field of dance. As we continue this activity, my hope is that we can find peaceful ways of resolving our differences and moving forward, as I relate in my afterword.

AFTERWORD

Ethics and the Play of Power

I hope that it is self evident in this project that an ethical perspective permeates every stage of research from conceptualization to fieldwork to writing to presentation. Ethical choices emerge in various forms in this work. My openly ideological stance and concern with social change spur me to say what I mean as I pursue questions of social significance. An awareness of power is not just about theory or education but about how I interact with those who contribute to my work through consenting to interviews and allowing me to watch them take or teach class. Ethical concerns affect how I write, how I present others' words and what I do with those writings. Such concerns go far beyond a Human Subjects Review Board's expectations. But then, such committees were mandated due to the misconduct of clinical and laboratory researchers. Of course, researchers such as myself also have possibilities for ill treating those we research, though rarely as damaging as misconduct involving drugs or medical procedures.

But I do not intend to close on a sour note. At certain moments in this dissertation I have critiqued work as I deemed

necessary. At each point I have questioned my intentions and reconsidered my words. Some of those who I critique are also colleagues. For many academics my words are mild and not worth noting yet the matter still concerns me. I have no wish to contribute to or participate in academic warfare.

I have not always taken this course. At times I have freely participated in the so-called "culture wars" and "science wars." However increasingly I wish to move away from academic warfare to an irenic stance described by Emily Martin (1996) in her essay entitled Meeting Polemics with Irenics in the Science Wars:

> According to Webster's, a polemic is 'an aggressive attack on, or the refutation of, others' opinions, doctrines or the like.' In today's academy, professors and students often have cause to be polemic, but seldom have cause to remember that polemic has an opposite. Webster's defines that opposite, irenic, as 'fitted or designed to promote peace; pacific, conciliatory, peaceful.' Recent skirmishes in the Science Wars have seemed to me so polemically bitter on all sides that rather than sending back another volley intended to hurt and destroy, I want to try moving irenically toward common ground. (p. 61)

This move away from warfare is influenced both by my practice of tai chi and by my more general desire for a peaceful existence. Michel Foucault influences me greatly and, though he was apparently combative at times, he did state towards the end of his life:

> What is tiresome in ideological arguments is that one is necessarily swept away by the 'model of war.' That is to say that when you find yourself facing someone with ideas different from your own, you are always led to identify that person as an enemy. . . And we know that it is necessary to wage combat against the enemy until triumphing over him. This grand theme of ideological struggle has really disturbed me. First of all because the theoretical coordinates of each of us are often, no, always, confused and fluctuating, especially if they are observed in their genesis. Furthermore: might not this 'struggle' that one tries to wage against the 'enemy' only be a way of making a petty dispute without much importance seem more serious than it really is? . . . What is more serious: acting out a struggle against the 'enemy,' or investigating, together or perhaps divergently, the important problems that are posed? (1991, pp. 180-181)

Foucault's word are well taken but increasingly I am coming more under the influence of another Michel, Foucault's former colleague Michel Serres.

Serres was Foucault's student before both taught together at Vincennes in France. They shared an ongoing discussion but had a falling out "about the ethics of teaching" (Serres, 1995b, p. 38). I have been unable to find further references to this unfortunate event. More importantly, Michel Serres's commitment to

"irenicism" appears to be more central to his work than to that of Foucault. He cautions us to

> beware of philosophies that put he who practices them in the august position of always being right, of always being the wisest, the most intelligent, and the strongest. These philosophies always and eternally come down to strategies of war. You wanted to talk about an ethic. Mine forbids me from playing that particular game. I willingly admit, before I begin, that I am not always right. This irenicism is the fundamental condition of intellectual honesty. (1995b, p. 134)

Serres's ethic is strong and an integral element of his approach to writing and research. His experiences in the military and in academia led him to state,

