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THE HUMAN IMAGE IN TWO CHOREOGRAPHED WORKS: AN EXPLORATION OF OUR
SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE REALITIES (ORIGINAL DANCE WORKS)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

M.A. 1983

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THE HUMAN IMAGE IN TWO CHOREOGRAPHED WORKS:
AN EXPLORATION OF OUR SUBJECTIVE AND
OBJECTIVE REALITIES

by

Mary Della Davidson

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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Date

PREFACE

It is the purpose of this paper to clarify personal issues in the area of choreographic form. My intention is to reveal myself to myself so that I may realize my ideas for choreography in a more fully conscious manner. In so doing I hope to create a critical attitude in my work.

Currently my work reflects a style that has stemmed from a reliance on intuition. I feel it is necessary to understand this unconscious preference so that I can pinpoint the source of my work. This will lead to my conscious unveiling of habits so that my work can evolve and grow. Also, my bias needs to be understood in relation to a critical understanding of the art of dance so that my work will not be naive.

I have begun to confront issues shaping the contemporary dance scene. The work of the post-modern practitioners in the 1960s and 1970s expanded the parameters of dance to the point that the only remaining constant in the choreographic concept is the presence of the dancer. Form, in any of its traditional uses, has been denied or expanded beyond recognition since the 1960s.

Contemporary choreography has moved away from dramatic work because of trends within the art world to move toward work that is conceptual and non-representational in nature. However, I know that I wish to do dramatic work.

My concern is to gain insight into the human condition by understanding and presenting the true complexity of our lives. This has origins in my broad philosophic view that observes the complexity with which the world has evolved on a conceptual basis. Specifically, in the face of high technology it is apparent to me that people need to develop a corresponding advancement in their social values so that they may live together peacefully. I feel that the current tendency to emphasize conceptual and abstract progression in art is parallel to technological advancement in our lives. Dance, for me, must not divorce itself from the mystery of human life in all its complexity; therefore, I have little interest in viewing the art work as autonomous and self-referential.

In order to accurately represent the world in all its complexity, I felt a need to understand how I perceive reality: the interplay of our subjective and objective comprehensions. This paper is a philosophic exploration of that complex interaction and its foundation in dance as a basis of my work.

I would like to thank members of my committee, Mr. Wayne E. Enstice, Associate Professor of Art, and Dr. Harold W. Dixon, Jr., Associate Professor of Drama, for their frank criticism and editorial assistance.

I also would like to thank the many lovely dancers and people who have performed and assisted in my performances of "Lineage" and "Bumps;" as well as to the Dance faculty for giving me the time and space in which to produce my works.

And to Harry and Pinkie Davidson -- my whole family -- for their continued love and support.

Finally, and in particular I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. John M. Wilson for his patience in guiding me through the thesis process. As my mentor and friend he has given me invaluable support and inspiration during the nine years that I have been privileged to know him.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis was to inspect the investigator's personal choreographic tendencies in relation to her philosophical outlook. Insights contained within the writings of Martin Heidegger and systematic descriptions of art form according to Susanne K. Langer provided for the model of the choreographer's "world view." Within the context of that view, the significance of those choreographic tendencies were reassessed.

Problems in the recognition and definition of emergent qualities were addressed. "Animation," "gesture," and the "human image" were assessed as they emerged from within two works choreographed by the investigator, and, simultaneously, as they were framed by the philosophical model.

Secondary problems arose as a result of this investigation. Intuition and cognition, subjective and objective realities, and formal approaches to the choreographic processes were partially discussed. Finally, the revelation of personal values in each choreographed work was viewed as an expression of one's persisting world view.

CHAPTER 1

A PHILOSOPHIC EXPLORATION OF TWO REALITIES WITHIN DANCE

Heidegger and the Work of Art

I will use an article by Hans Jaeger entitled "Heidegger and the Work of Art," because it was necessary for me to seek out a source that discussed in philosophic terms how art connects to the world.

Producing a work of art is a process of creating a reality with its own logic and rules. In other words, a work of art contains its own microcosm. Therefore by using its unique logic it will reveal something about the larger world in which we live. Some artists seem to deny this connection as they tend to concentrate on form rather than content. Their work does connect to the world in that it shows how the human mind perceives the world. However, these works can be opaque and distant from human experience.

Heidegger's explanation of art fully recognizes that all ways of seeing reality are interpretations and are therefore conceptual in nature. But he also insists that art reveals truth by being connected to the mystery of human life.

Heidegger defines art as the "strife of truth, the strife between the world and the earth, elucidation and concealment, being and existing reality" (Jaeger 1961, p. 428). For Heidegger, truth is not the concept of correctness but is the "revelation of being" (Jaeger

1961, p. 417). Being is one aspect of reality; existing reality is the other aspect. These realms are also described as "earth" and "world," respectively.

Earth and World

Earth and world should not be construed in their objective meaning here. As Heidegger explains: "We should neither associate with this word (earth) the conception of mass, of matter, nor that of a planet" (Jaeger 1961, p. 420). Jaeger (1961, p. 420) clarifies: "The earth is the complementary opposite of Being as a whole, of the Greek Physis and of the more limited realm of being which Heidegger calls the world."

Being is what we make of the earth; being is the world that we erect. "While Being itself and the world are ever-open overtness, the earth is ever enclosed within itself. It guards and hides its secrets [Jaeger uses a rock as a metaphor for earth]. We may break the rock and weigh its mass, the rock will remain withdrawn within itself" (Jaeger 1961, p. 420). However we may reveal the "world of the rock" (or its Being) by disclosing it to be a weapon or a potential building material. "Man exists in such a way that he not only transcends himself toward the realization of his possibilities, but he also transcends things that exist around him toward their Being so that they reveal to him what they are" (Jaeger 1961, p. 419).

This statement encapsulates the basis of the creative act. That man both can and does choose to shape his "world" by responding to the undisclosable nature of the "earth" is significant of mankind's

desire to create. Mankind is not content to live with meaninglessness. We continually explore and reveal the earth. Possibly, this desire to find meaning in our lives is the foundation of the hopeful nature of mankind.

Rollo May describes the creative act in the following manner:

They [the artists] do not run away from non-being, but by encountering and wrestling with it, face it to produce being. They knock on silence for an answering music; they pursue meaninglessness until they can force it to mean (May 1975, p. 108).

Art encapsulates this strife of revealing, for we are intrigued with the fact that art has been created. We take the creation of functional objects for granted. Perhaps a function of art within society is to continually renew our interest in the creative act. Jaeger (1961, p. 424) explains,

The fact of creation disappears behind the usefulness and dependability of such a thing as a chair . . . the miracle of creation is inherent in every true work of art and emanates from it, because a true work of art is something hitherto unimagined, unique, extraordinary. . . . Art changes our usual relationship to the world and the earth, so that we arrest all our common doing and rating, knowing and observing, and succumb to lingering in the truth that happens in the work of art.

Jaeger defines truth as event. "Event is derived from *ex-venire*, to come out. Truth conceived as an event means that truth is something that comes out, comes to the fore, rises from Hidden to Unhidden" (Jaeger 1961, p. 417). But it is important to remember that what is left concealed is as essential as what is revealed. There is tension between the Hidden and the Unhidden. Art reveals the creation of meaning (world) out of meaninglessness (earth), thus drawing our

attention to both earth and world. This tension between world and earth is truth for Heidegger.

