

Dance, Movement, and Bodies:

Forays into the Nonlinguistic and the Challenge of Linguaging Experience: Evening II

June 27, 2007

7:00 p.m.

The Philoctetes Center

Sheets-Johnstone: We come into the world moving. We're precisely not stillborn. Indeed, movement forms the 'I' that moves before the 'I' that moves forms movement. We make inchoate reaching movements before we effectively reach and grasp. We kick our legs before we crawl or walk. We babble and coo before we speak. We move before we judge directions or navigate across distances from A to B or have any kind of concept of distances. We learn our bodies from the beginning—we learn our bodies and learn to move ourselves. We do so without an instructions manual and without any instructions from other people. How do we do this? We learn to move ourselves. We learn our bodies and we learn to move ourselves. In the process, we form non-linguistic concepts—what I call corporeal concepts, because they emanate from our own bodily experiences of movement. We learn far and near, we learn fast and slow, we learn in, inside, on, underneath. We learn concepts that have to do with space and time and force non-linguistically. Indeed, there would be absolutely no basis for language unless we had formed some of these concepts from the very beginning on the basis of our having learned our bodies and learned to move ourselves. We also relate to other people through movement, through our awareness of our own tactile, kinesthetic bodies and through our awareness of the kinetic dynamics of others. We learn this through play, through affect attunement, and through more sophisticated forms of dance.

I would like to introduce you to what we just saw. The first segment that we saw on bear play was produced by Robert Fagen in relation to his animal behavior studies. Robert Fagen is there in the light blue shirt. The next segment we saw was called "Contact Improvisation," and contact improvisation is the form of dance that originated with Steve Paxton, who is here on my left. Steve was originally a dancer with Merce Cunningham, and ventured forth to create this form of dance called contact improvisation. The third segment that we saw—the shorter segment—was from a dance called "Revelations." It was choreographed by Alvin Ailey. It was a shorter piece at the very end that was actually choreographed, whereas contact improvisation is un-choreographed; it's something that happens in the moment.

What I want to do is to start the discussion this evening on play, affect attunement, and dance improvisation, and the way in which they are interlinked in terms of movement. Prior to that I would like to read something to you, because I've noticed in the Philoctetes heading there is always a mention of the imagination. The imagination doesn't come into play very often, it seems to me, except in one instance when there was a whole roundtable discussion on imagination, isn't that right, Ellen?

Fertig: That's right, but usually it comes into discussion one way or another.

Sheets-Johnstone: Okay. Well, I would like to read this very short quote because it seems to me very, very pertinent to our discussion tonight in terms of dance, movement and bodies, specifically with respect to play and affect.

“For everyone whose guiding principal is adaptation to external reality, imagination is, for these reasons, something reprehensible and useless. And yet we know that every good idea and all creative work are the offspring of the imagination, and have their source in what one is pleased to call ‘infantile fantasy.’ Not the artist alone, but every creative individual whatsoever owes all that is greatest in his life to fantasy. The dynamic principal of fantasy is play, a characteristic, also, of the child. And as such, it appears inconsistent with the principal of serious work. But without this playing, without fantasy, no creative work has ever yet come to birth. The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable.”

That’s from Carl Jung, “Psychological Types.” I thought that was very pertinent to our discussion tonight. Let me introduce—first of all, I want to thank Ellen Fertig. Ellen has been an inestimable help, and I really do appreciate everything that she’s done. This person here on my left is Steve Paxton. This is Joanna Harris, who is a dance historian, has practiced as a dance therapist, has been a dancer and choreographer and has run the gamut of dance in many dimensions. Robert Fagen I introduced originally as an evolutionary biologist who has done a lot of dance, in ballet, in Juno, Alaska. And Daniel Stern, who I was sure that all of you were already familiar with, who is an infant psychiatrist who has written eloquently on infants and affect attunement and relationships between mother and infant.

So we will begin our roundtable discussion with play and affect attunement and contact improvisation. There are two observations, perhaps, that I would like to mention. You may play with them or you can go off in whatever direction you want to. One of them is the fact that in play and in contact improvisation and in affect attunement as well, the future is unknown. There is no structure that is pre-given, so that what happens is all created on the spot in a way that can be a source of insecurity for people, because there is not something already known and anticipated that is going to happen, so that can make people feel ill-at-ease—create a lack of comfortableness. The second point that I would like to just make as an observation, and you can do with it what you will, is that precisely because of this non-structured future, thinking in movement is a very important dimension in play, in affect attunement and in contact improvisation, because one is not doing anything that has some kind of set forward motion to it; it’s all structured in the moment, and it evolves on the basis of thinking in movement. You may take off in whatever directions you would like to.

Fagen: Maxine, you ended your introduction with the words “thinking in movement.” Could you elaborate on that a little bit, because I think that’s a really important concept. It may not be familiar to everyone here. I know that with all of my supposed credentials in behavioral biology, it was new to me when I first heard it from you.

Sheets-Johnstone: Well, in the video that we saw, what evolves in the way in which the relationships happen, either between the animals or among the people who are dancing, is certainly not anything that is language-dependent. We usually think of thinking as being language-dependent—that language, thinking and rationality are an inviolate triumvirate of some kind or other. And we don’t remember having thought in movement in terms of our early life, and having learned how to navigate in the world by way of movement, which is the way we learn in the beginning. I gave an example once: if you’re walking along a path and there’s a big stone

in your path, you automatically—because you already know what it is to think in movement, you don't think, "Oh, there is a stone in my path, I have to lift my leg, I have to extend it, I have to step over, make an effort." You think in movement, and your walk proceeds in a very regular, unbroken fashion. So it's in that sense that thinking in movement seems to me a very basic way in which, just in our everyday lives, we think. Dan?

Stern: Could I try to answer that in one way, developmentally, at least? You can put the question like this: Why did nature make babies so that they couldn't talk for the first two years of their life, nor understand words? They understand tone of voice and melody. Especially in light of this question—in light of the fact that the more people look at babies, the more they realize how smart they are, how well they navigate the world, how they have representations of things, how they can anticipate, how they can recall and have memories of events and repeat them or not repeat them. One of the answers is that during the first couple of years, 18 months, the baby has to learn the infrastructure, the most basic fundamental parts of being a human being, especially with other people. They have to learn these simple things that we all know to do and don't think about much, like, when you're with somebody, what do you do with your eyes? When can you look at them in the face? When should you turn away? How far do you have to turn away your head? Do you turn it down, or do you turn it up? They mean very different things in a baby's life. You have to learn, who can I touch? Who can't I touch? With how much pressure? How strongly can I bite someone? How do you put your mouth so you can kiss? What distance can I be relative to another person? What orientation? It's the whole world.

