

**Choreographic Assemblages:
An Archaeology of Movement and Space**

by

Chiu-Fai Can

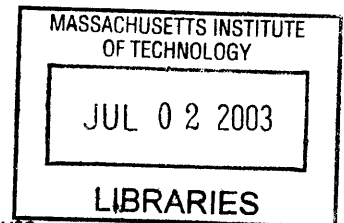
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Abstract

Time and movement always played a vital role in architecture, and it also takes significance in my work. This interest leads me to the investigation of choreography and dance notation in relation to space. By using notation, choreographers develop a general structure to document the accommodation of music, movements and patterns of a dance composition. A dance composition is an aesthetic entity existing in the four dimensions of space-time. Different styles of dance have different degrees of concern for the spatio-temporal symmetry of the body movements and the manipulation of abstract patterns. With Labanotation, choreographers are able to reduce a four-dimensional manifold to two dimensions – compression of the dimensionality by quantization.

Notation structures movement in space, and divides the spatial hierarchy in sequences inducing the notion of time. It orchestrates the movement of body and senses through space. In essence, notation establishes a relationship among architecture, space and time as an entity. It becomes a narrative or form of memory that offers “*the heterotopic space various past, multiple presents ...diverse future.*” (Michel Foucault: Heterotopic Space) Henceforth, it leads architecture to the realm of poetry (unconscious imagery). Architecture transfigures itself into the theater of memory, a sheer presence within space. “*After the visual recognition of forms (body), one’s mind struggles and attempts to reconstruct the very meaning of space.*” (Maxine Sheets: The Phenomenology of Dance) This fusion of meaningful and meaningless, significant and accidental reinforces one’s spatial experience and intimacy with architecture.

Architects have always sought ways to express the similar notions. The architecture of kinaesthetic (Labanotation) offers the opportunity to mend the rupture between the theorization of architecture and its actualization. It allows vast latitude of experimentation and makes possible to conceive a more corresponding architecture. This engagement would make architecture more relevant to the bodily movement and the conceptions of space and time.

It is possible to understand buildings as a resultant of a discourse possessing a structured system of representation. In its materiality, it is also a means of combining and preserving perceptions arising from within dissimilar ontological conditions. The method of analysis entails an identification of the kinaesthetic order of typological spatial conditions through a built object, using a composite protocol of analysis (e.g. Labanotation). This descriptive order prescribes the very meaning of spatio-temporality, and an insidious investigation allows a critique of conventional unities of spatial representation.

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Introduction

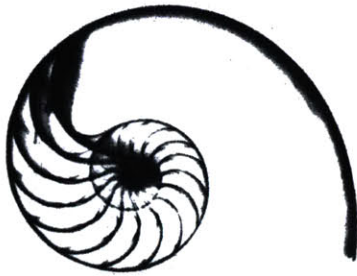
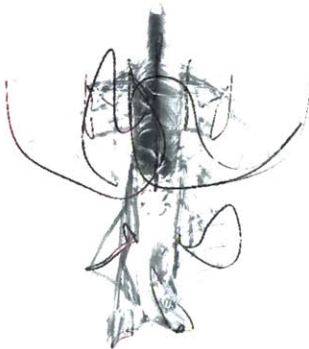


Figure 1

The thesis is about the dynamics of movement and space. It demonstrates how movement and space operating together in order to give the spectator a kinaesthetic experience. It is a critical investigation of the relationship between the body and the conception of

space. Through the research on body, movement, dance and notation system, one could resolve the confrontation between what is visible and what is invisible, what is random and what is ordered and question about the phenomenological vision and new spatial structuring defining this theoretical project, the aesthetic and semantic quest of which could be summarized in a phrase: **An Archaeology Of Movement and Space**. It sets to establish the dynamics among movement, the audiovisual dimension, and space, and to question the temporality of the body.

The purpose of 'archaeology' of movement and space is to look at how the body becoming the object of knowledge in the Western culture. Through the unearthing of the historical *a priori*, one could discover the historical and fundamental codes of space rather than merely the phenomenological perceptions of it. It is not a discourse of sign referring to its actual content, but a discourse of practice that form the objects of its content.



Space has always intertwined with time. The history of space is "a hierarchized ensemble of places". As Foucault suggests, this hierarchy constitutes the space of relations of emplacement which "is defined by the relations of proximity between points or elements."¹ Accordingly, the space of emplacement could be

¹ Foucault, Michel, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 2*, Edited by James D. Faubion, Trans. by Robert Hurley and others, The New Press, New York, 1998, p176.

diagrammed with a notation system. Such system is able to identify the codified elements in an ensemble – the space of knowledge.

Within the space of knowledge, one characterizes the choreographical process neither as discontinuous nor as continuous but, rather, as “a multiplicity of time spans that entangle and envelop one another.”² It allows one to conceive of space as a plurality of encounters and temporalities. Thus, knowledge of space manifests itself through the process of notation rather than the diagram of notation.

In *The Poetic of Space*, Gaston Bachelard suggests that space is not homogeneous and vacant. On the contrary, space embodies with various latent qualities and imagination. Bachelard’s notion of space gives rise to the heterogeneity of space. It is “an ensemble of relations that define emplacements that are irreducible to each other and absolutely nonsuperposable.”³

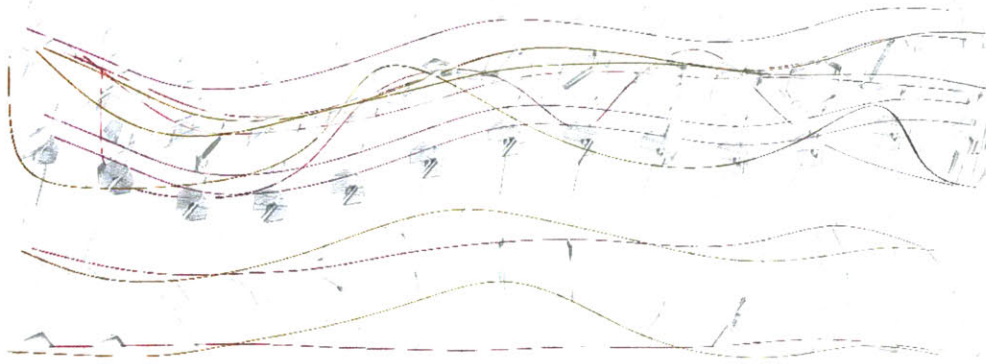
The Formations of Choreographic Space

Choreographic space, as the ‘systems of thought’, could be divided into three parts, the “re-examination of knowledge, the conditions of knowledge, and the knowing subject.”⁴ As a set of knowledge, one could take the form and function of space as an archaeological event and enter into relations with other forms of organized systems, such as ballet and choreography. Hence, philosophical concepts and detailed empirical inquiry are vital in the process of archaeological investigation, resembling Foucault’s goal to expand the analysis of natural history and biology in *The Order of Things*.

² Foucault, Michel, *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 2*, Edited by James D. Faubion, Trans. by Robert Hurley and others, The New Press, New York, 1998, p430.

³ *Ibid*, p178.

⁴ Foucault, Michel, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 1*, Edited by Paul Rabinow, Trans. by Robert Hurley and others, The New Press, New York, 1997, p12.



As the pivotal point of archaeological investigation, notation system becomes the *episteme* which organizes the bodily movement in space. Such *episteme* is not in a Foucauldian sense but rather the notion of meshwork of Deleuze and Guattari. It should not be the limit of the totality of experience and knowledge of space. Hence, choreographic notation, then, is not only an organizational structure of movement in space, but also a dynamic assemblage or trajectory that renders necessary a form of unconsciously organized thought.

As a discipline, classical ballet is “a form of power-knowledge linked to systems of control, exclusion, and punishment characteristic of industrial societies.”⁵ Foucault poses that *measure*, *inquiry*, and *examination* are the means of exercising power as well as are rules for establishing knowledge. Similarly, the invention of notation system allows choreographer to *measure* the spatial relationship between the body and movement which establishes or restores order and a matrix of physical and psychological knowledge in dance. As a form of *inquiry*, notation serves as means of establishing or restoring cultural and social relationship between the body and space as well as a matrix of empirical knowledge and discipline of dance. It is also means for examination which set or reinstate the standard, the rule, the distribution, and the qualification in addition to a matrix of the forms of power.

Correspondingly, the control of (re) creating dance performance is not only laid in the hands of choreographers. Notation system allows re-distribution of power of creativity between the dancers and choreographers. Classical ballet is liberated from a form of

⁵ Foucault, Michel, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth: Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, Volume 1, Edited by Paul Rabinow, Trans. by Robert Hurley and others, The New Press, New York, 1997, p18.

institutional practice and transforms into 'inquisitorial' mode of practice. Consequently, experimentations of spatiality and bodily movement are privileged as an opposition to the authority of tradition and knowledge.

The Formations of Choreutics

Every movement and space have their own dynamics. The choreographer works with the interrelation between the characteristics of the movements and space. In a choreographic work, it is the different choices made by the choreographer concerning

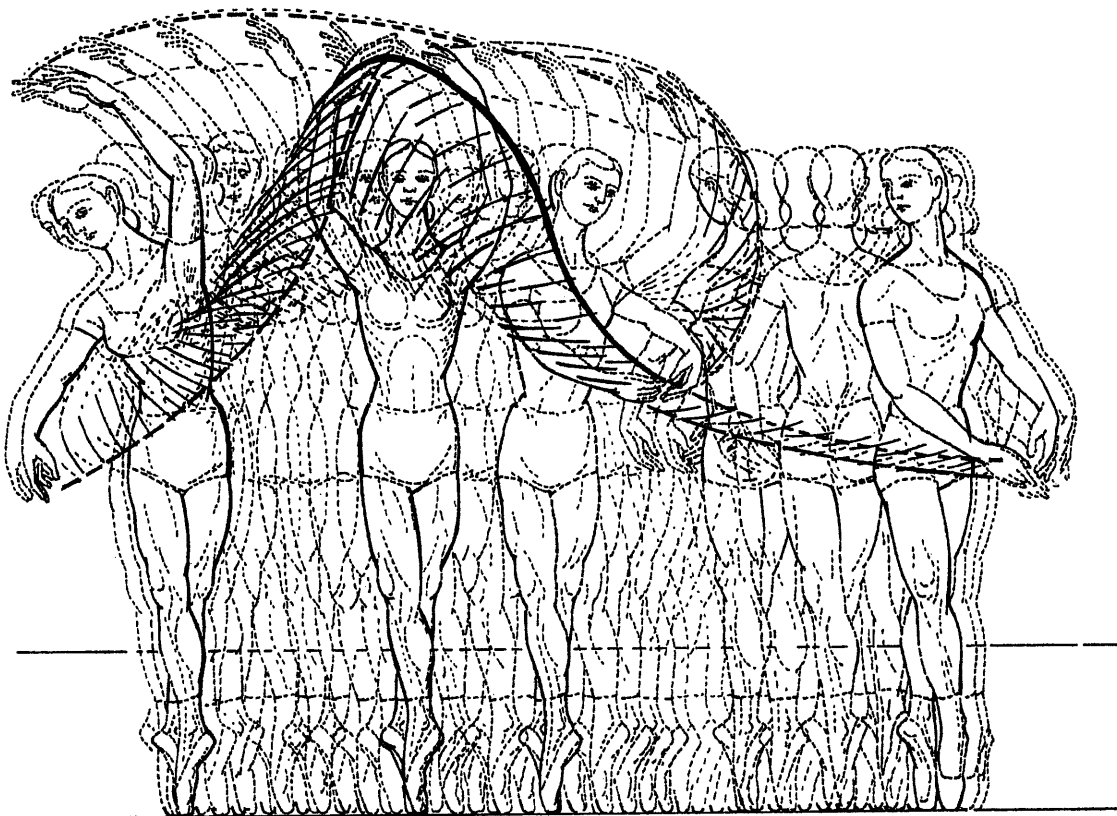
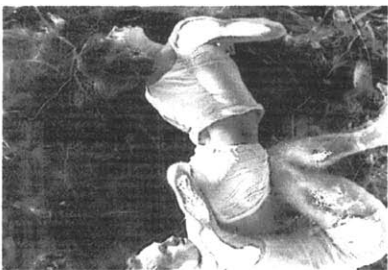
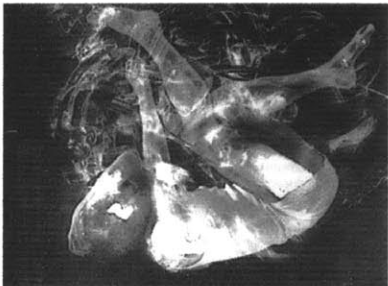


Figure 2

space, and the dancers in relation to space, that conveys the dynamics to the spectators. Dynamics relates especially to the forces that make movement occur. A choreographer convey meanings through movement to the spectators and the characteristics of the space have an enforcing function. The dancer, in conjunction with



the other dancers, is performing the choices of the choreographer concerning levels, directions, focus, and interrelations.

Rudolf von Laban, the creator of Labanotation, has written about movement in which different aspects of time, weight, flow and space all are elements of dynamics. Dancers move through space along pathways, sometimes making figures like circles or triangles, sometimes parallel movement and sometimes crossing pathways of other dancers, creating tensions which a choreographer should make use of.

A dancer is performing the movement from an inner motivation that comes from rehearsing the movement. The dancers' personalities and techniques, colors and movement in a way that gives possibilities for interpretation of meaning — latent space. In-between the intimate space and the public space different ways of performing a movement can have effects on the experience of the audience or the tensions as the dancers intrude upon the audience's space. Such tensions open up various spatial possibilities for choreographic purposes.

Space embodies more than three dimensions, which is different from experiencing them. Choreographers have to look at the movement from different angles in order to find the potential of the dance. Rudolf Laban created a geometrical figure he called the Icosahedron, which shows the different directions the dancer could reach out for. Such notion of Icosahedron is deployed to define the space around the body, and which the dancer can reach from a fixed position. It is called personal space. The

Figure 3 - 8

space outside this defined area is called general space. A dancer can move in another dancer's personal space. This space is called negative space and the way the dancer is moving gives different signals to the audience whether it is supposed to be a positive or a negative experience. When a dancer intrudes upon another dancer's personal space, the way it is done and the setting in which it is done, is crucial in relation to the audience's understanding of the dance movement itself.

Movement in dance is about how one dancer interacts with one another. When a dancer gives another dancer a handshake, hugs her or embraces him, the actions show different relations between the dancers. The way a choreographer is designing the sound or the music can create different ways of experiencing the space. A space can feel smaller by distributing sound well over normal level. By using "boredunes" one can create open spaces and change the sense of time. A space can be experienced too small or too big (agoraphobia and claustrophobia). Something or someone can be too near or too far away from you.

Clarity in movement and directions is the clue in conveying a kinaesthetic experience to the audience. Any choreographer needs dancers who have developed the sensitivity to space and to the fellow dancers. A choreographer is organizing everyday practicalities in an artistic way. A costume is interesting to the choreographer if the movements done by the dancers create interesting movements in the costume. A dancer dealing with props should need to work with the weight, the size and the texture of the object in order to make it a part of the dance. Elements, such as light, stage set, and sound, in a choreographic piece are important to create relations in space and through that create interesting dynamics which gives the audience kinaesthetic experiences.

Chapter 1 - History of Ballet

The Formations of Classical Ballet



Figure 9

Ballet is an art without words. The dancers express everything through the movements of the body which is used as a sensitive instrument. The search of expression through dance as a theatrical enterprise is continuously undertaken. It was not until 17th century that the first full ballet without words appeared in England. Since then European ballet masters have been seeking to explain themselves solely through the movements of the dancers. On the way, they have accepted ideas and methods from many countries and spheres of art, transforming and adapting these to their own special need. France, as the founder of ballet, determined its form and established the classical technique of dance.

Russia has contributed much towards the musicality and expressiveness of dance movement in all spheres. Italy has added to the spectacle by way of both décor and technique. In the course of a long history, the construction, content and style of ballet have been continually changing and each important choreographer has made some contribution.



Figure 10

The furthest precedence of classical ballet is rooted in the dance rituals of primitive Greek tribes. Within the rituals, performers had consciously to discipline themselves and their movements to communicate the meaning of ritual and fill the limited dance space. The Greek play is a performance of patterned movements within a ninety-foot dancing circle (*Orchestra*). Ritual elements are prominent and persistent through the whole



Figure 11

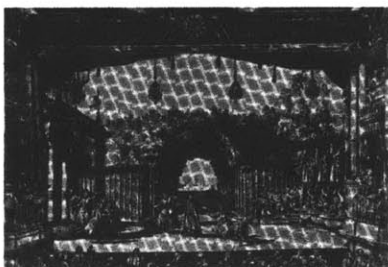


Figure 12

process. By the time of the Medici court, ballet, as a form of mannerist art, has been given its idiom, terminology, and aristocratic style.



Figure 13

repertory. In most cases, “a dancing chorus or *corps de ballet* is itself protagonist in a glorious recapitulation of the sacrificial tragic act.”⁶

Pantomime, the roman comedy, a school of manual gesture. It is a form of performance without words and is legible to the public. Through technical innovation of theater and dance, *pantomime* is elevated to humanistic significance, is organized by music, and transformed by visual ambience. Hitherto, a form of ballroom dance is commenced during the High Renaissance in the Northern Italy. It is a synthesis of human anatomy, solid geometry, and musical composition, which acquires intricate floor plans, swelling out *divertissements* for competitive royal occasions.

Soon after, the ballroom dance is transformed into a theatrical performance in court. Movements and manners of the dance are codified. With intrusions from folk and popular dances, a vocabulary is slowly emerged in the

Musical notation is later incorporated into the study of ballet. Harmony, counterpoint, and polyphony become part of the ballet composition. Ballet’s technique consists of stylized movements and positions that have been elaborated and codified over the time into a well-defined, though flexible, system called academic ballet, or *danse d’cole*, from the Royal Academy of Music and Dancing of the Louis XIV.

⁶ Kirstein, Lincoln, *The Classical Ballet: Basic Technique and Terminology*, Preface by George Balanchine, Univ. Florida Press, 1998, p4.



THE SLEEPING BEAUTY: THE PROLOGUE, LEAC FAIRY—ZOURKOVNAYA IN THE KIROV BALLET
(Photo, Anthony Colburn)

Figure 14

After the French Revolution, court dances and theaters were replaced by city opera houses with subsidized academics of music and dancing. The amplification of movements with delicacy and finesse rooted in the court ballrooms and increased legibility were demanded. The language of dance was broadened. As a result, the demands of endurance and capacity of the dancers increased especially in acrobatic virtuosity.

With an increase of virtuosity, legibility remained the first priority. It was increasingly difficult to read tiny movements as the size of the theater increased. “The graciousness and compact brilliance determined the apparent ease in the classic style. But this consciously simple breadth, the distinction in disdain of all difficulty, was intensified by pure physical feats, tempered through sustained muscular control.”⁷ Therefore, the technique and style of ballet have undergone a dramatic change in the clarity of the legibility of performance.

Technique and Style

The foundation of classical technique and style resides in the five basic positions of the body, arms, and feet. Through them, all other type of movement is strained; to them it all returns. The five positions “are invisible, or rather transparent, sieve, net, or screen, separating filaments of action into a mosaic of units, consecutive, yet at each step clearly defined.”⁸ Extension of the body parts offers elaborate profiles and attenuated silhouettes. The use of pointe work, with its small, sharp fulcrum, provided a means of almost imperceptible floating locomotion across the floor and an increase in elevation for the dance. Defying gravity commanded a whole division of schooling, with small foot-beats, air-turns, cross-leaps, and vertical jumps, proof positive that a dancer can not only rise through space, but can also perform movements with less friction there than on the

⁷ Kirstein, Lincoln, *The Classical Ballet: Basic Technique and Terminology*, Preface by George Balanchine, Univ. Florida Press, 1998, p6.

⁸ *Ibid*, p6.

floor itself. *Pirouettes* made clear that front and back of a body have a simultaneous plastic significance in addition to the dialectic brilliance of their blur.

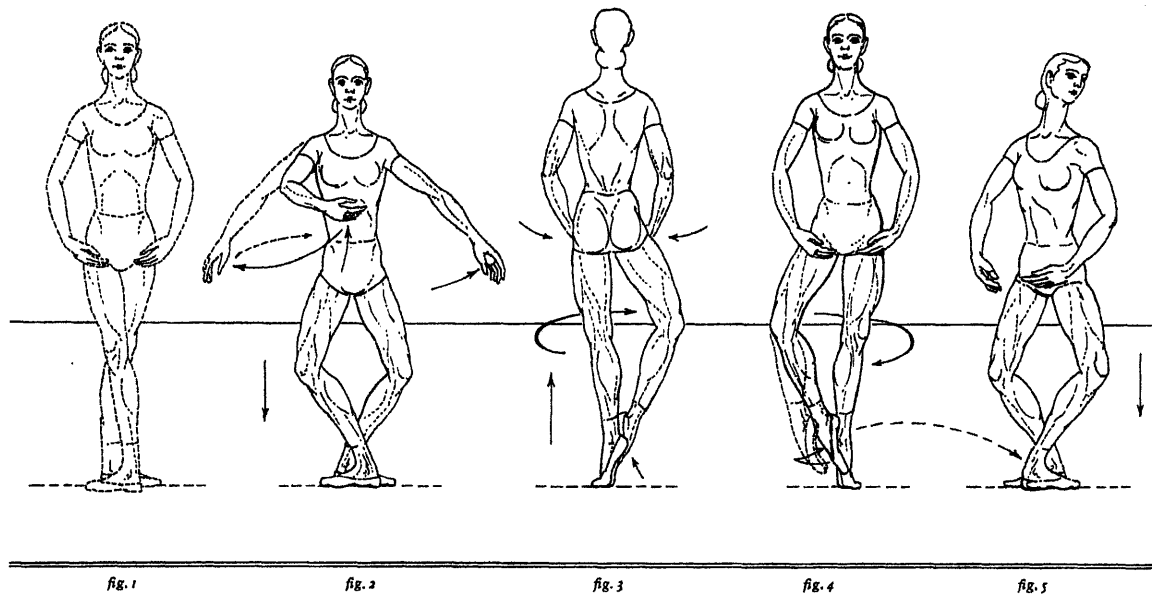


Figure 15

The turned-out position of the legs and feet: is resulted from each leg is rotated outward from the hip joint so that the feet form an angle of 180 degree on the floor. This turned-out position is not unique to ballet; it is used also in many Asian dance forms, including *bharata natyam*, the classical dance of India. Ballet comprises five specific, numbered positions of the feet, which form the basis of almost all ballet steps. Corresponding positions exist for the arms, which are generally held with gently curved elbows.

