Dance today prompts an inevitable question: Why do women and gay men outnumber other groups in Western theatre ("high culture") dance? And why are men disproportionately the recognized choreographers and managers and women the dancers (workers), notwithstanding a more balanced picture in the modern and postmodern dance traditions? Although dance is an art form, it also interweaves the ramifications of dancers, choreographers, and producers as individuals with being members of gender, ethnic, and/or economic groups in a context of the cultural history of women's and gays' liberation movements and reactions to them.

History attests to the liability of being female or recognizably gay in the United States. Prestigious careers have been closed to the "weaker sexes," as they have been closed to slaves and immigrants. Not only does work determine status and the use of time, but it also reflects physical, psychological, social, and symbolic power.

How do non-dominant groups cope when there are entry barriers to prestigious careers? In biological and social evolution, groups seek niches to which they adapt. They create new niches or fill those vacated by socially mobile groups. There are notable examples of ethnic adaptation, including the concealment of minority identity through assimilation (Thernstrom 1980). The Jews cut out the garment industry as an occupational niche and penetrated film and entertainment fields which were not dominated by and exclusive to WASPs. Kept out of mainstream economic positions, the Chinese opened laundries and restaurants. Barred by discrimination from most of Los Angeles' economic activity, the Japanese grew and marketed various foods and flowers.

Females and gays, groups stigmatized in America in the sense that they are subject to prejudice and discrimination, have sought escape from social and economic constraints. (Of course, some homosexuals easily hide their sexual preferences.) One option has been to go into dance, a metaphor of existence, for life is movement. Since the French Revolution, dance has been a low-status occupation, not sequestered by the dominant male group. Margaret Mead pointed out that in every known society, whatever the appropriate occupations of men, the whole society deems
those occupations as important. "When the same occupations are performed by women, they are regarded as less important" (1949:125).

Dance is a reflection of occupational opportunity and self-expression for males and females who have both common and different goals and recruitment pathways to dance. Dance shares with other arts a gender-related prestige hierarchy. Like theatre and symphony, dance is to some degree occupationally differentiated and sex-segregated. It separates the performers, the choreographers/composers, and directors/managers: the nondancing positions, dominated by men, are the most powerful. Women have less mobility across these career segments than men. Women are rarely trained in other disciplines or in team sports that aid managerial skills. Whereas marriage or teaching have been postperformance options for women, and most university dance departments are chaired by women, teaching, choreography, and management of larger income enterprises have been career developments for men. For example, at 37, principal dancer Peter Martins retired at the summit of his performing career with the New York City Ballet to codirect the company and create dances. Ballet dancers are stratified into superstar, principal, soloist, and corps. Sometimes there is also a straight/gay distinction among men, the former considered more prestigious. As in other performing arts, female dancers historically have been perceived as immoral and peripheral to the main economy (Simpson and Simpson 1983). Dance offers seasonal rather than full-time employment and accepts people with alternative lifestyles who deal with their differences, including homosexuality, through the artistic medium.

Classical or dual economy theories (Lindner 1983) alone are inadequate to explain the predominance of females and homosexuals in dance, with men disproportionately in managerial roles. Classical economic theories postulate that workers earn the value of their products and that pay disparities between men and women reflect quality differences. Women are assumed to anticipate discontinuous employment and select occupations accordingly. The dual economy approach locates the source of earning differential between the sexes in the structure of society which is partitioned into distinct sectors each with its own rules. To some extent, the typically low pay of predominantly female occupations may reflect their unequal location in the periphery sector.

Cultural history, including attitudes toward the body, emotion, and gender, must also be considered if one is to understand the labor patterns of males and females in dance (Hanna 1983b; Henley 1977; Kendall 1979). Today the American majority is beginning to view women in the dance profession as respectable and men who choose this career as nondeviant.

The following overview sketches the reasons for various attitudes toward the dance career in the United States; suggests how a nonprestigious domain of human behavior is used as a mechanism to cope with limited opportunity; and notes how an occupation changes over time in a dialectic of the "battle of the sexes," with male dominance a persistent thread. Cutting a broad swath through Western European and United States history, the source of much theatre dance heritage, I obviously must simplify what is complex. And certainly there are exceptions to the trend. Although American and European cultures are unique, they share some developments. Parts of Europe experienced the feminization of culture (Douglas 1977) heralded by female American modern dancers who performed abroad (e.g., Isadora Duncan and Loie Fuller) and had counter-
parts in women founding and directing dance companies in Germany (e.g., Mary Wigman and Pina Bausch), Sweden (e.g., Birgit Cullberg), and England (e.g., Marie Rambert and Ninette de Valois). Today Europe and America also share each other's choreographers, dancers, and repertoires.

**Gender and the Evaluation of Dance**

Why didn't prestigious male groups monopolize Western theatre dance after the French Revolution? After all, throughout history renowned men have danced; societies have deemed dancing a natural male pursuit and accorded such performance great esteem. Louis XIV of France (1643–1715), dancing in his roles as king or milkmaid, was glorified as "the Sun God," the epithet coming from a role he danced at age 15 (plate 1). The nobility acclaimed male peer dancing.

When Louis XIV ceased his dance performances, and his emulators among the 12 princes of royal council also abdicated as centers of their respective dance universes, courtly social dance developed into professional theatrical genre. The Judeo-Christian heritage that excluded women from active roles in public religious ritual carried over to the secular theatre (Brierly 1979). Because well-bred women did not appear on the public stage, men danced women's roles, often in travesty. Furthermore, because men's dress was not so physically confining, they could be more virtuoso and thus gain respect for their individual dancing.

The French and Industrial Revolutions (18th and 19th centuries) dealt serious blows to the prestige of dance, sending it from the epitome of royal male performance to the nadir of female "inferiority." Among the sociopolitical elite, activities of the body became associated with moral laxity and impediments to economic productivity. Drawing upon the age-old Biblical and Greek views of the potency of dance to express performers' emotions and to arouse spectators' feelings, the leaders of these revolutions negatively assayed male dancing as a distraction from their goals (Kern 1975). With its multisensory and cognitive stimulation, the dancing body calls attention to sexuality and evokes emotions.