Heidegger's ideas, as explained by Jaeger, on the origins of art have provided me a framework in which more fully to understand the philosophic implications of form and content in my work. These ideas have provided me a model by which to understand dance. It prompts me to ask what is the "earth" in dance and, correspondingly what "worlds" are possible.

I surmise that all art is trying to reveal the many potentials of our subjective "worlds" or is trying to reduce the subjective world to get closer to the objective but undisclosable earth. Heidegger's ideas have given me insight into the basic structure of reality by describing the complex interaction between our subjective and objective worlds.

We need both pursuits in dance but, unfortunately, much of the dance world has focused on only one or the other. The riff began when Merce Cunningham rebelled against the heavily expressive style of Martha Graham. He established the human body and its technical capabilities as the primary component of his choreography. Since then, choreographers have tended to gravitate toward either expression or technique as a thematic bias. My interest is to understand the philosophic issues between these choices so that I can make knowledgeable choices in my own work.

Further, Heidegger's essay has aroused my curiosity concerning the concept of hope. I have observed that my works end with a hopeful

statement. Could hope for me be the pursuit of artistic expression in order to understand the world?

With these ideas in mind I can more fully explore the concepts of form and content in dance. My first exploration will be in understanding the "earth" or material of dance -- the human body.

The Components of Dance

Dance is the medium in which the human image is explored through presentation of the human body. Dance is a non-verbal art form and develops its metaphors through the body's inherent movement capabilities. That dance is the exploration of the body's movement potential is apparent; that it is also the exploration of our inherent expressive nature is possibly less apparent.

Expressiveness in dance is due to our animated state. Animation is a state of being and, therefore, is a passive state. It is part of the existing reality of our bodies. In other words, because we are living beings that possess minds and souls we are in a constant state of animated vitality which imbues our movement with meaning. I will use the term gesture to distinguish animated movement from non-animated movement. Gesture is the active manifestation of our animated selves and is the primary component of the dance illusion. I use the word illusion to indicate that what is perceived in a dance performance goes beyond the tangible presence of human bodies to the intangible effects of human energy. This will be discussed later in the thesis.

In order to understand the full implications of the stylistic choices in dance I will discuss gesture and animation further to establish that human movement cannot be divorced from inner meaning.

Animation

Susanne K. Langer, noted 20th century philosopher of aesthetics, discusses the animated nature of human movement as vital movement:

Gesture is vital movement; to the one who performs it, it is known precisely as a kinetic experience, i.e., as action, and somewhat more vaguely by sight, as in effect. To others it appears as a visible motion, but not a motion of things sliding and rolling around--it is seen and understood as vital movement. So it is always at once subjective and objective, personal and public, willed (or evoked) and perceived (Langer 1953, p. 174).

Animation is human energy, recognized simultaneously in both our sensory and cognitive spheres and reflected as meaningful physical form.

Animation, to be understood, must be preceded with an understanding of our sensory realm of being. Our cognitive realm is more easily recognized because we tend to validate our existence through cognition (i.e., the Cartesean precept, cogito ergo sum).

Feeling is elusive because we cannot always describe the phenomena of feeling through cognitive processes. That is, the cognitive and sensory spheres are not directly interchangeable. Also feeling is popularly but mistakenly thought to mean exclusively emotional feeling, when actually its scope is much larger. Langer describes feeling as "physical sensation, to the most complex emotions, intellectual tensions and the steady feeling tones of conscious human life" (Langer 1967, p. xix). Feeling is the whole and organic perception of living energy. It is the recognition of change on all levels of our existence.

William James makes the following statement on the interrelationship of our mental and physical state: "Without the bodily states following on the perception, the latter would be purely cognitive in

form, pale, colourless, and destitute of emotional warmth" (Lange and James 1922, p. 13). Animation is the interaction of energy with our sensory and cognitive spheres so that we are uniquely enlivened.

Gesture

Cognition gives understanding to our feelings and feelings enliven our thoughts. They are in a simultaneous and perpetual relationship that governs all our actions. Consequently, all of our gestures are motivated. John Martin, dance critic, supports the importance of this in dance: "This is perhaps the cardinal consideration in the approach to dance composition, namely, that movement of whatever kind carries within itself implications of mood, purpose, function and emotion" (Martin 1970, p. 652).

Gesture in dance does not exclude ordinary gestures, but must have the appearance rather than the utility of daily action. Walking can have metaphorical or symbolic value on stage. To describe a man walking down the street as "dancing" might be an apt poetic expression, but cannot be confused with the art of dance in which the intended meaning of movement subsumes the utilitarian action.

The dance vocabulary is created out of all available human movement and it functions on a continuum from utilitarian realism to non-representational abstractionism. Through movement invention we extend our vocabulary to include movement that serves no utilitarian purpose but exists solely for the realization of ideas in dance. This movement can be shaped into representational symbols or exist as non-representational abstract movement.

Dancers and choreographers continually expand this continuum by transcending themselves through the quest for technical and qualitative excellence. Through gestural invention in the realization of ideas we can discover the potential worlds of the earthly body.

Dancing is often assumed to be a medium for self-expression. The assumption is wrong and it leads to confusion about the use and treatment of the body. Langer describes dancing as "imagined feeling" and it is therefore removed from real emotions in order to reveal structures of feelings. The confusion arises due to the viewer's personal identification with the medium used in dance; namely the human body. Performance frames the human body. In so doing, it becomes the image conceived by the choreographer in conjunction with the unique skills and personality of the performer.

The Human Image

Choreographers create "worlds" by exploring aspects of the human being; motion potential, feeling states, purposeful action and so forth. Human image is a projection by the choreographer of the human being removed from its pedestrian context and placed in the performance context. In other words, no longer will movement of the human being disappear in the utility of an action but will be set forth so that its significance can be perceived. A Choreographer may choose to "frame" the movement capabilities of the human being to reveal the capabilities of the human body -- muscles, joints, strength and so forth. In minimizing inherent expressiveness, we become more aware of the mechanical potential of our bodies.

Also inherent in dance is the condition of the human being which encompasses psychological states as well as physical motion. As a person approaches us, we immediately comprehend his or her physical body and begin to discern aspects of psycho-emotional energy through the person's walk and gestures. The walk and gestures are significant because they are motivated from within the individual's animated state; that is, the walk and gestures are the sum of the individual's sensory and cognitive spheres. Consequently, in dance movement can be constructed that heightens the inherent expressive nature of an individual to express a dramatic idea. The image that will be projected will be the emotional life of a human being.

The choreographer explores what he/she feels is significant. The continuum of choice has infinite permutations, however, the continuum seems to exist between exploring the objective human body to discovering the subjective human psyche within the human being.

The Objective Choice: Body and "Trio A"

Historically, dance has depended on the performer's technical and expressive excellence by which to create worlds through choreography. In the 1960s, Yvonne Rainer, a practitioner of the "post-modern" dance movement proposed "that dance is neither perfection of technique nor of expression, but quite something else -- the presentation of objects in themselves" (Banes 1980, p. 49). In her "Trio A," "the movement style is factual (matter-of-fact, direct, non-illusionistic) unexaggerated, unemphatic. Neither weight, nor time, nor space factors are noticeably stylized or emphasized" (Banes 1980, p. 47). "Trio A" minimalizes

dance as an art form at the abstract end of the continuum. In Sally Banes discussion of "Trio A" she uses Heidegger's essay as a tool for understanding Rainer's reductive purposes:

In thinking about Trio A, I have found Martin Heidegger's essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art," useful. Here the philosopher reflects on the artwork's source, rejecting the idea that it originates in the artist. He identifies the "thingly" and "workly" characteristics of works of art, showing how the work is neither a mere thing, nor an equipmental thing that uses up its material:

In fabricating equipment--e.g., an ax--stone is used, and used up. It disappears into usefulness. . . . By contrast the templework, in setting up a world, does not cause the material to disappear, but rather causes it to come forth for the very first time and to come into the Open of the work's world. The rock comes to bear and rest and so first becomes rock; metals come to glitter and shimmer, colors to glow, tones to sing, the word to speak. All this comes forth as the work sets itself back into the massiveness and heaviness of stone, into the firmness and pliancy of wood, into the hardness and luster of metal, into the lighting and darkening of color, into the clang of tone, and into the naming power of the word (Heidegger 1975, p. 46).