Ballet technique emphasizes verticality. Since all the movements of the dancer's limbs flow from the body's vertical axis, all of the dancer's body parts must be correctly centered and aligned to allow maximum stability and ease of movement. Verticality implies resistance to gravity, a concept that is carried further in steps of elevation, such as jumps and leaps. Ballet possesses many such steps, including those that require the dancers, while in midair, to turn, beat their legs or feet together, or change their leg position. The more demanding steps of elevation traditionally are considered the special province of male dancers but can be performed by virtuosos of both sexes.

The idea of spurning gravity culminated in the invention of toe dancing, also called dancing *sur les pointes*, or pointe work. Toe dancing was developed early in the 19th century but did not become widely used by ballet dancers until the 1830s, when the Swedish-Italian ballerina Marie Taglioni demonstrated its potential for poetic effect. Pointe work is almost exclusively performed by women, although male dancers may use it. It is the ultimate illustration of the axially of balletic movement.

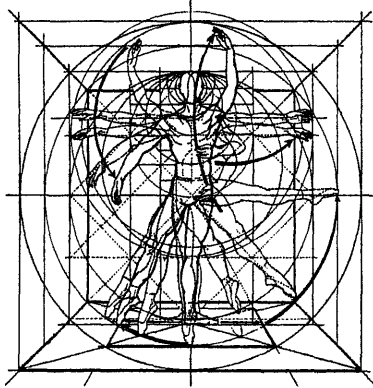


Figure 16

The term *line* in ballet refers to the configuration of the dancer's body, whether in motion or at rest. Good line is partly a matter of the physique a dancer is born with, but it can also be developed and enhanced by training. In ballet, certain relationships of the arms, legs, head, and torso are considered particularly harmonious, while others are not, although they may be perfectly acceptable in different forms of dance. Large movements of the whole limb are preferred to small, isolated movements of individual body parts. Ballet is often described in terms of moving upward and outward; ideally, the dancer's limbs should appear to extend into infinity.

Training

All dancers, no matter how experienced or proficient, take daily training session to keep their bodies supple and strong. Most ballet session begin with exercises at the *barre*, a round horizontal bar that the dancer holds onto for support. These exercises warm up and stretch the muscles, work the tendons to make them supple, and loosen the joints. The second part of the training session is done without the support of the barre and is called *center practice*. It usually begins with slow, sustained exercises that develop the dancer's sense of balance and fluidity of movement. Slow exercises are followed by quick movements, beginning with small jumps and beats and progressing to large traveling steps, turns, and leaps.

As the dancer grows more proficient, the exercises at the barre become more complicated, although based on the same movements taught to beginners. The steps performed in the center become quicker or slower, larger, more complex, and more physically demanding. Eventually dancers go to class not so much to learn new steps as to maintain their performing standards.

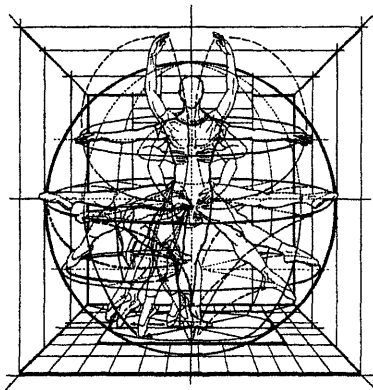


Figure 17

Some frequently seen positions include the *arabesque*, in which the dancer extends one leg backward in a straight line, and the *attitude*, a leg extension forward or back with a bent knee. Turning steps include the *pirouette*, a turn on one leg with the other leg raised; and the *fouetté*, in which the free leg whips around to provide impetus for the turns. Among the steps of elevation are the *entrechat*, in which the dancer jumps straight up and beats the calves of the legs together in midair, and the *jeté*, a leap from one foot onto the other. These steps

include many different variations.

Besides the basic session, women often attend training session in pointe work. Men and women learn to dance together in *pas de deux*, or partnering, session. Some ballet schools also teach mime, the conventional hand gestures used to tell the story in older ballets such as *Giselle* and *Swan Lake*. These hand gestures have become codified (for instance, an invitation to dance is indicated by circling the hands above the head) and are less realistic than the type of mime popularized by the French pantomimist Marcel Marceau.

The Geometry of Classical Ballet

The use of geometry is related to the ritualistic symbolism of dance. In Greek tragedy, different geometric compositions are used to convey certain atmospheric effect and the development of action for the play to enhance the dramatic effect to the audience. In addition, it is an attempt to refer to the Platonic disciplines esteemed towards the true

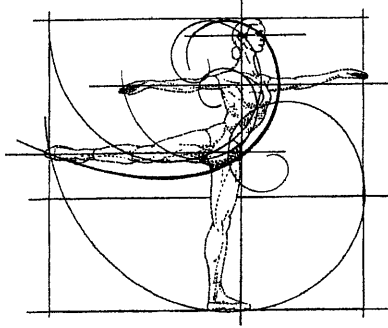


Figure 18

harmony of heavenly bodies or embodies the significance of the linkage to the nature and mythologies.

Pythagoras, the Greek mathematician, formed many mystic numerological beliefs. He associated numbers with ideas and the pursuit of divine truth. For example, a triangle represents justice or theological and intellectual disciplines. Three circles conjoined represent truth; a square within a square represents virtuous design; three circles within each other represents perfect truth; two equilateral triangles within a circle represents supreme power. Hence, geometries give the inherent symbolic meanings to movement and dance.

The need for geometrical configuration arose from the Renaissance. At that time, numbers were believed that they were related to all things, the outer world of nature and the inner world of soul. Following the example of Pythagoras, dance was created through geometrical and numerical associations. Dance was inherent the semiotic structure of language and music. The development of dance steps evolved as the social and cultural conditions. Then, dance became the temporal measure which expressed the ancient Greek beliefs.

During the Renaissance, dance was merely a social accomplishment rather than a means of communication. Dance was the outward form of poetry, music, décor, costume and props, but the expressive movements of the dancers. The designing of significant geometrical shapes was the only way the Academicians were able to bring their passion for allegory and symbolism in the ballets. In most cases, the dance was conformed to the design, music, and the niceties of social behavior.

Until the reign of Louis XIV, dance was developed as one of the official forms of French art. Art was used as a political maneuver to enhance the reputation and prestige of the King and the State. With the establishment of the art academies, the rules of classical theater were formed as laid down by Plato and Aristotle which were maintained as the Academicians understood them. Amongst these principles, the unities of time, place, and action were frequently used in ballet. As a result, the dividing of the arts into

separate categories was to hinder the development of dance as an expressive medium. In the process, the invention of notation system made the important departure point of the advancement of the formations of dance.

Eidetic Measures of Choreography

Seeing and feeling rhythm in movement is the means to comprehend the three-dimensionality of body, to sense its anatomical capabilities and its relation to gravity, to identify the gestures and shapes made by the body, and even to reidentify them when

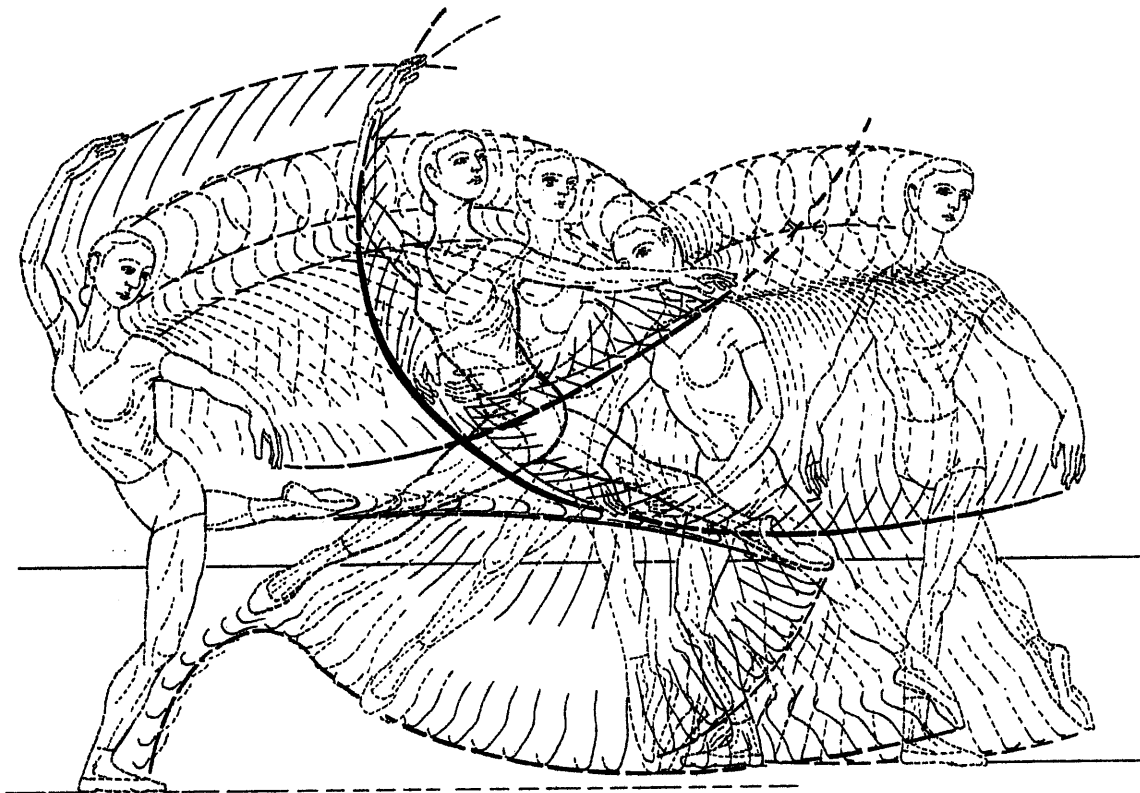


Figure 19

the choreographies are performed by different dancers. It is important that one notices the changes in the tensile qualities of movement, the dynamics and effort with which it is performed, and be able to trace the path of dancers from one part of the performance area to another. One who retains visual, aural, and kinesthetic impressions of the dance as it unfolds in time can compare succeeding moments of the dance, noticing

similarities, variations, and contrasts and comprehending larger patterns, phrases of movement and sections of the dance, and finally the dance as a whole. Hence, by developing knowledge of the body and its motion, one then is able to identify and retain patterns of rhythm, effort, and visual design in performance.

Through movement, one can apprehend the choreographic codes and conventions that give dance its significance. The conventions give the dance internal coherence and integrity. By focusing on the conventions in dance, one comes to understand not only what that dance means but also how it creates its meaning.

Dance could be analyzed through four points: mode of representation, stylistic expression, vocabulary, and syntax. The strategies and techniques involved in dance composition is simply the art of choreography designed for a specific cultural and historical moment.

Mode of Representation

Dance's mode of representation, as Susan Foster in *Reading Dancing* suggests, is considered as four methods: *resemblance*, *imitation*, *replication*, and *reflection*. These methods are used jointly in a dance, but one of them usually predominates. The use of method could be distinguished through the representation of various choreographic forms. In addition, the different modes of representation set forth the narrative structure of the dance in its entirety. Then, the narrative serves as a framework for the formal display of movement.

Resemblance is a way to depict and focus on a certain quality or attribute of object and repeats that quality in the dance movement.

Imitation depends on a spatial and temporal conformity between represented entity and danced step. Hence, qualities, such as height, width, speed, color, texture are appraised and reproduced in the movement.

Replication represents object as a dynamic system, an organic whole made up of functionally distinct parts. The movement replicates the relationship among these parts. This relationship may be seen in the tension between the dancers, one containing or deflecting the movement of the other. *Replication* signifies a relationship between qualities is represented.

Reflection is means for dancers reflect on their movement as one of many possible associations evoked by the activity of moving. Unlike the other modes, *Reflection* makes exclusive reference to the performance of movement and only tangentially alludes to other events on stage.

Stylistic Expression

Stylistic expression clarifies the framework of dance by adding references to cultural identity. It is resulted from sets of choreographic conventions: the quality of dance movement, the characteristic use of the body, and the dancers' orientation on stage. Quality in movement, defined as the texture or effort found in movement as it is performed, is most easily observable in a comparison of dancers' executions of the same choreography.

The movement theorist and choreographer Rudolf von Laban offers a comprehensive systematization of quality in movement. Laban analyzes quality or, in his words, effort in movement by dividing it into four basic components: space, time weight, and flow. Each of the components consists of sets of binary oppositions – “indirect and direct for space, sustained and quick for time, strong and light for weight, and free and bound for flow.”⁹ All movement, according to Laban, exhibits constellations of these factors that form identifiable efforts or textures of movement. Laban further postulates that specific combinations of the four components correspond to psychological states or drives.

⁹ Foster, L. Susan, *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*, Univ. California Press, 1986, p77.

Style in dance results from a characteristic use of parts of the body with their various symbolic associations. As Susan Foster in *Reading Dancing* claims, different parts of the body symbolize various social and cultural conventions and ideals. Even, the periphery of the body is seen as more articulate and intelligent than the intuitive central body, and the forthright, active, and social right side of the body contrasted with the obscure, unconscious left side. Thus, ballet constructs meaning through the use of the body parts in combination with specific movement qualities.

Choreographic style also depends on the characteristic use of the performance space itself. Meaning attach to parts of the space as to parts of the body, so that for every type of theater, from proscenium to theater-in-the-round, a three-dimensional spatial grid symbolically defines the space. Within this symbolic network, movement that occurs in the air, such as a jump or lift, or that gestures toward upper space is usually associated with the abstract, the pure, the heavenly, or the ideal, whereas movement occurring on the floor or orientated toward the ground. In addition, movement at the center of the space is more important than movement than movement at the periphery.

Dancers, characters in a dance, choreographers, and dance traditions all exhibit specific styles. Style informs one about he dancer's and choreographer's concerns and about the dance's place on stage. Growing out of the most fundamental cultural assumptions about the subject and the body, style infuses a dance with its particular identity.

Vocabularies

Vocabularies are the structural organization of the dance, by deducing its basic moves and by learning how these moves are put together, Although dance movement often unfolds seamlessly in time, isolating individual moves of the dance to determine its vocabulary. Any movement that articulates a strong visual design, a clear, simple rhythm, or a recognizable dramatic gesture can easily be perceived as a distinctive moment in the dance.

Ballet has a lexicon of moves from which the vocabulary of a given dance is drawn. The ballet's lexicon, consisting of approximately two hundred steps and their accompanying

verbal referents, for example, *arabesque*, *pirouette*, *sauter*, are taught in ballet technique classes and documented in dictionaries of ballet.

The vocabulary of movements takes many forms in each choreographer's work with an underlying principle which can disentangle one move from the next. Stylistic features permeate the basic moves of a dance or the lexicon of a dance tradition. The style washes over the entire vocabulary of a dance, giving it a cultural and individual identity, whereas the vocabulary set structural limits on the number and kinds of moves in a given dance and determines their discreteness.

Syntaxes

Determining how a dance move follows another in a performance encounters a variety of principles that inform the selection and combination of individual moves. These syntactic principles give an internal coherence to the dance, one that complements and resonates against the dance's references on stage. Syntactic choices, as Susan Foster discusses in *Reading Dancing*, such as repetition and variation, could be categorized as three strategies: *mimesis*, *pathos*, and *parataxis*. These principles work in the same dance at different times or operate simultaneously at the levels of phrase, section, or the dance as a whole.

Mimesis can operate in several ways. A move just executed can be repeated, like in classical ballet where a short phrase of movement is often repeated twice or three times before the dancer goes into the next phrase. Recurrence is one of the most common and readily apparent structure devices lending both coherence and complexity to the dance: moves previously associated with one dancer or seen in a specific context can recur in a new context that gives them added significance. The principle of *mimesis* also functions whenever the choreography reproduces the structure of the music or even the narrative structure of the dance.

Pathos is a way that illustrates the structural features of the music in the dances. Decisions informed by emotional life, dream life, or the realm of intuition, inspiration, and impulse guide the sequencing the dance. Then it becomes a stylistic convention of spatial location and movement qualities. It helps to builds the relationship between psychological and physical space in the dance toward an inevitable conclusion.

Parataxis includes diverse procedures for sequencing movement that range from aleatory techniques to variations on spatial or temporal properties of movement. These procedures have in common a formulaic approach to the organization of movement. It involves easily identifiable properties of movement, its shape, its use of body parts, its rhythm, rather than the less tangible feelings or images associated with it. Variation, a way of arranging movement, is accomplished by focusing specifically on the spatial, temporal, or tensile properties of a move or phrase.

Chapter 2 – George Balanchine

The Ballet of George Balanchine



Figure 20



Figure 21

George Balanchine (1904-1983), the founder of the School of American Ballet. He is regarded as the foremost contemporary choreographer in the world of ballet. In the late 1933, Balanchine came to the United States following an early career throughout Europe. The son of a composer, Balanchine early in life gained knowledge of music that far exceeds that of most of his fellow choreographers. He began studying the piano at the age of five and following his graduation in 1921, from the Imperial Ballet School (the St. Petersburg academy where he had started his dance studies at the age of nine), he enrolled in the state's Conservatory of Music, where he studied piano and musical theory, including composition, harmony and counterpoint, for three years. Such extensive musical training made it possible for Balanchine as a choreographer to communicate with a composer of such stature as Igor Stravinsky; the training also gave Balanchine the ability to reduce orchestral scores on the piano, an invaluable aid in translating music into dance.

As a choreographer, Balanchine prefers a certain type of dancer, and he changes and distorts classical technique. Balanchine gives a dancer a particular dancing style and appearance. This appearance is used to attain the full effect of a choreographic piece. Balanchine's ideal female body type is one who possesses the qualities of a long neck and legs with speed, agility, and grace.

Balanchine stresses that American dancers should become more aggressive on stage. His techniques created for his dancers are known for the unexpected shifts of weight or energy of the body in dance. The steps he created are important because they help to distinguish George Balanchine from the rest of the choreographers of the time. The movements Balanchine choreographed ranges from flowing to staccato and fast to slow movements or even standing still. George Balanchine's most clear elements of technique are balance and speed. His dancers often seem to be off balance with their bodies angled out as if they have been flung. This technique is Balanchine's trademark.

His trademark performances are often made to induce emotion and very simple in the use of props and costumes. He choreographs ballets to both classical and contemporary music with plot or, in most cases, abstract concepts. Balanchine choreographs ballets so that the steps did not explain the music, but the movements became intertwined with the music. In his ballet, every element is interrelated in order to ensure the flow of the performance.

For each composition, Balanchine always tries to innovate and rejuvenate classical ballet movements. The composition relies heavily on music and the energy and elegance of the steps instead of props and costuming. Balanchine shows the audience that one could choreograph a graceful ballet even with only simple movement and stage set.



Figure 22

Balanchine's dances are visual composition of design, proportion, and form. The dances progress fluidly from one elegant picture to the next. Each movement of the dance alludes to an ideal visual image – a geometrized shape they body can attain or a grouping of dancers can suggest by their arrangement in space. The compositions take as their format wether the pantomimic story dance or the plotless, abstract divertissement. The dances follow the story line, also described in program notes, combing pantomimed dialogue and action with more abstract movement sequences. The plotless dances focus primarily on the formal composition of movement

and its correspondence to the music, although they usually retain some resemblance of narrative by suggesting an active courtship or love relationship.

The narrative theme provides an important structural support for the dance, but the relationship of the music to the dance is even more significant. The dance movement parallels the structure of the music, often translating musical dynamics, changes in pitch, rhythmic patterns, phrasing, and orchestration into sequences of movement. New formations of dancers and movement phrases are usually in sync with new beginnings of musical themes; reiterations in the music accompany a recurrence of corresponding movement sequences. Out of this parallelism of music and dance comes a perfectly measured consonance of visual and aural patterns.

Perfection is the key of the dancers' execution of the movement. Balanchine's choreography puts emphasis on speed, strength, flexibility, and endurance. At the same time, the performance appears effortless as if attaining an amazing visual image requires neither work nor strength. Women float with arched torsos, arm trailing softly behind, from one astonishing placement of the limbs to the next. Men move continuously through gravity-defying leaps and endless turns with force and elegance. These extraordinary instances of virtuosity are often framed by configurations of dancers whose minimal gestures support the main action, yet even minimal actions are executed with exceptional precision and agility.

Balanchine experiments with the texture, color and design of space through dances. He begins assembling the pieces together by working with dancers directly. Balanchine believes that ideas for a ballet come from the dancers' own technical expertise, their particular flair for moving, and their idiosyncratic mastery of specific movements. These living versions of abstract choreographic ideas serve as the catalysts for his dance making. Using the structural organization of the musical score as template, Balanchine transforms the dancers' repertoire of skills into elegant spectacle.

The Choreography of George Balanchine

Balanchine's choreography pursues a classical conception of beauty. He always strives for the portrayal of ideal form. Dancers are asked not to feel something for or about the dance but to show the choreography. Far from being a hypocritical gesture, the smile is part of the dance movement. Like all facial expressions, it is part of the technical repertoire required of the dancer in performance. The earnestness involved in smiling or in any physical endeavor derives from the dancer's devotion to craft and skill, to performing each movement beautifully.



Figure 23

Ballet is consummately visual for Balanchine. The capacity of movement to display designs is his primary concern. While for him both dance and sight register discrete images, like a photographic sequence, only dance can show pure and well-proportional forms in order to highlight both its distinctiveness and continuity. To accomplish this display of designs, the choreographer must be aware of that “the eye focuses on only one central point of an image at a time and all events surrounding that point blur in relation to their distance from it.”¹⁰ Balanchine cites this theory of visual perception to explain his tendency, and that of ballet in general, to arrange movements of great intricacy at one focal point, framed by a large number of simpler movements and poses.

Only certain kinds of movement exhibit the visual features Balanchine's approach to choreography requires. Highly specialized and nonutilitarian, his dance movement emphasizes the linear: it is crisp-edged, geometrical, and axial. “Choreographic movement, used to produce visual sensations, is quite different from the practical movement of everyday life used to execute a task, to walk, to lift an object, to sit down. Choreographic movement is an end in itself, and its only purpose is to create the impression of intensity and beauty.”¹¹ Thus Balanchine, sharply distinguishes between pedestrian and dance movement. Nor does he make any attempt to work with dancers inexperienced in executing this specialized vocabulary.