The cognitive dimensions of dance being generally unrecognized (Hanna 1979; 1983a; 1983b), the kind of emotion linked to dance contributed to perceptions of it. Although the Bible discusses two forms, (1) anyone's prayerful dance to God as a demonstration that no part of the individual was unaffected by the love of God, and (2) Salome's immoral dance, popular unrestrained sensual dances by men and women attracted church attention. Clerical distress about this kind of dancing led to its periodic proscription (Fallon and Wolbers 1982).

Already implicated in sin and deemed the enemy of spiritual life, the body became the foe of economic productivity. Because the French emergent bourgeoisie attributed the collapse of the French monarchy in part to moral laxity, they transformed the body from an instrument of pleasure into one of production. In this way the middle class could protect its power. Self-control meant control of the body, and further, control of people who were primarily of the body. Similar attitudes developed in England. Consequently, the dance profession received low financial remuneration and career interest from dominant culture males.

As the importance of dance declined, traditional ties between dancers and noble patrons disintegrated. However, as men abnegated the dance profession—they had danced both male and female roles—women gained more performance opportunities.
Female dancers on the public stage were thought to be part of the *demi-monde*, or echelons of prostitution (Elsom 1974; Guest 1966, 1970, 1972, 1980). "Ballet girl" had a pejorative connotation until the mid-20th century, and in some places, it still does. Young female dancers were a source of sexual titillation and even gratification. *Abonnes*, regular opera subscribers, were their protectors. The ballet "leg show" enticed wealthy men who relished the sight, fell in love with beautiful dancers, and gave them gifts. Becoming mistress to a wealthy man usually meant success and the option of leaving the stage. Dancers reported to have shared favors with well-to-do men include Albertine Coquillard, Pauline Duvernay, Fanny Elssler, Pauline Guichard, Cleo de Merode, Pauline Montessu, Lola Montez, Adeline Plunkett, Elisa Scheffer, and Clara Webster. Dance was an avenue of social mobility, an alternative to factory sweat shops, agriculture, or domestic work. Respectable wives envied the dancers' freedom from the burden and hazards of childbearing and being "sexually cowed and emotionally brutalized" by husbands (Shorter 1982:16). Some less fortunate dancers in the "parade" left the theatre to become teachers or common prostitutes.

In the mid-18th century Marie Camargo shortened her skirt and removed her heels, gaining new physical freedom for active, proficient dancing. She, along with her peers La Barberina and Marie Salle (reputed to be homosexual) (Migel 1972:25-29), entered what had been the male preserve of dance. Yet when Salle danced to George Frederic Handel's

1. Louis XIV as the "Sun King" in Ballet Royal de la Nuit. (Photo courtesy of the Dance Collection, New York Public Library at Lincoln Center)
Alcina (1735), she was hissed because of her innovative yet "unbecoming" man's costume (Murphy 1985).

The eclipse of male supremacy in dancing on stage began in the 1830s when Marie Taglioni established a foothold for women, employing the toe dance as an essential element of ballet. Ushering in the Romantic Age (1831–1847), a theatre of dreams, Taglioni elevated herself on pointe, a nonmale special prowess (plate 2). While the tight-fitting toe shoe hardened by sturdy fabric and glue restricts natural movement and perpetuates the ethos of female frailty and dependence upon male authority, it also permits the dancer a range of movements, positions, and height impossible in other footwear (Dunning 1984).

Ballet celebrates the female dancer as its aesthetic quintessence. Ascendance of females by 1840 created a revulsion against male dancers, and the audience discovered the charm of danseuse en travesti. Female hussars danced in Paquita in 1846. In 1870 the prettiest girl in the Paris Opera danced the hero Franz in Coppélia (Guest 1966). On the courtly stages of Denmark and Russia, the man remained, although overshadowed by the ballerina. Donning men's clothes did not mean women assumed the
powers and prerogatives that go with male identity. Rather, claims Lynn Garafola (1985–86), the danseuse en travesti eliminated the danseur, the remaining in-house obstacle to social class and border politics that governed theatre corridors.

Beautiful 19th-century ballerinas with uncanny skills of speed, accuracy, and elevation dominated the stage, while their stage partners bowed and scraped in the background. Most of the important male dancers of this period were married to female dancers in the traditional pattern of a theatrical family (Jules Perrot to Carlotta Grisi, Arthur Saint-Leon to Fanny Cerriu, and Salvatore Vigano to Maria Medina). Yet after the French Revolution, men who became professional dancers in Europe and America were increasingly assumed to be homosexual. Sometimes marriage was a cover. Ballet was tagged as the “pansies’ ball game” (Barnes 1974). In Russia, where dancers were recruited as children to audition for government-supported training out of economic necessity, heterosexuality may have been more common.

Although women came into the limelight and gave the appearance of reigning supreme, ballet continued under men’s 300-year dominance. We often speak of the woman behind the successful male. On the ballet stage, males were literally behind the females, not merely in partnering roles, analogous to patronage by the stronger of the weaker sex [see this issue of TDR, p. 8]. Off stage, men retained control as ballet masters, choreographers, directors, and producers. They determined the work rules and chain of command: who had which rank, danced which role, how often, and with whom. Men aided Marie Camargo, who achieved equality with the premier danseur when she made her début at the Paris Opera in 1726. Marie Taglioni’s father taught and managed her.

Male dominance in ballet began with Louis XIV; Pierre Beauchamps was his dancer, choreographer, and recorder. Later, Jean-Georges Noverre argued for ballet d’action, in which movement conveys dramatic action. In 1760 he laid the cornerstone of contemporary theatrical dance in Lettres sur la Danse et Les Ballet. Then came such figures as Enrico Cecchetti and August Bournonville, the former noted for his method of ballet training and the latter for his choreographic style. Michel Fokine broke tradition by choreographing for men and women during the Nijinsky era, encouraging equality between the sexes in partnering and eliminating the artificial conventions and acrobatics of ballet at that time in favor of expressive movement. Impresario Sergei Diaghilev revived ballet as a serious art.