> I have passed enough of my life on warships and in lecture halls to testify before youth, which already knows, that there is no difference between the purely animal or hierarchical customs of the playground, military tactics, and academic conduct: the same terror reigns in the covered playground, in front of torpedo launchers, and on campus, this fear that can pass for the fundamental passion of intellectual workers, in the majestic shape of absolute knowledge, this phantom standing behind those who write at their table. (1997, p. 134)

Serres describes himself as having "uneasily survived ten diverse terrors maintained by theoreticians who were serfs to political or

academic ideologies" (p. 135) during his career as a "postwar French university philosopher." This experience led him to develop,

> out of regard for the health of life and mind . . . for my private use, some rules of ethics or deontology: After attentive examination, adopt no idea that would contain, on the face of it, any trace of vengeance. . . Never throw yourself into a polemic; Always avoid all membership: flee not only all pressure groups but also all defined disciplines of knowledge, whether a local and learned campus in the global and societal battle or a sectorial entrenchment in scientific debate. Neither master, then, nor above all disciple. These rules do not trace a method, but very precisely an exodus, a capricious and seemingly irregular trek constrained only by the obligation to avoid speculative places held by force, generally watched over by guard dogs. . . We have at our disposal tools, notions, and efficacy, in great number; we lack, on the other hand, an intellectual sphere free of all relations of dominance. (1997, p. 136)

Just as I am both humbled and inspired by the intellectual dexterity and wide grasp of Michel Foucault, so too am I moved by the work of Michel Serres. But my regard for Serres runs even deeper because he indicates not just a socially just way of proceeding but also a peaceful path which is a powerful reminder of where I want my journeys to take me. My work with power relations in the dance classroom is ultimately not meant as simply a way of

helping bring justice to the world of dance. Beyond that it is meant as a gesture towards the possibility of peaceful relations in the many worlds which we inhabit.

APPENDIX A

Proposal for an Alternative Dissertation Format

To the greatest possible extent, I have inscribed my evolving research process in this book, rather than simply presenting you with discrete 'findings' or artifacts of the study. . . [This writing] is deliberately structured to represent my research as emergent, subject over time to reformulations and reinterpretations. My aim is to provide a reasonably complete picture of how I have worked with my data thus far. (Linden, 1993, pp. 5-6)

My proposed alternative format is intended to offer an inscription of "my evolving research process." I will discuss the overall shape and reasoning of the proposed dissertation document and then I will discuss more general rationales for such an attempt. In general, it should be noted that I am not speaking of abandoning all elements of a traditional dissertation but rather fulfilling the requirements in a different form which tends to disperse research questions, theories, methods and data throughout the document. Such an approach is intended to move beyond the limits of the

> linear articulation of the theory/method/results nexus . . . [which] fails to signal the embeddedness of theory in the

> entire research task. . . [and] misconstrue[s] the reflexive nature of the research project and the epistemological assumptions within which it locates itself. (McWilliam, 1994, p. 46).

This move can also display the rigor associated with a traditional dissertation while communicating "findings" in an interesting and accessible manner.

The body of the proposed dissertation would be divided into three major sections plus introduction and closing thoughts. The first section would be a narrative describing my initial research into the Conservatory. This would be in an overtly narrative form which would be the story of the initial phases of a research project. Rather than splitting problem from theory from method, I would intertwine these elements into a research tale. Narrative would then enable me to model the forms of emergence that occurred as I did various studies. Rather than reprinting early articles or summarizing them, I would use them as landmarks along the way. The short article which follows, "Catherine's Body (remembering the Conservatory)" (1999b), is an abbreviated example of how such a thing could be done.

The second section would be, in part, similar to the theory chapter of this proposal. Here I would discuss the theoretical toolbox and the assembled elements. The theories being discussed would be those already introduced in the first section. I would then use this assemblage of concepts to both reconsider what I had done

so far and to include further interviews not considered in the early studies. I would also look for disconfirming evidence, peer at outlier data and generally stir things up. This section represents an opportunity to step back and look things over after the initial tale.