I think nature decided that you don't want language when you're learning all that stuff because language would actually screw it up, and you could never learn it. I think that this is not unimportant. I'd like to add just one thing to what you said about lifting your foot to the stone. I know you know all this because it's kinesthetic concepts and corporeal concepts, but there's an example that intrigues me from Lakoff and Johnson. They have a similar concept to Maxine's. They call it "primary metaphor." Look at it this way: this is what language is based on. You take a baby who can't talk, but that can move around, crawl or walk. They know how to get from here to there; they know how to start; they know how to get there; they know how to stop; they know how to change their direction. That becomes part of this corporeal knowledge about what happens in the world. So then when I say to another adult who asks me, "How are you and Sally doing?" I say, "Well, our relationship got off to a good start, but you know we really only got so far." Where is "so far?" Where is "far?" "And then our relationship stopped, and, I don't know, we went in opposite directions." It's so easy to understand because you have the body knowledge on which the language can rest. Otherwise it would be really hard to explain what I said really quite simply about it. Language is absolutely filled with these kinds of things. It is both layering the language on the body knowledge, as well as not even needing the language, as you're talking about. That helps.

Harris: And in dance therapy, the task, often, is to help people or make the environment in which some of that learning can be trusted again, because perhaps they haven't been paying attention to it, or they've distanced themselves from their own kinesthetic feedback. And within that feedback is often the emotional material they might want to feel and deal with if possible. So the process you described in the child development is often the stages that the dance therapy

process emulates—tries to structure—so that those senses of near/far, what is possible, who can I touch, et cetera, are available.

Paxton: Do they get lost or what?

Harris: They become not available. Those of you who are in the psychiatric world will know where they become not available. They're blocked, they're resistant, they're frightening, they're socially not acceptable. They're there but they haven't been practiced, in a way, or they haven't been paid attention to. How do you know what you feel? It's a very hard question for people—and I don't mean "feel" in terms of the emotive pattern, I mean in terms of, "What does your body feel like? How far is far? How far do you reach before you're going to be on the floor? Where is that?" Those things often become very frightening because the childhood state has been closed off or is just not comfortable.

Fagen: Dan, I'd like to play devil's advocate so that we can exorcise a particular nasty devil right now. The white tail deer that the suburbs have more than enough of, and our Sitka black tail deer that deserve to thrive and prosper, are born in an advanced developmental state. They do a lot of running around their mothers and charging this way and that, but there is totally nothing like the very sophisticated, elegant mother-young play that you see in humans or chimpanzees or brown bears or tigers or snow leopards. But I would think that even something as relatively straightforward as a deer would need to know some of these same sorts of basic social things, because deer do form groups and travel together and so on. So when is the turnover point? I don't really believe in genes—don't get me going on that one or we'll be here all night—but I feel like there are some things that DNA and the right kind of body can teach you about social behavior. And by the time you get from the common ancestor of deer and humans, the deer on the one hand and humans on the other, it almost looks like two completely different roads.

Stern: I didn't want to suggest—although it probably sounded that way—that it's as if you have to learn all these things. It brings me back to something that seems to have lost favor in the world, and that is human ecology, which was so promising 30, 40, 50 years ago. I suspect that the deer can get along pretty well on largely innate patterns with only a little bit of learning, where there are releasers in the environment for fixed action patterns in the deer, so they do very well. A lot of the things that babies learn—I have to put quotes around "learn"—are behavioral patterns that they have genetically available to them. And then it's a question of, are they going to get utilized or not, and what is the fine-tuning that the culture is going to give to the utilization. So I can't split out what's genetic and what's learned since they seem—I mean, even something that's culturally specific, although very widespread, like putting your lips together to kiss someone, we have the action pattern to do that. It's just what are you going to do with it?

Fagen: It's strange about the deer, because the releasers do seem to be very prominent. I first got my eyes opened to play when I saw deer running through shallow water in Morris County New Jersey's Great Swamp. I thought they'd gone crazy. I've seen a little bit of this in the Sitka black tails, but what the Sitka deer out where I live in southeast Alaska seem to do is, each spring when the new vegetation comes out after the long, dark winter, it really seems to turn on play. You get some of the sedges coming out and the early leaves on the salmonberries and the blueberries, it releases the same kind of behavior that the water did in the deer in the swamp. It's so specific to

that time and that place that it turns out to be mighty hard to study play in Sitka black tailed deer unless you can arrange a situation where you are there for those few days when the green vegetation is coming out. The rest of the year, I wouldn't say they're boring, but from the point of view of a play researcher, there isn't a whole lot you can do.

Harris: Do we need to define play or talk more about play? I was just thinking of Winnicott's wonderful book *Playing and Reality*, where, again, the child relationship is re-developed in the therapeutic situation very gently. It has become a very important book, or at least it was for me, in developing a "theoretical model" for what we do with people when we want them to move with us more than talk to us. I think that playing—to rehearse, to try, to put aside the expectation—is a very important step in just that getting in touch with the environment, the self, the other person.

Paxton: I'm having a little bit of a problem with the ideas of unstructured play, improvisational stuff, because it seems to me that the contact improvisation we saw has remained kind of like a monotone for at least the last 15 years. So if it's so unstructured, why is it presenting a structure to us? Dan, when I saw your films of the—what do we call it?

Sheets-Johnstone: Affect attunement.

Paxton: Affect attunement between mother and infant, it seems like you were showing a kind of constant that would be there—how the affect was attuned. It seems to me like contact improvisation sort of shows an element of that, whereas, as stilted, to my eye, as Dudley dancing the Ailey looks—the Graham technical dance form being such an antique at this point—still, that is a place where we don't know where it's going to go. And that's the place where it isn't a natural constant that we're seeing. But this unnatural, developed, quite bizarre form of movement, which deer are never going to accomplish—

Fagen: You know, Steve, I wouldn't worry too much about contact. My guess is that it's just an instance in human behavior of punctuated equilibrium. Somebody is going to come along and say, "We're the new generation," and create something.

Sheets-Johnstone: I don't understand why you're saying that it seems to have come to a standstill. What do you mean?

Paxton: I think it's a constant.

Sheets-Johnstone: What do you mean by a "constant"?