¹⁰ Foster, L. Susan, *Reading Dancing: Bodies and Subjects in Contemporary American Dance*, Univ. California Press, 1986, p17.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p17.

The Ballet Discipline of George Balanchine

Balanchine sees himself as part of a ballet tradition. Its procedures for transmitting knowledge about dance are defined as rigorously as the scope and content of the knowledge itself. His dedication to the art of dance absorbs his lives and defines his own sense of identity. Balanchine's dancers respect and obey him as the unquestioned artistic authority; he reciprocates by treating them with care and concern.

As his contribution to this tradition, Balanchine makes exhilarating and elegant dances to entrance enthusiastic yet discriminating viewers with images of human perfection. The dancers' confident appeal as they synthesize visual design, musical phrasing, and kinesthetic prowess captivates the audience and sustains their enjoyment. At the same time, viewers who recognize technical competence and apprehend musical and choreographic structure can intensify their understanding of the Balanchine's ideal as the performance embodies it.

In training, ballerinas are introduced to the five basic positions of the ballet vocabulary. Once these are mastered, increasingly complex movements each with a name are introduced. The typical technique class mirrors this progression by beginning with simple movements done in place (at the *barre*), followed by more complex combinations done in the center of the room and across the floor. Although the exercises vary slightly each day, their sequence is strictly maintained. Training involves frequently correcting the positioning of the body; encouraging precision, dexterity, speed, and correct placement; and emphasizing the height of the extended leg, the height and duration of the leap, the length of a balance, and the number of turns accomplished with one preparation.

With increased competence, the dancer enters more specialized realms of dancing prowess and an equally exclusive social milieu where skills are evaluated and ranked according to higher standards of achievement. The idealized career for the dancer takes him or her from ballet school to professional company, and then from the periphery of the staged action to the focal center of the choreography.

Technique, the mastery of a specific set of movement skills, is the foundation of Balanchine's choreography. With the competence dancers and the composers standing by, Balanchine then begins to craft the elegant sequences of movements that compose the dance. He would consult the score and demonstrate a phrase that visually comments on the musical structure. The dancers imitate him and then perform for him. Balanchine watches, thinks, makes alterations, discards some material, embellishes some phrases, returns to the score; and so it continues through the entire length of the training session. Gradually, the dance composition is formalized with emphasis on the perfection of timing and shaping of movement.

Chapter 3 – Labanotation

The System of Choreographic Representation

"As the musician needs to record the precise and minute details of his composition to insure correct performance of his score, so the choreographer needs a notation capable of equal accuracy," said George Balanchine.¹²

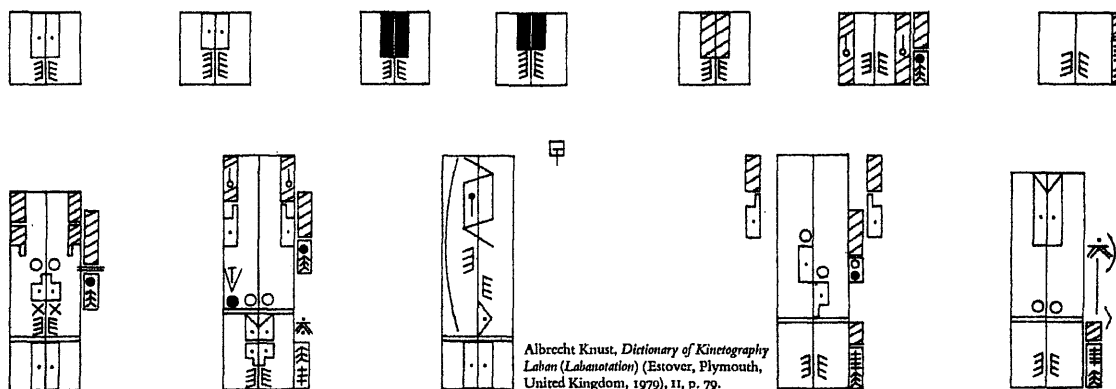


Figure 24

By using notation, choreographers develop a specific structure to document the accommodation of music, movements and patterns of a dance composition. A dance composition is an aesthetic entity existing in the four dimensions of space-time. Different styles of dance have different degrees of concern for the spatio-temporal symmetry of the body and the manipulation of abstract movement patterns. With Labanotation, choreographers are able to reduce a four-dimensional manifold to two dimensions – compression of the dimensionality by quantization.

Choreographic notation offers the opportunity to mend the rupture between the theorization of space and its actualization through the re-interpretation of movement and experience. It allows vast latitude of experimentation and makes possible to conceive a dynamic yet meaningful spatial construct which bodily movement and perpetual

¹² Hutchinson, Ann, *Labanotation: the System of Analyzing and Recording Movement*, Routledge/Theatre Arts Books, 3rd Edition, Revised, New York 1991.

experience engage each other. This engagement would make dance more relevant to bodily movement and conceptions of space and time.

By creating sequential spatial singularities (dance), both dancers and spectators could construe a conceptual topography that is both imaginative and physical. Such conceptual spaces generate perpetual movement among/between different intensities of visual and mental experiences in dance performance. Henceforth, choreographic notation becomes the inscriptions of spatial-multiplicities. It allows the conceptual topography working with and folding into one another to create multiple becomings instead of a reformed and redeemed sense of subjectivity, that lead to the liberation of thought and perceptual construct.

Dance performance, as a resultant of this discourse, possesses a structured system of representation. It is also a means of combining and preserving perceptions and memories arising from within dissimilar ontological conditions of bodily movement. In the tradition of classical ballet, convention prescribes the very transitions of different movement or gestures of dance. The method of analysis entails an identification of the kinaesthetic order of typological spatial conditions through the body, using a composite protocol of analysis - *Labanotation*. This descriptive order prescribes the very meaning of spatio-temporality, and an insightful investigation allows a critique of conventional unities of spatial representation.

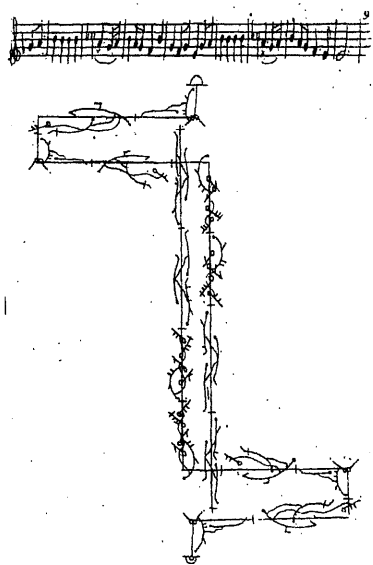


Figure 25

History of Choreographic Notation

In Europe, choreographic notation is nearly as old as ballet itself. The earliest notation, 'Orchesographie' in the late 15th century by Thoinot Arbeau, is composed of an abbreviation of the step's name against the appropriate musical note and includes an illustration of the floor plan. The first widely used system of dance notation using special symbols was apparently that attributed to Raoul

Feuillet and Pierre Beauchamp, the French court

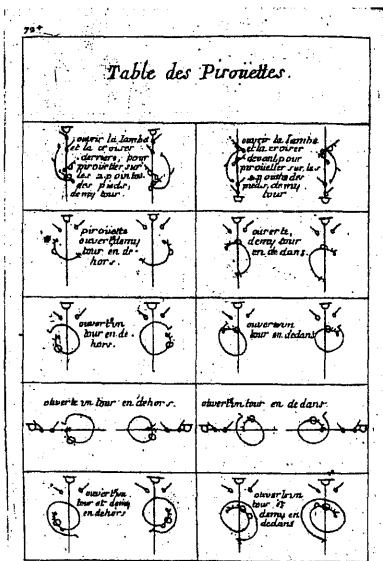


Figure 26

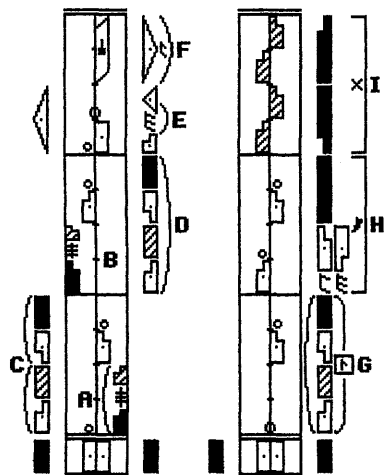


Figure 27

dancing masters of Louis XIV, and set forth in Feuillet's *Chorégraphie* in 1700.

This Beauchamps-Feuillet dance notation was used mainly to record dance's floor pattern and footwork with only a few indications of arm movements. This system was largely relied on the written descriptions to conveying the idea of the movement. It was used for about a century, gradually being extended until it became too cumbersome. In the 19th century, Charles Victor Arthur Michel Saint-Léon developed a system called

'Stenochorégraphie'. It was based on the idea of stick figures depicting body movement. This system was fairly popular among the dance circle in the latter half of the 19th century but eventually fell into disuse.

Since then, various systems of notations were devised but without success in their implementations. None of them were effective enough to become the principle system of notation. Dance notation is not a simple matter. An effective notational system has to be capable of specifically documenting bodily movement in terms of

positions, gestures, directions, speed, and rhythm in relation to music score in minute details. It is not until

1928 that Rudolf von Laban introduced "Labanotation" or "Kinetographie", which is designed to precisely record any forms of movement by employing a series of designated geometric symbols. Since then, it has become the most widely used notational system.

"Labanotation serves the art of dance much as music notation serves the art of music."¹³

¹³ Hutchinson, Ann, *Labanotation: the System of Analyzing and Recording Movement*, Routledge/Theatre Arts Books, 3rd Edition, Revised, New York 1991.

Labanotation is a universally applicable system of generic symbol, which does not pose any language barriers. It takes forms of long vertical lines to which blocks and other markers are attached. Because Laban describes the movements of the body in such minute detail, it has been applied to time and motion studies in dance. His analysis of movement is based on spatial, anatomical, and dynamic principles. Using this system of recording movement based on the universal laws of kinetics allows for reconstruction of the simplest to the most complex movements, great works of the theater and other more diverse activities such as time/motion studies for industry, medical, even psychiatric purposes.

The Geometry of Choreutic

Concepts of lines and planes are fundamental to Choreutic. An infinite variety of tilted orientations of lines and planes can be distinguished from the precise orientations of dimensional lines and 'Cartesian' or 'Cardinal' planes. 'Cartesian' referring to Descartes' geometric coordinate system and 'Cardinal' referring to the cognitive importance of purely dimensional orientations.

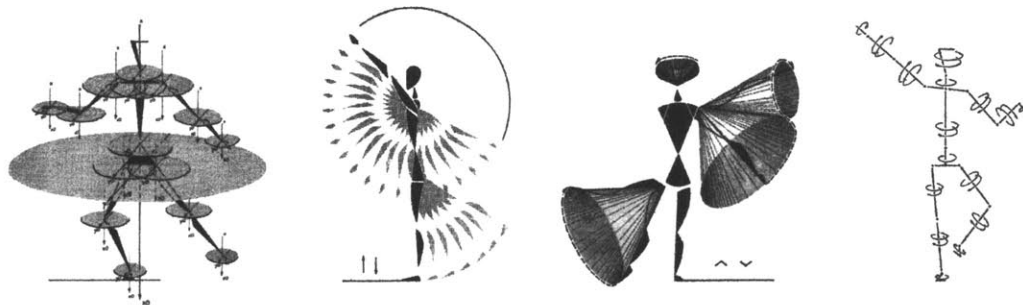
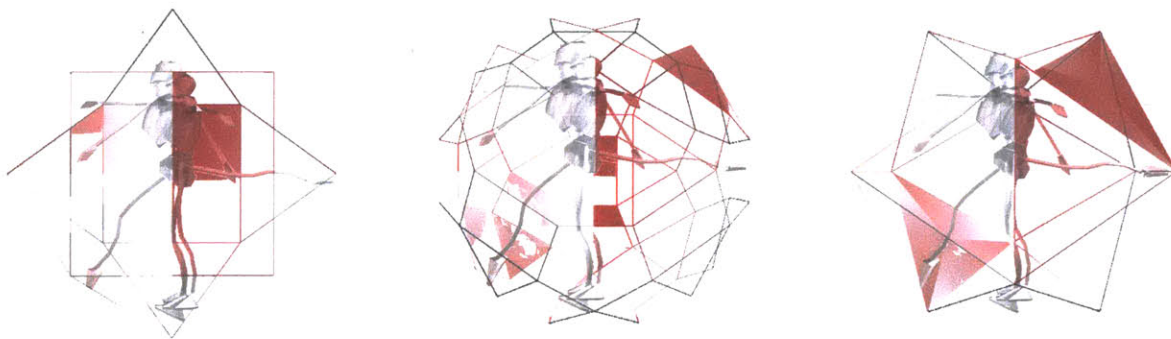


Figure 28

The Choreutic conception identifies the anatomical cardinal planes as each being lengthened more along one dimension than the other. Accordingly, the anatomical planes were referred to as "dimensional planes" since each cardinal plane was envisioned as being essentially tied to the character of one of the dimensions which is envisioned as widening into one of the planes so that the dimensions are experienced by

the body as lines rather than as planes. Because they were conceived as dimensional planes, each was named with the dimension which is its largest component, namely the 'vertical plane' is lengthened along the vertical dimension, the sagittal plane is lengthened along the sagittal dimension, and the horizontal plane is lengthened along the horizontal dimension.

As Choreutic conceptions have become more refined, such as reviving the use of a dodecahedral-shaped scaffolding, the concepts of the cardinal planes become more complicated. Because of the reversal in the major dimension for each of the cardinal planes, it prompts a question of how it can still make sense to conceive of a horizontally stressed plane as being a 'vertical' plane. For example when conceiving of octahedral or cubic (or cuboctahedral) shaped scaffolding, the cardinal planes have equal components of both dimensions. In this case they are not 'dimensional planes' at all and so the question arises as to whether it makes logical sense to conceive of these types of planes according to the same concepts as the planes which are lengthened along one of the dimensions.



In the face of these variously shaped cardinal planes it may be clarifying to develop concepts which are not specific to only one type of planar shape (the traditional 'dimensional planes'), but can be applied in the analysis of all types of possible planar shapes. The first discipline in which to consider other types of bodily-planar concepts is obviously in the field of anatomy and kinesiology. Even a brief overview of conceptions of anatomical planes reveals that while there may be some regularity of the concepts used, there is also a great deal of variability. For example the concepts of 'sagittal plane', 'median plane', 'midline plane', and 'anteroposterior plane' are relatively synonymous. Some variability arises as to whether the plane is considered to pass directly through the

body center or not, resulting in further concepts such as 'median sagittal plane' or 'mid-sagittal plane'. In addition, since this plane has a vertical component it is also often considered to a 'vertical plane'.

These same types of myriad concepts also occur for the other two cardinal planes. In the case of the traditional Choreutic 'vertical plane', it is also conceived according to the relatively synonymous concepts of 'frontal plane', 'coronal plane', and because this plane contains the side-side dimension it is also sometimes conceived as a 'lateral plane'.

Concepts for dimensions are often equally variable and mingle with the planar concepts. For example since a sagittal line is parallel to the floor it is also frequently described as being horizontal. With the intention of having available planar concepts which are distinct from dimensional concepts, the anatomical categories need to be considered. The concept of 'sagittal' is derived from the Latin for 'arrow' and so appears to be more of a dimensional concept, while 'median' (or 'medial') is derived from 'middle' and so is closer to the conception of a plane which divides left from right.

The concept of 'horizontal' is derived from the Greek for the boundary of a circle as so appears to be closest to a planar concept. While, 'lateral' is derived from the Latin concept of 'side' or sideways, and so appears to be closer to a dimensional concept. 'Vertical' comes from the Latin 'vertex', that is, the highest point directly overhead, and so appears to be closest to a dimensional concept. While the concept of 'frontal' is derived from the Latin for 'facade' or 'forehead' and so appears to be closer to a planar concept.

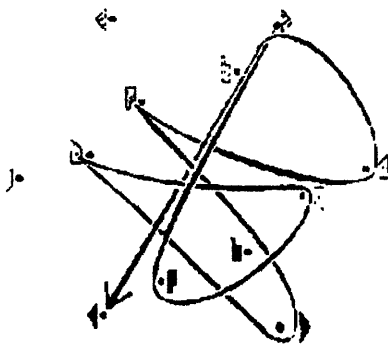


Figure 29

The Phenomenology of Labanotation

Dance notation structures movement in space, and divides the spatial hierarchy in sequences inducing the notion of time. It orchestrates the movement of body and senses through space. In essence, notation establishes an intimate relationship among body, space and time. It defines a grammatical structure of composing

movements and thoughts which embodies the poetic meanings of creativity and experience. The body transfigures itself into the theater of memory, a sheer presence within space. "After the visual recognition of forms [body], one's mind struggles and attempts to reconstruct the very meaning of space."¹⁴ This fusion of meaningful and meaningless, significant and accidental reinforces one's spatial experience and intimacy with the body.

Within choreography, memory serves as the retainer of spatial pattern in dance. In the process of envisioning movement, mental images of dance are always selectively erased and substituted with others. As Gabriele Brandstetter suggests, images of memory and imaginative contents are intertwined which choreographs the recognition of movement. Movement sequences are montaged through memory as transitional intervals. Different notions and meanings of movement and space could be synthesized collectively as memory is being reshuffled and recombined. Thus, the visualization of space through movement always embodies one's past spatial experience of choreography.

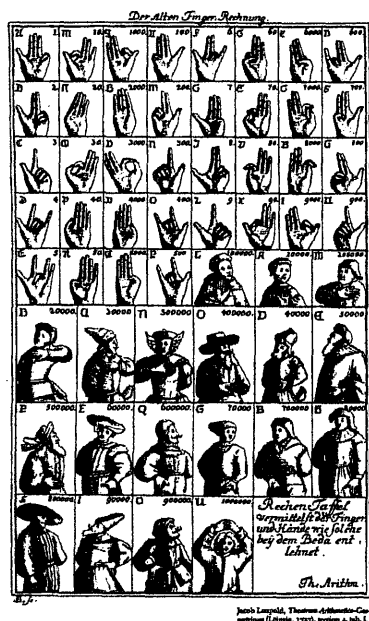


Figure 30

The different spatial constructions, predicated on choreographic notation, reveal a spatial topography that can be characterized as "a condition of the possibility of theory in general."¹⁵ A theory, with a priori, consists of truths – the very relationship between transcendental and phenomenological understanding of space. The introduction of topography into the phenomenal experience enables one not only to qualify the various inherent structures of movement, but also to describe its spatial implications. The mapping of this mnemonic territory could serve as the linkage between the structural, the visual and the conceptual in the construct

¹⁴ Sheets, Maxine, *The Phenomenology of Dance*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison and Milwaukee 1966, p112.

¹⁵ Husserl, Edmund, *The Shorter Logical Investigations*, Trans. by J.N. Findlay, Preface by Michael Dummett, Edited, with an Introduction, by Dermot Moran, Routledge, London and New York, 1970, p74.

of space. Subsequently, the choreographic notation becomes “systematic theories which have their roots in the essence of theory, with a priori, theoretical, nomological,” inscription, “which deals with the ideal [spatial] essence.”¹⁶ and thus constitutes the basis in the actualization of a phenomenological experience.

Phenomenological analysis fosters the foundation for an understanding of temporality and spatiality of dance, which are inherent in the phenomenon of movement itself. As Rudolf Laban claims, “vision was geometrical and physical as well as imaginative and organic.”¹⁷ Thus, spatiality is abstracted in concept and is formalized in experience which makes possible the congruence and/or consistency for confabulation with the body.

The body as an object is the basis upon which objective space is constituted. It becomes a relative juncture of spatial orientation in relation to the surrounding objects in a given space. Kinaesthetic movement constitutes “a uniquely dynamic form through a cohesive and continuous form – pure dynamics of the total form,” as Rudolf Laban describes. It is a lived experience of the sheer dynamic flux. By interpretation, space becomes “a unique interplay of fluid, ever-changing flux, not in a sense that its continually changes of

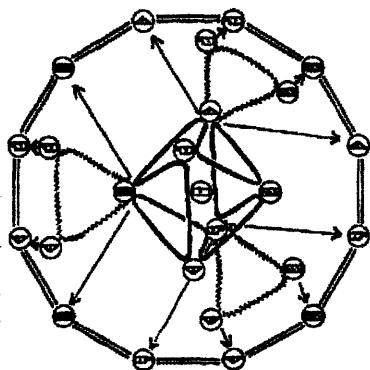


Figure 31

relationships and positions, but the immurement of the both.”¹⁸ Meaning embodied within dance only emerges if there is a lived experience; and only if in apprehending the space in its totality we perceive and experience it.

The kinetic nature of space addresses the exposition of phenomenology further by describing the visual constructs of two structures which exist within the total lived experience of any kinetic phenomenon: time and space. “Movement is a flux in time and space, is not

¹⁶ Husserl, Edmund, *The Shorter Logical Investigations*, Trans. by J.N. Findlay, Preface by Michael Dummett, Edited, with an Introduction, by Dermot Moran, Routledge, London and New York, 1970, p77.

¹⁷ Sheets, Maxine, *The Phenomenology of Dance*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison and Milwaukee 1966, p6.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p14.

descriptive of the lived experience."¹⁹ Space, time, and flux are apparent in performance, but they are not and cannot be objectively apparent.

"The phenomenological construct of time describes a complete totality of the body, whose sub-structures, past, present, and future, form distinct but interrelated units."²⁰ Their interrelationship is internally rather than externally defined. Past, present, and future constitute temporality as an internalized synthesis whose foundation is within the body. This foundation supports the kinetic structure of the bodily movement as a temporal totality, defining one's pure reflection on both appearance and disappearance of experience. Spatial experience is internally related because kinaesthetic movement, in its mnemonic dimensions, "is at the same a singularity and a unified multiplicity."²¹

The mnemonic dimension of the body is ascribed to the concept of choreographic notation: an organization of memory and its inscription and diffusion in/through shared conceptual spaces. It is the kinaesthetic movement as a whole which constitutes the memory, a memory in permanent transformation producing a mental topography. It pinpoints the spatial implications of phenomenological experience. Furthermore, kinaesthetic movement results from perpetual revelation of phenomenal construct. This revelation establishes a dynamic organization on the basis of its qualitative structure, which reflects a pure phenomenon of space. Then, the choreographic notation, as a uniquely created and uniquely appearing phenomenal presence, could be fully realized in the analysis of the embodied meaning of the body and phenomenological structure of the totality of space. Given these new possibilities of understanding and vocabulary of performance spaces, one could strive for ever more creative dialogue between perceptual construct of space and dance in result.