. . . we might extend his reflection to dance in regard to the unique, essential materials of its work: mind, muscle, and movement. For Heidegger, the origin of the work of art is in art, because "art is by nature an origin: a distinctive way in which truth comes into being, that is, becomes historical" (Heidegger 1975, p. 78). The artwork, making creative strife between "world" and "earth"--i.e., between the social world or the set of relations between humans, tools, natural things, and the natural realm or that which remains secluded, impenetrable, concealed--finds a way to bring the earth into the open without violating it. "In setting up a world, the work sets forth the earth" (Heidegger 1975, p. 46). The work shows itself to have been created, and by this workly aspect provides a framework for the thingly nature of its material. It lets the "unconcealedness," the truth of being, shine forth, at the same time that it protects the self-contained nature of its material. And in this process, "the artist remains inconsequential as compared with the work, almost like a passageway that destroys itself in the creative process for the work to emerge" (Heidegger 1975, p. 40).

In Trio A there is, in Heidegger's terms, a conflict between the refusal and dissembling of concealment. "At bottom, the

ordinary is not ordinary; it is extra-ordinary, uncanny" (Heidegger 1975, p. 54). In the dance Rainer shows us ordinary movements as strange, at the same time making strange movements fall into place next to the extraordinary ordinary uses of the body (Banes 1980, p. 50).

"'Trio A' tells us of a world in which people use their bodies with skill, intelligence, and coordination and economy. . . . The process is a metaphor for the intelligence of the human body" (Banes 1980, p. 53).

Rainer chose to minimize technique and expression in order to set forth her metaphor of the earthly, intelligent body. Conspicuously missing from her view is the earthly feeling body. Rainer framed an aspect of the human form but in so doing limited its "existing reality." In my opinion, Rainer wanted to see the wonder in the ordinary workings of the body -- our daily actions. In contrast, I am interested in our daily flux of emotions and the potential revelations of our felt life. Daily utilitarian actions can obscure the more subtle activities of human soul and spirit. My interest then, is in the subjective choice of feelings and powers.

The Subjective Choice: Powers and Feelings

As observed earlier in this inquiry, the human body is motivated as much by feeling as by thought. We are propelled by energy which is the result of mental and emotional motivation as well as physiological make-up.

Dance is the projection of the moving human form in relation to its energy level (dynamics) as well as time and space. For example, walking is a primary locomotor movement, wherein one finds the basic action of weight transferring from one foot to another. That same

action can evolve into a complicated series of leaps by a change of rhythm and the deliberate manipulation of the dancer's effort. The viewer is not only aware of the leaping form but the energy that propelled the form in relation to its spatial and rhythmic configuration. As these phenomena become apparent, new levels of meaning can occur. Suzanne Langer describes this as "the play of powers made visible:"

The primary illusion of dance is a virtual realm of power--not actual, physically exerted power, but appearances of influence and agency created by virtual gesture.

In watching a collective dance--say, an artistically successful ballet--one does not see people running around; one sees the dance driving this way, drawn that way, gathering here, spreading there--fleeing, resting, rising, and so forth; and all the motion seems to spring from powers beyond the performers (Langer 1953, p. 175).

The creation of powers through gesture holds the potential for projecting the most concealed aspects of human existence. The earth is revealed in the working of the world. In dance, we transcend our pedestrian movement vocabulary to enter a world of "virtual powers." Langer (1953, p. 190) explains: "The dance creates an image of nameless and even bodiless powers filling a complete, autonomous realm, a 'world.' It is the first presentation of the world as a realm of mystic forces." Langer further describes the potential of the dance experience: "No matter what the dance experience is supposed to achieve, what dramatic or ritualistic elements it embraces, its first move is always the creation of a realm of virtual power. "'Ectasy' is nothing else than the feeling of entering such a realm" (Langer 1953, p. 192).

Through the experience of powers we can understand felt experiences in our lives. By felt experiences (sensory realm of being), I

mean those occurrences in our lives that seem to be illusory but are known to be part of our direct experience. Langer describes such experiences as "divine powers, fates and spells, and all mystic agencies, the potency of prayer, of will, of love and hate, and also the oft assumed hypnotic power of one's mind over another" (Langer 1953, p. 188).

Choreography potentially can reveal the most irrational aspects of our lives by working to subvert rational thought and turn our sensory experience on awareness of powers in our lives. Dance is not limited to a verbal transcription of an experience. Consequently, new structures of understanding Heidegger's earth and world are possible. In other words, we tend to recognize those aspects of our lives that can be validated through cognition as being tangible. My interest is to understand the intangible aspects of our lives that are best known through feeling and experience. Dance in its ability to create powers by working with the physical phenomenon of energy can provide the means for these understandings.

The seeming polarity of Heidegger's existing reality and the Being of existing reality merge as we understand the circular nature of reality. Dance begins with ourselves, the human form and its animated vitality. Through movement invention we realize our potential physical and emotional selves through the creation of "virtual powers." The emergence of powers completes the circle as our experience of them and their influence confirms their reality as well as their mystery. Powers are undisclosable, opaque and refer back to the existing reality of our potent sensory realm of being.

Existing reality and the Being of existing reality are mutually dependent. They do not represent a dual system by which we can categorize the world, for in so doing we would only limit the world. The complexity of the world is in the complete interaction and interdependency of our subjective/objective comprehensions.

Dance reveals the human condition by framing aspects of the human being. Yvonne Rainer in "Trio A" chose to minimize subjective invention in order more clearly to explore the objective human body -- mind, muscle and movement. However, in so doing a limited view of ourselves was projected; for what remained concealed was the complex interaction of feeling with thought and body. Feeling imbues the body with warmth and is essential to human spirit.

In setting forth a world of virtual powers through the understanding of gesture, the dance potentially sets forth the earthly, mysterious human psyche, creating tangible evidence of the body's soul and spirit.

My argument, in brief, is that the strife between earth and world is exposed in dance which shows the human at work in powerful emotions and situations. Dramatic dance, which includes narrative and metaphor, delves into the working of energy in human life.

Using these ideas as a framework, I will explore two of my works, "An Investigation of Love and Loneliness and other Things that Go Bump in the Night" and "Lineage." The purpose for the explorations will be to understand how gesture can be structured into disclosing thematic ideas of human spirit.

CHAPTER 2

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF TWO CHOREOGRAPHED WORKS

"Bumps" and "Lineage" are works that emerged from my intuitive grapplings in trying to understand the world. They are metaphorical representations of basic dilemmas that have occurred in my experience of the world. By objectifying these dilemmas into choreographed workd I gain insight into their complexity and possibly gain philosophic understanding as well. Furthermore, in the process of objectifying these ideas they take on a more universal scope instead of remaining in the realm of personal musings.

