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SEEDS OF DESIRE

THE COMMON GROUND OF PERFORMANCE AND POLITICS

BY

RANDY MARTIN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1984

This Manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

Seeds of Desire

The Common Ground of Performance and Politics

By

Randy Martin

Advisor: Professor Michael E. Brown

This work is concerned with investigating the empirical and theoretical grounds for political performance. In so doing, an argument is made for alternate conceptions of both politics and cultural communication. The body and the physical dimension of social experience, particularly as they are manifest in performance, will provide the focus for this exposition. There are four sections divided as follows: 1) an ethnographic study of a modern dance company which traces the making of a single dance from first rehearsal to performance; 2) an historical comparison of the work of the Russian Director V. E. Meyerhold during the period of the Bolshevik Revolution to the Living Theater in the United States in the early 1960s; 3) A critique and review of some theories of culture and communication that center around the notion of meaning as a symbolic process and the development of an alternate theory based upon a

notion of desire as abstract communication; 4) a critique of politics as symbolic acts which applies desire in physical communication to political performance. The first section exhibits the dance company in transition from symbolic, lingual forms of communication to non-lingual abstract forms to demonstrate how desire is produced in the moment of performance. Next, the historical conditions that shape the social expression of desire are illustrated in the differences between two theatrical avant-gardes in two diverse social contexts. Desire is shown to be an absent term in explaining agency in social activity. Finally, a politics of the body is outlined which places desire in the stead of consciousness and opposes a symbolic community organized through exchange with an abstract community organized through circulation. A political performance based upon the lessons gleaned from dance and theater is offered as a means of developing desire in politics.

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This project draws upon all the stimulation one would encounter living in New York in the eighties. Since its inception, Mike Brown was there opening doors with a warm sensitivity that gave my inchoate probings all the unbounded excitement of discovery. Stanley Aronowitz met each foray I ventured with enthusiasm and verve and a handful of stones I'd left unturned. When the ritual seemed to overtake the work, Bill Kornblum offered nothing but encouragement. When sociology and performance appeared oceans apart, Ginger Gillespie kept the wind in my sails. Claudia Gitelman was the harbinger of important events, including my coming to New York. Ernie Martin from his palace on 43rd Street, kept the blood from getting stuck in my head. For all the friendships that sustained me, I offer a place that could never be accounted for by words.

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In the broadest sense, this work is concerned with sketching the possibilities for political performance. In doing so however, a number of theoretical and methodological issues emerge. What might appear to be a relatively simple answer to a relatively straightforward question, that is, what is political performance, is belied by the very ecclecticism of the sections that follow. The first is a sort of ethnographic description of a modern dance, recounting the manner in which it was put together; the second is a comparison of political theater in Russia in the twenties and the United States in the sixties; the third part is a theoretical discussion of culture and what constitutes the physical dimension of culture and cultural experience; and the last part is a discussion of how this physical dimension of culture, what I term desire, would fit into political practice.

These four seemingly discrete studies comprise different aspects and approaches to the problem of political performance. This problem first brings up the issue of what is politics and how is politics to be viewed. To make some gross generalizations, the tendency in marxist discussions on what constitutes the necessary conditions

for political activity, and what would get groups or classes of people involved in politics, has been to use consciousness as the conceptual framework. Somehow by raising the class or oppositional groups to some level or plane of consciousness of the entire society, the conditions are secured not only for an understanding of political possibilities, but also for their expression as political activities.

Saying this however should not imply that there has been general agreement as to what consciousness means. Marxism not withstanding, views of consciousness are most often divided by their emphasis on the psychological as opposed to the structural, pitting the individual against the social. In either case, awareness, understanding, meaning emanated from the ability of the part (whether as mind or social group) to represent the whole (as either individual being or social totality), a process I term symbolic.

The question to ask is, is consciousness an adequate condition for political action and activity. One weave running through this work and one reason why political performance is important is precisely to consider what are the other dimensions or contributions to political activity other than consciousness. One of the basic themes here is that people can be aware or conscious of

a specific set of political problems or even of the social totality as a whole, but that does not necessarily mean that they are going to get involved in political action. There is another dimension at play and that is the whole question of physical and emotional involvement in political activity, a dimension with its own dynamics and means of expression. The specificity of political performance lies in touching this non-conscious dimension through a kind of activity or intervention that can serve to animate and agitate not only people's emotions and physicality, but their actual sense of willingness to get involved in political activity as well.