Paxton: It's related to Dan's work. Dan Stern did a lecture down in Soho in the early '70s, and I was working on contact—it didn't even have a name at that point—but was beginning to think about touch and weight and all of that. And when Dan showed his work, which was extreme micro-movement in this attunement, so you could really see how the attunement was going, I realized that what I was working on was related to this innate event in all of our lives. How we attune, essentially, is the event that I'm talking about—and then how as adults we can tune to each other or, given permissions or rules or modulations, somehow, in the improvisational

relationship between people. If those modulations are there then that's what shows up. This was a highly developed group, you know? You didn't see fumbling attempts in this particular performance. This was the tenth anniversary performance, so people had been going for ten years.

There are many movement styles, events—one could almost talk about “syntaxes,” maybe, that are absent in contact improvisation. Actually, I've been trying to do it—it will be burst apart at some point; it will be re-opened. I've been mining it for a while now myself, and making a technique to develop further. But the play definitely sets forth a statement of some sort, but I just don't quite think we're going to see mothers and children—deer mothers, deer children—developing different behaviors in the short term, whereas in the dance—in the choreographed dance—you can develop whatever behavior you—

Fagen: There is openness in deer play, and in all animal play. But looking at the contact improvisation and the amount of inventiveness and variety there, and the kinds of movement themes that came in—if you study animals, even chimpanzees, it just blows you away. There is a real watershed there.

Paxton: They don't do it as much?

Fagen: No. You might come close to it in some groups of common chimpanzees or bonobos, and you might see something like that in elephants or bottlenose dolphins. But that is about as much, I think, as you could probably hope for, and there would still be obvious differences.

Sheets-Johnstone: Doesn't this relate, though, to the fact that humans have a far, far broader range of movement because of bi-pedality than non-human animals? Because even though chimpanzees and even baboons can walk upright, they don't have the range of movement of humans, and they are—because they don't have the possibilities of ballistic [ph] movement—their movements are more limited.

Stern: I think it may relate to that, but also to something more mental. That brings us back to imagination, because play requires a level of imagination or inter-subjectivity. You have to imagine what's going on in the other person's mind in order to play. The question is, getting back to play, Winnicott, and most of us, certainly, in the psych fields, talk about symbolic play. I'm not going to talk about symbolic play; I'm going to talk about purely physical play, where you see much more imagination from my point of view. In fact, if you watch preschool age kids or kids in kindergarten, and you watch them in the playground where there are no teachers and no parents, the most common activity that they engage in is imitation. And then the next most common is a set of lying, cheating, tricking and mucking up in general. Now, to lie, cheat and trick requires an exquisite imaginative leap to know what the other person can do, or to at least make an estimate so you can do something different. The other person has to make an imagined leap with regard to what you're likely to infer about what they're doing, all of this non-verbally. Then you see patterns much like what you showed me tonight, where these people—I mean, they're all super dancers, but they're throwing themselves around with a certain imaginative anticipatory expectation of what the other person is going to be able to handle in the next split second, especially like that girl who throws herself in the air at people. But she knows where

they're at. She knows what their capacities for receiving her are and all that stuff. But there are also a lot of surprises; those people are fooling each other, too; there's a lot of trickery going on, which is part of the fun part—to see them do that. This is what the kids are doing all the time. It's not like you see something and then you've got to respond; everybody has to coordinate their tricks, otherwise it doesn't work. It looks like it's about the tricks but it's really about the coordination.

I once did an analysis of a film of a world heavyweight boxing match between Muhammad Ali and this German, Mildenberger. What was fascinating about it was, I knew that the reaction time in a pretty good athlete is in the range of a quarter of a second. I timed how long it took either Muhammad Ali or the other guy to throw a jab. It turned out that they can throw a jab faster than a quarter of a second, which means that the other guy should get hit every time. And they get hit, what, 1 out of 20, 1 out of 40? It depends on the fight. This means that they were anticipating each other and moving into a synchronous dance pattern where there were just milliseconds of lag in order for them to do this kind of thing. That's what I was thinking about with the bears. When mama bear, there, goes to get the side of the baby bear, the baby bear knows her pre-intention movements, so the baby bear can then go like this, or go in another direction. So they're doing it too. They don't bump their heads together. No, I'm serious, they don't. They seem to do it very—you know, like this—really nice.

Fagen: I'm thinking there's a lot of truth to that. With a lot of the mother bears, they really do seem to attune the pace and phrasing and rhythm of their movements to what a little bear cub is capable of. Because little bears freak out very easily. I've seen them panic and run for the trees when they see a salmon. It's really a pretty dumb thing to do, because those trees are hundreds of meters away and there are a lot of big bears around. So how those mothers keep the little ones from panicking is really not trivial. It couldn't happen without the kinds of things that you're talking about.

Harris: Steve, you used the word “constant”—it's not a constant. What, exactly, were you referring to in that kind of play? The lack of rehearsal? The lack of intimate knowledge among the people? I wanted to differentiate between this sense of play and the play that you were referring to.

Paxton: I think it is a constant. Contact improvisation, it seems to me, is a level of behavior that reveals a constant, in the same way, and growing from, this moment of affect attunement, which, it seems to me, is a constant in behavior between all mothers and all children. I mean, what do you think, all or some?

Harris: The constant is the micro-movement and the cueing, which is so intrinsic to the moving body.

Paxton: The activity seems, in the minds of the people doing it, to be complete in and of itself, with the tricks and surprises that can occur, especially in a relaxed but still formal situation, as this was.

Harris: And yet, initially, those moves have to be rehearsed and practiced until they get to a certain kind of spontaneity, is that not true? The physical skill to improvise?

Paxton: Not very much. I teach—

Harris: Really? Nita wasn't able to jump up like that when she first started, was she?

Paxton: The tapes exist. The tapes exist. It would be really nice to be able to do the archives. There is a tape of the woman who flung herself sideways at the man who was running, and was caught—learning to fling herself, and also learning to catch, so you see her learning that behavior. So there was learning, intensively, of several weeks and, in general, sort of occasionally over the rest of that summer in '72 when this began. Now she's a wizard at it. But at this point it was ten years later; they pushed the boundaries themselves, but they didn't particularly invest it imaginatively, I think. It looks to me like they got better at it, they trusted it, the reaction time situation got more clear and more refined, but it's—I don't see it invested with different mind or imagination than it always was.

Harris: May I ask you a question, then? Is it something similar to the way in which we, in our everyday lives, get into certain habitual patterns so that it becomes habitual—would you classify it as habitual ways of moving?