The third section would focus on my work with Susan Van Pelt with an overt theoretical awareness developed in the preceding sections. Whereas the first section is characterized by the lone research journey, this section will include more interplay between researcher and researched. In part, this element will be highlighted because we did a certain amount of collaboration. So this will be a more interactive research tale, one which involves multiple methods and multiple possibilities. A closing section would attempt to deal with implications and future directions.

My desire to write a research narrative grows in part from a desire to reach a larger audience with my writing. Certainly the traditional dissertation structure is not one which is readily accessible to an interested public, even a small one composed mainly of academics (Duke & Beck, 1999, p. 35). Dissertations are rarely studied except during thorough literature searches and when writing a dissertation. Normally one might write the dissertation and then rewrite it for publication. However, this route makes the early stage of a new job particularly difficult (Krathwohl, 1994, p. 31). As an older student (now 40), I am acutely aware of the passing of time and the need to get on with things. So, while

intending to fulfill the content requirements of the dissertation, I want to experiment with the form.

Of course the traditional form is increasingly under attack as an "anachronism" (Krathwohl, 1994, p. 30) or simply as being

> ill-suited to the task of training doctoral students in the communicative aspects of educational research . . . [and] largely ineffectual as a means of contributing knowledge to the field. (Duke & Beck, 1999, p. 31)

It seems quite obvious that the "typical four- or five-chapter dissertation structure trains students in a writing structure they will probably never again use" (Krathwohl, p. 30). It also seems reasonable to claim that the traditional dissertation format as

> qualitative research training validates the mechanistic model of writing, even though that model shuts down the creativity and sensibilities of the individual researcher. (Richardson, 1994, p. 517)

Though the traditional form may be useful for some researchers in training, for an increasing number it represents a hindrance rather than a culminating experience.

Krathwohl (1994) and Duke & Beck (1999) offer other possibilities for dissertation forms in Educational Researcher. Elliot Eisner addresses the subject from multiple platforms and seems comfortable with dissertations in the form of novels (1993, p. 9) or even in forms which are not written (1991, p. 244). My own proposal seems rather modest by comparison and its most radical

elements are the departure from traditional forms and the use of narrative elements in the research report. One inspiration for such an approach is Ira Shor's book When Students Have Power (1996) a strong example of material unfolding, of telling a research tale.

The idea of including or even organizing through narrative elements allows for the more ready practice of reflexivity as well as modeling the process of emergence which is ever present in the course of research. Further it enables the turn away from master narratives to particular accounts of knowledge production. Of course, "all social scientific writing depends upon narrative structure and narrative devices" (Richardson, 1997, p. 27). So the "issue is not whether sociology should use the narrative, but which narratives will be provided to the reader" (p. 28). My interest is in a narrative which communicates all aspects of research in a manner related to the form of that research for

> there is an intimate relationship between our conception of what the products of research are to look like and the way we go about doing research. (Eisner, 1997, p. 5)

One example of how some of this might work is in a paper I am presenting at the Not Just Any Body conference in Toronto entitled, "Catherine's Body (remembering the Conservatory)" (1999b). In its overview of this project so far, it weaves together theory, data and method to tell a research tale.

APPENDIX B

Undisciplined thoughts regarding individuation via surveillance and documentation (1999c)

[With quotes from Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish (1979)]

In grade school I attended Charles R. Bugg Elementary. The school was shaped in a big L. The principal's office was at the corner of the L allowing him to see the main entrance, the lobby, the parking lot. Each grade was arranged in order spatially, the older students closer to the principal's office.

A relation of surveillance . . . is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching. (176)

I remember the rows of desks, the immobile bodies, the teacher's watchful eye, the student in second grade who acted out one time too many, never to be seen again.

This hierarchizing penality . . . exercised over them a constant pressure to conform to the same model, so that they might all be subjected to 'subordination, docility, attention in studies and exercises, and to the correct practice of duties and all the parts of discipline'. So that they might all be like one another. (182)

In third grade we underwent IQ tests but were not told of the outcome. By the time I left Charles R. Bugg, my permanent file must have been thick with such secret documents.