Data on contemporary male dominance comes from Don Moore, executive director of Dance USA, a service organization of the major ballet, modern, and ethnic dance companies in the United States (with the exception of the New York City Ballet). Member companies must meet minimum criteria (a $750,000 annual budget, full-time artistic director, 22 performances a year, and 18 paid dancers for ballet companies; a $100,000 budget, paid artistic director and dancers, and regular performances for other companies). In 1984, out of 75 companies, approximately three-quarters had male managers. By 1986 the situation had changed. Out of 60 companies, 57 percent had male managers. However, the largest ballet companies—New York City Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, The Joffrey Ballet, and the San Francisco Ballet—have male artistic directors, as do many of the largest modern and postmodern dance companies—those of Alvin Ailey, Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, and the Dance Theatre of Harlem. A glance over the years through the lists of companies in the
United States and abroad in the Dance Magazine Annual nets a male-dominated pattern.

In spite of ballet companies founded by women (for example, Ballet Rambert by Dame Marie Rambert, the Royal Ballet by Ninette de Valois, American Ballet Theatre by Lucia Chase [and Richard Pleasant], Chicago Ballet by Ruth Page, Pennsylvania Ballet by Barbara Weisberger, and Boston Ballet by E. Virginia Williams) and the recognition of choreographers and directors Natalia Makarova, Twyla Tharp, Lynne Taylor-Corbett, and Martine Van Hamel, male dominance persists to this day. The heritage of George Balanchine, foremost ballet choreographer (plate 3) of the 20th century who created more than 150 ballets during his 50 years in the United States, and the activity of Jerome Robbins, Peter Martins, Robert Joffrey, Rudolf Nureyev, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Arthur Mitchell, and others is strong. Indeed, many companies founded by women are now run by men (for example, Anthony Dowell at the Royal Ballet and Baryshnikov at the American Ballet Theatre).

Contemporary ballet choreographers and directors—"almost always male—mold ballet's young women to the ideal of feminine that equates beauty and grace with excessive thinness," an aesthetic that is punitive and misogynist (Gordon 1983:173). Pert-breasted, narrow-hipped women evoke the male fantasy of deflowering the virgin. Male choreographers and managers treat dancers like children, school them in obedience and deference, call women "girls" (and men "boys"), ignoring the fact that relentless pursuit of the "ideal" female body arrests puberty, imbalances hormones, contributes to hypothermia and low blood pressure, and often leads to psychosomatic disorders of starvation, vomiting, and the use of laxatives. Anorexia and injury are interconnected.

Even when a woman contributed to ballet choreography (man's bailiwick), she was not likely to receive due recognition. Bronislava Nijinska made an important career as a classical ballet choreographer with about 50 ballets to her credit (plate 4). (Marie Salle and Birgit Cullberg also had choreographic careers of some importance.) When poet-critic Edwin Denby saw Nijinska's Les Noces (The Wedding) performed in 1936 (first produced in 1923 by the Diaghilev company), he said it was one of the finest things one could see anywhere. John Martin called it "a work of undeniable genius in an even more radically reformed style of movement" (1937:30). About 50 years later, Washington Post dance critic Alan M. Kriegerman asked how so highly esteemed a masterpiece could have escaped the attention of the contemporary ballet public, which by and large had heard of Nijinska only as the sister of Vaslav Nijinsky. Kriegerman proffers that Les Noces evaded its due fame, not merely because of the cost and difficulty of producing the work, but because "it was [her lot] to be both a woman in a man's profession [... ] and the sister of the most prodigiously adulated virtuoso in ballet history" (1982:E1).

The deprecation and relegation of dance to the nonessential, the vulgar, and the primitive created an obstacle for the growth of dance in the United States until the mid-20th century. Less than half a century ago, the downgraded ballet began gaining respectable status in America, for several reasons, including the decrease of puritanicalism and the increase in exposure to the excitement of Diaghilev's superb dancers and choreographers. Dance was given a boost toward respectability when high society and great family fortunes followed by foundation resources supported American ballet companies. The establishment of the National Endowment for the Arts Dance Program in 1965 provided further legitimization.
of dance. Prior to these developments, many literary and artistic individuals had fixated on the dancers (the good-time girls or prostitutes) of the “decadent” music halls of the 1890s, which continued in some transformations up through the topless and bottomless discos of the latter part of the 20th century. Vaudeville was the setting for the incipient ballet in America and the development of what was called modern dance (a new form of theatre art in rebellion against ballet) that were to flourish by the 1960s. Pioneers of modern dance drew themes and strategies from the popular theatre of their times rather than from the tradition of ballet.

The advent of modern dance in the 1920s, pioneered by educated middle class women such as Ruth St. Denis and Martha Graham, both of whose parents trained in medicine, and the creation of university dance programs like Margaret H'Doubler's at the University of Wisconsin helped make the dance career respectable, although male dancers continued to be questionable.

For example, choreographer Brian Macdonald said his family wanted him to be a lawyer, and his refusal was paramount to prompt disinheri-
tance: "The day I joined the National Ballet of Canada in 1951, my father changed his will. He died without ever changing it back" (Sloop 1984:62). Of the younger generation, dancer/choreographer Douglas Dunn, trained in art history at Princeton University, said his parents, both doctors, were not happy with his career choice. A 1980 “pulse reading” on attitudes toward dance came from Ronald Reagan's campaign headquarters: the politicians concerned with reactions of the Moral Majority seemed embarrassed that, as The Washington Post (25 June 1980:B2) put it, “While his dad does the White House waltz, Ronald P. Reagan, 22, is jete-ing for the Joffrey II Dancers.” Only in movies did men have big careers in dance; their genre was not ballet or modern but jazz, tap, social, and popular.