Paxton: Habitual ways of improvising—can we make that kind of leap? It is, still, I think, improvisational, especially considering that you saw her dancing with some of her students. The woman you saw flinging herself around taught a number of the men on whom she was flinging herself. In those days it was expected of a contact improviser from the earliest days to be ready for anything to happen to them. That is, it was understood that somebody might jump on you from behind or from any direction, so that there would be no preparation time. And you were expected, on touch, to be able to deal with that weight. And we got so that we could do it. We got so it wasn't a problem to do it, so that's why it becomes ordinary being leapt on. It would be amazing on the street if somebody jumped on you, you know?

Harris: But the imagination and anticipation that Dan talked about had been accepted and bodily experienced. The imagination he was talking about of what might happen—the trickery and the unanticipated become anticipated. Not that it is predictable, but it is one of the many kinesthetic impulses, and the kinesthetic responses that I could have.

Stern: You know, when I call it “imagination,” I think I'm stretching the concept a little bit, because it's also no different from having expectations. On the other hand, when you think through “expectations,” where, in fact, you don't know the story line, you do have to make some kind of leap with regard to what's likely to happen, which requires some kind of leap into the other person's intentional system. So in that sense it's imagination, but in a very weak sense.

Fagen: I think the element of surprise is worth expanding a little bit, because that's certainly one of the paradoxes of play: that with the repetition and the variation, you get the expected and the surprise. You can really pick that one up and run with it, all the way from dyadic relationship to

macroevolution. You can imagine the dinosaurs being too dumb to play, so that when the meteorite hit they were done for.

Harris: They couldn't throw the meteorite back, is that it?

Paxton: With adaptation, no change is possible. They couldn't play with the environment that resulted, right? Is that the line?

Fagen: That's a fun story to get some thoughts going, but I mean, the fact is that there is a lot of play that seems to build a relationship to the unpredictable, and there's a wonderful Stephen Jay Gouldian hierarchy in all of this that goes all the way from the very short term, individual developmental time scales, to the lifespan, to life over a few generations, and onwards and upwards to the actual kinds of things that he and Eldridge talk about when they talk about what makes macroevolution different. And for mammals and birds, a lot of that seems to start in play. So we're actually at the point now of asking ourselves, "How can we test this? Can we actually look at speciation and extinction rates in brainy animals in terms of play and its hypothesized ability to anticipate the unknown?" It's a really exciting time in play research, and I really have to thank Steve Gould now that I'm on his home turf, only a few miles from Yankee Stadium, for some discussions many years ago that got these thoughts percolating through my much less capable brain.

Stern: If it's appropriate, I have a super example of mother-baby play where it's a question of surprise, expectancies, violations and whatnot. If I could show it, it'll just take me a minute. This is another shell game. The most popular cross-cultural game that I know to make a baby under a year laugh or smile is a form of peek-a-boo, most commonly in the form of, "I'm gonna getcha," where you hold the baby like this and go, "I'm gonna getcha, I'm gonna getcha," and finally you get them and they laugh. But when you look at it closely, it's a huge dance with a rhythmic structure and a progression. What happens is, time is moving this way. The mother says, "I'm gonna getcha." The baby looks at her, and then she repeats it, "I'm gonna getcha," about this much time away. And so the baby gets more alert. And then the baby says, "Okay, the next one's going to come right about here." So the mother goes, "I'm gonna getcha, I'm gonna getcha, I'm gonna getcha," so she violates the expectancy by a little bit. The baby gets even more interested, and he says, "Okay, I got that wrong; the next one should be here." Right there. And she goes, "I'm gonna getcha, I'm gonna getcha, I'm gonna getcha, I'm gonna getcha." So she violates progressively more. At this point, the baby is blown up. He's absolutely about to explode with excitement. So he says to himself—

Harris: Non-verbally.

Stern: Non-verbally, through movement, and appreciation of temporal—

Harris: Intention.

Stern: Intention and temporal units. He says to himself, "Okay, my mother's being tricky, but I know that game. That's the game of progressive temporal violations," which the baby can do. It's a question of being on the beat or off the beat, and whether that's moving in the right

direction. So he says, “My mother’s tricky. She’s going to have the next one somewhere out here.” So the mother goes, “I’m gonna getcha, I’m gonna getcha, gotcha!” Right there, and the baby explodes in laughter because the baby’s been violated again at the short end. Now, if she had gone “gotcha!” there, the baby would have cried. It would have been like a baby bear going up the tree, because they’re too overloaded and they can’t handle it, and the system falls apart. If the mother did it out here, the baby would kind of go, “That wasn’t so funny,” or something like that. So you see a corporeal concept having been constructed in this unbelievably common game. There are 100 variations of this kind of thing. They can set up the representation of what that consists of very, very quickly. This is for babies of five or six months. We’re not talking about talking people, or even walking people.

Harris: Believe it or not, I think the same thing happens with audiences in dance performances.

Stern: Absolutely.

Harris: Because I see people who’ve gone to the ballet for 25 years, or modern dance or anything, and they say, “Well, there’s going to be two pirouettes and then a split leap and she’ll catch them and they’ll do a swan dive.” But they don’t remember the choreography, or the choreography isn’t done by the same people the same 42 times they’ve seen it before, and they say, “Wow, I’ve never seen that before,” and they explode in the same way. In that way, no matter how skilled and predictable dance choreography is, it still has that sense of in-the-moment and that anticipation of the physical kinesthetic release that happens when the person is caught or when the thing is executed, and you say, “How did they do that?”

Fagen: I’ve been told, but I don’t know that this is really true, that in the pros, when you’re doing partnering and you’ve got a season when you do the same piece a lot, the partners actually try to surprise each other and go outside the choreography just to keep it fresh.

Harris: I think so. I’ve talked to lots of people in dance and I know some of the things they have told me that they do: tickles and wiggles and—

Fagen: That is so amazing. If I tried that with the kids I would be in big trouble, especially with their moms and dads.

Harris: You said the “pros”—you’re talking about pros, now. That’s different than the students. Do you want to open it up to the group?

Sheets-Johnstone: Are there any questions or comments from anybody?

Harris: Posterity is just around the corner.

Audience: The gentleman on the left—the name?

Sheets-Johnstone: Steve Paxton.

Audience: Yes. You were saying that was not contact improvisation in its truest form? I missed that. The constant?

Paxton: I'm saying that it was contact improvisation and it was very pure, freeform improvisation, which is just about all I've seen since it started.

Audience: Do you think it should go even further?

Paxton: Well, we didn't know where it was going to go.

