Being African in essenes, and my understanding from these past few months taking the class; is the acknowledgement of someone's humanity. Before you can even dance with anyone, you first must acknowledge their presence and being. For to dance alone, is to create a pseudo perception of what dancing really is. Villages would gather together and dances not as individuals but as a people. Dancing in a village meaning everyone is invited to dance because everyone is a community.

Before I go into what I got from this class, let me talk about where I started when I walked into class the first day. I am latino, there’s no way around it because it’s who I am as a person. My dad is from Peru, and My mom is from East Los Angeles, California; her family being from Michoacan and Zacatecas. I grew up with dancing, but it was nothing similar to what we do in class. I learned how to dance by practicing in my room to music and watch me father dance. To this day, he is one of the best dancers I’ve seen dance, he dances such a variety of dances from salsa, santiago, and to valts. My mother was never really a dancer as she put all her efforts at being the best at sports. She learned how to dance a bet but it wasn’t until my dad taught her that she learned a grasped what it meant to really dance. To dance with someone else.

Where my dad is from, it is considered rude to not invite the neighborhood; and for bigger events like a quinceanera. If you hear about it and you know one person there at the party, you’re allowed to go, and in fact welcomed with open armed to the family. A house visit in Peru is a full day in devore as you go in the morning or afternoon; are feed lunch and dinner and you just catch up, tell stories and other things that make us who we are.

No matter the event, whether it’s a quinceanera or a house visit, there will be a point where everyone is up and dancing, even if it’s for one song. Everyone is invited to dance and able to participate at their level and capability of movement. As a latino, it’s an unspoken rule that you need to learn how to dance. It’s so ingrained with our culture that shying away from it is very out of the norm, but later regretted by many who wish they had learned earlier.

When I entered the class I’ll be a hundred percent honest, I had no idea what to expect. I walked into class on a dare. I wasn’t actually on the waiting list, I wasn’t even a student at CU Boulder. I walked in because of Julia Williams and Andrea Dulsky. And the transition between latin dance and African dance was a hard transition for me.

African dance has the following “rules” for basic form:

**Sit:** African are close to nature, and grounded with mother nature. They don’t want to be far from mother nature, it’s not ballet

Ripple: Why tire yourself out be being rigged and stuff when you can let the polyrhythm move your. You tireless as you shift your weight between both legs.

**Arms:** Your arms are apart of your dance, they help you convey emotions. What you dance means. To use words from class: it’s the way to dress your mannequin. Once you learn the basic form, the arms dress it, give it live so to speak.

**Expression:** Once arms are brought into play, you can’t just smile the entire time as you dance. You must emote through the dance, to let it live.

**Connection:** No matter if you’re an expert dancer or just started a week ago, you dance with people. Not by yourself. You dance to dance with people. Not for yourself.

The culture of African dance hits me close to home because it feels like what I grew up with. It’s about community and humanity. And I’ll be honest, I’m terrible at putting expression like these into words. I know I’m not the best dancer but when something accepts and dances with you and your from of your humanity.

I know this paper is very long because I don't know what I can say without posting all my drawing of the dances moves (as I’m an extremely visual person). I could take about the dances of soko, and the tradition dances that we learned in class. And it interested me, but my interest in class is related is the movement of the body and the connection between people. I never did anything related to my body and because of this class I work out muscles that I never really worked out before doing things like rock climbing and frisbee.

The essenes, and my understanding of dance is the acknowledgement of someone's humanity and acceptance in your community.