The examination that places individuals in a field of surveillance also situates them in a network of writing; it engages them in a whole mass of documents that capture and fix them. (189)

Later I understood that I could see this permanent file, this record of my individuality, but I never did.

This turning of real lives into writing is no longer a procedure of heroization; it functions as a procedure of objectification and subjection. (192)

An older friend of mine got his FBI file through the Freedom of Information Act. He said it made him out to be much more important than he really was. His file made him a hero so the FBI agents could look like they were doing a good job. What do your files contain and who do they serve?

APPENDIX C

On Considering Dance Education as a Form of Technology (1997b)

In this thought paper I apply some of the readings from class to issues of dance education. In particular I draw on Corlann Bush's definition of technology to look at dance education as a technology which utilizes the tool of dance technique to produce dancers. In doing so, I am not as interested in making a case for defining dance as a technology as I am in creating an opening for applying feminist critiques of technology to dance. This maneuver, which perhaps seems peculiar at first glance, offers a way of "unthinking" dance educators' assumptions regarding their practices. I focus in particular on dance technique because in Western dance training the technique class is at the core of the making of dancers.

I decided to explore this idea as a part of the work that is leading to my dissertation. Over two years ago I began interviewing students who trained as dancers at a state university based conservatory of the arts. They all studied with two men who were known for their abusive treatment of students. For more than twenty years these teachers carried on at this school and the stories of their behavior became common knowledge among a wide range of people, particularly in the modern dance community. Many of

these stories focused on technique classes which are central to dancers' daily educational experience and often to their ongoing lives as dancers as well. I chose an extreme case to study which illuminates issues regarding business as usual in dance education.

In technique class the teacher is generally in total control at all times. The big difference in teachers is in how they use that power, which they all share whether or not they use it abusively. This relationship of power between students and teachers is taken for granted in the dance community as is the centrality of the technique class. The value of defining dance education as technology is that it then allows us to rethink or even "unthink" (Bush in Morgall, 1993, p. 129) dominant ideas regarding dance technique and to apply critiques of technology to dance training.

> Corlann Bush speaks of technology as
> an organized system of interactions that utilizes tools and involves techniques for the performance of tasks and the accomplishment of objectives. (in Morgall, p. 130)

Dance education can be thought of as a technology in that it is "an organized system of interactions." Utilizing this definition we can then speak of dance technique as both a tool and a technique. Dance technique is a tool in that it generally is a standardized sequence of physical maneuvers which can be utilized in producing dancers. This utilization involves specific techniques or ways of using such tools in the process of production. The objective is to

create a dancer who can perform the necessary tasks which he or she is required to accomplish. Bush's definition is particularly useful for my own considerations of conservatory training. Other definitions could be drawn on as well which focus on the fact that technology is not just about machines but about knowledge, practices and social relationships.

Whether or not this definition of dance education as technology is ultimately satisfying, it does enable a project of unthinking which can rely on feminist critiques of technology. One place to start is with Morgall's discussion of "historical perspective" which allows us to "expose the ideological and social power of those who make decisions during the various phases of research, development and dissemination of technology" (p. 148) or, in this case, dance technique. Many feminist critiques of technology and of science focus on their gendered development, particularly in relationship to Western history. This perspective can be applied to the history of dance technique as well.

My focus is on modern dance techniques which arose at the turn of the century and rapidly proliferated throughout the first half of the 1900's. Yet, though modern dance developed partly in opposition to ballet technique, modern dance choreographers and teachers eventually incorporated ballet skills into their work. I would argue with Morgall that this incorporation of what was considered antithetical is possible due to "the reinforcement of old and established forms of power and control [which] are often

embedded in the design and organization of technology" (p. 148). In fact I would argue that the development of codified ballet technique, which can be said to originate in the court of Louis XIV, establishes the scientific rationalization of dance training which is later developed in modern dance.