Audience: I always thought contact improvisation would be total spontaneity without any kind of—some little set form, but then it would just be what it is in this very spontaneous moment, and not the practice and the practice and the practice. I thought you were negative on that by saying it was a constant and not true with contact improvisation—what it was really meant to be. I just got confused.

Paxton: It's modulated improvisation. Maybe somebody here has another viewpoint and I would love to discuss this because I've been thinking about it for far too long by myself. It seems to me like improvisation doesn't have a meaning that can stick around because it's always got to be moving on. I mean, they're teaching cool jazz improvisation at the Berklee school of music and you learn it note by note. You get the style and you soon can do it. So improvisation is meant, or seems to me to operate in this way that Robert said—that the next generation will come along and further develop or burst it apart or something like that. That was contact improvisation. It was by a rather elite group of contactors. I mentioned that it therefore didn't have a lot of common slow movement and stuff like that; these people all know each other and have been doing it together for years, so it lost some of the affect attunement element that is often there when people begin to learn it.

Audience: Isn't that the quintessential element in improvisation—that particular element that you're talking about?

Paxton: But improvisation doesn't have quintessential elements; it has to do with lack of form, right? But it doesn't last very long in that way. We didn't know what we were doing. We knew sort of what we were doing. Seeing Daniel Stern's work let me think that it was founded innately in us as human beings to be able to play this game, that it's not an artistic overlay on top of human behavior. It is part of human behavior that is now, in this kind of dancing, very much developed and amplified, and done by adults as opposed to a mother.

Audience: It's not an artistic overlay? You feel that is not an artistic overlay?

Paxton: I'm saying there isn't an artistic overlay at first in improvisation. The artistic overlay comes later. I guess what I'm saying is that it's a modulated improvisation. It already, when it came out, had a direction. The words I used, the examples I gave, the things we found together as a group, created a direction which, it seems to me, has remained sort of constant since '72 when it began, or maybe since '73 or '74, when it sort of got into the bodies and people began to trust it as a form. But you can improvise within forms. I mean, games are that kind of thing. So play

contains a lot of that. It seems to me that in the kind of play of the bears that we saw, the bears seem to me very much involved in contact play. I mean, the contact, as you mentioned about the timing, was very much an element, besides the biting and the swatting and all of that business. But improvisation does not have the kind of freedom that—as a *word*, it does have that freedom. As a word, as a linguistic event, you know, we don't know what we're talking about. That's the important thing about that word. But actually, as a practice, it very quickly takes on characteristics and then loses the freedom that we keep saying exists. I'm not sure there is such a thing as that kind of freedom for us. In language we can get there. In language we can say these things. Whether we can behaviorally play that game, I'm not sure. It's a question mark.

Harris: Right. In dance and in dance therapy, there is some physical safety, especially with adults, that I think of as given. There are some dancers who do it, but I don't want people who I work with to run and hit themselves against the wall. So I might set some givens. But how that's accomplished and the timing that it's accomplished in—one of the basic things that we often do in dance therapy is start on the floor and get up. Now, that seems like a very simple thing; we do it in 20 seconds or less, but for many people they will take half an hour, and finally say, "I didn't want to get up." Or they don't even have to say it, they just don't get up. But from sitting or lying to standing is quite an interesting journey, and it's an improvisation. There's no other direction.

Maccanione: So staying on the floor is a given.

Harris: No, don't say "Stay on the floor," say "Start on the floor." I don't say "Stay on the floor," I just start on the floor, which is where we all like to be eventually. But getting up isn't always half the fun, or it is the fun. Anyhow, that's the kind of improvisation that I take into dance therapy situations, but it's also a dancer's situation. When you find out how you go from lying to standing, you find out a great deal about gravity, your adaptation in your back, and blah, blah, blah. And therefore you might, then, use that improvisation as a basis of recall and more choreographic elaboration.

Audience: This particular discussion seems to be a good point to bring imagination back in. What struck me is that the description you give of improvisation is as something wide open linguistically, but in terms of movement there is some sense of limitation. There is something you can approach, but you won't hit it. You'll be tending toward this sort of boundary of what can be done. That, to me, is where imagination sort of extends the possibilities. In a sense, imagination defines what's possible, and it sounds to me like this training that goes on, and the elements that make up the actual improvisation—the structural procedures that are shared—are sort of the things that make certain movements more probable. So that over 20 or 30 years of doing these same sorts of things, there are sets of motions that will likely follow from one another. However, the outer limit of what those movements can be was defined by trying something new that hadn't been tried before, which is that imaginative leap. So it sounds to me like there are many factors going on here: there's imagination, there's structure, there's looseness, there's dependencies upon physical relationships where someone throws themselves out because they understand, at a very implicit level, the capabilities of other people. I have used, in my own research, experiments that look at two people working together who are not allowed to communicate. They have to pick up a board on a conveyor belt. It was found that the way in which they did it was to calculate arm lengths and the length of a board and relate to each other

in terms of their respective capabilities. So it seems to me that that's another factor, where people look at each other and are able to assess what their physical capabilities are. It seems that there's a very multivariate set of factors here, which include imagination, structure, openness and all these things. I think it provides a nice sort of unity to understanding how these things can develop and be expressed. Communication comes from culture—all these things, I think, launch out of it.

Sheets-Johnstone: I want to finish what this person has said, and follow up on Steve's comment about being stuck. It seems to me that part of it is breaking through our habits, whether they're habits within dance or habits in everyday life. And if you thought of this as, for example, de-contact improvisation, where you didn't have the possibility—I mean, you could fling yourself but nobody would be there. Then you'd have to learn a new way of moving because nobody would be there. That would be an imaginative opening. In other words, even moving in ways that are non-habitual for all of us is just a very, very threatening kind of situation. If we don't break out of our habits then we just keep on the same narrow track and we don't discover new things and we're not awakened in new ways. Our life becomes one habitual pattern after the next. Isn't it a question of opening? How do we open ourselves to new ways of being—new ways of being in the world and new ways of developing our own capacity so that we don't stay stuck in our grooves? Does that ring any bells?