Dance for Women's Liberation

The turn-of-the-century modern dance was in part a rebellion against male domination in both dance and society. Women’s bodies were viewed as being thoroughly saturated with sexuality and governed by sex-linked irrationality (Foucault 1978:6; Gardella 1985; Money 1985). Typecast as they were, daring women in the 19th and 20th centuries took advantage of the emotional behavior attributed to their gender. Their critique of the 19th-century system that excluded them from key economic and political roles and relegated them to the home and the realm of morals took a variety of forms. Women created new fields like modern dance, social work, kindergarten teaching, and librarianship rather than compete in men’s professions. Affirmation and self-control of the body was one thrust of the women’s critique. In the birth and development of modern dance, women chose to be agent rather than object. They looked to themselves for inspiration as they formed female-dominated dance companies similar to the small businesses that ethnic groups owned, governed, and found to be vital instruments of upward mobility.

Emphatically, beyond traditional domestic life to which females had been relegated, theatre dance epitomizes a public world. From a cross-cultural perspective, women appear oppressed or lacking in value and status to the extent that they are assigned to the domestic world (Rosaldo 1974:41).
Constrained economically as well as physically by dress styles that distorted the body and hampered movement, by restricted education, and by poor health practices, some innovative women displayed their strength and their displeasure with traditional roles by breaking the rules of the rigidly codified traditional ballet. They extended the boundaries of dance with revolutionary movement vocabularies, grammars, composition techniques, themes, and costumes. Women offered new dance systems and images alongside the danse d'école that had been developed by men. Showing one's new choreography on stage invites audience admiration, empathy, and contact, perhaps relieving some women's male-imposed feelings of social and physical insignificance.

Ground-breaking American modern dancers helped to de-corset wasp-waisted females. Tight lacing oppressed the body and enforced sexual taboos, whereas unlacing meant sexual release. While the corset worn in ballet helped pull up the body and enabled the woman’s male partner to get a good grip when lifting her, it also prevented him from feeling her flesh (Kunzel 1982:84). What women wore closely mirrored their changing role in American society.

Modern dance exemplified women’s emergence (Kisselgoff 1985). Females were choreographers, dancers, company founders, and managers. They established schools. Harbingers of innovation include Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan, and Ruth St. Denis; later, Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Agnes de Mille (combining modern and Broadway styles in the ballet idiom); and more recently, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Twyla Tharp, Laura Dean, and Lucinda Childs.

Duncan (plate 5) believed that ballet projected a socially pernicious image of women: virginal, frail, sexually passive, disembodied sylphid. She
denounced the recruitment of dancers from the slums as exploitation of the poor by the rich and a perversion of artistic values in favor of the prurient (Duncan 1938:49, 56, 69). Considering movement activity in human life to be an antidote to the rigidities of modern life, Duncan, with messianic zeal, founded schools for children.

St. Denis (plate 6), mother of the most flourishing lineage of modern dance, began her career in the flurry of vaudeville. There she had performed her rapid-fire stunts about 11 times a day in a dime museum, which also presented midgets and two-headed calves in jars. She turned to exotic, for nonwestern cultures offered visual beauty and spiritual messages in contrast to Western industrial life (Hanna 1987b). The critique of traditional options for women through new forms of dance was thus in some ways indirect and symbolic; ballet choreographers had also drawn upon exotic cultures, but to make their art innovative. In a 1932 address to the students of Barnard College, St. Denis said, “Today is woman’s hour. It is woman’s chance to offset what men may be doing in the realm of politics and war. It is woman’s place to foster and develop the cultural forces of civilization.” She lauded the plans for a new World’s Fair that would include the placing of “the dance upon a level of dignity and power” (New York Times 1932:20).

Graham’s movement vocabulary redefined the art of dance: stunning, sharp, and percussive patterns of torso contraction (with sucked-in pelvic organs) and release (movements corresponding to life’s breathing and sexual tension); twisting and spiraling spinal movements (ballet focused on limbs with the torso held as a single unit); parallel and inwardly rotated positions of the legs (ballet uses a turnout); flexed feet (ballet feet are pointed); an Egyptian-inspired walk in which feet move in one direction
while the upper body twists open against that base, pelvic isolation; and falls to the floor. Graham thematically presented earthy and socially relevant Sturm und Drang dynamics dealing with dominance, unbridled passion versus duty, attraction and repulsion, and submerged guilt and open eroticism to counter ballet’s ethereal fantasies.

Much of the female choreography centered on heroic women who took fate into their own hands, if only, says Jochen Schmidt, “with an axe, like Lizzie Borden in Agnes de Mille’s Fall River Legend, who murdered her parents in order to free herself from their rules and strictures” (1938:18). Graham portrayed the settler women of America’s pioneer history in Frontier (1935) and Appalachian Spring (1944). She also dealt with the great lovers and haters in Greek tragedy.

Some women such as Anna Halprin and Meredith Monk explored gender through movement and went on to express in performance the male and female possibilities within us all. That is, either or both sexes do the same movements in abnegation of stereotyped gender actions. Monk also has experimented with makeup and costuming to obscure sex identity; for example, she sometimes wears a mustache. Senta Driver’s choreography extends women’s early use of weight and power by reversing dancers’ traditional gender roles: her women lift and carry men. These choreographic explorations helped lay the foundation for the popular androgyny of the 1980s, exemplified by singer Michael Jackson.

Postmodern dance (Banes 1980), a rebellion against modern dance that both women and men have been developing since the 1960s, has tended to de-emphasize sexuality and gender-specific movement. Growing in tandem with an increasing acceptance of recreational sex and unisex dress and behavior, postmodern dance gained much of its inspiration from Merce Cunningham, who had been a Graham discovery, protege, and company member.

Gays and Men’s Liberation

Having focused on female participation in dance, I now turn to why male homosexuals are disproportionately attracted to dance. On the fringe of society and receptive to the unconventional, the art world offers them an opportunity to express an aesthetic sensibility that is emotional and erotic, an insulation from a rejecting society, an avenue of courtship, and an arena in which to deal with homosexual concerns. It has been argued that “the male homosexual has found the means to pass by identifying himself as artistic/romantic rather than simply gay. So the social rejection on the basis of sexuality is refocused by the justification of art” (Caroline Sheldon quoted in Wandor 1981:10; also see Laine 1980). Especially important for the perpetuation of dance as a magnet for gays was Diaghilev, himself gay, founder and director of the Ballets Russes and renowned in the art world for decades.