¹⁹ Sheets, Maxine, *The Phenomenology of Dance*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison and Milwaukee 1966, p14.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p16.

²¹ *Ibid*, p18.

Chapter 4 – Music and Notations

The Music of Stravinsky and Balanchine

Music plays a vital part of Balanchine's choreography. It offers an architectural framework for the dance. Plot is much less important than the capacity of the music to evidence structure and to support the replicate gestures of the dance. Balanchine's visual explication of the music results in the enhancing effect of ballerinas' intricate footwork.

Criteria similar to those for music govern the selection of plot structures for the dance. Stories must be simple and predictable in their narrative sequence. For Balanchine, plot lends consistency to the dance, but it does not determine the realistic portrayal of characters and their circumstances, nor does it imply any profound statement about humanity. Balanchine is interested in beauty, not meaning. The performance should inspire a sense of admiration and awe rather than attuning viewers to their surroundings or to their own feelings. Balanchine wants dances to be elegant which offers far more than entertainment and enjoyment.

Balanchine uses various planes of his set and the geometrical patterning of his dancers to give pictorial value to his choreography. Then, he entirely rejects the artificial conventions of classical ballet and simplifies its principles and vocabulary in order to match the choreography to the classical formulas in the score provided by Stravinsky.

All Balanchine's classical ballets bear his very distinctive visual hallmarks shown in his way of patterning certain technicalities and his choreographic design is always subservient to certain musical principles. These ballets are abstract in content and have a single purpose, to display the classical dance qualities of the participants as they reveal the purely musical context of the composition Balanchine chooses to interpret. His choreographic methods are quite unlike those of Fokine and Massine. He seems to regard his task as an intellectual exercise and with the eye of an expert in the science of geometrical equation and design, and the ear of an expert in sound, he deploys his dancers according to certain given formulas which he himself has devised and by which he disciplines himself.

The dance movements are engendered by and parallel the musical content. Balanchine simplifies the classical dance movement and music to the bare essential physical movement and representation. He hears and sees movement in terms of note values, time signatures, cadences, chords, runs and other elements forming the musical structure. To each bar, or phrase he sets a particular step or series of steps, whose timing, accent and quality he believes parallel the notes written. Thus repetitions in the music are matched by repetitions in dance and so on. In other words, he tries to equate dance movements with what is written in the scores, and no matter whether the composition is by Bach, Mozart, Bizet, Stravinsky, or a modern American composer, provided the score is written according to the principles of classical composition, Balanchine applies the same formulas and frequently arrives at the same enchainment in all his abstract works.

The Evolution of Music and Ballet

“We are representing the art of dancing, the art of body movement, in time, in space. It is the music, it is really time more than the melody, and our body must be subordinated to time – because without time, dance doesn’t exist,” said George Balanchine.²²

For Balanchine, music and dance were simple, elegant expressions of the manipulation of time and space. It was his conviction of order and beauty. He believed that the ancient Pythagorean notion of beauty in the method of reduction. Balanchine recognized that temporality was the elemental force of musical and physical movement. He set the organization of time in music as the boundary of dance, which served as a catalyst for his conception of movement and space.

The fundamental contrapuntal fabric of stratified musical layers evident in Balanchine’s choreography. It is always simple and reserved. It clarifies the music’s complex architectonics in order to visualize the musical space. Sometimes, basic geometric shapes, such as squares, lines, circles, are deployed to allow the audience to see the

²² Joseph, M. Charles, *Stravinsky & Balanchine: A Journey of Invention*, Yale Univ. Press, New Heaven, 2002, p3.

concept evolving onstage. The crafting of the rhythmic permutations corresponded to the articulation of the dance composition, which underlying the regularity of the movement pattern.

Balanchine visualized music in terms of correlative physical movement. He was interested in the inherently fundamental tensions of theater and drama. He explored all types of counterpoints: male and female, spatial, rhythmic, and audio-visual symmetries. Then, Stravinsky's exploration in music established the orders of harmony, linear, texture, structure, and rhythm, which constituted the compositional interplay of musical elements.

Through visual impressions, Balanchine was able to express the abstractions of order, precision, boundaries, time and space, the inerrancy of motion, in dance. Then, he attempted to understand the visual rhythms of structure and aural patterns in dance through temporal perception. Hence, Balanchine could devise a sense of balletic space, which was apportioned in sonic and visual relationships of movement.

“In the dance, unless your body fills time, occupies time, as music does, then it means nothing. Gesture itself is meaningless,” said George Balanchine.²³

Balanchine's choreography was intended to magnify the music's architecture, to clarify such internal dialogues in three-dimensional space. He liked to compare the making of his ballets to the construction of architecture. He referred to Stravinsky as “the architect of time,” he was no less aware of the music's temporal architectonics. For Balanchine, there was no disparity between function and beauty.

His thinking about fundamental geometric issues includes the pulling and pushing of symmetries and asymmetries. The choreography shapes the interior of a musical gesture through the sense of temporal pacing parallels the architectonics of metaphorical movement. Rhythm becomes the formal esthetic relation of any part-to-part in any esthetic whole. Dance and music unfold in parallel but independent planes throughout the central portion of the gesture until the point where both visual and aural

²³ Joseph, M. Charles, *Stravinsky & Balanchine: A Journey of Invention*, Yale Univ. Press, New Heaven, 2002, p8.

components coalesce at eh music’s cadence. His sense of musical texture and musical space, whereby lines appear and fade in the overall fabric, is matched by his apportionment of the stage space.

“...Ballet is not a chest of drawer. It is closer to an IBM electronic computer. It is a machine, but a machine that thinks... a measured construction in space, demonstrated by moving bodies,” said George Balanchine.²⁴

The collaboration of Stravinsky and Balanchine challenges the conception of musical-balletic time and space. It is a marriage of music and movement. Precision is the essence of the marriage. Balanchine comparison of ballet to computer is the embodiment of the temporal exactness - its techno-precision, both musically and choreographically. The substructure of the symmetrical ordering of musical cells and

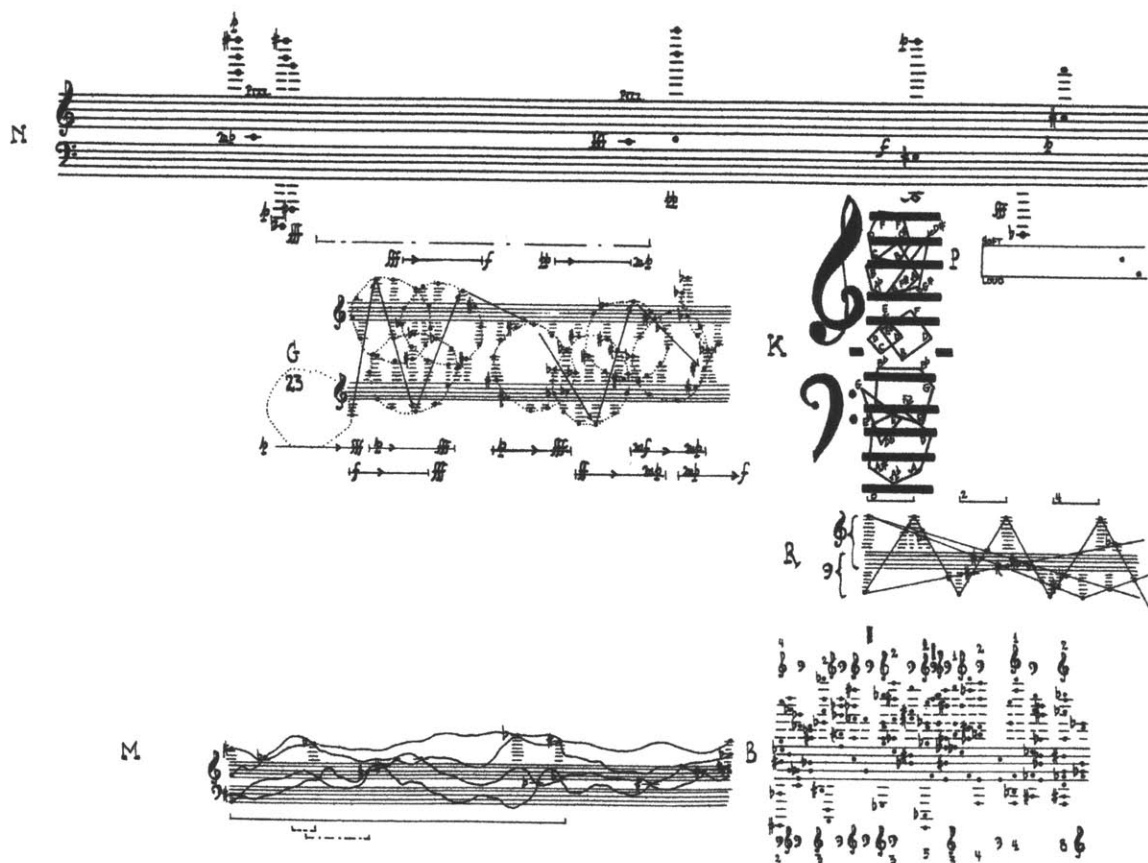


Figure 32

²⁴ Joseph, M. Charles, *Stravinsky & Balanchine: A Journey of Invention*, Yale Univ. Press, New Heaven, 2002, p257.

transmutative rhythms set to expressing the choreographically the musical form of a dance.

The Indeterminate Notation of John Cage

John Cage's most important work is in music composition and the invention of indeterminate insisted on the notions of chance and indeterminacy. "An indeterminate piece, even though it might sound like a totally determined one, is made essentially without intention so that, in opposition to music of results, two performances of it will be different."²⁵ Ultimately, indeterminacy allows for flexibility, changeability, and fluency.

Chance and indeterminacy are the two primary concepts involved in Cage's theater pieces. Indeterminacy refers to systemic chance, which is defined by a rhizomatic relationship with a sequence or causes independent to the predefined. Chance operations block the exercise of one's accumulated knowledge and prejudices. Such notion opens up a bounded, limited range of possibility for John Cage's notation systems. The notations are indeterminate of a specific, repeatable content, but the resultant performance is a determinate act.

Cage's methods of composition serve as a means of emptying the mind of thoughts that would exclude possibilities. He employs not only traditional tonality but also noise and the entire spectrum of possible sounds, including electronics. He also is concerned with the formal, structural implications of sounds, rather than tonality, in composition. Cage writes music that shared a common total duration with the choreography in dance performance. In the performance, the performer, rather than the composer, determines what actual recordings are to be played.

Silence always plays a vital part of Cage's composition as integral to music. It is developed as a 'macro-microscopic rhythmic structure' which establishes a way of working between the music and the dance that allows them to be separate, coming together only at the structural points. The use of time structure, Cage allows him to be

²⁵ Goldberg, RoseLee, Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present, Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, New York, 1988, p124.

free from dance except at the structural points. Hence, dance could be free from the musical structure. The phrases and movements within the phrases vary their speeds and accents without reference to a musical tone.



Figure 33

In his theater pieces, Cage employs chance procedures in the making of music in relation to choreography. It is a description of the use of the random procedures in the act of composition and the variability of performance, which refer to a specific techniques or situations. Indeterminacy becomes the rhythmic structures for dance. He makes charts of musical elements, moving from square to square akin to the movements of pieces on a chessboard. The musical materials and moves on the graphs were made by intuitive choice.

Graphics represent various elements in his compositional system. Lines designate as acoustic variables of sound, amplitude, frequency, timbre, splicing patterns, and duration controls. To obtain values for these variables, measurements are made from the points at which they intersect the slanted straight lines to either the top or bottom horizontal lines. Each of these slanted lines represents a 'time bracket' during which sounds described by these measured parameters take place. A grid is superimposed on the lines and points, and becomes the reference for all measurements. In addition, points and circles represent events, and the placement of the rectangle or grid over them thus selects events, places them in time, and further defines their musical characteristics. Hitherto, Cage proceeds to use the utility to create the description of the time bracket within the theater pieces. Sound materials, then, are mixed, spliced, and modified according to the specifications of the notation.

Cage notates his method of spatial duration through graphic layout of notation in space equal to time in his theater pieces. The placement of notated events in stopwatch timings appears in space on the page. The actual duration of events must be determined spatially and done within a time limit that will allow for the next notated event to be performed at the required time-occurrence. The actual duration is intertwined with the musical duration spatially in reference to the spatial layout and the numerical notation of

the stopwatch time. Such arrangement illustrates the general dynamics level employed through the theater pieces. As a result, Cage presents a paradoxical situation between notation and its performance. The notation is indeterminate, and allows the individual performer to make personal decisions, determinations with how and what to do.

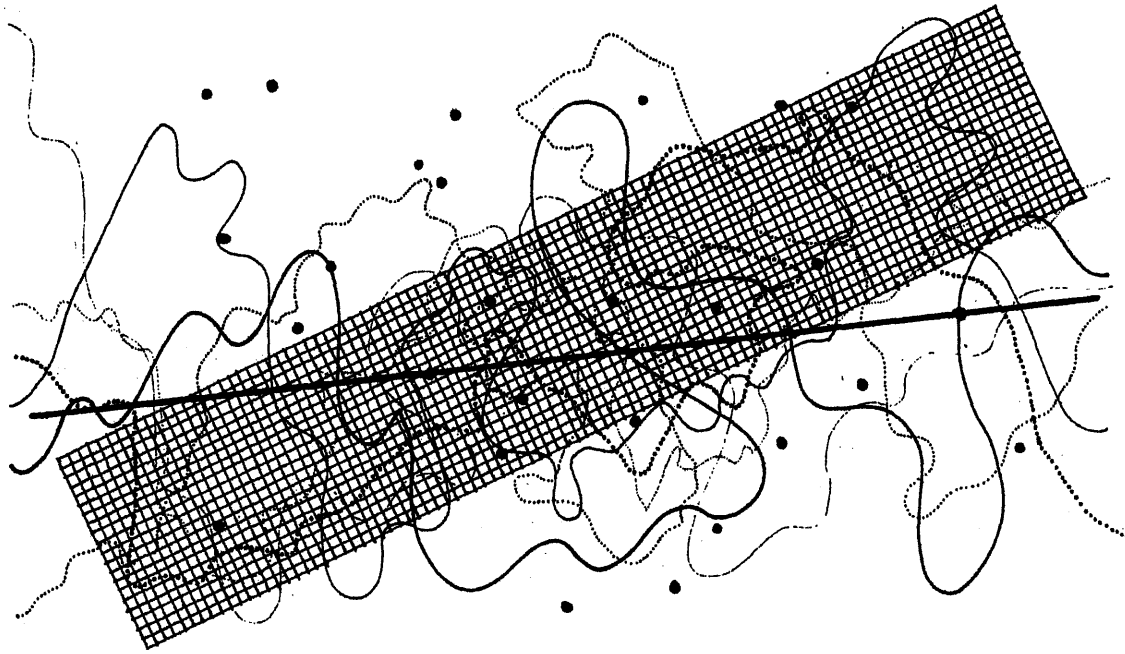


Figure 34

In his new notations derived from his approach to composition, which become combinations of graphic and musical actions. The elements manipulated are graphic and spatial, rather than musical. Cage uses the notion of indeterminacy in establishing ambiguous frames of musical reference for the graphic tokens. In essence, his notations are not about the use of new graphics nor new means of producing graphics, but rather the translation graphics into musical directions through chance procedures and indeterminacy.

“This unimpededness is seeing that in all of space each thing and each human being is at the center and furthermore that each one being at the center is the most honored one of all. Interpenetration means that each one of these most honored ones of all is moving out in all directions penetrating and being penetrated by each other one no matter what the time or what the space ... In fact each and everything in all of time and space is related to

each and every other thing in all of time and space," explained John Cage.²⁶

With his oeuvre of composition, Cage attains the freedom to explore any part of that space of interpenetrating sounds. He allows, "sound emerges of itself from the empty space of the rhythmic structure." Cage describes this method as "throwing sound into silence: not making an expressive continuity, but simply composing individual sounds and letting them find their own expressiveness within a blank canvas of empty time."²⁷

Rhythmic structure becomes an agent of compositional discipline. It is no longer a true physical and perceptible silence. Instead of working with a compartmentalized space of silent rhythmic structure, Cage sees his act of composition as an infinite space of sounds that are completely interconnected, yet unique. He refers this space as "a totality of possibilities" that are "impermanently involved in an infinite play of interpenetrations."²⁸ Hence, form simply becomes any arbitrary path traced within the total space of possibilities.

²⁶ Pritchett, James, *The Music of John Cage*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993, p75.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p74.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p76.

Chapter 5 – Oskar Schlemmer

The Theatrical Space of Bauhaus and Oskar Schlemmer

“Art and Technology – a new unity,”²⁹ said Walter Gropius. Seeking a new synthesis of art and modern technology is the rudiment of the Bauhaus’ motto in the 1920s. Bauhaus becomes the common ground of artistic experimentation. Oskar Schlemmer manifests his philosophy toward dance and design of theatrical space through the study of the biological facts of human perception and the phenomena of form and space. Their works manifest the shift from a notion of abstraction based on form and vision to an abstraction based on process and movement.

Under the establishment of Bauhaus, Oskar Schlemmer views three elements of the theater: man in space; light in motion; and architecture. He is not merely interested in a representational theater, but a theater of abstraction. He sees the life of his time as a product of mechanization, and that impulse explains his insistence upon reducing form and motion to the smallest number of shapes and movements.

The choreography of Schlemmer derives from the distinct character of each costumed dancer, or figurine in his own terms. He analyzes and isolates the primary gestures in the movement of the human body, reduced them to a basic set of elementary forms, such as the ellipse, straight line, diagonal, and circle; then he designs his costumes and dance steps based upon these forms. Schlemmer’s work on painting and choreography becomes the basis for his systems of dances.

Dance is “a means of channeling the propensity for emotional expression.”³⁰ Schlemmer attempts to “make the unclear appear clear, the unconscious conscious, the impossible possible; plucks the one out of the chaos, simplicity out of multiplicity.”³¹ He works to

²⁹ Gropius, Walter, *The Theater of the Bauhaus*, Edited by Walter Gropius, Trans. by Arthur S. Wensinger, Wesleyan Univ. Press, Connecticut, 1961.

³⁰ Lehman, Arnold L. and Richardson. Brenda, *Oskar Schlemmer: Exhibition Catalogue*, The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1986, p127.

³¹ Schlemmer, Oskar, *The Letters and Diaries of Oskar Schlemmer*, Trans. by Krishna Winston, Edited and Selected by Tut Schlemmer, Wesleyan Univ. Press, Connecticut, 1972, p23.

forge out such briefs a unique painting style in which his fundamental respect for the integrity of the human figure, located in an essentially naturalistic space, is balanced by his commitment to simplification and geometric abstraction as a means of conveying the order that he feels was inherent in pictorial form. Influenced by Wassily Kandinsky, Schlemmer views dance as “the only medium in terms of time and space expressing the interior meaning of motion,” and argues that “harmonious or contrapuntal composition” of musical, pictorial, and dance movements “will help to realize stage composition, the first form of a monumental art.”³²

The Conception of the Pictorial Body

Schlemmer sees the body not as an objective motif but rather as a psychophysical whole – “cosmic being”. In his teaching notes, he states “the object is nothing if it is to be merely an isolated thing; only in a universal system of references does it gain significance, become a quantity which obliges man to come to term with it.”³³ His concept of the body is divided into three parts: the formal, the biological and the

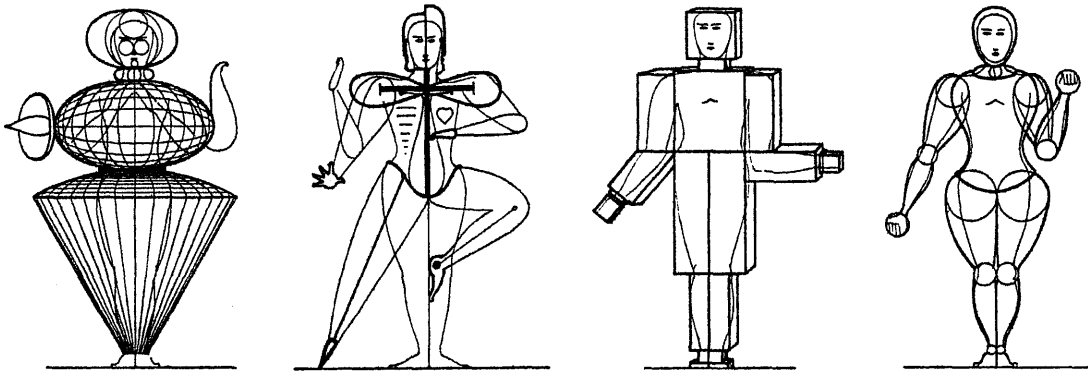


Figure 35

³² Schlemmer, Oskar, *The Letters and Diaries of Oskar Schlemmer*, Trans. by Krishna Winston, Edited and Selected by Tut Schlemmer, Wesleyan Univ. Press, Connecticut, 1972, p57.

³³ Schlemmer, Oskar, *Man: Teaching notes from the Bauhaus*, Edited by Heimo Kuchling, Trans. by Janet Seligman, The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, 1971, p23.

philosophical part, which correspond to graphic representation, scientific structure and the philosophical ideas.

Graphic Representation

It is mainly concerned with pictorial sense, deals with the norms and systems of line, plane and solidity or plasticity: standard measurements, theories of proportion. These notions lead to the laws of movement, the mechanics and kinetics of the body, both within itself and space, both in natural space and artificial space.

Scientific Structure

It is concerned with the biochemical and biomechanical viewpoints. The senses of sight and touch are naturally of special importance: the factual world of anatomy, the theory of the structure of the body, are here contrasted with the less unambiguous physiology and the theory of the vital activities.

Philosophical Notion of the Body

It is concerned with the thinking and feeling of man, the world of imaginations, concepts, ideas, and the struggles for a philosophy of life. Special attention is placed on the conception of substance, conceptions of time and space. Such metaphysical knowledge elucidates the questions of aesthetics and ethnics.