In exploring these works, the thematic idea of the work is as important as the gestural development in understanding the "world" that is being created. These "worlds" act as a framework in which to understand certain aspects of human spirit and psyche.

An Investigation of Love and Loneliness and Other Things That Go Bump in the Night

"An Investigation of Love and Loneliness and Other Things That Go Bump in the Night" (hereafter "Bumps") is a choreographic interpretation of a fairytale. A fairytale is described as a story of make-believe; but the make-believe is only a disguise within which to grapple with the dilemmas of life. Bruno Bettelheim describes the function of fairytales as "stories that represent in imaginative form what the process of healthy human development consists of and how the tales make

such development attractive for the child to engage in" (Bettelheim 1976, p. x). The purpose of fairytales is not to give us an accurate picture of the world, but to teach us about the world on a symbolic level.

In "Bumps" I was concerned with "growing up" and facing the realities of life instead of assuming the fairytale scenarios of childhood. Consequently it was appropriate for "Bumps" to be realized in a fairytale scenario in order to dispel these fantasies. At the same time, I hoped to portray a rite of passage from adolescence into adulthood and in so doing to put fairytales into their proper perspective.

I used fantasy as a style to personify emotional states. In "Bumps" I portrayed loneliness as a person in order to understand and watch it interact with the "personalities" of fear, lust, and other human states of feeling and behavior. Because of the nature of fairytales we suspend our need for realistic detail and accept less complex characters in order to obtain the symbolic meaning of the story. In truth, all the various characters were individual aspects of one person's psyche.

Cast of Characters

"Bumps" has seven characters as well as seven sections. The characters are the Dreamer, four Innocent Maidens, a Hero/Prince and the Villain/Bumper. The Dreamer is the only realistically portrayed character in that all the other characters are aspects of her psyche. Initially the four maidens represent childhood innocence; they personify different emotional states of the Dreamer as the piece progresses. The Hero/Prince represents idealized love. The Bumper,

portrayed here as a cunning, sly creature initiates the Maidens into adulthood.

Scenario

The Prologue begins the action. In the Prologue the Dreamer is alone on stage as a short Fairytale is read: "Once upon a time there was a poor little girl who was all alone . . . and she is still sitting there all alone." As the Dreamer falls asleep the four Maidens enter, signifying the beginning of the dream. The Dreamer awakens and is lulled back into the "forest" of her fears; she disappears into the black backdrops. As the action proceeds, all the characters are introduced. We see the Prince galloping through the forest, wooing the Maidens as the Bumper enters in a classic melodramatic stereotype of the cunning and sly villain. The Bumper proceeds to have encounters with each of the Maidens, introducing them, respectively, to lust by seduction, fear through loneliness, disillusionment through setback, and jealousy through envy and vanity. Meanwhile, the Dreamer is seen wandering through the forest mimicing various movements of the Maidens.

All the characters end up in the forest lost and being chased by the Bumper. The climatic moment is the emergence of the Dreamer from the forest representing the collective anxieties of the Maidens into an encounter with the Bumper as nightmare. The Dreamer narrowly escapes the Bumper by falling asleep. As the Dreamer awakens she experiences revelation: she comprehends aloneness and misfortune as integral aspects of adult life that lead to freedom of self. The dream ends as the characters of the maidens and the villain dissolve and the

Dreamer exits through the doorway barely escaping the grasp of the Bumper.

Mise-en-scene

Original costumes for "Bumps" were designed by Don Newcomb from the illustrations of Kay Neilson. There was a desire to capture the romantic and lush quality of the drawings as well as to place the piece in a fantastical setting. The Dreamer was the only character to wear pseudo-realistic clothes: loose pants and a sequined vest. The Maidens wore diaphanous dresses of pastel colors with large florals drawn on them. The Prince and Bumper were in wool and satin; the Prince in rose and ivory and the Bumper in dark blue. Both men wore huge plaid pants (of classic Scandinavian style) in their respective colors as well as long, flowing capes.

The setting was designed to give the impression of a dark forest. Black panels were hung in layers across the back of the stage so that dancers could disappear behind them. The panels were installed to create a large V-shape receding back to a silver and gold door. A forced perspective was created to give the effect of great depth. Tree branches painted silver were hung overhead -- floating in surreal detachment. Lighting enhanced the scene by being dark and muted. Many blues and violets were used to give a dreamlike effect. Pools of light and shadows enhanced this effect.

Intuited Choreographic Form

It is difficult at this time to account the exact creative process of "Bumps" as it was created seven years prior to this analysis,

with several revisions in the interim. Hindsight gives meaning to actions that, at the time, were a matter of simple intuitive groping.

The basis of my work is my intuitive understanding of the world; not the exploration of formal elements or a conceptual precept that determines form. It is as if an intuitive "grid" is set up within my mind; an intuited grid of feeling based in the impressions of the idea that I am working with. As elements are introduced into the grid, they are accepted or rejected according to the arbitrary limitations of the grid. That is the only explanation for the coincidence of elements that seem to fall together in my creation of a work. I am unconsciously pulled toward ideas, music, and visual forms that will complete the grid.

A children's story by Maurice Sendak entitled In the Night Kitchen in which the phrase "things that go bump in the night" was included, was the primary source for the thematic organization of "Bumps." Night, of course, was symbolic for childhood fears of the unknown. Night is also the time for dreams. The word "bump" was humorous as an encapsulation of life's "ups and downs." Also, to bump would lend itself to movement ideas. Actually, the idea of bumping was personified by the character of the Bumper who became the initiator of life's pitfalls within the work.

The music "Song for a Starry Night" by George Crumb, a contemporary American composer, became the music for the closing section of "Bumps" entitled "Vision." Crumb's use of a passage from the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke as an inspiration for part of his work had a great influence on me. The passage gave me insight into a philosophic

resolution of the dilemma I was trying to portray. The passage is as follows:

And in the Night the heavy earth
is falling down into loneliness.
We are all falling. And yet there
is One who holds this falling endlessly
gently in his hands
(Crumb 1975, Cover).

Falling was a major movement these throughout "Bumps." I did not intend a religious solution to the dilemma, but a philosophic one in the sense of recognizing the futility of the human condition in relation to the hope that sustains our lives.

Thematic Intentions

The juxtaposition of futility and hope, falling and being held, was the essential paradox within "Bumps." The presentation of this paradox through metaphor establishes truth by showing the "strife" between what can be understood and what is incomprehensible -- Being and existing reality.

My purpose was to have this paradox "understood" through the felt experience possible in dance by engaging the viewer through music and the illusions of powers.

I constructed "Bumps" in a classic narrative form -- prologue leading to rising action, climax, and resolution -- in order to carry the viewer to a certain cathartic end. I wanted the viewer to be absorbed within the work so that empathy with the characters would be at a high level. This was aided by the strong mood that the music created as well as the feeling that time was suspended. The sparseness

of the music and the use of slow motion movement aided in the feeling of time suspension.

"Bumps" was introduced by a reading of a short fairytale by George Büchner from the play Woyzeck:

Grandmother. All right, you little crab apples! -- Once upon a time there was a poor little girl who had no father and no mother. Everyone was dead, and there was no one left in the whole wide world. Everyone was dead. And the little girl went out and looked for someone night and day. And because there was no one left on earth, she wanted to go to Heaven. And the moon looked down so friendly at her. And when she finally got to the moon, it was a piece of rotten wood. And so she went to the sun, and it was a faded sunflower. And when she got to the stars, they were golden flies, stuck up there as if they were caught in a spider's web. And when she wanted to go back to earth, the earth was an upside-down pot. And she was all alone. And she sat down there and she cried. And she sits there to this day, all, all alone (Büchner 1928, p. 261).