Cross woven through this work is another set of issues. In studying political performance, the implicit tendency has been to look at performance as if it were a text. In other words, to examine performance in the same manner one would analyze a book. One of the best reasons to do this has been that for the last eighty years, perhaps the richest intellectual material on culture has come out on literature. The assumption to be questioned however, is whether performance is indeed just like a book, or does this metaphor conceal exactly what is unique about performance. Is it possible to explain performance, not just in the sense of what goes on inside the theater but also in the performance of daily social life and per-

formance of political acts as if one were reading a text? The idea that social life or culture itself is purely or explicitly symbolic, which is what I see as the underlying thread to a lot of literary theory, is belied by people's experience of their bodies. Certainly, the body can be analyzed as if it were a language, that is, as if it represented something other than itself. At the same time, considering an existential or phenomenological level of what it feels like to have a body, our own feelings, our own perceptions, our own understandings of our bodies are not representational, they are not symbolic. Rather, they are evidenced as some other form of expression that is captured within the experience of the body. In contrast to the symbolic, this other, non-representational form is termed abstract.

I turn specifically to the analysis of dance, viewed from the standpoint of the performer, to explore the world of the abstract. On the one hand, the dance section is an analysis of issues within art, that is, what is a performance like, how is it constructed, what is particular about the experience created in performance. More generally though, it is a rumination on the mechanisms of physical behavior in a social group. The dance ethnography, while it studies a particular art form, is also a study of the body itself. Dance, a setting explicitly

established to construct bodily experience, provides an ideal opportunity to delimit the boundaries of physical communication.

Briefly, the section on dance sketches a movement from what I term authority to totality. That is, from forms of communication that are like a language, the interactions between the choreographer and the dance company, to the actual moment of performance when the choreographer is no longer actually telling the dancers what to do. That form of communication, that form of regulation, what keeps, binds and creates a common terrain for communication among the dancers is no longer verbal or even lingual. It is rather sentient and kinetic, a direct kind of expression or experience among the dancers. That then is the distinction I make between symbolic and abstract forms of communication.

With the symbolic there is some form of mediation, of representation to go between in this case, choreographer and dancer, or any subject and object relationship. There is a third set of things that means something else that brings those two elements together. With abstract communication there is direct rather than mediated expression between elements. A movement of the body does not mean something else, it is felt directly, kinetically, sentiently as that movement, as that physical communication

by other bodies. The transitions described within the section on dance trace, not what the dance looks like, but how this development from one form of communication

What is produced in the moment of performance is termed desire. This abstract product of communication is the physical agent of activity. In order to dance, in order to have a group of people doing the same range of physical activities with a shared physical understanding, there is an actual production of a sort of physical co-ordination among those dancers that goes beyond the formal movement that they were taught to execute.

Now, if there is something specifically physical about culture and cultural experience and communication, and this is to be dealt with sociologically, we have to understand how it can change historically. To establish its sociological aspect it is inadequate to say that this is something that is shared by a group of people, but we have to understand its historical dimension. To this end, the work of one particular Russian director by the name of Meyerhold during a period which spans from before the Bolshevik revolution to the twenties is examined. Historically, this is a period when there were a lot of possibilities both in politics and in culture. Meyerhold's work is compared to that of the Living Theater in the

United States from the fifties to the early sixties.

The logic of this historical comparison is to examine the development that many writers have tried to capture under the rubric of contemporary, late or monopoly capitalism to analyze our society in its current period. The main term I use for this identification is the notion of relative autonomy, that is, a kind of institutional separation between the different spheres or aspects of society. The argument is that in the Soviet Union at the time of the Bolshevik revolution, a modern capitalist society as we would understand it here in the United States had not been decisively developed. But what is unequivocal at this moment is the end of the ancien regime, the final demise of feudal cultural and political forms. Even though in specific instances such forms may persist, on a global scale, what is interesting about the Soviet Union at this time is that it can tell us something about the nature of the transformation into our current social arrangement. In that transition, there are a lot of possibilities; one may be socialism, another capitalism, another some unspecified social order or formation. To compare Meyerhold to the Living Theater is to look at a time when relative autonomy as a form of institutional separation is not intact in a society and to compare that instant to the United States in the 1960s when it is.

I take Marx's metaphor that he uses in the 18th Brumaire that history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce to look at first, what happens to Meyerhold, who is a victim of the very beginnings of the separation between culture and politics, and then the Living Theater which is born into the moment when culture and politics, and more particularly avant-garde and mass media are very decisively separated. By understanding what the difference between those two conditions is, we can understand the historical boundaries of the conditions for the repression of certain cultural and political possibilities.

