

Do you remember the Call?

A reflection inspired by the dance 'The Call and the Answer'

I could begin in a thousand places. The spider-gram in my head sprawls out in so many directions each drawing me to a different point with diverse examples, stories and emotions. I have distracted myself by pulling old journals from a shelf in search of my retreat notes where I know one began with the dance 'The Call and the Answer', but other notes jump out of the pages. I need to begin somewhere and December 13th 2004 is the page open before me. I give silent thanks that I reference quotes that have inspired me!

"Have you ever imagined yourself in a place that stirred your soul like the song of doves at dawn? Uncover what you long for and you will discover who you are." writes Phil Cousineau in 'The Art of Pilgrimage' p.13. My Journal adds another quotation which I discover on the next page in the book when he quotes Richard R Niebuhr; "Pilgrims are persons in motion - passing through territories not their own - seeking something we might call completion, or perhaps the word clarity will do as well, a goal to which only the spirit's compass points the way."
(My own notes are about my own desire to walk to Santiago again and question why there and not somewhere new.)

The next entry in my Journal is February 2005 and a quotation from T.S. Elliot
"We must be still and still moving into intensity." (East Coker)

These say something about my connection to the dance The Call and Answer. I know that in the notation Friedel Kloke-Eibl refers to Part A of the dance as Introvert, the scissor steps drawing the dancer to form a semi-circle and the arms being brought gently round and crossed in front of the body. I like this movement, the respect it gives to my inner being, the invitation to look inwards and I can accept this movement as introvert, an enfolding in order to process, reflect. Part B of the dance is titled Extrovert and as the steps, the change of direction of the dancer, movement of the arms and the rond de jambe draw or compel the dancer along the circle line I sense the energy. My question is, which part is the Call and which the Answer?

There is a hymn which begins:

"Do you remember the Call? When did you hear your name out loud? Can you remember the word that you heard when the story began in you?" (CD 'In the Name of Love' Music by Sr. Jennifer Corlett and Fr. Mark Hobson)

According to the Myers Briggs Personality test I am a fairly high extrovert, energised by people, able to respond with a certain amount of speed to the world around me and discovering what I am thinking by hearing myself speaking it aloud! As I have grown older I also recognise my introvert side. I love silence and being alone, absorbing my surroundings as opposed to responding to them; but in each of these places and ways of being I discover the Call or The Answer. Often the vibrant world around me is the call to go inwards just as the stillness and reflection times are the call to go beyond myself. Dance is a language and I am very aware that as I dance the music and steps resonate within me and that I move in response to it but that often I also engage my inner voice, a place deep within that is awakened

I am drawn to take from the bookshelf a copy of 'A Mantis Carol' by Laurens Van Der Post; the account of a woman's relation with Hans Taaibosch, a Bushman of South Africa, whom she discovers "danced out his sense of religion for her time and time again in his dance of the great hunger". She says: "It was the loveliest dance I have ever seen, and it was I not he who ended up in tears."

'I'm not surprised, 'I said. 'They would always rather dance out their deepest gratitude than put it into words. It is the loveliest of all their dances.'

I was inspired by it because I could resonate with the idea of a 'dance of great hunger'; or of dance being the response to the inner, intimate relationship of the 'I and Thou'.

Hearing the music and words of "Do you remember the call?" in my head again, the answer is, 'Yes'. I remember the call to religious life, and I was walking! Perhaps my inner self was quiet but it took what felt like a branch of a tree falling on my head to provoke a response in me! (I still regard that tree with great respect and walk by with caution) And perhaps the pilgrim in me knows that in movement I intensify the inner voice that gives clarity to my life. When I walked from the French / Spanish border to Santiago it was to reconnect, rediscover creativity within me. Each village or water fountain drew me forward and as I walked I observed the world around me, enjoyed the encounters with others from all over the world and exchanging the response to the question: "Why are you walking?"

A question I frequently ask is "What do you do when you dance?" Perhaps it should be "What today, when you dance, are you responding to? What are you saying?"

Lorraine Pratt rscj

I am a religious in the Society of the Sacred Heart, an Order founded in Paris in 1800, after the French Revolution, to educate girls. I have spent many years in the world of education both in schools and with University students. My subject is Religious Studies. As a school chaplain I turned again to dance and discovered *Meditation des Tanzes* which gave a new dimension to my spirituality and how I expressed it.

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Ich bin eine Ordensschwester der Gesellschaft vom Heiligen Herzen Jesu, eine Ordensgemeinschaft, die 1800 nach der Französischen Revolution in Paris gegründet wurde, um Mädchen auszubilden. Ich habe viele Jahre lang als Pädagogin in Schulen und Universitäten gearbeitet. Mein Fachgebiet ist die Religionswissenschaft. Als schulische Seelsorgerin habe ich mich wieder dem Tanz gewidmet und entdeckte die *Meditation des Tanzes*, die meiner Spiritualität, und wie ich sie äußerte, eine neue Dimension verliehen hat.