Barry Laine, American writer, amateur dancer, and gay, said that homosexual males who pursue a dance career do not have as much to lose as other males (1980b). Because gays have already broken the compact of mainstream sexual behavior, their occupational deviance is less threatening to them. Elistist members of scorned minority groups, remarked Stanley Crouch, “rather than accept inferior definitions of themselves or develop a stiic dream of equality [. . .] draw up their own maps to the land of the aristocrats and define themselves as a chosen people suffering at the hands of insecure and sadistic barbarians. This probably accounts for the obsession so many homosexuals have with taste, art, style, and minute
detail—in lieu of procreation, it allows association with the ageless greatness of human history” (1982:13).

Seymour Kleinberg (1980) refers to homosexual sensibility in the elite culture of the arts as feminine and erotic. Male dancers share more with females and thus are expected to be more emotionally expressive than mainstream American men, who are allowed to physically show emotion only in such well-defined situations as the celebration of athletic success, when they break taboos against men touching men and pat each other on the buttocks and hug. Some gays identify with the yearnings, feelings, and romantic idealization of the ballet, which is not marked by sexual preference so much as sexual grace for both sexes.

Moreover, in presenting an image of interaction between men and women that is rarely consummated, ballet presents an illusion experienced by gay men as parallel to their relationships with women and the difficulties some gays have in establishing long-term relationships with each other. Dance themes may permit homosexuals to play roles demanded by society that they do not fulfill in real life. As choreographers and managers, their domination of females (and males) in dance may raise their level of social prestige to equal or exceed that of straight males. Dance companies are usually self-contained units insulating men against the plight of being homosexual in a heterosexual society that assaults their ego and validity; this plight conjoins with that of the low-paid artist in a materialist culture. In the world of ballet, homosexuals can compensate for self-questioning, and even self-loathing, and can sustain a sense of personal and social strength through identification with a powerful ballet master, choreographer, or director as well as an accepting group. Besides, gay men as men may still feel themselves to be superior to women in Western culture.

Gay dancers attain perfection and power through the rigorous, esoteric demands of ballet training with its ritualistic language, dress, and studio-stage routines. But this concentration brings with it the attendant danger of ridicule from males engaged in athletics, business, or war. Through dance gays set themselves apart from the outside world, to which they assign imperfection and from which they feel rejected. At the same time, positive audience reaction to “superhuman” physical and artistic achievements on stage enhances a performer’s self-esteem.

Kenneth Plummer suggested that although homosexuality was a stigmatized and feared identity, some individuals declared their homosexuality because they were unable to withstand the pressure of leading a double life (1975:180). It is possible that some men who entered dance chose this way to “come out.” Access to supportive others neutralizes or strengthens homosexual sensitivity (Plummer 1975:136). Another possibility is that the public openness facilitated meeting sexual partners—dancing may be an audition for lovers. By the same token, dancing may sublimate unfulfilled sexuality. The hours of intense sensuality and physicality in dance can substitute for sexual consummation.

Because the dance profession offers a more physically and psychically integrated presence than the typical nine-to-five world of work, dance provides opportunities to explore the range of unconventional options without the consequences of real-life sanctions (Laine 1979). During times of men’s somber dress, ballet has had the attraction of colorful costume, glamour, and makeup.

Men in America aggressively compete in sports, business, and love. Not only does dance combine this masculine expression with unabashed
athletic feats, but it also allows graceful communicativeness or romantic interdependence. The act of men dancing together may create a sense of belonging and a return to basic human relations unimpeded by industrialism's distortion of the rhythms of social life.

Certainly money and its power were not the attractions for men who followed a dance profession, because dancers are paid very little. Most could not easily support a wife and family on their earnings, a requirement to be a "real man" in America. Because women had the option of marriage, assuring their husband's financial support, they could indulge in the arts, what most Americans considered a luxury rather than a necessity.

What about lesbians in dance? They were probably always present in dance, as in other fields. However, the literature on this subject is scant. The explanation may lie in the fact that because male homosexuality was against the law and harshly punished in some Western countries, men became politically active to confront the discrimination (Bullough 1976:565). Homosexuality was a capital crime at the time of Henry VIII. The English law that Americans inherited in the colonial era led to male homosexuals being hanged, castrated, jailed, and lobotomized (Oaks 1980). Although a 1656 New Haven law prescribed the death penalty for homosexuality, lesbianism was not generally a crime (Katz 1976). Puritan men may have thought only males were capable of experiencing and acting on sexual attraction to their own sex; furthermore, lesbianism is often sexually arousing to heterosexual males.

According to Vern Bullough, one reason lesbianism was not prosecuted was that the "male establishment was convinced that most women knew nothing at all about the subject, and to pass a law against lesbianism would make women feel guilty about their own gregariousness. The male establishment was willing to tolerate lesbianism, convinced of their own superiority" (1976:382). They dismissed what women could do by themselves on the grounds that it did not amount to much. "Only when it threatened their status or position in society did they move against it" (1976:446). Men may have denied lesbianism because "to see women as sexually independent is bound to challenge notions of male dominance and seeing women as mothers touches on the deeply-rooted ambiguities about woman as life-giver or castrator" (Wandor 1981:78).

Without court cases against them, lesbians had no compelling reason for a public campaign on the matter. Their interests were closely associated with the oppression of all women, and they did not want the added burden of society's hostility due to their sexual preference. Women were vulnerable financially and socially. When a woman has trained herself to her potential in dance, given the difficult, time-consuming work demanded, why should she publicly take on, in addition to the identity of a dancer, the even less acceptable identity of lesbian? Loie Fuller, choreographer-dancer Wendy Perron (1980) argues, would have been more broadly seen as a founder of American modern dance if she had not been avowedly lesbian. Fuller predated Duncan in her love of natural movement and in her belief that individuals can find their own approach to dance. In 1900 it was Fuller who presented Duncan to Viennese society. However, Duncan was reluctant to be associated with Fuller's life-style of a dozen or so beautiful girls grouped about her, stroking her hands and kissing her.