Stern: I have a thought about this and the whole improvisation problem, which you brought up. More and more I tend not to think in terms of, "Is it improvisation or is it structured?" but rather to see different combinations and degrees of them. If you use a different system, like dynamic systems theory, sort of like chaos theory of a kind, I think that you find that most things go along in a semi-structured way, and then all of a sudden there's an emergent property that you can't predict, which is where you all of a sudden do a new movement, or you receive a new movement. That sets it in another direction and it now becomes different. These are not predictable and they're not plan-able. After you've gone through a moment that is more chaotic and less structured, then you revert back to the semi-structured thing. For instance, taking a dance as an example, let's say one dancer takes his arm around the other person's body like this. Now, she can do a lot of things. And this person—it seems to me that as soon as you've done this, there are not only constraints on what you can do next physically, which is what you were saying, but there are implications of what's possible. They can either be surprised and violated or not. Because most of the time when you do that, you see some kind of counter movement on the other person's part, which is harmonious with one of the implications that was inherent in this movement. So in a way it becomes semi-structured. The moment this person has done this, you're already in a semi-structure. And then you go along automatically, almost, until there's another one of these emergent properties that come up like that. So there is a flux between what is truly improvised, which really comes from the interaction, not from anyone's head. And then after that, they work it through, or out, or something like that. The word "improvisation" is a funny word. I understand well why we use it, but it doesn't capture what's going on in a way.

Fagen: That was really helpful to me. I'm going to sign up for a transcript because there was so much in what you just said. I don't know whether that's more like mathematical chaos theory, which is so numerically dependent that it's hard to apply it, even to behavior, or something like what you see in macro evolution, where constraints can be productive and you're exploring in a

more or less free but systematic manner a whole new set of possibilities that are opened up by a particular constraint.

Stern: It may be that the people who do the math of dynamic systems theory or chaos or complexity theory—whatever you want to call it—wouldn't agree with what I just said. But I think some of the people who are using these theories very successfully are people who do it in terms of behavior. Developmentalists have been using it enormously. There's a group in Boston that I'm part of, and we've been working on how people change in psychotherapy. What goes on, really, between the therapist and the patient? And we analyze at a very close level the interaction. What we find is, nobody knows what the hell they're doing. There is a huge degree of unpredictability. What most therapists do, especially when they are being supervised and stuff like that is, at the end of the session, you construct what happened and you tell it to somebody else, or you tell it to yourself. But when you're in the middle of the session, when you're riding the crest of the present moment, the future, you don't know what's going to happen. You don't even know what's going on, if you tell the truth. You can always make it up as you go, but there are only moments when you have certitude, and the rest of the time you can't know because you're in the flux of it. And what happens then is, when you don't know, you get these strange turbulent moments that either are really important or teeny misunderstandings, sloppiness—the whole process of psychotherapy is unbelievably sloppy in this sense. Mathematically speaking it is truly sloppy. But that's where a lot of the creativity comes in, just like the emergent move comes in. For us, the ability of the therapist to use the sloppiness becomes the most crucial feature in allowing a therapy that is geared to the person and not to the theory.

Fagen: That's great stuff. It's acceptance and everything connected with it; it's the T.S. Elliot effect: nothing looks the same again. I wasn't trying to—

Stern: No, I know you weren't.

Fagen: I wasn't trying to say that the metaphors weren't terribly productive. I was just kind of beginning a feeding frenzy to think—I've worked with the math. I know it pretty well. I wish we could come up with testable, risky hypotheses for play or psychotherapy or anything else based on explicit formal models. That's what I was trying to do, and I just didn't have the right stuff to make it happen. Are you actually at that point now where you can use them as formal mathematical structures to generate testable predictions, or are they still simply very fruitful metaphors?

Stern: In the therapy session they are fruitful metaphors. I'll bet that I could do an analysis of the mother and baby bear, though, that would be mathematically acceptable. But you'd have to get to the micro behaviors to do it.

Fagen: You can do it—this is going to get much too technical for this audience unless there are some mathematicians—but we can always shoot the breeze about it afterward. I would applaud anybody who could pull that off. If they'd like a copy of the video, just ask.

Harris: But the spontaneity and the sloppy, metaphorical unknown—the un-reconstructable—is really where the dance therapy work is so honest, I would say. Because the person moving or the

people moving together do not know what's happened. If the dance therapist is very good in movement observation, they can recall in some way the events, and they can often begin, again metaphorically: "It was like; it seemed as if." But in the work that I like, we wait to see if the person who has moved can recall the sensibility of those wonderful sloppy movements. Then the group where the interaction is: Can we find that together or reconstruct it again so it can be a little more a guided improvisation? These are all steps in the process of trying to hold what those sloppy moments have been, in which some realization of self has come about. But you described it perfectly.

Stern: I use "sloppy" in a very loose sense. For instance, the rock that Maxine found on the path—that is an emergent property of the world messing around with you. It's unpredictable. And then you do something. Actually, if you were in a playful mood you could have done fun things to get over or around the rock, so it would then trigger an improvisational moment.

Sheets-Johnstone: It seems to me you're talking a lot about the way we anticipate and think we know when we don't really know, because we don't really know where we're going.

Paxton: If you posited that, then we can posit a direction and a destination or something. We can posit movement, right? So it comes with your original—

Sheets-Johnstone: Oh, okay, yes, back to that. No, I was just saying this with respect to Dan's description of the whole process of psychotherapy where you don't know how it's hanging together or where you're going. We have the sense that we know, and we usually have a sense of controlling what is going to happen, whereas we don't really know. That was what I was picking up from you.

Stern: Well, take a game that requires a lot of timing, like soccer. I think that the players have to think in movement, thinking through their movements every second. One of the beauties of that game, which I have come to appreciate more living over there, is that you cannot predict what the complexion of the field will be like at any moment. In this sense it's like basketball. You have to have a physical corporeal sense of where the action is and what are the potentials and stuff like that. So I mean, I am in deep agreement with your whole notion about movement and thinking through movement. I think that that encompasses the emergent unpredictable stuff as well as the predictable stuff.

Sheets-Johnstone: Oh, yes, I do to.

Stern: Maybe I misunderstood you there.

Sheets-Johnstone: I was thinking along different lines. I was going to mention this one example that seems a good example of how unaware we are of our habits and how ingrained they are in terms of our tactile kinesthetic bodies. Because it occurred to me that, for example, if someone else took your toothbrush and brushed your teeth, you'd find that experience strange. But it wouldn't be because somebody else was holding your brush, and it wouldn't be because somebody else was standing in front of you. It's because you would feel and experience a different kinetic dynamics inside your mouth.

Fagen: What about that very strange state—using this as a hypothetical example—where a person is doing movements and it feels like somebody else is doing it. That’s a pretty scary mental state to be in. I can just imagine writing a very effective short story where somebody was brushing their teeth but it felt like somebody else was doing the brushing. I mean, are there generalizations of that in therapy, for instance?

Harris: Often people do feel that they are not moving themselves. They are moved from without—

Fagen: Whoa.