This fairytale immediately set a dark and cynical tone, but in a whimsical style. The music, too, had a stark quality about it that was effective in developing the feeling in each section of the work.

Movement Material in Relation to Themes

Postural set of the characters as well as movement gestures were important in conveying the transformation from adolescence into adulthood by encounters with the Bumper. The entrance of the maidens had an ethereal quality. They were hand-in-hand, beginning a journey. The maidens were held tall and erect unburdened by life's weights or distorted by emotional tension. Their gestures were soft and delicate with large, apparently weightless falls into the ground. They moved in slow motion and their landings were cushioned. Their movement was representational of the naivete of childhood.

After this initial movement quality the postures of the maidens began to change as the falls became faster and landings harder. Their encounters with the Bumper changed the reality of the world. The entrance of the Bumper by contrast to that of the Maidens was marked with precise, sharp movements; as if he was cutting through a fog.

Throughout "Bumps," stereotypical images of good and evil, innocence and cunning were used for specific reasons. My desire was not to be taken too seriously. The audience was also to be able to smile, gently and knowingly, in recognition of universal childhood feelings. To facilitate this, some of the gestures were simplified versions of symbolic actions. They were cartoon-like and added levity to the work while maintaining the fairytale mood of the piece. For example, the image of the prince riding through the forest with the princess tucked safely underneath his arm was a caricature of reality. This was a humorous comment on male/female roles.

In other words, I portrayed typical behavioral solutions to emotional states (such as disillusionment and despondency), in order to poke fun at human behavior. In gestural development I used symbolic gestures surrounded by non-representational movement in order to convey the emotion. For example, in the section entitled "Jealousy" the soloist was to convey a preoccupation with self and her manipulative use of sexual desire. This was achieved with two basic gestures. These gestures were symbolic in their basic design so as to communicate a specific meaning. The two gestures were hand/arm movements consisting of the touching of the neck by the hand and the holding of the hand flat in front of the face as if it were an object.

The soloist was placed downstage center. She opened a box. As she opened the box, she flung her arms up as if overcome by the powers that the box contained. She undulated slowly and gently back down to a crouched position. This momentary respite was quickly interrupted by a series of sharp, striking gestures indicating frustration. Her arm struck out to the side and then was placed gently on her neck only to strike out sharply. The head and torso also fell to the side with the leg extended sidewise, *a la seconde*. The sequence ended with the soloist staring intently into her palm. The palm symbolized a mirror and represented infatuation with self. The touching of the hand to the neck was intended to signal awareness of an errogenous body zone. These two gestures were recognizable symbols.

Non-representational movement which developed from the symbolic gestures represented the emotion in kinetic form. This movement put the symbolic gestures into context by transforming the outer symbol for the emotion into the inner experience of the power of intense emotion. This surrounding movement communicated on a level of kinetic empathy rather than of symbolic association.

Kinetic empathy is in reference to the vicarious experience of movement through body response to visual stimuli. In reference to the William James and Carl Georg Lange theories of motion preceding emotion, if a movement can be experienced vicariously then it is possible that the emotion that the motion intended to express can be transmitted to the audience through a physical action (Lange and James 1922, p. 14).

Another aspect of gestural development was the physical relationship between the characters. In "Bumps" the Bumper was used as a

second figure in relation to the Maidens to create tension. He acted as a catalyst for experience. In the section "Lust," of course, he acted as a seducer, bringing out the sexual overtones implicit in a male/female duet. In "Fear," though, the Bumper acted as a shadow. After establishing the symptoms of fear through the bodily tensions of the Maiden, the important gesture was the physical tension between the soloist Maiden and the Bumper.

The image that was created was a stereotypical dream image of fear: that of one's walking down a dark street and sensing someone following. The tension was to build until the moment of encounter when fear became so great that the mouth opened to scream without a sound emerging. In "Bumps" this feeling was conveyed by the hovering presence of the Bumper and by the rhythmic progression of the gesture. This was most evident toward the end of the section when the Maiden followed by the Bumper moved in a spiraling square pattern. At every turn the Bumper would close in on the Maiden until the sides of the square became so short that he was on her. This reduction of the spatial configuration also accelerated the rhythmic pattern giving the feeling which is akin to the shortening of the breath as panic set in during the chase. This overall pattern was the structure used to convey the spine-tingling feeling of fear. However, I did use specific utilitarian, even cliché gestures such as hands-to-face and hunched shoulders to reinforce the feeling of fear.

Compositional Structure in Relation to Meaning

As important as movement construction to realizing the ideas was the thematic development. The climatic moment of action in "Bumps" was the section entitled "Nightmare." Prior to "Nightmare" we have seen the Maidens were defeated as they succumbed to the emotions of lust, fear, loneliness, jealousy and disillusionment. The final picture was a despairing one -- life is a lonely venture, death a known end. As the Dreamer experiences these aspects of life her anxieties result in the symbolic nightmare. In the dream she runs away, refusing to confront the Bumper. However, the Bumper chases after her, and just as he grabs her she escapes by falling asleep.

The last section "Vision" began with the Dreamer awakening into revelation and new awareness. The storyline fades as I attempt to portray the Dreamer's psyche as it "awakens." Whereas prior to "Vision" the sections were specific dramatic scenes of a representational nature, in "Vision" I wanted a non-representational image (or non-associative) in order to construct a metaphor for hope.

The image that I wanted in "Vision" was twofold. The overall image was of stars, shining and pulsing in the sky. Combined with this image was the Rilke literary and philosophic metaphor of "falling into loneliness." The movement forms were dictated by these images. The formation of the dancers in space was important for the star image. The Dreamer held center stage and remained the center of the "universe."

The image of falling was dependent on the repetition of a movement motif by many dancers. This was achieved by constructing a

falling action that did not respond in time and weight to the force of gravity but had as its primary quality a sense of weightlessness in its action. The action started with a broad sweep of the arm and torso. As the torso fell to the side the leg extended to a la seconde and counterbalanced the falling torso and arms. As the arms reached the floor the body and leg crumpled, falling completely onto the floor.

The falling effect was heightened by the organization of the movement sequence into a canon. A canon is a movement sequence performed by several dancers but on different counts. This produces an "echo" effect which can be visually exciting. In the case of "Vision" the canon prolonged the fall so that it had a continuous and sustained feeling.

Juxtaposed to the continual falling action was the action of spiraling and rising back up to standing, indicative of the human spirit to hope. The rising and falling actions created an equilibrium and an image of "being held" -- futility and hope.

Finally, the group "dissolves into a mist" to become an integrated part of the Dreamer's experience. With these new insights the Dreamer makes the passage into adulthood, leaving innocence behind. She exits through the doorway knowing that the Bumper is close behind -- uncertainty and disappointment are integral parts of adult life.

Lineage

Literary Resources

"Lineage" was inspired by a book of poetry by Ted Hughes entitled Crow (1971). The imagery and message of the poetry is very dark and cynical. An example follows:

When God, disgusted with man,
 Turned towards heaven,
 And man, disgusted with God,
 Turned towards Eve,
 Things looked like falling apart.

But Crow Crow
 Crow nailed them together,
 Nailing heaven and earth together.