Society at large has been slow to accept men professionally dancing during the last 200 years (Terry 1978; Bland and Percival 1984). (The show business dance of Broadway musicals and Hollywood films, which
permitted conventional male images and incomes, was exempt from the
sissified and effete image.) Men's reemergence in dance gained impetus
and seeds for homosexual themes on stage were sown in 1909, when
Diaghilev introduced Nijinsky to the West. The Diaghilev era (1909–
1929) lauded the virtuosity and passion of the Russian male dancers
and of Adolph Bolm and George Rosay. Nijinsky (plate 7) created a sensation
with his unsurpassable standards of excellence, phenomenal elevation (as
in his enormous leap through a window in *Le Spectre de la Rose*, 1911),
mesmerizing stage presence, and sensuous virility. His provocative an-
drogy nous mystique appealed to both women and men.

Another of Diaghilev's ballet stars who promoted the role of the male
dancer was Serge Lifar. He embodied the physical beauty and nobility
of the romantic hero and excelled as a dancer. "In addition to successes
in the classical repertory, Lifar created roles in such precedent-shattering
works as Balanchine's *Apollon Musagète* [1928] and *The Prodigal Son*
[1929] [. . . ] true heroes at last, not just gilded playthings come to life"
(Siegel 1977:105). But the impetus for male respectability in dance did not
go far for 50 years after Nijinsky and Lifar.

Whereas women numerically dominated ballet onstage during the first
half of the 20th century, they dominated the "first phase" of modern
dance both on stage and behind the scenes as choreographers and com-
pany managers. With the exception of Ted Shawn and Charles Weidman,
few men were in modern dance during its early years. Shawn was the
self-styled "Papa" of American modern dance; he became patriarchal
modern dancer Ruth St. Denis's husband, co-choreographer, and co-
founder of the Denishawn School. Later, Shawn, a bisexual, founded his
own all-male company. Weidman formed a dance company with Doris
Humphrey in 1928.

Women's liberation via dance catalyzed a similar movement for men.
Shawn said male dancers were necessary if dancing was to have any
weight or depth at all. For him, dance without men was like a symphony
played only by piccolos and violins. Reflecting a prevalent male chauvin-
ism and "put down" of women as well as a turbulent personal rela-
tionship with St. Denis, he wanted to restore male dancing to the dignity he
believed it possessed in ancient Greece (plate 8). Breaking away from St.
Denis, he selected proven athletes and established the "Ted Shawn and
His Men Dancers" company in 1933 to present the male dancer as
"jock." His dances include fencing, dribbling a ball, shooting baskets,
and "virile" dancing. *Kinetic Molpai* (1935) was one of his most famous
works. Critic Walter Terry, who meets the issue of Shawn's homosexual-
ity with candor, finds irony in the effort and time Shawn's "Men Danc-
ers" spent trying to prove that they were not what Shawn and many
members of the company were. Later, Jose Limon created dances for an
all-male cast. But he tended to choreograph for the particular qualities of
men as a contrast or complement to those of women.

One of the most famous Denishawn students was Martha Graham,
whose own dances until the late 1930s were only for women. Then, in
1938, Erick Hawkins, a Harvard University student captivated by dance,
became a member of Graham's company. After living together for nine
years, they married in 1948 for a short time. Graham's choreographic use
of effort, resistance, and sheer physical strength, as well as favorably por-
trayed key male characters from Hebrew and Greek mythology and
American history, appealed to American men, even though the central
role was always danced by a woman.
Like St. Denis, Graham spawned a male reaction. Graham's artistic progeny determined the profile of the "second phase" of modern dance with male leaders. Hawkins went on to become one of America's prominent dancers and choreographers. He saw that ballet favored the female and that modern dance glorified women. Disturbed about his own identity as a male dancer in America, he went on a pilgrimage seeking insight, spending an entire summer driving through New Mexico and Arizona, where he experienced American Indian ceremonials. "I had to see and feel whether a grown man could dance without being a fool" (Kisselgoff 1980:43). He looked to non-American cultures for male role models in dance. (Indeed, as exemplified by St. Denis and Hawkins, the strength of American modern dance stems in large measure from its cross-pollination of different peoples' aesthetics.)

A number of other key male dancer-choreographers also began with Graham: Paul Taylor, John Butler, and Merce Cunningham (plate 9). The latter countered Graham's dramatic psychological dances with a unique abstract style from which postmodern dance evolved. Other notable male choreographers, too, were proteges of women. Alwin Nikolais studied with Hanya Holm; Jose Limon with Doris Humphrey; and Daniel Nagrin with Helen Tamiris. In 1961 John Martin commented on how times had changed in the modern dance: the bulk of the season was male. He thought only one choreographer had, however, come up with anything "that invites a second seeing" (1961:24).

Choreographers of the 1950s and '60s such as Nikolais and subsequent postmodern dancers-choreographers eschewed male and female polarized stereotypes in favor of unisex movements and androgynous dancers (plate 10). About sexuality and gender, Nikolais explained, "I've always abhorred the idea of male and female as opposed, as if we were all walking around in heat." His hope is to make "motion the revealer of the human spirit rather than a decoration of it" (Dunning 1983).
9. Martha Graham with Erick Hawkins (left) and Merce Cunningham in Deaths and Entrances (1943). (Photo courtesy of the Dance Collection, New York Public Library at Lincoln Center)

10. Gallery by Nikolais Dance Theatre. (Photo by Jack Vartoogian)
Big Bucks and the Challenge

Since the 1960s and the resounding dance boom following World War II, male superstars such as Soviet defectors Nureyev and Baryshnikov have earned big money and the respect it brings. Six-digit incomes encouraged heterosexual men to enter dance, win back their honorable status in dance, and assert their usual dominance over women as well as their apartness from them. Sexual identity, dance, and economic opportunity jostled comfortably together.