Harris: —because they have taken so much of their direction from the outside. This is the dance technique class, where your response is not only to the person who’s leading, but to the mirror image which is what you’re responding to. Are you correct in the mirror in contrast to the person who has been teaching you? It’s very much an outer-directed thing. Many dancers, at least for a long time, I find, do not check into their own kinesthetic feedback: “Am I doing this correctly?” which means, “Am I imitative.”

Fagen: The way we deal with this at our very rudimentary level is, we just tell the kids to close their eyes and do their barre. How do they do it at a level where there’s actually some significant skill?

Harris: The problem with closing your eyes for a long time is that you need the balance and the eyes—and the balance alone is not often stable enough to then complete a double pirouette—I wouldn’t want to do a double pirouette with my eyes closed.

Fagen: It sounds like fun, though.

Harris: If you then have had some training about falling and you can anticipate that person who isn’t there to catch you. I mean, the dancer really becomes another body, and the integration of the dancer within his or her own body is when you begin to see something very special. But for a long time, you do carry the imitation of the other with you. I think with people coming to dance therapy, that’s one of the reasons they have come: they want to try to find out something about themselves. Isn’t that an interesting idea, at 40 or 50 years old? “I’d like to learn something about myself.”

Paxton: It makes me feel a little weepy.

Harris: It often has a lot of weepy people—as people weep in dance classes all the time.

Sheets-Johnstone: Any other questions from the audience?

Audience: I’d like to jump back to thinking in motion.

Sheets-Johnstone: In movement.

Audience: In movement—thinking in movement. I actually really agree with that concept instinctively, but it starts me thinking and makes me hard pressed to think about defining thought. Because we now can talk about thinking in motion—in movement—and thinking linguistic thought. And then I start wondering, how many kinds of thought are there? Is there one kind of thought that is expressed in multiple mediums? At what point are we calling something thought. For example, is something running up my optic nerve a thought? I was just wondering if you could possibly comment on that.

Sheets-Johnstone: Well, I don't get into optic nerves or nerves at all in terms of thinking. But I think that we can think in images. Thinking takes place spontaneously with us. I mean, we can concentrate on something and really pay attention to something and devote ourselves, so that we're really wholly involved—focused on something. But our thinking and our thoughts are generated—they come by themselves. This is something that I think is certainly clear if you practice any form of meditation like vipassana where you really become aware of what the heck your mind is all about. It's a lot more—there's a lot more disarray than you would normally think [LAUGHTER].

Paxton: Another sloppy process. Right.

Harris: We use the word “I think that,” and then because you're working on one dimension of thinking, and yet thinking and movement is not necessarily the thinking you just used those words for.

Sheets-Johnstone: Right. I'm thinking in words, now, I would say—trying to put into words what—as an answer to your question. We think—thoughts arise—they just come. And we can, as I say, focus on whatever it is. Sometimes what happens is that they are images—we have an image of something. It's like, “Hmm, what will I have to eat now?” There will be images that come. I classify those as thoughts. You have an image of what's in the refrigerator or whatever. But then if we're involved in something like moving—if we're involved in an improvisation group—or you were here last evening—if we were moving and there was no direction or nobody was programmed to do anything, I call that thinking in movement because we were relating to other people. We were making something. We were creating something without any kind of prodding or instructions—verbal instructions at all. But we were moving in concert with one another, and that takes thinking.

It's like watching the bears, or like watching the movement improvisation, or even in a choreographed piece—that's thinking in movement in terms of listening to the dynamic. So that, to my mind anyway, in a dance like that—or even in contact—the same thing in contact improvisation: you're not simply moving through a form, but the form is moving through you. There is a great difference between the two, because when you're simply moving through a form, you're doing something in a habitual way. That's why I was concerned about habit. You can be completely oblivious because you're doing it by rote. It's some kind of perfunctory operation. When the form moves through you, you're attuned to the dynamics that are there in the whole of the movement itself. You are present to that kinetic aliveness.

Harris: And even—I mean, *even*—in dance performance, this reconstruction of the thinking in movement is what makes you want to look at that performer. They are not doing a habitual set of glissade to jete, or whatever is the movement vocabulary. They are, I hope, reconstructing and thinking in movement, so that the spontaneity makes you respond to them.

Paxton: Even though it's not spontaneous movement. Even though it's set, choreographed, and has been done for maybe a century.

Harris: A century and-a-half. The umpteenth Swan Lake. Read Alistair McCauley today: "The Umpteenth Swan Lake." And once again, you fall in love with the swan queen because there is something she has found for that performance which is—

Sheets-Johnstone: It comes alive because it's created then.

Paxton: I have a question for you, Maxine.

Sheets-Johnstone: Oh, dear.

Paxton: Are you anti-habit? [LAUGHTER]

Sheets-Johnstone: In some ways, yes.

Paxton: Because aren't we talking, here, about the refreshing of a habit?

Harris: Yes.

Sheets-Johnstone: The refreshing?

Paxton: When Fontaine did Swan Lake, I had that experience of falling in love with her in the ten thousandth performance or something—falling in love with her and feeling improvisation in the movement. And yet that movement is so in her nervous system that there was some relationship of her to that movement that was fresh, rather than the movement being fresh. In other words, inside the habit, or even with the habit—I mean, how could we exist without habits and all this rote movement that we do? At the same time, there—I'm going back to your path, now, and the rock. Dan said the rock could be—

Sheets-Johnstone: A playful invitation.

Paxton: Yes, what was the word about the deer? What word did you use about the deer in the water? It's a signal—it signals—it causes the behavior?

Fagen: It's something that—

Stern: Releaser.

Paxton: The rock could be a releaser, or it could be enfolded, it seems to me. So what turns the stone into a releaser? You saw it as enfolded in your metaphor. Dan was saying that it could be a releaser. So here's Swan Lake again. Oh my God, Swan Lake, you know, nothing left to be said about it. And you go and you find yourself transported. The dancer must have found some kind of releaser, or knows about—spirituality has worked to create a releaser situation. And that's within the habit.

Sheets-Johnstone: Yes, but the difference for me—the way in which I would express this is that even as a form which the dancer knows, she's not moving through a form but the form is moving through her, so it's being created anew.

Paxton: It's exactly when you said that before—it made me think this thought, because I thought, well, she is not moving habitually, the habit is moving through her. I just transformed the words. Do we need a word that means, "blind, dumb habit," and another word that means "inspired"—

Harris: Reconstructed habit [OVERLAPPING].