So man cried, but with God's voice
 And God bled, but with man's blood.

Then heaven and earth creaked at the joint
 Which became gangrenous and stank --
 A horror beyond redemption (Hughes 1971,
 p. 57).

As I interpret Hughes' poem, evil, in the form of a black crow, is the main theme. The crow character defies all expectations of normal behavior. It influences one's thinking about human values by, for instance, its blatant disrespect for human life and feeling.

In "Lineage" my desire was to translate the crow metaphor into movement terms. This image was only a point of departure for "Lineage." My interest was not to just visualize the poetry, but to show different manifestations of evil as an aspect of the human condition.

Other inspirations for "Lineage" came from my own observations of distorted emotions and the play "Hedda Gabler" by Henrik Ibsen. By distorted emotions I am referring to experience with my own emotions that have gone astray, affecting my actions in an adverse way. "Hedda" is an example of a character who was not evil but because of distorted emotions committed an evil act. I am interested in these more subtle manifestations of "evil" within the human spirit.

These ideas coincided with several other interests: the music of Brian Eno; theatrical ideas about the relationship between audience

and performance; and the use of props for visual and symbolic stimulus.

Compositional Outline

The work was in three sections: (1) Scorched Fort; (2) Heart's Torn Face; and (3) Tombed Vision. There were interludes between each section that served as transitions. These interludes were not used for thematic progression but were intended as pedestrian moments in which the audience could withdraw from the action of the sections. I was playing with the Brechtian technique of alienating the audience so they could gain perspective on the action within the sections. However, the idea was not realized in a convincing manner. I used the interludes for the utilitarian action of setting props on the stage, hoping to break the "spell" with pedestrian actions. But I confused this action by introducing oranges as mysterious props on stage. I was playing with visual stimulus. The "symbolic" oranges maintained the feeling of mystery onstage.

Scorched Fort was a metaphorical containment for evil using the image of the crow as an individual embodiment. It was a series of provocative images that suggested evolutionary ideas but shown from a dark, ominous point of view. The image series went as follows: large mass breaking up into molten stream; bird-like forms, claws emerging; crow flies, pounding wings; crucifixion image; insects crawling; soldiers marching death pile, regeneration. The section ends with a tower of Babel image -- humanity crying and unthinking.

Section two began with a lone figure in a chair; and groups of two or three people in all four corners. Two figures, male and female,

circled around the perimeter as if keeping time. The soloist, a woman, proceeded with a series of images that suggested neurosis or inner turmoil: her arm wavered and vibrated around her torso and head suggesting an inability to "know" her own mind. Various transformational events occurred as this Hedda-like figure changed from herself to a cat-like prowler . . . restless and discontent. "Hedda" manipulated all those around her until she, too, was trapped. She destroyed herself to escape.

The transition at this point was the ensemble swooping around the space churning the energy, depositing two figures, the man and woman seen previously, as the duet began. The duet was a portrayal of entanglements in relationships; ending in the hopeless condition of dependency through loss of self. The music by Marcel Duchamp was the sound of glass breaking; fragile and yet sharp. The duet ended and the ensemble surged onto stage as the lights faded.

As section three began, sand was pouring onto the stage from two bags, slit with a sharp knife. A silver pole was in the center of the space with the lone male figure sitting on top. The ensemble, lying around the periphery, started to crawl, spiraling inward around the pole until a pile of bodies ascended to the top of the pole. The male figure that was on the top dropped to the bottom and created a base for the climbing. As the section ended a female figure reached the top, swaying, yearning toward the light. The piece ended with the final interlude: oranges spilling all over the floor. The cast numbered 13 and worked, generally, as an ensemble except for the middle section where a solo and a duet emerged. A lone male figure was a focal point throughout the piece.

Mise-en-scene

"Lineage" has not been fully produced; therefore, the set and costumes were sparse and incomplete. In the first section, the dancers were in all-black leotards and jazz pants with streaks of black painted on their faces. The feeling was to be dark and ominous. In section two, I wanted a surreal feeling of no particular time, and so mixed many periods of clothing in vivid reds, purples and mauves. Accessories of hats and gloves were important details. The third section was to have a feeling of nudity. Everyone was dressed in flesh-colored tights, the men were bare-chested, and the women's leotards were of pale blue or lavender. The piece was performed "in-the-round" and there was no set except for a few chairs, the sand, a pole, and the oranges.

Theme Development

It became clear early in the rehearsal process of "Lineage" that the work had several evolutionary themes. The piece, in fact, concerned the development of human consciousness from a particular perspective.

In "Scorched Fort" the theme of a crow was used as a symbol for different events in human history, from an animal ancestry to our animal-like behavior of aggression and violence. This section portrayed humankind's dark, inarticulate origin.

The second section, "Heart's Torn Face," showed the human as a complex character. The source of evil was more difficult to pinpoint. It was not stereotypically so obvious as in the first section. The Hedda-like character portrayed in "Heart's Torn Face" walked the line between sanity and insanity, confusing the impulse of her evil-doing.

"Tombbed Vision," the third section, portrayed the spiratual potential of humankind as an accumulation of knowledge leading to wisdom.

Choreographic Approaches in Relation to Themes

Stylistically, "Lineage" evolved in relation to my own growing awareness of the different perceptual modes that gesture can influence. In "Lineage" I worked with three of these modes understanding through association; experience (phenomenal) and conception (gestalt).

Section one worked with gesture as a symbol that evoked strong associations in personal experience. The gestures of section two were developed from non-representative movement to create subtle and complex portraits that, hopefully, brought new awareness through experience. The third section worked with the idea of total conception, or gestalt. Gestalt as defined by the American Heritage Dictionary is "a unified physical, psychological or symbolic configuration having properties that cannot be derived from its parts." This phenomenon will be discussed in further detail when section three of the dance is discussed.

"Lineage" was a very different process from "Bumps" in the development of its metaphors. With "Lineage" I did not have a clear understanding of the metaphors I wished to attain. I was exploring ideas without use of stereotypical gestures. This was an exciting process but it weakened the theatrical effect of "Lineage" due to my slow realization of the metaphors. Following are discussions of the individual sections in stylistic and thematic terms.

In "Scorched Fort" the music by Brian Eno entitled "Index of Metal" had a powerful effect on development of the mood of the section.

The sound was a droning, metallic whine. The "coldness" of the music was an appropriate musical metaphor for the feeling of evil that I was attempting to create.

The working image for the dancers in "Scorched Fort" was that of a crow. A crow-like shape was to transform to various images, but always returned to the basic crow motif. I worked improvisationally to develop many of the images. By following the logic of the movement forms, many of the images revealed themselves in the process of exploration. I worked to create specific images that were intended to create associative responses in the viewer. For example, there was an inverted crucifixion symbol that was to evoke evil images. I also used the Nazi "goosestep" to evoke the known evils of that regime. Images of scuttling insects with gasping mouths affected individuals according to their own feelings about insects. These images worked on a personal level.

I used the group to create a pulsing feeling by expanding and contracting the dancers within the space. This created an ominous sense of power.

Movement Metaphor

The use of symbols of a personally associative nature drew on the viewer's own experience to create an empathic response. Combined with recognizable symbols was movement that was specifically intended to surprise the viewer. This was for the purpose of creating excitement in visual and kinetic terms. These two techniques served to create interest in the viewer and, consequently, involved the viewer in the work.