Nureyev's 1961 defection from the Kirov Ballet marked the full reascendence of the male dancer begun by Diaghilev's dancers. Protean Nureyev, a leading example of a danseur's bravura, was like some athletes: dashing, flamboyant, temperamental, and arrogant, but not heterosexual. He reached an audience in the tens of millions through a phenomenal schedule of appearances in five continents during more than twenty years, as well as through television and films.

Asserting male dominance in areas once securely reserved for women, Nureyev disproved the notion that "ballet is woman," as Balanchine put it. "Born into an age of resurgent male dance, Nureyev," wrote Arlene Croce, "has become the usurper, encroaching on the ballerina's territory with extensions of the Prince's role. [. . .] Nureyev's career may be understood in part as an attempt to gain and hold center stage without a repertory that places him there" (1982:165). Nureyev (plate 11) modified the 19th-century fixation on the ballerina at the expense of the male dancer and expanded men's parts. He also created original work such as Manfred (1979), which highlights the Byronic hero who is not bound by society's mores and expectations (Steinbrink 1983). Nureyev has said that men are better at everything. "You don't kneel to women. You mistrust them" (Washington Post 1983:C3).

This was only a beginning. The 1960s search for human contact and feeling fueled the dance explosion. People had more leisure time, First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy promoted the arts, and respectable families permitted their daughters to become ballerinas. The widespread interest in dance was further spurred by the Dance in America television series, the National Endowment for the Arts Dance Touring Program (20 years ago dance was limited almost exclusively to New York), weekly news magazines that plastered dancers on their covers, newspaper and periodical advertisements using dancers to sell a variety of services and products, and Broadway plays and movies about dancers. Baryshnikov defected from the Kirov in 1974 to eventually become artistic director of American Ballet Theatre eventually and a star not only of the ballet stage but also of films and television. Modern dance gained increasing recognition as it became further ensconced in the halls of academe. Yet, Arlene Croce observed, "Nothing galvanizes the general public like the advent of a male star in ballet" (Steinberg 1980:123).

The dance boom extended Shawn's effort to promote dance as a sport (Accocella 1983). Dancing—A Man's Game, a 1958 Omnibus television program, placed dancers among the world class athletes of the day. In well-publicized lecture-practicums for youths who think "the ballet might be effeminate," former New York City Ballet principal dancer Edward Villella quickly appealed to America's success syndrome by comparing his salary to that of baseball pitcher Tom Seaver (Gardella 1979). In 1969 Life Magazine ran a story about Villella, "Is this Man the Country's Best Athlete?" Two years later, Sports Illustrated featured him in the profile "Encounter with an Athlete" and cited his $100,000 yearly income. Sev-
eral books have appeared recently about men in dance, portraying them as gods, heros, and craftsmen. In 1980 there was even a concert performance of six companies and eleven male soloists in New York City called A Celebration of Men in Dance. Thelma Hill Dance Awards went to 20 men. An annual tribute to men (mainly blacks in dance) has continued.

Jacques d'Amboise, hailed by Life Magazine in June 1963 as America's first great male ballet dancer, also challenged the dance domain that women and male homosexuals had corralled. He is a longtime crusader attempting to shatter the canons of the past and erase the stigma associated with male dancing. Dancing schools had been solely places for girls and therefore a “sissy” activity for boys. A former principal with New York City Ballet, d'Amboise and his son, who also joined the company, defied the traditional image of who's who in dance and let boys know that dancing is as manly, exciting, demanding, and dangerous as any sports activity (Gelb 1982). D'Amboise dreamt of dance becoming part of the everyday life of all Americans. He began teaching free classes at New York City's Dalton School, Collegiate, The Town School, and Public School 191. D'Amboise pursued his determination to reverse entrenched prejudice against men in dance and created the nonprofit National Dance Institute (plate 12) in 1976 to “demystify the world of dance” (Solway 1983:20). By 1983, assisted by seven professional dancers and four musicians, he was bringing dance to 1,200 children in public, private, and parochial schools in New York, New Jersey, and Evanston, Illinois. In
1969 the School of American Ballet, the official New York City Ballet school, had 86 boys out of the 300 young students; a decade later nearly half the students were boys. In 1985, d’Amboise made the history of the War of 1812 come alive with a production of *Andrew Jackson and the Battle of New Orleans*. It had a cast of more than 1,200 students and appearances by the New York City Dancing Police and Boston SWAT Team (Rimer 1985). In 1986 d’Amboise made his annual spectacular at the Felt Forum of Madison Square Garden especially grand by recruiting Chinese children from Beijing to participate.

Nonetheless, in spite of efforts to establish the respectability of a male dance career, problems remain. Ballet student, teacher, and anthropologist Danny O’Connor observed that in New York City, dance capital of the world, male dancers still feel threatened to find their occupational choice considered deviant in mainstream America (1982). Moreover, he found the male sphere of ballet to be as homophobic as other career domains. Thus, there are several approaches to the problem in addition to the d’Amboise strategy to upgrade the status of male dancers and destigmatize the profession. A male dancer (straight and gay alike) might handle the issue with nondancers by first acknowledging the stereotypical image and then establishing himself as an exception. He does this by revealing, for example, that he has a girlfriend, he finds gays disgusting, or his love of ballet makes him “put up” with gay men. Other men may offer information that would lead an outsider to believe the stereotype of the male dancer is unfounded. A number of dancers told O’Connor that there are very few gays in ballet today, in contrast to just a few years ago. Another strategy is dressing like a successful businessman or gentlemanly scholar and communicating machismo through body language.

12. Jacques d’Amboise teaching a class of the National Dance Institute in San Francisco. (Photo by Kim Stolper; courtesy of the National Dance Institute)
Conclusion

Male liberation in dance has its glitches. Yet, "When a woman dances, nobody cares [. . .] All women can dance. But when a man dances, now that's something," a high school dance teacher told Wendy Perron and Stephanie Woodard (1976:59; see also Gordon 1983:34–37). In an insightful article, they point out that men in dance became a special kind of minority. "Dancers and critics alike are proud of the ever-increasing number of men in dance because their presence has legitimized it. No art is recognized as an art until men do it, from cooking to medicine to dance. And then it becomes dignified, arduous, skilled" (1976:59). Echoes of Margaret Mead.