Sheets-Johnstone: I wouldn't call it "habit," then, because—

Paxton: Exactly. Why not?

Sheets-Johnstone: Because it's being present in the moment.

Paxton: But what if it's the same movement that you've been doing all your life?

Sheets-Johnstone: That's an added, outside, third person account of it.

Paxton: So "habit" means—that's interesting. So I didn't see Fontaine do—

Harris: Re-imagined. Perhaps we can use the imagination. It's re-imagined; the habit is re-imagined and taken—

Sheets-Johnstone: I wouldn't call it a habit in that kind of situation. I just don't think it's a habit in the way that you brush your teeth is a habit.

Audience: This is briefly part of the discussion.

Harris: She—he wants the recording.

Paxton: For posterity.

Ludwig: It's relating to this. I'm an actor and I have been in a show where I've done over 300 performances of the same thing. Thinking of this idea of habit and the distinction between an inspired habit, or something that's practiced and something that has the allure of being spontaneous.

Paxton: Ah, that's a helpful word.

Ludwig: The word that came into my mind was “mindful.” As a performer, knowing that you're doing a practiced movement, but if it's—if you connect it to a specific thought that you are having in that moment, it is mindful, and therefore it is in the moment, and it has a spontaneity to it which is alluring. Whereas many nights, you don't have that inspiration; you're not mindful; you're doing it by rote, and it's different. I think that “habit” is a pejorative because of that—that association with someone phoning it in. “Phoning it in” is a term we use in the theatre for just—your body is there but your mind isn't. But when the mind and body are connected, it could be something you've done 100 times, but it still breathes in the moment.

Sheets-Johnstone: Would you think of—what you're talking about is “mindful,” which I think is a very good way of putting it, too. It is being present, too.

Harris: And the mind, then, is full of the kinesthetic feedback. It's full of the material that comes in that.

Ludwig: I think they're connecting thought and movement.

Harris: Right, because “mindful” often makes us think it is only cerebral.

Fagen: No, we're talking the embodied mind.

Harris: Right, the embodiment, and the feedback system is working. This is what we keep longing for people to be—conscious—being thoughtful in movement so that they have a sense of what it is that's happening and they can then work with it, and play with it, too. If you are mindful as a performer, it comes to you that perhaps—without spoiling the whole ensemble of the evening—you might work with the dynamic of it, or the vocal quality, or the rhythmic quality, all of which makes for the spontaneity and the surprise.

Stern: You've been waiting a long time.

Strock: Thank you, I'm Bob Strock. I'm a clinical psychology student at the New School. I'm very pleased to see this group collected here. I'm also an actor, part time, in a theatre group that works non-verbally for the most part. I've never had the experience of doing 300 shows in a row and forcing myself to be mindful each night. Actually, the work that we do, and the work that we did last night in the improvisation workshop, is very similar to some of the workshops that we do. We work non-verbally; we work with ritual forms; we try to see what the audience—see what the people—see what the guests bring, also, and work with that. But what I was thinking about—the title of this program is about the languaging experience, which—I think in your description about how movement is a prelude to speech. I know in Dr. Stern's work, babies learn—think by moving—that's how we think first. And I'm thinking about, also, just in the history—I mean, human history—how ritual preceded speech—that human movement—that movement was the way that human beings first communicated meaning.

To get it back to the idea of the habit question, actually, that ritual is a series of movements, but it's—the process of ritualization is how the meaning is created. And how ritual itself, when it's not—just like in performance, actually—and we look at sort of the bridge—in my theatre group work—the bridge between ritual and performance. When it's not being created in the moment, it does become empty in some way. We find places where we try to break habits. We put ourselves into a place where we don't know, and not knowing is kind of where we want to be.

I've tried to tie this to my clinical work. I work as a clinician. The only thing that it's—that I've been able to do is, I can sit in the room with anybody because I can be present in the moment. But other than that I haven't really been able to mesh the two. I don't know if you want to talk about ritual or anything there.

Stern: Can I say a word here?

Sheets-Johnstone: Certainly.

Stern: Coming back to languaging movement, I'd like to, just for a moment, take a position that is a little more exaggerated than I really believe, but I think it's worth doing it. That is to run with Maxine's basic idea of thinking in movement or through movement. Her book on the primacy of movement, for me captures so much. Because a lot of the neuroscience stuff, now, about language and what it does to the mind, is starting to be very interesting in this regard: not only are there the corporeal concepts that you bring up, or the kinesthetic concepts or the primary metaphors, like we went “so far,” but it turns out that with at least many of the words they've studied, if the words are “howl, scream, cry” then they go to the language center. They also go to the auditory center, where we're not talking about language. If you say “jump, run, step,” the words will fire off in your brain not only the language center to understand them, but also they'll go to the motor center where you would jump, or whatever I said.

So in other words, there's a parallel processing, in movement, of the language. They haven't finished doing all of this—I mean, with regard to all kinds of words—but it complicates, in a wonderful way, the problem. The other thing is that people who have been studying these mirror neurons, which allow you to have the virtual experience of being inside another person's mind or body, indicate that when they say something to you, you can experience the word part by also having it trigger off mirror neurons so that you would be doing the thing that they're talking about. And when it doesn't happen right, you can—like, for instance, earlier, Maxine, you were saying, “It arises.” I had trouble with that movement because that's falling down. I think of arising as going this way. It's a very simple thing, but when you think about it, there's a conflict in that. You have to see it in terms of the rhythm of the punctuation that you were doing, because you did several movements of this kind [MAKES RHYTHMIC SOUND], and the arising of the thing. But it wasn't arising. So the linguistic part of it and the movement part of it are very intimately related, probably all the time. I'm sure there are exceptions, and this is an exaggerated point of view, because I see that the movement remains primary. That's what I'm really trying to say.

Sheets-Johnstone: Well, I was just trying to break the habit [LAUGHTER].

Harris: But you also were getting down underneath from the place, because you cannot go up unless you go down, as everybody who's done a plié, right? You have to bend before you jump.

Sheets-Johnstone: That makes me think of—my background, really, in philosophy is very, very strongly in phenomenology, which is very, very much concerned with getting to the foundations. So foundations, from that point of view—getting everything grounded in experience—really grounded. So that may be part of it, too.

Harris: It's 9:00.

Stern: Look behind you.

Sheets-Johnstone: Pardon?

Harris: Is there somebody who wants to be at the mike?

Sheets-Johnstone: I thank everyone for a very invigorating and lively time with us. I hope that everyone enjoyed the conversation [APPLAUSE].

[END OF RECORDING]