The solo in section two was an exploration of the character Hedda Gabler within the play Hedda Gabler by Henrik Ibsen. The portrait was not a complete rendition of the play, but was a character exploration. I saw in the Hedda character pentup frustration manifesting itself in manipulative power. Her desire to control a human destiny was the result of her inability to control her own destiny. It was this inner psychotic turmoil that I wished to portray.

I used gestures of utilitarian action to represent Hedda in reality. Non-representational gestures were used to represent Hedda's psychological turmoil. These gestures eventually were interchangeable as Hedda's physical reality was confused with her mental mechanisms. I was also trying to depict this schism through the dramatic styles of realism and surrealism. (Surrealism is defined as the attempt to portray the unconscious in visual terms as in the images of dreams.) Images of a surrealistic nature were used to convey Hedda's psychological turmoil. For instance, at one point, Hedda is standing and everyone else is lying on the floor in mannequin-like postures and gestures. Hedda dropped to the floor to join them as they rose to normal standing positions. Hedda could not get her reality to converge with that of the others.

In the beginning of the solo, Hedda was sitting in a chair gesturing in a nervous manner. Her hand was stroking and pulling at her hair. These actions built to a jerking action of the head falling back off the neck. The first gestures were utilitarian in nature but evolved to actions that were unfamiliar. As the section continued, non-representational gestures dominated the utilitarian action so that

the viewer experienced forms, dynamics and rhythms unbiased by personal experience. The effect was intended to reduce mental activity so that the powers of the form could be experienced on levels of emotional and kinetic experience leading to new awareness.

"Tomed Vision" was my comment on the potential of humankind's evolutionary future. "Tomed Vision" was a metaphor for the passing of time and the consequential growth that time allows for. The piling of bodies to permit ascent up a silvered pole was to express the accumulation of mass consciousness leading to wisdom and understanding. The section was to create a hopeful but melancholy feeling about our existence.

The movement motif of "Tomed Vision" was not complicated in its construction. From the periphery of the performing area, dancers crawled in a spiraling pattern into the center of the stage to ascend the pole. The effect of this section came from the power generated by a harmonious group action. The spatial configuration of a spiral used by the dancers created a churning effect within the performance area. Hopefully the audience experienced this churning action through kinetic empathy.

Crawling was used as the motif of "Tomed Vision" for particular reasons. The action of crawling has a definite primal feeling. Also, crawling has many emotional connotations for humans. Crawling can represent weariness but with a determination to go on. However, crawling is not heroic like striding can be. Crawling is humble, accepting of the situation; yet persistent. The effect of 13 people crawling toward center was powerful due in part to the feeling of

perpetual seeking. The spiral is an important configuration because, in my view, it represents infinity. The culminating feeling of the ascent up the pole was potentially ecstatic.

The music used in "Tomed Vision" was important in conveying certain immediate feelings. Brian Eno's "First Light" had a luminescent quality about it. An underlying base rhythm maintained a sense of eternal activity. The music was an integral part of this section in producing the overall effect.

This effect was aided by the use of sand spilling onto the floor. Flowing sand is a symbol for time's passage. It also has a hypnotic effect as it falls. As the bags crumpled from the sand pouring out, the image became one of shells.

The focus on the solo male figure in "Tomed Vision" was a culmination of his presence throughout the piece. As the section began, he was sitting on top of the pole, an omniscient figure. He contemplated the scene and eventually lowered himself down to become one of the "building blocks" for the ascent up the pole. His character came to represent the impartial observer; the artist; myself. He was always detached but part of the action. Possibly he was an Everyman figure -- a seeker of truth.

The intention of "Tomed Vision" was to produce a gestalt experience. I use the word gestalt to describe the effect of the total image. In other words, I wanted the viewer's awareness to go beyond the crawling dancers to sensing the whole space churning. I wanted an image that had no cognitive or logical explanation, but affected the

viewer on levels of feeling and awareness. In this way "Lineage" was similar to "Bumps" in the final sections.

Concluding Meaning

Essential in both of the works is the use of the spiral. The large spiral used in "Lineage" is in contrast to the smaller more personal spiral used in "Bumps." Representing infinity, the spiral is in contrast to the finite-ness of human life. However, while we are living we are never finished. Up to the moment of our deaths we can only sense the continuity of our lives.

In "Bumps" I used the spiral as the individual's motif to create an equilibrium of rising and falling, representing the flux of emotional life. In "Lineage" the large spiral created by the group was the broader philosophic statement of the continuity of civilization -- the diminishing of the individual's life in relation to the continuation of mankind.

The ending for "Lineage" could be described as visionary. In other words, it is not a practical or realistic vision but only exists in the imagination. There are no solutions to the human condition -- our penchant for violence and aggression seems ingrained. "Tombed Vision" is a metaphor for time passing and the possible accumulation of wisdom that could lead to change. However, the ending is inconclusive. We may evolve to a more enlightened way of solving our problems, or we may possibly annihilate ourselves. My vision is a more hopeful solution but not necessarily the most realistic.

In performance, ideas accumulate to reveal the idea or truth of a work. Whereas "Bumps" revealed itself through unraveling plot, "Lineage" revealed itself through the thematic association of sections. "Lineage" gave a more complex picture of the world by showing an illogical progression of events as opposed to the logical progression inherent in narrative form.

It is possible that "Lineage" has no final or realizable meaning as "Bumps" appears to have had. Meaning in "Bumps" was dictated through the use of symbols revealed in narrative form. Even though the ending of "Bumps" was ambiguous, it had the feeling of a resolution. In "Lineage" my intention was not as clear. I was exploring a subject that has no resolution. I did not know the meaning of all the forms I was using and, consequently, did not force them to a cognitive realization. In "Lineage" I was intrigued with pointing at the mystery -- what remains concealed. Even though symbolic meaning could be projected onto the forms -- such as the oranges and the solo male figure -- I had no such specific meaning in mind. They were my attempts to throw in elements of an irrational world. However, due to the form and the heavy mood that I created, these elements tended to take on symbolic meanings. New forms must be realized in order to isolate the irrational, the illogical -- the mystery.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSION

Significant Findings

Form, in my choreographic works, has always been dictated by the thematic material. The significant difference between "Bumps" and "Lineage" is that I did not wish to dictate meaning in the latter, but rather to shed light on the inexplicable aspects of life. However, my intuitive understandings of form limited my abilities to realize these ideas fully. Questions concerning the complexity that I wished to portray and its ramifications in form became paramount. These questions led me to contemporary issues prevalent in the art world concerning representational and non-representational work. In order to understand these issues in dance I felt a need to comprehend the essence of the dance medium in relation to a world view in order to make knowledgeable choices. This thesis is a result of that exploration.

Dance is a figural art. Consequently, it has tended to be a representational art, imitating life and emotions. Beginning in the 1940s modern dance changed that tendency, emphasizing the abstract, formal elements in dance. This development paralleled events in the progress of the visual art world. Merce Cunningham removed expression from dance to explore new visions of time, space, logic and chance; but retained the theatricality of technique. Twenty years later Yvonne

Rainer removed technique, phrasing, and dynamics to reveal the essence of the intelligent, working body, and to do so in a non-representational manner.

If my desire is to retain expression in my work, am I limited to representational work in which the qualities of human feeling are made visible?

For me the difficulty lies in the shift from representational to non-representational forms. Representational work limits the world by dictating meaning. Non-representational work reveals underlying structures but are cloaked in opaqueness.