In 1917 a lot of things were possible and if we look at the movements in art and the revolution in physics, we can see evidence for a change in the very nature of perception. Here again, a movement from the symbolic to the abstract is evidenced in this perceptual shift. In the West, through the nineteenth century, artistic outputs, pictorial, sculptural, theatrical, had been fundamentally representational. They depicted reality but also positioned the viewer in relation to that reality, fixing them at the center of the possible universe. The movement into abstraction, of which Meyerhold was a part, decentered both the viewer and the thing viewed. Applied to social groups, there is the possibility of seeing that group in

relation to rather than in a position fixed within the rest of society. It is that social possibility contained within the new esthetic and scientific movements that is repressed.

In the case of the Living Theater, their attempt to become a political avant-garde, to offer new social possibilities, is stifled, not merely by what they have to offer as alternatives, but by the institutional position they find themselves in. They attempt from their position as avant-garde to invade, penetrate and organize social life as a whole. My claim is that they are doomed to failure precisely because they do not understand the relatively new institutional constraints of their position.

Having sketched something of its historical dynamics, the third section addresses theoretically the role of desire in culture and politics. I do this by discussing how other people, sociologists, psychologists, philosophers, psychoanalysts, have looked at the problem of culture and cultural experience. Here, the common thread has been the notion of meaning which I argue is a symbolic way of understanding communication. To develop the notion of desire as something apart from meaning and in turn, non-symbolic, I respond to the French philosopher Merleau-Ponty who views the body itself as a subject or site of experience. I claim that his problem lies in first look-

ing at the body as a passive instrument; he asks, how can the body perceive things in its own right. My question, that of desire is how can the body act, how can we have physical social experience in its own right. While there is a difference in the questions we are asking, this difference molds his view of the body as a purely individual entity contained within an individual subject or person. For political activity however, we want to understand in a very literal sense how there can be a social body. In our quotidian experience of the world, just as in the dance, our experience of physical possibilities and desire is shaped by a social experience.

After exstablishing the analytic place of the body, I then turn to another Frenchman, Jacques Lacan, to specify the notion of desire. Lacan brings out the emphasis on language in Freud to understand what constitutes the individual subject and experience. He sees in language a way of forming the individual, not as a self generating personality, but against something outside the individual; the unconscious, which is structured like a language and social in its very essence. The unconscious, embodying our aspirations, our motivations and wants is not inside of us, inside our heads but outside us in social life. The problem in using language as a way of constructing desire, and here I think that Lacan's intent for desire

is similar to my own, is that desire becomes, first of all, something purely symbolic, and secondly, something that is purely negative. Desire never fully appears for Lacan, it has a sort of shadow existence as the difference between need, people's natural drives, which he takes from Freud, and demand, that authority, that other, that lies beyond the individual subject. In this gap between what people want and what they can never attain, is desire; desire is generated in that difference. If we attempt to apply this notion of desire to practices other than psychoanalysis, which it is intended for, it is uncertain how we can actually have a body, and further, how we can have drives and needs if there is not a positive dimension to desire. To explain physical experience, we must ask what desire would be in positive terms within a social context. That is the task of the third section.

Finally, in the last section, the difference between symbolic and abstract is applied to political practice itself. There, I criticize not only conventional notions of politics but indeed, what I consider the underlying logic of the organization of a left, manifest in terms like unity and the correct line, that there exists a shared object that can rectify all extant political positions. There has never been a moment historically when the left has been one thing. It has always grappled

with political differences. The common logic of how to deal with these differences has been to postulate some future unity. In this context, the very notion of socialism itself has often taken as the symptom of a symbolic order; it becomes a goal in and of itself.

It must be asked, what is wrong with an ultimate goal that poses as a solution to some current range of differences. One problem is that it can confuse the nature of the contribution of those various political practices, particularly to the extent that there are different groups of people trying to do irreducibly different kinds of things. The logic of symbolic politics impedes upon this diversity by obscuring the different histories, problems and contributions that these groups are making. Secondly, in terms of a progressive movement toward socialism, by whatever name it is called, the very notion of symbolic is a reflection, and I do mean reflection, of the constitution of bourgeois or capitalist politics.

The notion of a unity, certainty, authority of what the future can and should be is, under contemporary capitalism, embodied in the state. Despite numerous marxist positions that identify the state as a set of institutions, I argue in the last section that, from the point of view of cultural control, control over the reproduction of social relations, the state is an attempt to organize

a relationship between subject and object; between people's experience and some means of authority or regulation or organization of that experience. To the extent that left organizations constitute themselves in relation to the state, as an opposition to the state explicitly, they also constitute themselves symbolically. That is, they take on the same logic that the state employs to rule, dominate or organize social and political experience within the society.