Perron and Woodard compiled data on 1,900 students and company members of six major New York City modern dance and ballet companies with affiliated schools, and recipients of 316 grants given by the National Endowment for the Arts (1974/75) and the New York State Council on the Arts (1971–1974). They concluded that women were good enough but not man enough for the goodies: "Male dancers are getting hired, and male choreographers are getting grants way out of proportion to their numbers. The men require less performing skill and experience" (1976:59). Whereas the male-to-female percentage of dance students was 32% to 68% and of dance company members, 45% to 55%, the male-to-female percentage of scholarship students was 38% to 62%; of grant recipients $15–70,000 was 73% to 27%; and of grant recipients $70,000 or more was 100% to 0%. How, or whether, these proportions have changed in the last 10 years, I do not know.

The experience of women in dance is not unique. Gaye Tuchman and Nina Fortin found that when the novel, which had been the province of female writers, became associated with high culture (as writing professionalized and publishing centralized), men successfully edged women off their own turf. "As more people move into any field of literature [and I would add dance], the gain by men is almost always greater than that by women" (Tuchman and Fortin 1984:86). Mary Shelley invented science fiction in 1816 with Frankenstein. When men viewed her invention as a viable literature, they took over (Keller 1986). Moreover, dance companies as an idealized form of American capitalism—businesses run by self-employed individuals—were overcome by the model of national corporations run by men. In many arts organizations, "corporatization" has occurred in management and on the boards of directors.

Women are concerned about their status in dance, a field they have dominated numerically as workers and in which they have made progress as dancers, choreographers, and managers (and as critics and scholars). In December 1981, an all-day conference in New York City called "Networking for Women in the Performing Arts" was sold out. This parlty to aid women had 24 panel workshops on different aspects of the arts, each led by women who have achieved recognition in their fields. How do they feel about losing preeminence in a field, albeit a comparatively nonprestigious one, to the men's movement? How will they respond when men's big bucks make a dance career acceptable for male dancers and push women back into the stereotypic secondary place in the various sectors of the profession? It is noteworthy that as more "respectable" and "masculine" men are moving into dance, more women are moving into sports and business.

The ambivalence about dance dating from Biblical times lingers. Still, dance is a way to shatter canons of the past with audacious transforma-
tions of feeling and thought (Hanna 1986, 1987a, 1987b). Who does what and how in dance tells us about many things. The body is a subject and purveyor of messages about opportunities and expectations. Dancing is about itself (technique and aesthetics), its creators, and society's nondance life. The story of theatrical dance in America in the 20th century is a tale of changing economic and sexual options for men and women, developments in dance, attitudes toward dancing, transformations from reputable to disreputable and back, and recurring male dominance. Although the dance world has a degree of insulation that fosters creativity and challenges the status quo, it also contains, expresses, and fuels the prejudices of the larger society about sex roles and career choices.

Notes

1. My discussion focuses primarily on ballet and modern/postmodern dance. However, the situation of male dominance succeeded by female challenges is similar in jazz and tap dance. Tap began as a black male street form which was then transformed into theatre dance, later to become supplanted by new Broadway story genres. Because blacks sought new forms and associated tap with the era of black subservience, tap nearly died out. It has been picked up and revitalized by white females who perform by themselves and also with black male old-timers. Note that women now do traditional Irish dances formerly passed down from father to son for generations (Goldman 1983).

Homosexuality refers to exhibiting sexual desire toward a member of one's own sex. Many homosexual men prefer the term "gay" because of the history of pathology and persecution associated with the label "homosexual." It should be noted that there is a diversity on the homosexual-heterosexual continuum and a range of experience within each behavioral category.

2. This article is a revision of papers presented at the Conference on Social Theory, Politics, and the Arts, University of Maryland, 1984, and the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, 1985. After my 1984 presentation, a male colleague said he was disturbed that it was not clear where I stood; I sounded like a feminist who did not deliver. However, my intent is to present facts, issues, and perspectives of participants involved in a process, not to advocate.

3. In the mid-18th century, the relation between sexual ideology and social structure ensured the world of dance. The Industrial Revolution attracted populations to the city and uprooted the old morality. Victorian England's social underclass was degraded and powerless, yet potentially threatening as a conduit of venereal disease to respectable society. The prostitute was a highly visible symbol of social dislocation attendant upon the new industrial era (Walkowitz 1980).

4. After 1801 the French were more tolerant than the British. The law leaves unpunished any sexual behavior in private between consenting individuals. Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Rumania, Russia, and several Latin American countries adopted similar laws. In the United States homosexual sodomy was outlawed at the time of the Constitution and was a crime in every state until 1962. Twenty-four states and the District of Columbia provide criminal penalties. The AIDS epidemic has engendered the current outbreak of homophobia. Note the Supreme Court decision Bowers v. Hardwick 478 U.S. (1986) which holds that there is no constitutionally protected right for homosexuals or heterosexuals to engage in sodomy.

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The name of Sergei Diaghilev is invariably linked with ballet in most people’s minds. In just what capacity is not always clear. When Diaghilev died in Venice in August 1929, people at newstands in London and New York were heard to remark, “What a pity, I never saw him dance.” Of course, those better informed have long known that the bulky, heavyset Diaghilev was neither a dancer nor a choreographer. In 1951, a young art student named Jacqueline Bouvier (better known today as Jackie O.) won a contest sponsored by Vogue magazine with an essay in which she described Diaghilev as “an alchemist unique in art history,” whose specialty was achieving an interaction of the arts and an interaction of the cultures of East and West. The same essay cited Diaghilev’s ability to get the best out of his composers, designers, and dancers, and to incorporate it into “a unified yet transient ballet masterpiece.”

By Simon Karlinsky