It was in reading of Heidegger's essay that I began to understand a solution to my dilemma. Heidegger emphasizes the relationship of "earth" and "world" -- the necessity of one to reveal the other. The true complexity of our lives is in the constant flux of meaning to non-meaning, mystery and disclosure. It is this flux that I wish to portray in the subtle shifting from representational to non-representational ideas. To realize these ideas I will have to concentrate new energy in understanding the ramifications of form. No longer can form take "second place" to thematic idea. Through experimental structures new meanings, not preconceived by myself, can emerge. Because these meanings are not preconceived they will have the potential of being unique and non-representational. In other words, within a certain context all gestures can be symbolic, representational. However, I wish to retain a dramatic context but use gestures to create illusions of powers that are not representational of known experience but give insight through the experience of powers themselves.

"Bumps" was naively realized in story form. I was simply following the standard that I was used to seeing in dramatic productions. The Aristotilian structure of plot development has dominated the development of Western dramatic form. This form is representational in that it attempts to create an image that imitates life.

With the study of modern dramaturgy and art criticism I begin to realize the potential of dramatic choreography that is non-representational. The need is to get away from symbolic associations. For example, Richard Foreman and his "Ontological-Hysteric Theater" based work on perception itself:

In founding his own theatre, Foreman rejected the tendency toward emotionally "moving" the audience and searched instead for a "spiritual" quality. His goal was to replace the theatre of confrontation, emotion and "ideas" with what he terms a "mental," non-emotional, yet sensual theatre. He stated, "I wanted a theatre that did the opposite of 'flow' -- a theatre that was true to my own mental experiences, that is, the world as being pieces of things, awkwardly present for a moment and then either re-presented by consciousness or dropped in favor of some other momentary presentation." Hence, the functioning of the consciousness became his preoccupation, resulting in work that deals directly with the nature, process and activity of thought itself. He discarded the conventional dramatic attributes of plot development and character interaction, replacing them with a kind of "atomic" structure. He explains that this structuring involves the breaking down of all the theatrical elements (story, action, sound, light, composition, gesture) into "the smallest building-block units, the basic cells of the perceived experience of both living and art-making" (Foreman 1976, p. ix).

In trying to structure consciousness itself, Foreman portrayed the existing reality of our perceptual lives. Traditional, representational theater portrays life through symbols, feeling states, associations, and continuity of events. Non-representational theater portrays the reality of our lives through the dissociative and discontinuity of

events; through disinterested composition and performance techniques that focus on direct perception rather than symbolic evocation.

"Lineage" was my first conscious attempt to get away from imagetic work; however, it remained, on the whole, closely related to my earlier works. Nonetheless, the use of the oranges was an attempt to insert an element of mystery and discontinuity. The "Hedda" section attempted to explore and project a unique unknown personality through non-associative forms. And no logical structure, whereby events and gestures could be seen as plausible, even if fantastic as in "Bumps," was constructed for "Lineage." In any case, my explorations in "Lineage" revealed new possibilities.

My interest at this point in time is to pursue the presentation of feeling states, the flux of emotions and spirit, instead of plot-oriented narratives. I wish to pinpoint the irrational flow of events in our lives as they intertwine with emotional and cognitive comprehensions. For instance, I wish to explore such subjects as phobias, depression, the nature of inspiration and so forth. My interest has always been a psychological one. "Bumps" explored the maturing process of going from childhood to adulthood. "Lineage" explored the subject of evil within the human spirit.

However, I no longer wish to realize these ideas through narrative dramatic form. I want to create the being state itself. Techniques of non-representational theater as well as a new exploration of dance will provide the means to realize new forms.

Specifically in dance I wish to explore the idea of creating the illusions of powers to its maximum potential; especially as it

relates to the viewer. I intend to do this by working with repeated movement that is constructed around a momentum motif to create movement "loops." I am curious about the perception of the viewers as they watch a constantly repeated motion. I wonder if at some point they will cease to see the movement and begin to experience other phenomena. If so, what is the potential of conveying meaning through such experience?

Because of my interest in the psychological my thematic material is about the subjective aspects of our lives -- the worlds that our mind and feelings create. However, I wish not to lose sight of what, to me, is the objective aspect of life -- the utilitarian demands of survival.

These ideas are new thoughts that, as yet, have not been incorporated into my work. They are a result of the philosophic exploration of this thesis.

Summary

In dance, the human form is always present. Consequently, dance is inescapably representational of human activity. However, through invention of arbitrary movement, illusions of powers are created that are potentially unique and non-representational of known or common experience. Dance can delve even more deeply into the complexity of the world through these illusions, and yet not abandon the search for meaning in the world.

In search for meaning in the world, hope, or some form of optimism, emerges as the center of my work. Possibly it is the answer to this world where meaning is so often obscured by the seemingly illogical and senseless progression of events. However, I no longer wish to

portray hope in a simplistic fashion. Hope is a curious human feeling-quality; an idea laden with emotion that, in the light of real events and hard-and-true perception, we have little reason to hold onto. It possibly is a futile idea shot through with empty emotion. Perhaps representational dramatic choreography simply fosters the futility and the emptiness of such a notion as hope. Perhaps non-representational, non-dramatic choreography strips away the futility and reveals emptiness. Between these two is a world to discover.

Human spirit becomes a philosophic center for my work as I perceive existing reality and through choreography realize the possibilities of our Being. The purpose of moving beyond existing reality is to create moments of clarity that illuminate the darkness or mystery. Creation is the light that allows us to accept the darkness.

A Personal Critique

Through the exploratory processes of this thesis I have moved closer to understanding not only the origins, tendencies, preferences and limitations of my own working habits, but the range of positions that an individual choreographer might take in relation to the creative work in process. On the one end of a hypothetical scale, the choreographic process can be entirely intuitive; on the other, cognitive to the extent that the form and content can be preconceived. Neither is necessarily more productive or of greater value except as the individual choreographer requires to realize the work to be done. Each way of working presents its own problems that need to be recognized.

My tendency has been to rely on my intuition for choreographic processes. Meaning has always been the highest criterion for my work.

In other words, as long as I have seen the meaning emerging through choreographed forms I have been contented. However, even though this has been the strength of my works, my focus on meaning has tended to reinforce my weaknesses. In general, I tend to let formal elements go in order to keep the emergence of meaning foremost. Now, I see the necessity for developing formal tools in order to support the emergence of meaning; but also, better to elevate the craft of the choreography. "Lineage" was in many ways undefined, even more so than "Bumps."

In "Bumps" I was used to organizing the heavily symbolic gestures that constituted the movement motifs. With "Lineage" I was resisting my tendencies to use familiar symbols. I did not want the motifs to be easily accessible to the viewer. However, I had difficulty organizing the new forms. "Lineage" showed once again the primacy of emergence of meaning at all costs. And yet, it also elevated my awareness of the significance of form for future work.

Exploration of formal elements for their own sake such as rhythmic work, spatial work, aleatoric and "chance devices," etc., might help me to better organize my working processes without denying my dissociative way of viewing the world.

In any case, I can't compromise intuited sources, but can reach into the formalistic end of the scale where more cognitive work operates in order to organize my intuitive ideas. To abandon my intuitive processes of understanding the world through subconscious images would be to abandon a world view. As understood through Heidegger, the mystery (what is left concealed) is as important as what we can reveal. "In the midst of existing reality as a whole there is an open spot. In the

forest there is a clearing" (Jaeger 1961, p. 422). Through the potential of dance to describe the world non-verbally, I hope to illuminate the mystery of life through the experience and projection of "powers."

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