With all three theoretical knowledge of the body, Schlemmer explores the theatrical space through the making of illustrative schemata and diagrams. Consequently, the processes of thought and scales of feeling could be presented in form and color. Color and form, then, reveal their elementary values within the constructive manipulation of architectonic space in form of choreography, diagram and score.

The Conception of the Moving Body

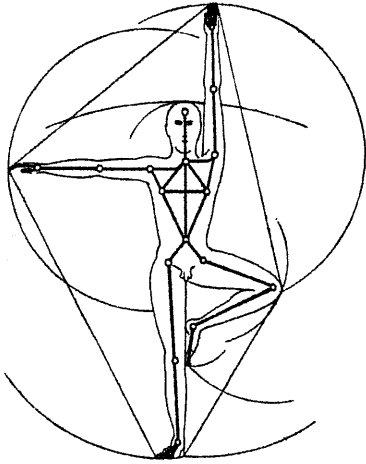


Figure 36

The natural movement of the body is raised in the dance to a form of artistic expression; but it is subject to physical laws. Schlemmer constructs the motifs of the movement of the body by rhythm and replaces the physical laws with a formal one. In Schlemmer's paintings, "rhythm is the system of organization which makes transient events simultaneous and visually intelligible."³⁴ He alternates and repeats the contrary and parallel movements of the body; his motif of movement is implied. Such purely rhythmic manner of representation receives its own dynamic from this movement.

The body conceived in space depends on the figure-ground relationship of the pictorial arrangement. In Schlemmer's paintings, it evolves two-dimensional arrangements out of the axes of the bodies or brings the spatial bodies into the system of axes of the pictorial space. The plane and spatial prospects contain architectonic motifs which are presented orthogonally or in exaggerated perspective.

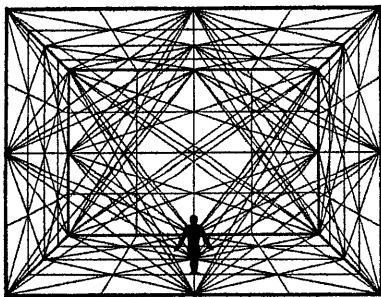


Figure 37

"Invisibly involved with all these laws is Man as Dancer (*Tänzer Mensch*). He obeys the law of the body as well as the law of space; he follows his sense of himself as well as his sense of embracing space."³⁵

The diagram, 'Figure and Space-Delineation', Schlemmer views theatrical space as a five-sided box articulated by an "invisible linear network of planimetric and stereometric relationships" in which the human body

³⁴ Schlemmer, Oskar, *Man: Teaching notes from the Bauhaus*, Edited by Heimo Kuchling, Trans. by Janet Seligman, The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, 1971, p113.

³⁵ Gropius, Walter, *The Theater of the Bauhaus*, Edited by Walter Gropius, Trans. by Arthur S. Wensinger, Wesleyan Univ. Press, Connecticut, 1961, p25.

“creates its balance by means of movements, which by their very nature are determined mechanically and rationally.” Thus, corresponding to the laws of cubical space are bodily movements that constitute a “geometry of calisthenics, eurhythmics, and gymnastics.”³⁶

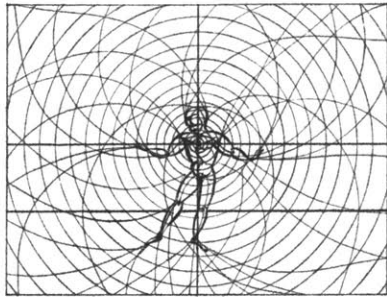


Figure 38



Figure 39

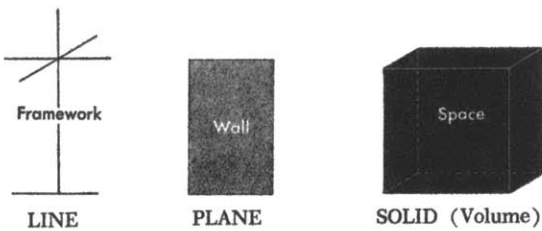


Figure 40

Then, in Oskar Schlemmer's 'Egocentric Space-Delineation', the body in movement is characterized by two different spatial networks, the concentric circumferences arising from the chest and curves that radiate from the points of articulation of the body. 'Man as Dancer' is one that "is involved with both the mechanical laws of his surrounding cubical space and the organic laws of his own existence."³⁷ The commonalities between space and dance in that they both deal with bodies in spaces. It is an opportunity to study the theatrical space, in which the 'Man as Dancer' (*Taenzermensch*) performs his actions, with reference to the kinetic nature of the phenomenon of dance.

Schlemmer transforms the body moving in space into abstract terms of geometry and mechanics. His figures and forms are pure creations of imagination, symbolizing eternal types of human character and their different moods. Pace and gesture, figure and prop, color and sound, all have quality of elementary form, demonstrating anew the problem of theater of Schlemmer's concept: *Man in Space*.

³⁶ Gropius, Walter, *The Theater of the Bauhaus*, Edited by Walter Gropius, Trans. by Arthur S. Wensinger, Wesleyan Univ. Press, Connecticut, 1961, p23.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p25.

Man in Space, as the formative means, "governs the dimensional and temporal limits of dance."³⁸ The anthropomorphic measure of abstract space is adapted and constitutes both the object and receptacle of movement. Within the constructive manipulation of architectonic space, form manifests in extensions of height, breath, and depth; as line, as plane, and as solid or volume. Depending on these extensions, form becomes linear framework, wall, or space, and as such rigid, tangible form. On the other hand, non-rigid, intangible form occurs as light, whose linear effect appears in the geometry of the light and defines space through different intensities of illumination.

The Conception of Costume

"Each puppet has a focal point in movement, a centre of gravity, and when this centre is moved, the limbs follow without any additional handling. The limbs are pendula, echoing automatically the movement of the centre. Every time the centre of gravity is guided in a straight line, the limbs describe curves that complement and extend the basically simple movement."³⁹

Influenced by Heinrich von Kleist, Schlemmer views the puppet as a vehicle of stylization and abstraction on stage, which despite its human shape, "is neither capable of expression physically a state of mind, nor subject to the limitations imposed by gravity and nature's other organic laws."⁴⁰ Schlemmer uses costume as a means for the transformation of the human body. The function of costume is to emphasize the identity of the body or to change it. In addition, costume expresses and transforms the body's nature.

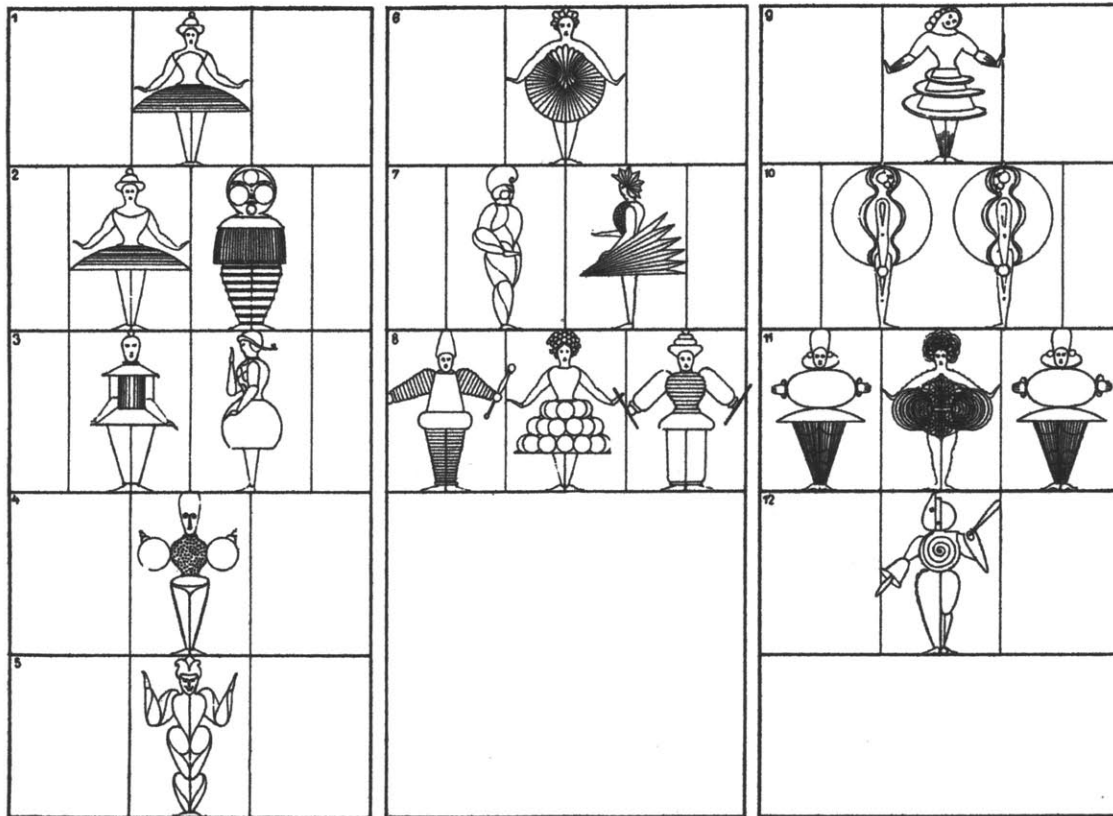
³⁸ Gropius, Walter, *The Theater of the Bauhaus*, Edited by Walter Gropius, Trans. by Arthur S. Wensinger, Wesleyan Univ. Press, Connecticut, 1961, p23.

³⁹ Von Kleist, Heinrich, *On the Marionette Theater*, (*Fragments for a History of the Human Body: Part One*, p.415-429), Edited by Michel Feher with Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi, Zone, New York, 1989, p415.

⁴⁰ Gropius, Walter, *The Theater of the Bauhaus*, Edited by Walter Gropius, Trans. by Arthur S. Wensinger, Wesleyan Univ. Press, Connecticut, 1961, p28.

Like puppets, the dancers embody the qualities of lightness, softness, and resisting gravity. Schlemmer's emphasis on the mechanical "is not one of dehumanization wherein the dancers would be rigid automatons, but rather the mechanical as offering freedom of the expressive potential inherent in technology."⁴¹ He conceives the abstract visual effects of the costumes in motion; kinetic potential and expressive carriage could only be exploited if costume and performer are in physical harmony.

FIRST (YELLOW) SERIES / SECOND (ROSE) SERIES / THIRD (BLACK) SERIES



A B S T R A C T O F T H E T R I A D I C B A L L E T

Figure 41

In the production of 'The Triadic Ballet', Schlemmer abstracts the human body into regular geometric shapes suggesting the simplified form of a puppet or a marionette. He develops this conception of geometric equivalents for parts of the human body. In the costumes, the materials are formed into geometrical shapes, such as spheres, demi-spheres, cylinders, disks, spirals, and ellipses. Strapped into and constrained by these

⁴¹ Gropius, Walter, *The Theater of the Bauhaus*, Edited by Walter Gropius, Trans. by Arthur S. Wensinger, Wesleyan Univ. Press, Connecticut, 1961, p28.

forms, the dancers are physically able to make only a limited number of movements. Schlemmer describes 'The Triadic Ballet' as "the first consequential demonstration of spatially-plastic costumery. Spatially-plastic, for they are so to speak colored and metallic sculptures which, worn by the dancers, move in space, whereby physical sensation is significantly influenced, in such a manner that the more the apparently violated body fuses with the costume, the more it attains new forms of dance expression manifestations."⁴²

Together with the geometric abstraction, there is in both the costumes and the choreography of 'The Triadic Ballet' a pronounced emphasis on mechanical qualities. Schlemmer is not trying to reduce the dancers to the status of automatons composed of mechanical parts, but rather to constrain the body with the costume. Rather than the body itself, machine dynamism assumes the focus of the dance.

As a result, Schlemmer attempts to use the function of the costume in establishing the relationship of the human body to the space through abstraction and metamorphosis. He exploits the possibilities that contemporary technological advances opened up for the mechanical human figure in the modern theater, all the while emphasizing that the "potentialities of constructive configuration are extraordinary on the metaphysical side as well."⁴³

The Conception of Theatrical Space

"Perception will no longer reside in the relation between a subject and an object, but rather in the movement serving as the limit of that relation, in the period associated with the subject and object. Perception will confront its own limit; it will be in the midst of things, throughout its own proximity, as the presence of one haecceity in another, the

⁴² Lehman, Arnold L. and Richardson. Brenda, Oskar Schlemmer: Exhibition Catalogue, The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1986, p132.

⁴³ Lehman, Arnold L. and Richardson. Brenda, Oskar Schlemmer: Exhibition Catalogue, The Baltimore Museum of Art, 1986, p134.

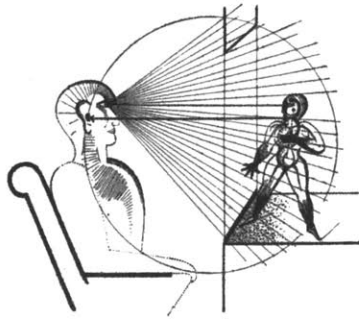


Figure 42

prehension of one by the other or the passage from one to the other: Look only at the movements."⁴⁴

Schlemmer explores the laws that govern the movement of the body in space related to the "cubical, abstract space," as the visual access. It engages the importance of movement in space. He argues that if the spectator is to experience the vital action of contemporary theater, that action must be placed not before a decorative, frontal "picture-stage," but on a "space-stage, which is

not merely a priori space but also appears as space."⁴⁵

The stage, as Schlemmer describes, is an "architectonic-spatial organism" where every element and activity exists "in a spatially conditioned relationship."⁴⁶ He explains that space is articulated by form, which can in turn be broken down into color and light. The visual play comes into being when all these elements are comprehended as a totality.



Figure 43

In *Pole Dance*, Schlemmer attempts to articulate the body's relationship to the space around itself. Such relationship is conceived with respect to the costume. In the performance, the twelve poles fixed to the body of the dancer are part prop and part costume, "an intermediary state between that which the dancer wears and that which he manipulates." This manner of emphasizing the dancer's penetration of space is reminiscent of Rudolph Laban's use of the 'Icosahedron', an open-sided polyhedral form within which the three-dimensional movements of a dancer at any given moment could be located. Instead of locating movement

⁴⁴ Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Trans. by Brian Massumi, Univ. Minnesota Press, 1987, p282.

⁴⁵ Gropius, Walter, *The Theater of the Bauhaus*, Edited by Walter Gropius, Trans. by Arthur S. Wensinger, Wesleyan Univ. Press, Connecticut, 1961, p88.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p85.

in a very well defined, centralized area, Schlemmer uses the poles transposing the mechanics of the body into the figures in space.

"Movement is by nature imperceptible. Perception can grasp movement only as the displacement of a moving body or the development of a form. Movements, becomings, in other words, pure relations of speed and slowness, pure affects, are below and above the threshold of perception."⁴⁷

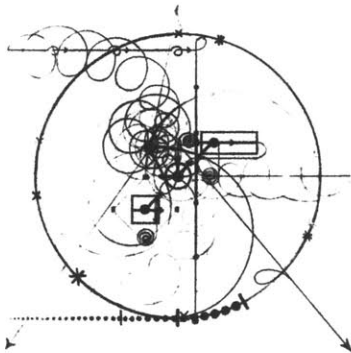


Figure 44

In *Gesture Dance*, Schlemmer devises a dance to illustrate his notion of spatial abstraction. He uses a notation system which describes the linear paths of motion and the dancers' movement. By incorporating the costumes in primary colors, he executes complicated geometric gestures and banal everyday actions in the performance. His intention is to express words or abstract signs, demonstrations and physical images in the form of paintings, which all become a means for representing layers of real space and temporal changes.

As a result, Schlemmer's theory of space, through notation and painting, could be established.

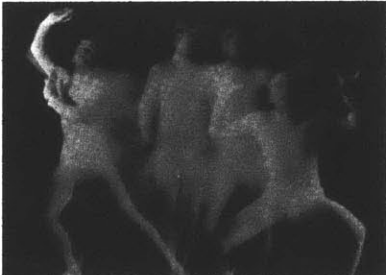


Figure 45

The notion of *Raumempfindung* (felt-volume), "sensation of space", that Schlemmer attributes the origins of each of his dance productions. He explains that "out of plane geometry, out of the pursuit of the straight line, the diagonal, the circle and the curve, a stereometry of space evolves, by the moving vertical line of the dancing figure." The relationship of the "geometry of the plane" to the "stereometry of the space" could be felt if one were to

⁴⁷ Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Trans. by Brian Massumi, Univ. Minnesota Press, 1987, p280-281.

imagine “a space filled with a soft pliable substance in which the figures of the sequence of the dancer’s movements were to harden as a negative form.”⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Goldberg, RoseLee, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, New York, 1988, p104.

Chapter 6 – Isamu Noguchi

The Conception of Sculptural Space

“I see sculpture strengthened and finding through it the means of again becoming the great myth maker of human environment where man will find surcease from mechanization in the communion of mysteries and in the contemplation of enjoyment of a new freedom of spirit.”⁴⁹

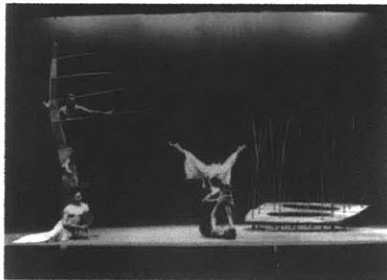


Figure 46

Noguchi's experimentation, his eclecticism, and his multidisciplinary character help him create spaces in which the sculptural object is integrated with architectonic, theatrical, and environmental spaces. As a result, his projects are endowed with special harmony. The play of light, mass, shape, and volume, in addition to the sensibility engages the spectators, are always considered as significant part of the design.

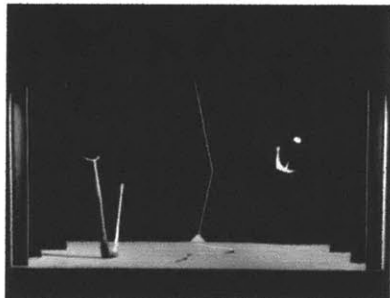


Figure 47

His approach to sculpture is based on the understanding of the intimate relationship between the body and space. “One may enter the space and then discover one is in scale with it, and it is, therefore, real.” **Noguchi declares,** ““Empty space has no visual dimension or significance. Scale and meaning appear, instead, only when an object or a line is introduced... The size and shape of each element is entirely relative to all other elements and the

given space.”⁵⁰ When a viewer enters, all points assume a central location within the space.

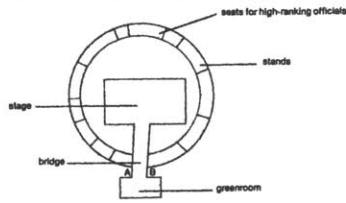
Furthermore, Noguchi thinks that sculpture has a psychological spatial dimension. It is “the theater of mind” where he could exercise his imaginative faculty. Noguchi explores

⁴⁹ Ashton, Dore, *Noguchi East and West*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1992, p79.

⁵⁰ Torres, Anna Maria, *Isamu Noguchi: A Study of Space*, The Monacelli Press, 2000, p20.

the Eastern views of space. In great detail, he explores the Eastern arts and mediates

Figure 1. The Floorplan of a Performing Space Used at the Time of Zeami



The Floorplan of a Modern Nô Stage

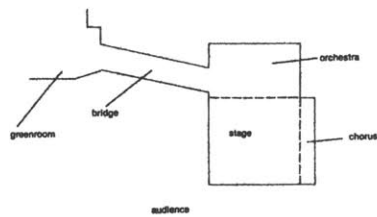


Figure 48



Figure 49

on the nature of space. He immerses himself in the aesthetics of the East and extends his own artistic breadth of various art forms such as dance, in which the spatial problems are necessarily relative and in which it is the environment that creates the object. His interests in Noh and Kabuki performances enhance his own sense of the theater as a controlled space and a site for synesthetic experience.

Noguchi said, "Theater is a ceremonial, and the performance, the rite."⁵¹

Noguchi follows the various specialized crafts that contributed to the theater, from mask carving to wig making; his attention to details is apparent in his notations. He is interested in the sequence of photographs and explanations of the makeup procedure, which, even in photographs, show a decidedly sculptural approach to the transformation of the face.

In addition to *Noh* and *Kabuki*, Noguchi studies the *Bunraku* Puppet Theater. Puppets are essentially sculptures and their manipulation partakes of a sculptural sense of space. In his early ceramics, there is often mimicry of the puppet's aspect and a suggestion of its jointed composition.

Noguchi develops sculptures that are highly responsive to the radical means through bodies, music, and choreographic composition to create a whole. The use of symbolisms derives from the myths would distance the theater of the dance from both balletic and mechanistic modernist conventions, giving collaborators in the dance theater possibilities

⁵¹ Noguchi, Isamu, *A Sculptor's World*, Harper & Row, New York, 1968, p123.

of far wider scope, similar, as Noguchi discovers, to those of the Japanese classic theater.

The collaboration with Martha Graham, Noguchi begins to aware of the importance of the floor as a kind of primal ground from which all forms would rise. For Martha Graham, floor exercises and the training of the back and torso from the seated position are very important. The barre is no longer used as a horizontal mooring for the vertical body. Instead, Graham puts emphasis on asymmetrical formations that would shape the spaces of the stage in unaccustomed ways.



Figure 50

In 1953, Graham and Noguchi collaborate on a performance, *Frontier*. For Noguchi, it is “the genesis of an idea – to wed the total void of the theater space to form and action.”⁵² A stage becomes a landscape of metaphor that choreographed visual and bodily movement. As he describes the dance:

“A rope, running from the two top corners of the proscenium to the floor near center of the stage, bisected the three-dimensional void of stage space. This seemed to throw the entire volume of air straight over the heads of the audience. At the rear convergence was a small section of log fence, to start from and to return to. The white ropes created a curious ennobling – of an outburst into space and, at the same time, of the public’s inrush toward infinity.”⁵³

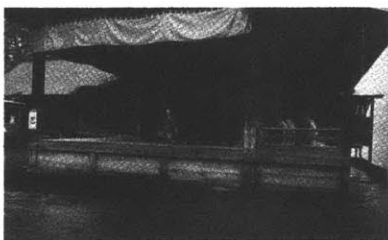


Figure 51

On stage, Noguchi desires to “split the air of the stage” in a fundamentally sculptural way. He expresses the continuum of the stage space; of the very air that he would symbolically cleave and shape. Such notion meshes very well with Martha Graham’s approach. She is aware of the invisible dimensions suggested by the minutest gestures of her dancers. She tends to envision

⁵² Tracy, Robert, *Spaces of the Mind: Isamu Noguchi’s Dance Designs*, Proscenium Publishers, New York, 2000, p24.