By the late 1800's scientific rationalization was embedded in Western thought and even those practices which imagined themselves to be finding the "natural" body were doing so with science in mind and in body. So the development of codified modern dance techniques which included a rhetoric of rebellion against ballet shared an underlying perspective which enabled the later incorporation of balletic technique into modern dance. Whereas in the early 1900's modern dancers studied modern dance, today's dancer must study ballet extensively to find work as a modern dancer.

The gendered component of the development of modern dance seems at first to go against a relationship to the gendered mindset of technoscience. The early "pioneers" of American modern dance were mostly women. Though some men were involved it was not until the 1950's that men achieved prominence as choreographers and creators of new techniques. Even today dance in the United States is generally considered to be more appropriate for women. Men who dance professionally remain somewhat suspect. However, though women were the initial creators of modern dance, men have achieved hegemony in this

realm as well. Jan Van Dyke (1992) details the fact that in the United States, in modern dance as well as in ballet, men are more likely than women to be company directors, heads of dance departments, members of the board of directors and power players in funding organizations. It would be interesting to trace the history of this male hegemony in relationship to the development of modern dance, for example, is there any correlation between the emergence of male leadership and the incorporation of ballet technique into modern dance?

Bush's four contexts for studying technology (in Morgall, p. 130) are also useful for looking at dance education as a technology. In my own studies of conservatory training these contexts are readily applicable. The first context, that of design and development, would include the history of dance technique sketched out above. It might also include such related history as the development of the arts conservatory as a site for training elite dancers. It would be interesting to look at Hacker's studies (1989) of the military basis for elite education in relationship to these various developments in dance training. Certainly the similarities between military and dance training are striking.

Bush's next category, the user, would refer to the dance instructors and perhaps the dancers as well. In my interviews I seek to understand, in part, the nature of the disciplinary regime the teachers created and how students participated in such a regime. In doing so, I rely greatly on Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish

(1979) with its discussion of disciplinary technologies. The use of a codified dance technique as a tool for disciplining docile bodies facilitates the power/knowledge relationship. The specific technique that is utilized also allows for a form of surveillance that is internalized quite readily by the students. While the teachers use technique as a means of creating dancers, the dancers themselves are using the process in their own self creation. Though agency clearly plays a role in this process, an important feature remains the submission of the student to the teachers' deployment of technique.

The conservatory itself is an enclosed environment which supports the student's ability to remain in an abusive situation. From the interviews I have done so far it is clear that we are dealing with young people in an environment cut off from the rest of the world who tend to take this situation for granted. So the environment in which this technology is enacted, Bush's third context, plays a strong role. Beyond being a site of isolation in which technologies are deployed, the conservatory environment is also one which focuses the efforts of both student and teacher. In such a setting the effects of technology are greatly heightened and therefore enhanced. For me, the idea of environment leads quite naturally to the fourth context, that of culture.

The larger cultural setting is important because no site can be cut off from the effects of that context. Another work I use to illuminate these interviews is Arthur Deikman's The Wrong Way Home (1990) in which he sketches out the dimensions of cult

involvement by highly educated people in the United States. I use his work to look at conservatory training through the lens of cult creation. Deikman extends his argument to look at American cult/ure and its reliance on a cultlike mindset to maintain allegiance. This linkage to the larger cultural context can be explored in other ways as well, just as analysts of technology have situated technoscience in the larger cultural setting.

These initial examples illustrate how feminist critiques of technology can be used in unthinking established notions regarding dance education. However these examples focus on the oppressive nature of dance training, disregarding the multiple pleasures associated with developing a sophisticated, articulate physical being. In considering why dancers submit themselves to oppressive regimes we must also consider the concomitant pleasures associated with that training. Perhaps such pleasures offer a hint as to how we might transform the study of dance. Here we can turn to Sally Hacker's discussion (1989) of the possibilities for work "as an opportunity to express ourselves most fully . . . an expression of human creativity and a source of freedom." (p. 5) Rethinking the practice of dance education requires an awareness of the "strong sensual and erotic dimension[s]" (p. xvi) of the technologies which we employ in creating dancers.

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