

I guess I'm confused about direction. I'm invited to perform as part of New Directions in Dance and I'm not sure what is new, either. If there's no such thing as time (they're changing the measurement of time, by the way, this October) how can there be any dancing? And yet, there is dancing. Is it the arrow that moves, or the mind that moves? Is it the arrow that causes pain, or again, the mind? Someone said, "Pain is a matter of opinion."

First dance lesson: Put your feet on the floor. Now, put your mind in your feet. What's it like down there? What's it like, dancing on sharp knives? The same as any other dancing, no doubt. A floor is what's under you; footing; he has his feet on the ground. If I can be happy standing on one foot, that's better. Next, on no feet, rising to heaven.

When does extravagance become a necessity? Extravagance is exorbitant, outside the orbit, outside the circle. In The Bald Soprano Ionesco says, "Take a circle, caress it, and it will turn vicious." In A Damsel in Distress, a Fred Astaire film of 1937, in the amusement park sequence, Gracie Allen runs in a circle, on a great, turning wheel, for a very long time. Later, off the wheel, she still runs. Throughout the film, Gracie shows us her world, she talks, sings, dances, mimes: we don't know whether to laugh or cry. It is real, but it is not our illusion, it is hers. Suddenly, our knowing is changed, our circling no longer makes sense, only Gracie's does, such is her center. Her world is the only possible world; its rules are inexorable. She does not convince, she is convinced. Her motive, simply, is the movement of spirit, the movement of mind, the spiralling or radiation of her belief from its unshakeable center.

(Note: Gracie Allen died the 28th of August, 1964, at the age of 58.)

James Waring, "Gracie Allen and the Wheel of Life," July-September 1964
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