⁵³ Noguchi, Isamu, *A Sculptor’s World*, Harper & Row, New York, 1968, p125.

her choreography as a whole before she sees the parts. Both Noguchi and Graham understand that abstract concepts such as timelessness and infinity could only be transmitted through the powerful and reductive means – *Noh*.



Figure 52

Noh theater is a fourteenth-century development and emerges from earlier religious rituals, including dances performed by priests at ancient *Shinto* shrines. It has two aspects which undermine Noguchi's perception of dance theater. The First is the absolute poetic character of the events. *Noh* is the optimal expression of the ancient mythologies and tales. It is wholly ceremonial and ritualistic in every detail. The second is its visual structure. *Noh* has universal qualities, such as timelessness and placelessness, which are rich in suggestion for the new art of Western dance.

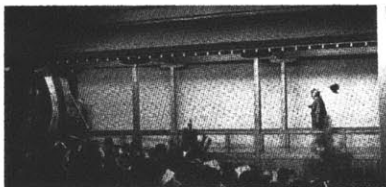


Figure 53

The Spatial Conception of *Noh*

Noh theater is the reflection of the symbolic structure of the *Shinto* shrines. Through the spirit of this ancient tradition, the stage itself becomes the threshold that connects the world of the present and the dead. The bridge-like passage, providing an asymmetry to the entire visual experience, suggests a different existential tempo. The conventional back wall with its invariable pine tree brings the outside space into the inside, sheltered space, and the tree by its very presence evokes the animated, mountainous landscape.



Figure 54

With its simple stage spaces, *Noh* theater gives ample latitude to the imagination of the audience, which is stimulated by the stately entrance of masked and costumed figures who move exceedingly slowly over the bridge to the center stage. Almost no scenery

and very few props are used, but the props are significant in their reminder that in *Noh*, realism is to be avoided in all costs.

Noguchi draws essential components of *Noh* into the theater of dance, the carved *Noh* masks. They are made in a similar way and are different in a very subtle way to indicate age, sex, or emotional condition of the character. Delicate modulations of the basically symbolic face occur in almost invisible ways, an effect that Noguchi exploits not only in dance theater but also in sculptures. In contrast to the masks, the *Noh* costume functions to animate the entire stage space. The very nature of the ceremonial robes is architectonic. Through the *Noh* dancers' subtle movements, such as the tip of the foot or a glimpse of a wrist, the costume is transformed in lines, forms and shapes.



Figure 55

Graham's conception of the dance, with ritualistic overtones, is perfectly apposite to *Noh*. As for Noguchi, he stresses the affinities of modern dance with the *Noh* dance forms. Associating the symbolic with asymmetry, he creates a new choreographic conception of space that "nature understood in a totally new dimension where a total, unifying, non-artificial, directly experienced, harmonious order as well as the delicious sensuous spontaneity, the unplanned playful surprise and diverse abundance occur at absolutely the same time."⁵⁴



Figure 56

"There is a difference between the actual cubic feet of space and the additional space that the imagination supplies. One is measure, the other is an awareness of the void."⁵⁵

In Japanese classic theater, the verses, the props, the actions, the dances, the music, are not merely metaphorical. In a deepest sense, they are experiences. They are the spaces that Gaston Bachelard designates

⁵⁴ Ashton, Dore, *Noguchi East and West*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1992, p229.

⁵⁵ Noguchi, Isamu, *A Sculptor's World*, Harper & Row, New York, 1968, p60.

as the “lived spaces,” the spaces of imagination. These spaces both envelop and flow from the imagination. Bachelard’s descriptions of such spaces, “lived” in the imagination, included several different orders, such as the spaces of attics and cellars, of seashell and tree, cupboards and drawers, cave and sanctuary. As Bachelard suggests, one’s memory of space is “inscribed” in one’s mind. The memories of objects and senses become the archetypal as categories of essential and emotionally invested spatial experiences.

“By sculpture we mean those spatial and plastic relationships which define a moment of personal existence and illuminate the environment of our aspirations. An analogy of this definition is found in the temple sculpture of the past. There the forms – communal, emotional and mystic in character – fulfill their purpose.”⁵⁶



Isamu Noguchi conceives sculpture as a spatial whole rather than as an object. He manipulates concepts tied to environments of ritual and includes them in the sculptural spaces. Through the collaborations with Martha Graham, Noguchi brings technology and new materials into the sculptural aesthetic of theatrical space. In essence, he sees “space as a volume to be treated sculpturally and the void of theater space as an integral part of form and action.”⁵⁷

Figure 57

Like Schlemmer, Noguchi gives great importance of the symbolic dimension to his work. Through Graham, he begins to be fascinated with the ritualistic forms of *Shinto*, *Zen*, and *Noh*. The essence of sculpture becomes the perception of space. For him, space is inconceivable, but the concept of space could be altered through the transformation of dimensions and qualities of space. As he claims, “everything was sculpture. Any material, and idea

⁵⁶ Ashton, Dore, *Noguchi East and West*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1992, p79.

⁵⁷ Noguchi, Isamu, *The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, New York, 1987, p212.

without hindrance born into space, I considered sculpture... I thought of a room of music and light, a porous room within a room – in the void of space.”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ Hunter, Sam, Isamu Noguchi, Essay by Sam Hunter, Exhibit by Bryan Ohno Gallery, Univ. Washington Press, Seattle, 2000, p60.

Chapter 7 – William Forsythe

The Deconstruction of Ballet

“Tradition is open in this general way to continued inquiry; and if one consistently maintains the direction of inquiry, an infinity of questions opens up, questions which lead to definite answers in accord with their sense. The form of generality – indeed, as one can see, of unconditioned general validity – naturally allows for application to individually determined particular cases, though it determines only that in the individual that can be grasped through subsumption.”⁵⁹

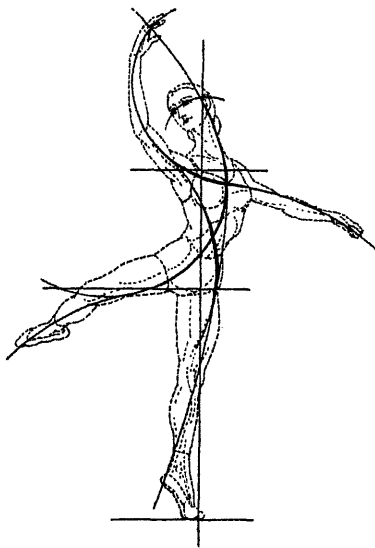


Figure 58

William Forsythe, the choreographer and director of Ballet Frankfurt, is always interested in offering unexpectedness on stage to the audience. As a form of inquiry, he deploys various forms of organization and moments of invisibility as the transitions of movements in contrast to the traditional notion of classical ballet. Yet, there are no preconceived notions of such forms. Beginning with Labanotation, Forsythe investigates Laban's spatial theory in relation to the body –corps de ballet- and explores the possibilities of spatial inscription. As Heidi Gilpin points out in her article, *Aberrations of Gravity*, ANY No.5 March/April 1994, that Forsythe's work attempts to illustrate “the quality of lightness,

disappearance, failure and disequilibrium as the trajectories of new performance.”

“Failure: contains within it notions of absence, of lack, as well as very distinct elements of movement and performance. Displacement, as a movement, is a potential source for configuring the interpretation and composition of performance, but here its importance is in relation to failure. Failed performances ultimately describe movement: movement of a physical and psychic nature, and multiple

⁵⁹ Derrida, Jacques, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, Trans., with a preface and afterword, by John P. Leavey, Jr., Univ. Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1989, p159.

movements of the body, of memory, and of the conscious."⁶⁰

In classical ballet, the body is organized by a system of oppositions, by line that runs through the body mixing edge into grace. Arms complement legs and the gaze is organized in an outward direction that draws attention to the pose. For example, Arabesque is a pose in which the dancer stands on one foot with one arm extended in front and the other arm and leg extended behind; Epaulement is the placing of the shoulders, one moves forward and other draws backward with head turned to look over the forward shoulder. Through the understanding of the principles, one could know what movement to follow in performance. But, Forsythe purposely subverts such balletic logic. In fact, he challenges the ontological distinction between the movement and the body, techniques and expressions, dancers and spectators. Forsythe seems to strike for the uncertainties within dance. His dance celebrates the invisibility and faults of the performance, which is departing from a philosophical rather than an artistic point.

By manipulating the notion of disappearance and disequilibrium, Forsythe forces the audience to envision performance and focus on the invisible body. Through using lightning and stage set, various intensities of light and shade are created to capture the disappearances of the dancers in the shadow. One could not see but feel the movement of the dancers. Such notion is another attempt of contesting the very idea of theatrical convention. Movement itself does not disappear, but the body that performs it does. Forsythe prioritizes the experiential over the visual. Through new forms of visual dynamism, he eliminates visibility via the performance of movement. The presence of body is no longer significant in performance. He dismembers the deceptive unity of movement operative in classical ballet, explodes it into a space where is usually ignored, such as the periphery and the shaded part of the stage, and takes advantage of its residual motions to offer new forms. Forsythe focuses on the specific residual effects of failure in movement explorations. Classical ballet vocabulary is being challenged in order to discover, or uncover, other directions and forms of movement.

For instance, in *Enemy in the Figure*, Forsythe illuminates the complex context of in-between space, movement, and memory from another angle. Perception and memory of

⁶⁰ Heidi Gilpin: Aberrations of Gravity, ANY No#5 March/April 1994.

movement in reading and writing always produce interspaces – conceptual topographies. As Gabriele Brandstetter states, “All memory is spatial. Choreography, as notation and as cartography of movement, is a means of retaining the memory of movement.”⁶¹

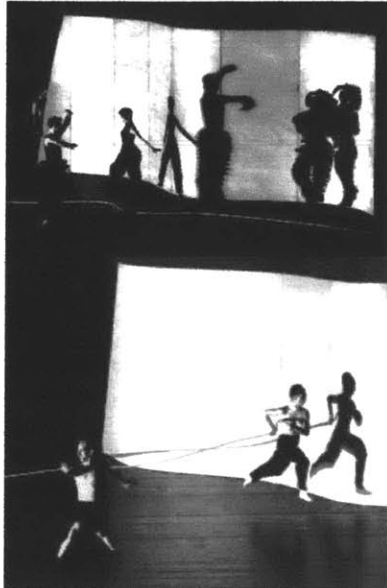


Figure 59

In the performance, the dancing seems broken down into fragments, the minute movement refracted and inverted its hidden processes. As Forsythe described, “I wanted to see how complexly a dancer could move. I took literally what Balanchine said about a counterpoint between the head, the hands and the feet, and tried to create a web of counterpoints in a single body.”⁶² Thus, the writing movement of the piece comes as an incursion into the symmetry. Its strange, snaking rope and wavy screen drew an undulating line like a soundwave on stage. The composition seems to suggest the fixing of

spatial paths and bodily movements in a spatial script. Movement itself is clearly transitory, while dance is

always remembered; writing and the notation carry the traces.

In addition, throughout the performance, the importance of the play is emphasized either on the side of the stage or in the shadow of the wavy screen. Spectators are forced to appreciate the dance through not the visible but the invisible. Even though the dancers are performing under the shadow, spectators could sense the movement through the subtle reflections of the bodily movement. As a result, Forsythe is able to invert the spatial relationship between the significant and the insignificant within the traditional sense of theatrical performance.

⁶¹ Brandstetter, Gabriele, *ReMembering the Body*, Edited by Gabriele Brandstetter and Hortensia Voelckers, Hatje Cantz Publishers, Germany, 2000, p120.

⁶² *Ibid*, p122.

The Deconstruction of Labanotation

“The writing-down effects a transformation of the original mode of being of the meaning-structure, with the geometrical sphere of self-evidence, of the geometrical structure which is put into words. It becomes sedimented, so to speak. But the reader can make it self-evident again, can reactivate the self-evidence.”⁶³

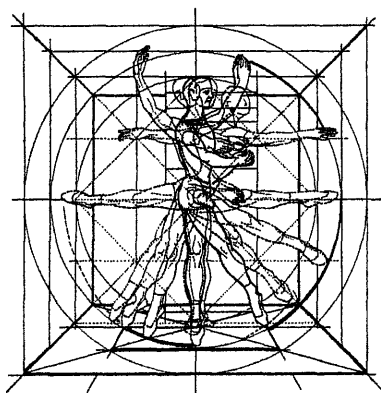


Figure 60

The notion of kinesphere serves the foundation of Labanotation. Laban establishes spherical space around the body defined by extensions of the limbs like the Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian man. The movement beyond the kinesphere would result the displacement of the kinesphere from its origin. As Laban defines it, the kinesphere always remains in a fixed relationship to the body. As the body moves, the kinesphere would constantly travel with it. Like the diagram of Labanotation, the kinesphere is orientated itself at the central axis of the body where all movement originates or passes through. Since classical ballet employs one central point in the body as its organizational structure, Laban's axial model suits its vocabulary of movement well.

Forsythe acknowledges this premise of the Laban's system. Like Jacques Derrida's play of Différance in linguistics, he marginalizes the notion of Laban's kinesphere by reassigning its centers infinitely throughout the body rather than the center of the body. The origin of the kinesphere is no longer dictated by the center of the body but the origin of the movement. Eventually, he is able to assume multiple kinespheres; each is entirely collapsible and expandable. As a result, rotational axis/kinespheric center could be any point of the body and appear simultaneously in multiple points in the body.

⁶³ Derrida, Jacques, Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction, Trans., with a preface and afterword, by John P. Leavey, Jr., Univ. Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1989, p164.

William Forsythe said, "When you speak about the vocabulary of classical dance, you're talking about ideas. You say, this is a place the human body can occupy. I use ballet, because I use ballet dancers, and I use the knowledge in their bodies. I think ballet is a very, very good idea, which often gets pooh-poohed. Let me make a metaphor. It's like saying that a compass isn't valuable because it has four points, and it divides the world into top and bottom, and orients you in a certain way. I see ballet as a point of departure - it's a body of knowledge, not an ideology."⁶⁴

Such operation allows a simultaneous demonstration and deconstruction of the choreographic search for perfection of form, in which the dance is continually broken down and reconstituted in such a way as to offer 'traces' – the residual movement. Furthermore, Forsythe creates multiple centers of focuses in performance by giving privileges to the periphery over the center of the stage - a deliberate play with the hierarchies of visual privilege that seating in theatres traditionally provides. By questioning the priority of ballet, which is deeply rooted in its tradition and history, he sets up a new strategy for writing and interpretation of dance. Afterward, Forsythe transforms, by binary opposition within dance, the hierarchical structure of ballet and reprioritizes its order. For example, *Disfocusing* is about the residual movement that occurs through the task pursued. "The idea of moving away from a strong, outwardly directed visual focus and heading toward a trance state."⁶⁵ Therefore, by revealing the derivatives or subordinates of ballet, such as instability, reversibility, invisibility and the mutual dependence of various movements, new principles or enquiries of dance organization could be comprised.

"I like to hide, to make uncertainties which takes place on stage," Forsythe has said, "and to extend that which I call the poetry of disappearance. People are always frightened that things will disappear. But life without death, light without obscurity, would be terrifying. Shadow is that which permits imagination."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Spier, Steven, *Engendering and Composing Movement: William Forsythe and the Frankfurt Ballet*, <http://www.frankfurt-ballet.de>

⁶⁵ Caspersen, Dana, *It Starts from Any Point: Bill and the Frankfurt Ballet, 1999*, <http://www.frankfurt-ballet.de>

⁶⁶ Sulcas, Roslyn, *The Poetry of Disappearance and the Great Tradition, 1991*, <http://www.frankfurt-ballet.de>

The notion of erroneousness gives rise to a continual interrogation of the historical and philosophical parameters and stratagems of inquiries within disciplines of dance. Forsythe attempts to subject his very own methodology of dance composition to such questioning; then, his choreographic work commences the resultant of the elaboration of the discourses that emerges from such interrogation. Forsythe's refusal of unified or transcendental meaning in his choreography gives a radically new inner logic that allows freedom to explore new territories of embodied meaning. His choreography simultaneously exposes and creates theatrical illusion from the fallacies of movements. This is the equivalent of Derrida's strategies of Différance, spacing and temporization of the domain of dance. Forsythe explores "the states of concentration where accidents happen to produce exquisite and unexpected possibilities."⁶⁷

"If the goal of reactivability can only be relatively fulfilled, then the claim which stems from the consciousness of being able to acquire something also has its relativity; and this relativity also makes itself noticeable and is driven out. Ultimately, objectively, absolutely firm knowledge of truth is an infinite idea."⁶⁸

For William Forsythe, his concern of the representation of the body gives rise to the question of addressing not the static but rather the motion body. He tries to expose the paradox of movement: "the inextricable interweaving of stillness and motion, of body image and the simulation of movement."⁶⁹ As a result, the moving bodies reflect the representational possibilities of the body in motion, which is governed by the perception because the moving bodies cannot be settled as a unified form. In essence, dance and choreography function as the formulation and reformulation of the body remembrance,

⁶⁷ Sulcas, Roslyn, *The Poetry of Disappearance and the Great Tradition*, 1991, <http://www.frankfurt-ballet.de>

⁶⁸ Derrida, Jacques, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*, Trans., with a preface and afterword, by John P. Leavey, Jr., Univ. Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1989, p166.

⁶⁹ Brandstetter, Gabriele, *ReMembering the Body*, Edited by Gabriele Brandstetter and Hortensia Voelckers, Hatje Cantz Publishers, Germany, 2000, p16.

from which one could examine on the theatre of perception, representation, and recognition of the culture.

In one of the Forsythe's ballet performance, *Wolf Phrase*, he points out that movement cannot be taken from one place to another, because they are absent and invisible by their very nature. In classical ballet, movements exist only as idea, as ideals those dancers can aim for in their quest to execute the stops as perfectly as possible. But in performing the movements of the dance, they can do no more than pass through the figures and briefly bring them to life, before they fall once again in oblivion.

He used Virginia Woolf's novel, 'Mrs. Dalloway', one of the most important modern works of fiction about the effects of time, which serves as the foil for the text of the dance. Forsythe transforms the text into not only the essence of the movement, but also the constant approximation of movements around an empty, invisible center. The vertigo effect of visual and audio perceptions evokes the moment and emphasizes the suddenness of events or emotional states.



Figure 61

In the piece, the movements are generated by the gaze of the dancers themselves. With its succession of solos and duets, the performance is impressionistic and uniform except for a chaotic scene in the middle of the program. The dancers move through space and time effortlessly, approach each other, and are driven apart according to the play of the quotes from 'Mrs. Dalloway' and the fragments of music which is played in reverse. The choreography of the movement shatters the glances and perspectives, which are fragmented into a sequence of singularities of moment without losing the inner cohesion of the piece. In fact, vision is used to internalize the visible, in order to subsume into the body phenomena that are disappearing and subject to the passage of time.

The Strategy of Choreography

“Anything that is shown to be a historical fact, either in the present through experience or by a historian as a fact in the past, necessarily has its inner structure of meaning; but especially the motivational inter-connections established about it in terms of everyday understanding have deep, further and further-reaching implications which must be interrogated, disclosed.”⁷⁰

“The body is comprised of a multitude of bodies and concepts of bodies.”⁷¹ Through examination of the relationship between the body and the space, body itself in ballet is not given, but rather becomes configured as the recipient of phenomenological experience. Forsythe devises the concepts of the body arising as topographies and choreographies as the description of space, a mnemonic space. Henceforth, an interesting question arises. Dance becomes the ‘unfocused object’, which refers to the forms of observations and representations: space and time, and the media, as a process of transferal/deferral.

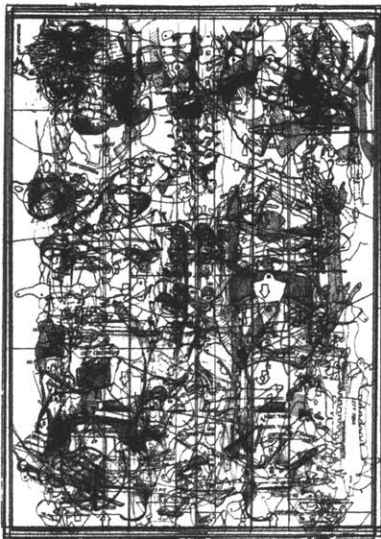


Figure 62

Such process as the discourse of the body opens up infinite possibilities for the interpretation of the phenomenology of space and movement. However, the body itself is still under the continual subjection of the body dimension to the aspect of the boundary of time. Traditional choreography becomes the rhetoric of defining spatial construction and temporal organization, which marks the forms and conditions of perception and the fundamental parameters of movement.

As an opposition, Forsythe choreographic work illustrate the fluctuations in perception and the formation of a

⁷⁰ Derrida, Jacques, Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction, Trans., with a preface and afterword, by John P. Leavey, Jr., Univ. Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1989, p170.

⁷¹ Brandstetter, Gabriele, ReMembering the Body, Edited by Gabriele Brandstetter and Hortensia Voelckers, Hatje Cantz Publishers, Germany, 2000, p124.

plural concept of body reveal a peculiar autonomy of movement, of agitation: the shifting of classical proportions, the organization of space and the form of the body are deformed and follow a movement orientation pattern of perception. He uses the strategy of marginalization as the paradigm for the dissolution of a static pictorial composition based on the compositional principles of perspective. Then, Forsythe is able to establish connection between movement and spatial notation as a game of perception and of rhetoric. He creates processes of dissolving of fixed patterns result from an exact observation of the codified steps and poses of dance body.

“The sedimentations of a truth-meaning that can be made originally self-evident; whereas it is by no means necessary that they have such a meaning, as in the case of associatively derived falsifications.”⁷²

‘Failure’ is used as a strategy both for composition and interpretation of movement. With his destructive strategy, he interprets, “lively in an incorrect way,” the code of classical ballet. He actively incorporates the making of falling out of balance (disequilibrium) in contrast to the tradition of classical ballet as part of his choreography. The point of disequilibrium becomes the source of a continuation of a movement. As a result, movement could be performance in a three dimensional space while engaging imaginary spaces through which the body is constantly in a state of multidimensional falling.

“The more you can let go of your control and give it over to a kind of transparency in the body, a feeling of disappearance, the more you will be able to grasp differentiated form and differentiated dynamics. You try to divest your body of movement, as opposed to thinking that you are producing movement. So it would not be like pushing forward into space and invading space – it would be like leaving your body in space,” stated William Forsythe.⁷³

⁷² Derrida, Jacques, Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction, Trans., with a preface and afterword, by John P. Leavey, Jr., Univ. Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1989, p170.

⁷³ Brandstetter, Gabriele, ReMembering the Body, Edited by Gabriele Brandstetter and Hortensia Voelckers, Hatje Cantz Publishers, Germany, 2000, p124.

Forsythe's choreography also had a retrospective effect, especially on Balanchine's ballet, as Roslyn Sulcas suggests, which choreographers and audiences begin to study for their structural scaffolding rather than for their individual dance sequence. He unlocked the zeitgeist of ballet. His principle of spatial change and transition continuous into the movements that follow the principle of twisting and turning in all imaginable ways, be it around one's own body or around the supporting and tangential limbs of the dancers. Through his techniques, he decomposes and recomposes the ballet rhetoric with Laban's spatial theory and achieves bodies that are plural both in space and time. He seems to have mapped out a new dance. His obsession remains the abstract vocabulary of classical ballet; it is the material he breaks down methodologically and that serves as his creative point of departure.

"I like classical dance," Forsythe told an interviewer in 1984, the year he was appointed artistic director of the Ballet Frankfurt. "I think it's nice, neutral language. You look at a ballet and you read history What we try to do is to keep the syntax logical without resorting to rhetorical ballet language. Choreography is a language. It's like the alphabet, and you don't necessarily have to spell words you know The most important thing is how you speak with the language, not what you say."⁷⁴

With his new strategy of choreography, Forsythe sets out to create challenging original works that are removed from conventional ballet. In addition, it helps him to develop a unique ballet aesthetic that does not deny traditional ballet technique but which both deconstructs/constructs, broadening and challenging the vocabulary of dance. As Forsythe defines this new limit of dance, he offers a new framework of intellectual enquiry that his strategy and the layered composition of the ballet. This framework is a new connotations and associations for the language of ballet. With the play of *Différance*, he frees ballet from the past and the traditional theatrical context and endows it with new meanings. Yet, his quest for ever-changing and innovative dance composition is necessary that he keeps questioning his paradigms and reinterpreting the very boundaries of tradition. Like Derrida, one needs to be surprised by one's own conservatism. Constantly put oneself in question is needed. Such questioning would

⁷⁴ Aloff, Mindy, *Rebuilding Ballet*, StageBill – BAM, December 2001 / January 2002, StageBill, New York, 2001.

lead to a kind of infinite to demystification, in whichever more sophisticated subtleties are elaborated within an unchanging field of questions.

Chapter 8 – The Body

Introduction

“...An expression machine capable of disorganizing its own forms, and of disorganizing its forms of content in order to liberate pure contents that mix with expressions in a single intense matter.”⁷⁵



As a form of language, dance is a medium that is not about words. It is a resultant of the interwoven movement and expression, which allows a dance to express contents of great clarity. For William Forsythe, the director and Choreographer of the Ballet Frankfurt, dance seems broken down into shards, the minute movement refracted, inverted, its hidden processes exposed. Like the mutation of medical knowledge in the eighteenth century Michel Foucault demonstrates, choreography makes the body possible to be mapped and diagrammed. Then, balletic space becomes the subject to new rules of classification rather than the subject of precision and expression. With choreography, one begins to describe phenomena below the threshold of the visible and expressible.

In Foucault's philosophical projects, there is always an underlying principle which governs his analysis and critical argument of the subject matter, such as medicine, discipline, punishment, language, and history. His method of analysis establishes an organizational framework for an abstract concept - diagram. In turn, Foucault is able to reveal the hidden principles of the subjects. By the same token, dance notation could be studied as a form of archaeology from which the relationship between bodily movement and various spatial conditions could be unearthed.

This philosophical investigation is an attempt to unearth the relationship between the body and the conception of space. Through research on body, movement, dance and

⁷⁵ Deleuze & Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Trans. by Dana Polan, Univ. Minnesota Press, 1986, p28.

notation system, one could resolve the confrontation between what is real and what is mediatized, and question about the phenomenological vision and new spatial structure underlining this project, the aesthetic and semantic quest of which could be summarized in a phrase: An Archaeology Of Body. It sets to establish links between choreography, movement, and space, and to question the status of the body at the time when the domination of machines, reinforced by the acceleration of communication technologies, is indisputable.

“Body” as a “Receptacle” of Knowledge

"When you speak about the vocabulary of classical dance, you're talking about ideas. You say, this is a place the human body can occupy. I use ballet, because I use ballet dancers, and I use the knowledge in their bodies... Let me make a metaphor. It's like saying that a compass isn't valuable because it has four points, and it divides the world into top and bottom, and orients you in a certain way. I see ballet as a point of departure - it's a body of knowledge, not an ideology," said William Forsythe, Director and Choreographer, the Ballet Frankfurt.⁷⁶

Ballet remains today nothing different more than a prison system as Foucault describes in *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of Prison*. Like the notion of “Panopticon”, ballet is “being elaborated for distributing individuals, fixing them in space, classifying them, extracting from them the maximum in time and forces, training their bodies, coding their continuous behavior, maintaining them in perfect visibility, forming around them an apparatus of observation, registration and recording, constituting on them a body of knowledge that is accumulated and centralized.”⁷⁷

Fundamentally ballet is a highly developed and refined way of organizing the body. Choreography is about organizing bodies in space, or is about organizing bodies with other bodies, or a body with other bodies in an environment that is organized. As an

⁷⁶ Aloff, Mindy, *Rebuilding Ballet*, StageBill – BAM, December 2001 / January 2002, StageBill, New York, 2001.

⁷⁷ Foucault, Michel, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of Prison*, 2nd Ed., Trans. by Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, 1995, p231.

organization of the human body as an art form, modern ballet leads ways of engendering and organizing movement, which makes the pursue of counterpoint, proprioception, entrainment, and authenticity for organizational principles that also allow improvisation. Based on the fundamentals of classical ballet, the multiplication of Laban's construct creates an incredible variety of movements and agendas. Then, one could challenge the traditional distinction between choreography and space, thus questioning hierarchy, authorship, and disciplinary boundaries.

“'Body image' was ... a *compendium* of our bodily experience, capable of giving a commentary and meaning to the internal impressions and the impression of possessing a body at any moment.”⁷⁸

A ballet dancer is trained to imagine lines, planes, and vectors in order always to know precisely where he or she is in three-dimensional space. Classical ballet connects coordinates in established ways, which has allowed it to develop a high degree of formal and technical complexity against which one can judge it. By simply looking anew at conventions of turnout, placement verticality, balance, and spatial orientation, one can draw attention to these conventions and achieve startling results, in effect turning ballet upon itself. Hence, beyond the traditional theatrical context of dance, the new interpretations of movement and space endow the body with new meanings, freeing modern ballet to be other than the sum of its past.

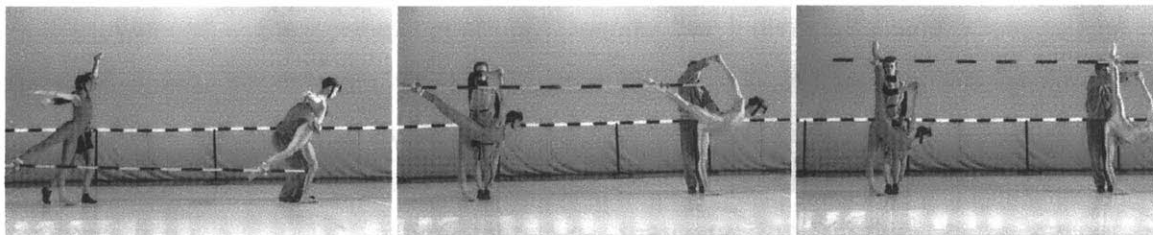


Figure 63

Disregarding the verticality and apparent effortlessness that inform ballet, the choreographer, in the case of Forsythe, allows many different planes of orientation to co-exist, introducing a disequilibrium that gives the movement a quality of release and

⁷⁸ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Trans. by Colin Smith, Routledge Classics, 2002, p113.

fluidity altogether different from the control and prowess emphasized by classical technique.

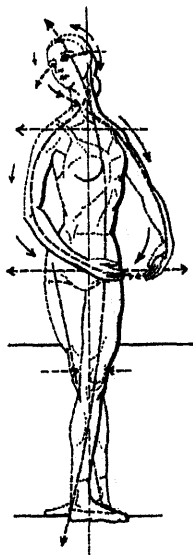


Figure 64

"The gaze plunges into the space that it has given itself the task of traversing. In its primary form, the ... reading implied an external, deciphering subject, which, on the basis of and beyond that which it spelt out, ordered and defined kinships."⁷⁹

Forsythe said of *epaulement*, a classical technique, "it is the crowning accomplishment of great ballet dancers. It entails a tremendous number of counter rotations determined by the relationships among the foot, hand, and head and even of the eyes. As in Indian classical dancing, it dictates rules of gazing past the body. For him, *epaulement* is the key to ballet because it demands the most complex torsion. The mechanics of *epaulement* are what give ballet its inner transitions."⁸⁰ Hence, *epaulement* becomes an embodied mechanic, a form of knowledge and trace of bodily memory.

As a discipline, then, ballet has an idealized notion of form after which one strives. By calling attention to this predicament, of always trying to reach what is by definition unattainable, one could then closely examine the intricate relationship between the body and movement – the spatial construct. Despite the individuality and idiosyncrasy of different styles, the dancers should not be subsumed by the dance, like Balanchinian perfect tools, but rather to have made the movement into something of their own. By repeatedly viewings of a ballet sometimes reveals consistently occurring individual improvisations within its overall structure that are the product of a deliberate choreographic strategy. This strategy provides the dancers with an environment within which they can find their own personal style. Then, choreography should serve as a channel for the desire to dance rather than a fixing of steps to which the human interpreter bears a transitory relationship. This is not a concept of improvisation neither

⁷⁹ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Trans. by Colin Smith, Routledge Classics, 2002, p136.

⁸⁰ Sulcas, Roslyn, *The Poetry of Disappearance and the Great Tradition*, 1991, <http://www.frankurt-ballet.de>

of an illusory freedom, nor of an anarchic state, but of a highly trained state in which dancers are able to rely on their own ability to create appropriate movements for themselves and their context.

This ideal of autonomy and freedom of choice for each person is radically at odds with the traditionally authoritarian power structure of choreographer and dancer, and is clearly only possible if the choreographer is willing to relinquish the traditional humanist concept of the art work as an "expression" of the individual creative self. It is also only possible if the dancers are able to waive their in-bred sense of themselves as merely vehicles for choreography and possess the courage to abandon the security of that position. It is within this framework of intellectual enquiry that these strategies and the layered composition of the ballets appear to be awaiting for 'Necessity'. 'Necessity', as the preservation of the binary sense of opposition and alliance, offers the language of ballet new connotations and associations.

“... As intellect was ruling over necessity by persuading her to lead most of what comes to be toward what's best, in this way accordingly was this all constructed at the beginning: through necessity worsted by thoughtful persuasion.”⁸¹

The notion of 'Necessity' is clearly established by Socrates in Plato's *Timaeus*. Bodies "are moved by others and come to be movers of other things only out of necessity."⁸² Further, he claims the idea of the body as "a receptacle for all becoming."⁸³ The "receptacle" is a permanent thing which underlies change. It has no sensible qualities of its own, but is not wholly without character which is identified with space. In addition, Plato affirms that all images are logical dependence on the original as relational entities. Thus, the spatiality is in part an inter-related relationship of the space and body; the space and body are not stretched out along side each other but rather enveloped in each other.

⁸¹ Plato, *Plato's Timaeus*, Trans., with introduction, by Peter Kalkavage, Focus, 2001, p79.

⁸² *Ibid*, p77.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p80.

“Body” as the “Receptacle” of Technology

In dance, “technology” is defined as the conversation between art and scientific principles, the interaction between creativity and the tools one uses to extend the abilities of the senses. Dance, as a theatrical or ritual form, always has some relationships to the tools of the culture that performs it. Whether it is intertwined with music, and therefore with the instruments that make that music, or makes elaborate use of props and costumes, or relies on dramatic sets to create its world. Dance, as an art form, is emphatically not separate from the technologies that surround it.

“Space can dance. It can dance with the object and the dancers can be motionless,” says Frederic Flamand, Director and Choreographer, Charleroi/Danses.⁸⁴



Figure 65

Confrontation between what is real and what is mediatized, questions about the digital vision and new spatial possibilities, Flamand tries to investigate the relationship between the body and the machine. The machine in its materiality but also in the immaterial sense which is increasingly the norm in the era of large communications networks. Choreographic

experimentation with props leads to a dance of bodies, but also to a dance of props and of space in its entirety.

It can be difficult for dancers to accept this type of endeavor, this idea that space can dance, that it can dance with objects and that the dancers themselves can be immobile at that very moment.

In the trilogy *The Fall of Icarus*, *Titanic*, *Ex-Machina*, by Flamand and Plessi, they work with big baroque machines, with very heavy props, very difficult to handle. The props become a partner which has to be tamed. The same goes for the ubiquitous images in the performances which force the body to redefine itself, to affirm its rejections, to set in

⁸⁴ Flamand, Frederic, Repertoire(s), Charleroi/Danses – Plan K, Brussels, 1997.



Figure 66

motion its revolts. The body of the artist has always been a rebellious body. The body itself is matter, authenticity. It is haunted by its wounds, fallibility, and sensuality. At a time when there has never been so much talk of caring for the body, when there is obsession with maintaining the body in fitness clubs to gyms, the true care of the body has never been so absent. The performances bring the physicality of the body, its flesh and its sweat, face to face with immaterial and virtual technology: the performances thrive on this relationship of the body with or against the machine. They are relationships between the object, space, the dancer, the actor, and the image. The performances are not solely anthropocentric. This choreographing of the relationships between the diverse elements leads to an explosion of space, even if the event takes place within a finite framework. The notion of explosion evokes the disjunction of the structuring/de-structuring space.

“Body” as the “Assemblages”

“...The perfect object of novel, has two sides: it is a collective assemblage of enunciation; it is a machinic assemblage of desire.”⁸⁵

“Assemblages” is aggregatization of different vectors of conceptions; or, it “is not form, but a procedure, a process”⁸⁶; this is something other than the “strata” as Deleuze proposed. From this aspect, one distinguishes the body in any assemblage of the content and the expression. In each assemblage, one must find the content and expression and evaluate their real distinction, their reciprocal presupposition, and their piece-by-piece insertions. But what already determines the fact that the assemblage is not reduced to the ‘strata’, is the expression ‘becoming’ within a semiotic system, a regime of signs, and the content ‘becoming’ within a pragmatic system, actions and passions.

⁸⁵ Deleuze & Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Trans. by Dana Polan, Univ. Minnesota Press, 1986, p81.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p8.

As Deleuze suggests, the consideration of two forms of content with a binary relation is necessary; then a new form of expression would correspond to a form of content. In the discussion of Kafka's *The Great Wall of China*, he points out that "the Russian Constructivist Khlebnikov invents two languages; one can ask to what degree they can rejoin each other, to what degree they differ from each other: the astronomical, algorithmic, stellar language of pure logic and high formalism, and the underground 'zaoum' that works with pure asignifying material, intensity, sonority, contiguity. It is as though there were two remarkable bureaucratic styles, each pushed to its extreme – that is, each following its own line of escape."⁸⁷

The notion of 'line of escape', then, initiates and sets the datum for the process of 'becoming'. To the extent that 'assemblages' remain subject to the distinction of content and expression, they still belong to the 'strata'; and one could consider the regimes of signs, the pragmatic systems, as constituting 'strata' in their process of assemblage. Yet, because the content-expression distinction takes a new shape, one already finds oneself, in another element than 'strata'.

But the assemblage is already divided along another axis. Its territoriality (content and expression included) is only an initial aspect, the other aspect being constituted by the lines of deterritorialization which cross it and carry it off. The territoriality is no less inseparable from deterritorialization than the code was from decoding. And it is following these lines that the assemblage no longer presents any expression or distinct contents, but only unformed materials, destratified forces and functions.

The residues, the destratified forces and functions, operates as the alternate assemblage of bodies. This assemblage is a system of counterpoint, which consists of organizing the ways of alignment in time within the 'strata'. Either it organizes shape, or it organizes flow of movement, or change in motion. Then, the bodily movement and expression could be accessed and apprehended historically, structurally, temporally, spatially.

⁸⁷ Deleuze & Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Trans. by Dana Polan, Univ. Minnesota Press, 1986, p76.

Assemblage, then, becomes a form of meshwork in which form and matter play out their dance. Within it, there is a diagram which represents the plastic aspect of the reality: subject and object not only partially merge and overlap, but can virtually assimilate as one another. Such notion offers possibilities for the theory of perception, which frees one from static, abstracting, and vision-based concepts of space. Hencefore, assemblage becomes the concept of organization which defines differentiation, dissymmetry, and specialization in the development of form.

“Body” as the Diagrams

“An abstract machine in itself is not physical or corporeal, any more than it is semiotic; it is diagrammatic... It operates by matter, not by substance; by function, not by form... The diagrammatic or abstract machine does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality.”⁸⁸



Figure 67

Diagram is a notation that maps program in time and space, its primary utility serves as an abstract thinking about organization and its representation. It is both a formal and a programmatic configurations. The configurations the diagram develops are momentary aggregation of space which is subjected to continual modification. Therefore, the diagram is not a thing in itself but a description of potential relationships among elements, not only an abstract model of the means of thinking about space but a map of possible spatial conditions – ‘topological forms.’

The ‘topological form’ is a point in the space of energetic possibilities for the assemblage. It governs the collective behavior of individual elements and results in the emergence of a shape, which could guide the processes that generate many other geometrical forms. Deleuze calls this ability of topological forms (and other abstract machines) to give rise

⁸⁸ Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Trans. by Brian Massumi, Univ. Minnesota Press, 1987, p141-142.

to many different physical instantiation, a process of 'divergent actualization'. "Actualization breaks with resemblance as a process no less than it does with identity as a principle ... In this sense, actualization or differentiation is always a genuine creation For a potential or virtual object, to be actualized is to create divergent lines which correspond to – without resembling – a virtual multiplicity. The virtual possesses the reality of a task to be performed or a problem to be solved."⁸⁹

More than an abstraction, the diagram is a field of resonances and virtualities, an abstracts which explores an experimental thought of possibilities. It is a diagram of knots, interlacings, combinatory or labyrinthine circuits, folds and unfoldings. The diagram is connected to a topological space in which dialectical oppositions are interacting. Then, it becomes an intermediary object which suggests something more tangible rather than some mere perceptual signs.

The subject of perception can only recognize and be conscious of the body as an object when perceiving the spatialization of the diagram. This is perception already severed from temporalization, for what distinguishes the body, as an objective reality is that it is already detached, like a diagram, represented in isolation from other thoughts. Temporal flow of ideas, what precedes and follows, has been suppressed insofar as the living perceptual being has no interest in it, but only in the object. Hitherto, Merleau-Ponty suggests that space is neither a container nor a unifying activity but an open field of possibilities.

As Deleuze suggests, the figure of the diagram is not representational. In contrast, Foucault claims, "the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form ... a figure of political technology."⁹⁰ It conveys the spatial organization of a specific form of state power and discipline. The arrangement of the 'Panopticon' is the expression of a number of cultural and political conditions that culminate in a distinctive manifestation of surveillance. The "Panopticon" is a manifold like all diagrams. Foucault introduced the notion of the diagram as an assemblage of situations, techniques, tactics, and

⁸⁹ Deleuze, Gilles, *Difference and Repetition*, Trans. by Paul Patton, Columbia Univ. Press, 1994, p212.

⁹⁰ Foucault, Michel, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of Prison*, 2nd Ed., Trans. by Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, 1995, p135.

functioning made solid, even though he put the emphasis more on the strategies that form the diagram than on its actual format. He isolated the “explicit program” of the Panopticon in the context of his concept of the repressive hypothesis; the concept of repression was his real protagonist. Deleuze reverses the agenda and zooms in on the configuration and working of the diagram itself.

For Deleuze, diagram is interesting not as a paradigmatic example of a disciplinary technology but as an abstract machine that “make no distinction within itself between a plane of expression and a plane of content.”⁹¹ Diagrams are distinguished from indexes, icons, and symbols. Their meanings are not fixed. “The diagrammatic or abstract machine does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come.”⁹² In contrast, Foucault’s diagram quickly deflates under pressure without such crucial intervention, which were never directly or completely realized as institutions because the diagram is not a blueprint.

“Body” as the Assemblage of Technology

“Movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body. Then there was the object of the control: it was not or was no longer the signifying elements of behavior or the language of the body, but the economy, the efficiency of movements, their internal organization; constraint bears upon the forces rather than upon the signs; the only truly important ceremony is that of exercise.”⁹³

Dancers express themselves in movements, not in words. Dance explores territories where the word proves powerless. Dance may be more appropriate to this transmission of the non-visible; in any case it best brings about a resistance to the dullness of images.

⁹¹ Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Trans. by Brian Massumi, Univ. Minnesota Press, 1987, p141.

⁹² *Ibid*, p142.

⁹³ Foucault, Michel, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of Prison*, 2nd Ed., Trans. by Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, 1995, p137.

All these elements overlap to form a fluid and yet heterogeneous material. Fluidity – heterogeneity which leads to choreography organized in networks: movement in opposite directions, alternation of ruptures and harmony resolved in a climax and merging into an organic whole.



Figure 68

In *Metapolis* (2000) Flamand and Hadid use three aluminum and fiberglass bridges surrounded by dancers who move and are moved by the bridges. On a screen there are more bodies with images of cities and buildings projected onto their costumes. *Metapolis* is beyond the city. Flamand and Hadid evoke an utopian city torn between fluidity and friction, public and private, individual and crowd, mobility and immobility, urbanization and depopulation, order and chaos. Flamand and Hadid wanted to “translate the dancers’ movements into a calligraphy of space,”⁹⁴ which explains why the preliminary sketches resemble Arabic script more than anything else. The drawing space, “architecture breathes”, like ideas, like the diagrammed movements of Boccioni’s figures. The show as a whole seems to resolve

around memories of Futurism, Prampolini, and Depero.

In *Body/Work/Leisure* (2000), Flamand and Nouvel try to express “a reflection on the status of the body defined by criterias of calculation, order and speed applied to space and time by the industrial revolution. While waiting the mutations implied by the digital revolution.”⁹⁵

Any suggestion of classical, linear, narrative structure is replaced by broken sequences of simultaneous events. Time and the spectator’s positioning are variable, perception is fragmentary. The audience has no privileged vantage point. View of the real is mixed with the projected images. *Body/Work* is a critique of how we work, a meditation – in the form of a show and an installation – on the effects of globalization, the spread of information technology, flexibility, networking, the environmental question. Flamand

⁹⁴ Flamand, Frederic, *Metapolis: Project 972, Charleroi/Danses – Plan K*, Brussels, 2000.

⁹⁵ Flamand, Frederic, *Body/Work/Leisure, Charleroi/Danses – Plan K*, Brussels, 2000.

plays with new visual technology, unsteadily walking borderline between fascination and repulsion. Nouvel is interested in the possibility of changing how we perceive our bodies:



Figure 69

“the body as flesh and bone, or the body as material in constant need of re-working, with a considerable need of prostheses, and still ruled by the laws of gravity,” caught between images and structures, the protagonist – nude, real, virtual, conceptual – remains the fragile, sensual human body.”⁹⁶

Moving Target (1996) developed with Diller+Scofidio explores the schizophrenia associated with Nijinsky’s¹ notebooks – the main focus is the relationship between human bodies and increasingly virtual machines. The aim was to create interference and prevent people from getting their bearings in space (a mirror set at 45 degree doubles the image of the stage). Architecture is everything that can be made or done between the skin of one person and the skin of another person, which dance is akin to this.



Figure 70

Like Merce Cunningham and Trisha Brown, Flamand ignored any form of pre-established code, practicing the tabula rasa method. He is always to continually questioning pre-established codes as such and by exploring the relationships that may emerge between the codes of different art disciplines and different media.

Flamand seeks the notion of overreaching memory body. By the memory body, he means a body that could function independently of the mind’s dictatorship or the established codes of movement, that could rediscover certain spontaneity. He does

not mean violence inflicted on the body. The method was based on a very strict structure and on the search for an inner life as a basis for all movement.

⁹⁶ Flamand, Frederic, *Body/Work/Leisure*, Charleroi/Danses – Plan K, Brussels, 2000.

It is crucial that the dancers have a rich choreographic vocabulary developed from different contemporary techniques. Classical dance (hierarchical) which tends to fashion all dancers in the same mould is somehow a negation –in other words sublimation – of the body. Only the soloists have the right to an individual identity. The *corps de ballet* is condemned to executing group movements in perfect synchronization, which negates any difference between the dancers.

By questioning the pre-established codes of experience, Flamand examines schizophrenia, which is characterized by the baffling aspect of the body's interaction with its environment, the passage from one code to another, the disturbing juxtaposition of different codes. Under such condition, a diagram is something that performs; it is transitive; it reactivates the factual data of the territory which is projected into it in all its complexity. The diagrammatic conception offers a topological space, where a whole host of conceptual plans and entries of the territory are overlaid and dovetailed. As Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate, the notion of diagram is a rhizome with many different entrances - an interconnecting arrangement between differing orders of representation and conception.

“Body” as the Assemblage of Expressions

“Expression must break forms, encourage ruptures and new sprouting. When a form is broken, one must reconstruct the content that will necessarily be part of a rupture in the order of things. To take over, to anticipate, the material.”⁹⁷

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty suggests, one considers neither the perception of things in space nor the conception of space as a system of unification, but instead focus on the primacy of perception. Then, one may unearth a new spatiality – conceptual topography. He also claims that there must exist a system of possible actions and an imperceptible body whose place is defined according to its task and situation, such that this body with its systematic possibilities can even take over for the actual

⁹⁷ Deleuze & Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Trans. by Dana Polan, Univ. Minnesota Press, 1986, p28.

body when the things situated around the body assert a direct power over it. Thus, experience and temporality of space could be re-examined.

“A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved. The celebrated automata, on the other hand an organism, they were also political puppets, small-scale models of power.”⁹⁸



Figure 71

Like the military training illustrated by Foucault, Forsythe analyzes what the dancers know about space and their bodies from their intensive ballet training. He realizes that in essence ballet dancers are taught to match lines and forms in space. Then, he begins to imagine lines in space that could be bent, or tossed, or otherwise distorted. By moving from a point to a line to a plane to a

volume, Forsythe is able to visualize a geometric space composed of points that were vastly interconnected,

“according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement.”⁹⁹ As these points were all contained within the dancer's body, there was really no transition necessary, only a series of "foldings" and "unfoldings" that produced an infinite number of movements and positions.

From these, Forsythe starts cataloguing of what the body is capable of like a form of archaeology. Such method makes possible “the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility.”¹⁰⁰ And for every new piece that he choreographed, Forsythe would develop a new series of procedures. Some of these procedures worked with what is already in classical ballet. If one analyzes the basic ballet position where the hands are held over the head, one would realize that there are two curves involved, one on the

⁹⁸ Foucault, Michel, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of Prison*, 2nd Ed., Trans. by Alan Sheridan, Vintage Books, 1995, p136.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p137.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p137.

right and the other on the left. As a result, the dancers could create innumerable transformations from that simple position, which is a given in ballet.

“A new conception of intentionality, since the classical conception, which treats the experience of the world as a pure act of constituting consciousness, manages to do so only in so far as it defines consciousness as absolute non-being.”¹⁰¹

In his work, *Improvisation Technologies*, Forsythe offers the body, “as evidence,” the ‘Chora’, “as rupture and articulations (rhythm), precedes evidence, verisimilitude, spatiality, and temporality.” ‘Chora’, from Plato’s *Timaeus*, is denoted as an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movement and indeterminateness. One must differentiate this uncertain and indeterminate articulation from a disposition that already depends on representation, lends itself to phenomenological, spatial intuition, and gives rise to geometry. In case of Forsythe, he is able to deploy this theoretical description of the ‘Chora’ as part of the discourse of representation.

However, Forsythe’s discourse moves with and against the conception of ‘Chora’ in the sense that it simultaneously depends upon and refuses such notion. Although the ‘Chora’ can be designated and regulated, it can never be definitively posited. As Deleuze points out in *Difference and Repetition*, representation of the body is rendered by the inter-relation of pure difference and complex repetition. While difference implies divergence and decentering, repetition is associated with displacement and disguising. Thus, ‘Chora’ is only an approximation of an invisible significance. It is an ontological continuity which illustrates the geometric depth of space. It is a poetic translation rather than prosaic transcription of body.

Conclusion

¹⁰¹ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Trans. by Colin Smith, Routledge Classics, 2002, p283.

“...One doesn't see where the system is coming from and going to, how it becomes, and what element is going to play the role of heterogeneity, a saturating body that makes the whole assembly flow away and that breaks the symbolic structure, no less than it breaks hermeneutic interpretation, the ordinary association of ideas, and the imaginary archetype.”¹⁰²

Dance is significantly concerned with the movement of dancers through space. The origin of the space of 'Chora' in Plato's *Timaeus*, as something animate and moving, is not detached and abstract. It has been noted that space is not only comprised of built matter, but is constituted of experience of space by human ritual and interpretation.

In Deleuze and Guattari's scheme of phenomena, everything is moving. While dance is traditionally viewed within a frame of the Cartesian scheme of phenomena, composed of distinct objects arranged in space, through the thoughts of Deleuze and Guattari, dance could be seen dynamically that emphasizes 'becomings', and the fluxes and flows of which all things are made. Everything that exists is involved in the dynamic flow of space, which is always in movement.

The discipline of dance should not be only limited to its choreographic structure and expression. Instead, it should account for perceptual experience, social, political and economic relationships. Thus, the 'machinic assemblage' becomes, of the uniformization of various elements, deterritorialization and made uniform in order to be moulded into 'machinic' shapes. The essence of the machine is linked to procedures, which deterritorialize its elements, functions and relations of alterity. “The notion of machine involves differentiating itself qualitatively and emerging onto an ontological plurality, which is the very extension of the creativity of machinic vectors.”

In the 'machinic' process, dance is no longer contained and legitimized by existing theatrical context and history of itself. Instead, the notion of machine creates rupture in the tradition of dance. The functions, representations and the immanent embodied meaning of dance are destabilized and displaced. In essence, as the repertoire of autonomous and self-referential multiplicity of the body, the process of 'machinic assemblage' is an attempt to mask origin. It does work by extrapolation. Where it

¹⁰² Deleuze & Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Trans. by Dana Polan, Univ. Minnesota Press, 1986, p7.

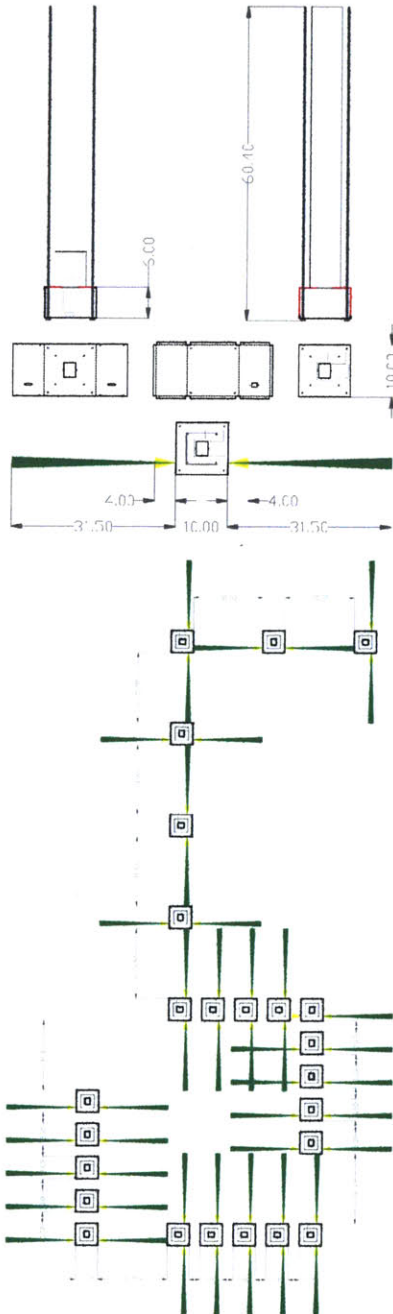
diverges from the original diagram is in its repetition of elements that get in the way of one another, which creates an unusual kind of space that emerges entirely from itself. "It's a proliferating space, and also a space of loss: one could be lost any sense of the concrete, leaving one with nothing but indications of its origins."¹⁰³

As a synthesis of the qualities of topological space and the geometrical attributes of space, diagram (the body) is a representation of space-matter; it demands a synthesis of the material and spatial imaginations in the sense of Bachelard. Yet, diagram itself is not exactly a tracing, but an extrapolation of lines from itself. Hitherto, a new paradigm of the body could be conceived through this newly established theoretical construct, from which new apprehension of space/time could be derived. And a new logical organization of spatial thought could be justified.

¹⁰³ Forsythe, William, *Improvisation Technologies: A Tool for the Analytical Eye*, Hatje Cantz Publishers, Digital Arts, Edition, Germany, 1999.

Chapter 9 – Installation

The Eidetic Space¹⁰⁴



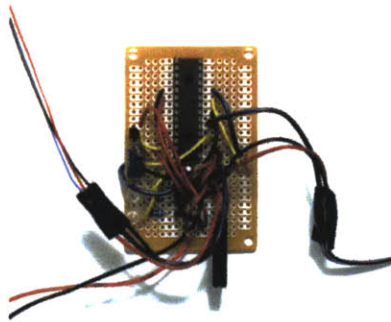
The installation illustrates the understanding of the bodily movement within space. As the spectators are aware of the notions of Choreutic, effort placement and balance, they could explore how their bodies and movement occupy their immediate space – **the Eidetic Space**. The installation deploys programming language as a form of notation to regulate the latent qualities, such as sound and movement, of its immediate space. The programming language filters the seemingly randomness of the space into specific computational representation of movement. Then, the installation manifests the kinaesthetic concept of geometry in dance - the idea of human movement as it occurs on planes and levels, in movement components and specific movement. Whether consciously or unconsciously, it is a conscious attempt to break down a movement visually, mentally, physically and verbally.

Movement can be seen as symmetrical, or moving together and/or in parallel, and asymmetrical, or moving apart and/or opposite from. This is sometimes referred to as being complementary to another movement or in opposition to another movement. The embedded motion and sound sensors are used to codify the engagement of the body in relation to the installation. Through

¹⁰⁴ Eidetic Reduciton: in phenomenology, a science of essences, this is how a philosopher moves from the consciousness of individual and concrete objects to the transempirical realm of pure essences and thus achieves an intuition of the eidos of a thing, i.e., of what is in its invariable structure, apart from all that is contingent or accidental to it. The eidos is the necessary structure of the thing.

computation, choreographic qualities of movement, then, are translated into a formal spatial representation. Such representation becomes the very essence of the **Choreographic Assemblages**.

Choreographic Assemblages gives rise to discontinuities which make different elaborations of discourse become possible. Through the installation, new topological forms of identities and competence are produced. The installation is the resultant of multiple pivots of discourses functioning in different directions, which becomes visible not as a finality but rather as a singularity of the totality of the subject.



Programming language is procedural, a form of logical manifestation of idea. Concept and design of space could then be reduced to a form of scientific discipline. Imagination and creativity are challenged and are put into questions. Subjectivity is replaced by a sense of objectivity through the procedural thinking of space. Then, a critical evaluation of the body of the production of space could be commenced.

The dissolution of the subjective order of space enhances the Bachelard's latent qualities of space. Choreographic technique allows the invention of apparatuses of objection. Within a given condition, the memory of space could be broken down analytically. Such process, as Foucault suggests, becomes the linear dimension of the continuous execution of successive and parallel field operations.

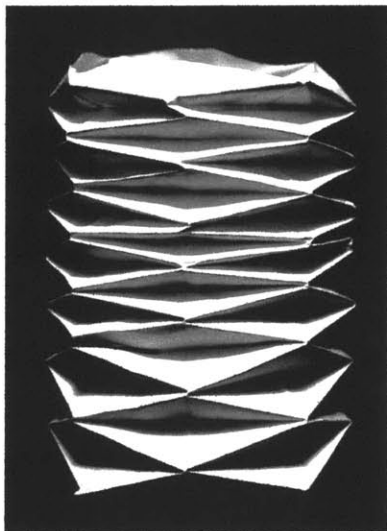
Each field operation is a technical operation designed to form and to fix aptitudes in the perceptual body in term of its power and increasing functional efficacy. In fact, choreographic notation makes the body docile, which then is able to adapted to instrumental layouts and productive, and also tractable. It makes the body function as elements that can be programmed and maneuvered.

Hence, the transgression of space could be registered. The process of formalization and its imaginative possibilities could then be initiated and observed. It differentiates elements, makes comparison possible between the levels, abilities, and performances of

different elements, and between the different stages in the evolution of an element. The individual elements are constituted as a describable, analyzable object through a set of procedures for identification, codification, narration, and induction.

Ultimately, notation transforms perception of phenomenal forms. Possibly even more important is the deployment of computational logic which for instance has led to the discovery that, when the solutions to equations are reiterated and plotted as points in space, forms of hitherto unsuspected complexity emerge. The emerging forms allow the integration of imagination and dynamic process which leads to an objective phenomenological experience.

The Space of Parametric Representation



Representations follow orders of qualitative and quantitative laws and present a fixed form of variation. The inherent problem of the concept is its preservation through implied limits: identity in the concept, opposition within concept, analogies through conflict, and resemblances in perception similar to the notion of ballet. Yet, through the Cage's model of composition, one could then unearth an infinite, completely non-dual space of unique. By means of chance techniques, one could vacate one's preconceived notion about relationship between body and movement, and thus identify with an

infinite space.

The possibility for the forms of architectural notations includes the ideas of the multiplicities through differentiation, mediation, and variation. Differences in ideas are intensive, dynamic, affirmative and singular. Differentiation requires the simultaneous existence of bodies and parts, intensities and extensities, partitions and organizations. The simultaneity of conditions and varying degrees of intensities, and their refraction in between the action and perception points to the importance of organization in the process of design.

Such notion of instructive, yet interpretative organizations exists in the open-ended music of John Cage and the dance performance of William Forsythe, who fundamentally transformed the traditional matters of notation systems. Both artists expand the idea of composition in music and dance from prescription and limited interpretation into a technique of fully determined instructional systems that facilitate the unlimited *becomings* of the ideas.

Accordingly, *becomings* of ideas manifest itself as diagram, an abstract and dynamic expression of coexistences. With the establishment of the instructional system, diagram becomes a *machinic* representation of non-formal dynamics interdependently related to the varying intensities of actions, singularities and matter in motion, and become asignifying concepts. Variables of both intensities and expressions in abstract machines become deterritorialized.

Thus, notations could be understood as limited and categorized. They are made from abstract codes and syntax that are informed to be decoded and recoded. It is their full determination to the vicissitude of code and syntax that matters. They always included the foreign and evolve like language, where dialects refract and deterritorialize the subject, and cause it to evolve, while simultaneously depending on it.

The Geometry of Parametrics

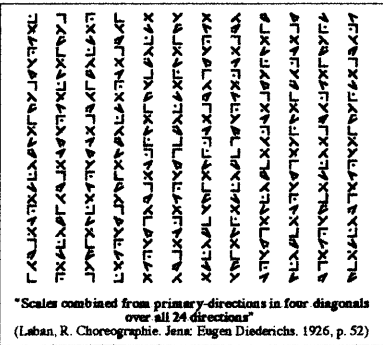


Figure 72

The installation arrangement contains an algorithm that can mimic an indeterminate process of both form and behavior. It evokes dynamic interaction between body and space. The machine, as the choreographer, imbues the spatial conditions with topological options rather than complex forms. Furthermore, it implies the deployment of

forms of philosophical thinking which serves as the basis of the new conception of the genesis of form.



The origin of geometry interweaves genesis (*idealization*) and structure (*intuition*). Inside constituted geometry, an essential intuition can only operate after the fact of an idealizing genesis. However, the "primordial passage-to-the-limit is possible only if guided by an essence that can always be anticipated and then 'recognized'."¹⁰⁵ In other

words, geometrical idealization produces a truth of a pure shape of pure space, not of some other moment of a region of being; this restriction to the eidetically purified



moment of "spatiality" guides the idealization that results in a geometry, while the idealization of a field of not merely spatial shapes abstracted from physical nature, but fully material bodies.

Thus, geometry is "this extraordinary operation: the creation of an eidetic."¹⁰⁶ One could see the relationship

between structured genesis and generated structure.

The unity of the moment of spatiality guides the infinite history of geometry, so that any idealized space is recognizable as a geometry, or in other words, the



continued genesis of geometry is structured by the *eidos* "spatiality." Conversely, this structure is in turn generated: the unity of spatiality had first to be constituted, and is forever open to change: "it is only the unity of the infinite historical development of the eidetic called geometry."¹⁰⁷

From the questions of idealization, one is led to the questions of primordial temporality. Husserl desires to give a formal structure of self-presence to all genetic

¹⁰⁵ Derrida, Jacques, Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction, Trans., with a preface and afterword, by John P. Leavey, Jr., Univ. Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1989, p135.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p135.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p135.

acts. Hitherto, the notion of iteration becomes the significant part of the discussion of idealization - the mathematical idealization. It implies an "again and again" movement, an iteration: one must be able to perform over again the same process of idealization to assure the unity of the geometrical field.



In lived space, the horizon of unity of spatial perspectives is necessarily indefinite: one must always add more perspectives, though one can roughly anticipate the roundness of an object; however, in mathematical idealization, one can immediately pass not only to the limit of exactitude of the circle but also to the exactitude of any form of pure spatiality: "the idealized space of mathematics allows us to go immediately to the infinite limit of what is in fact an unfinished movement."¹⁰⁸ Thus, one can be assured of the ability to repeat what one can as yet not conceive.

¹⁰⁸ Derrida, Jacques, Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction, Trans., with a preface and afterword, by John P. Leavey, Jr., Univ. Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1989, p136.

Appendix

Programming Code

```
// Dual distance sensor code
#case
#include <16F872.H>
#device ADC=8
// Configure PIC to use: HS clock, no Watchdog Timer,
// no code protection, enable Power Up Timer
// #fuses HS,NOWDT,NOPROTECT,NOPUT,NOBROWNOUT,NOLVP,NOCPD,WRT,NODEBUG
// Tell compiler clock is 10MHz. This is required for delay_ms()
// and for all serial I/O (such as printf(...)). These functions
// use software delay loops, so the compiler needs to know the
// processor speed.
// #use DELAY(clock=10000000)
// #define MS_BETWEEN_TRIGGERS 1000
// #define FAN_OFF_CYCLES 240
// Hardware definitions
#define LED1_OUT PIN_B7
#define LED2_OUT PIN_B6
#define FAN_OUT PIN_B5
#define DIST1_IN PIN_A0
#define DIST2_IN PIN_A3
#define POT_IN PIN_A1

void init() {
    setup_adc(ADC_CLOCK_INTERNAL);
    setup_adc_ports(RA0_RA1_RA3_ANALOG);
}

void main() {
    int dist1;
    int dist2;
    int pot;

    long fan1On;
    long fan2On;

    init();

    fan1On = 0;
    fan2On = 0;

    while(1) {
        set_adc_channel(0);
        delay_ms(1);
        dist1 = read_adc();
        delay_ms(4);

        set_adc_channel(3);
        delay_ms(1);
```

```

        dist2 = read_adc();
        delay_ms(4);

        set_adc_channel(1);
        delay_ms(1);
        pot = read_adc();

        if (dist1 >= pot) {
fan1On = FAN_OFF_CYCLES;
        }
else {
    if (fan1On) fan1On--;
}

if (dist2 >= pot) {
fan2On = FAN_OFF_CYCLES;
        }
else {
    if (fan2On) fan2On--;
        }

if (fan1On)
        output_high(LED1_OUT);
else
        output_low(LED1_OUT);

if (fan2On)
        output_high(LED2_OUT);
else
        output_low(LED2_OUT);

        if (fan1On || fan2On)
            output_high(FAN_OUT);
        else
            output_low(FAN_OUT);

        delay_ms(10);
    }
}

```


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