Alternatively, abstraction, in the last section conceptualized as abstract community, is offered by exchange, as organizing and regulating political interaction. Taking from Marx's distinction in Volume One of Capital, the abstract is organized through circulation. In effect, the distinction is between the tendency to equilibrate values as existing within a social group on the one hand, and viewing different values as existing within a motional context or situation on the other. This is again to underscore what is the physical dimension or aspect of political activity and brings us back to the whole problem of political performance, which is then to see what is the physical condition for political activity. It is to look at how the different parts can be animated and in some way co-ordinated without being reduced to some single, solitary, symbolic logic that all parts of political groups, etc., must fit into .

Within this specifically, I return to the question

of what political performance should be like. I attempt in the end to make some sort of synthesis between what has been gleaned from the section on dance and the section on political theater (hopefully without reducing the parts to the synthesized product). In short, political performance needs to work on a kinetic level to try and create certain kinds of physical tensions among its audience within performance such that that tension which is created within the theater, within that single evening of performance, of a single intervention of cultural activity, can only be lived out in a larger social and political context. The theater creates a dilemma for the body that cannot be contained within its walls. This is the answer that I give to the question of what is political performance, and the answer is only symptomatic, it is only an excuse to go into an extended discussion of what the nature of physical communication is and what the role of desire in political activity could be.

SECTION ONE

DANCE AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

First Movement: Contours of a Company

"And God Said, 'Let there be light . . . ,'" but absenting myself from religion and squinting in the face of abundant light, I had to find some other voice of authority to divine the spirit. Such could be described as the dancers' plight, poor souls so entwined in the corporeal that they abandon themselves to the choreographer's command. But in this sense the dancer is only a mild inversion of the mover sans leotard. For what has become an outspoken demand and response for the dancer, has a silent partner in the choreography of everyday life. The mutual naming of dancer and choreographer that transforms an empty space into a kinetic architecture, can reveal much about the more anonymous social physique that we all share. A study of how a dance is made, through the explicit direction and expression of the body, can therefore serve as a map for those felt but perhaps unknown reaches of social experience. The dance as a social situation illustrates how the reaches, grabs, twists and shimmers of the body, too often seen as the shadows of God's light, are themselves acts of worldly production and transformation.

Dance, though rife with its own particularities,

finds its place among the arts. And art, among social activities (as opposed to being seen as a thing in and of itself, yet without excluding the thing as part of the activity),[1] appears uniquely bounded by consciousness, that self-reflexive aspect of the human mind.[2] Unlike purposive social activities that result in the production of a material object, or that increasingly ubiquitous thing known as a service,[3] art can be said to make people aware of themselves as such, as total beings. Of course it could be claimed that services like cashing a check or going to a psychologist are predicated and proceed through knowledge of the self.[4] In neither case however is the one paid for the service offering their own consciousness to the one paying, for even in psychoanalysis, self knowledge is turned into an analytic tool for knowing the mind in general. Nor does the one paying come to the relation as consciousness but rather the service identifies a certain lack or problem that again even in psychoanalysis represents only a part of total being.

Art, whether paid for or not,[5] is framed on the one side by those who conceive of it and on the other, by those who consume it, these relations being not the beginning and end of art, but its conditions of production.[6] For those who conceive, their specific ideas develop out of an orientation to represent their experience, a form of

presentation of consciousness. It is precisely this representation of experience, now their own, that the consumer will register as their part of the art activity.

Although art is bounded by consciousness, by representations of people's total being, curiously these two boundaries, the opposite sides of the frame, conceiver and consumer, do not come face to face. Even where poets read their works, a painter paints publicly or a video artist films spectators. There is something between these consciousnesses, connecting them, yet keeping them apart. After all, the one in the position of consumer never takes on or becomes the consciousness of the conceiver. The viewers may leave the event with the impression they have shared something of the conceiver, but that impression is the consumer's own consciousness. Where the conceiver has an effect on the consumer, it is through what they have been able to impart not of themselves but through the work they are doing.

This work, what could be called the work in a work of art, makes possible the coming together of consciousness while it secures their distinctness. The notion of a go between in human relations of value shouldn't seem strange. Money also brings people together while it secures their difference. In the process of exchange, money represents difference while it acts as an equivalence

for the two values. The meeting ground that money frames however is a purely symbolic one, money provides the medium through which things, but not people, can be equilibrated.[7] The art object on the other hand serves as both the means of a value transaction, and the site for that set of relations. Art then does not so much equilibrate values (in this case consciousness) as make possible their interaction. It points to their use rather than their means of exchange.

For the work of art to mediate consciousness, it must be something other than consciousness, just as money must be something other than the commodities it mediates, for bringing shoes to an exchange of shoes and wheat will not expedite the process. The case of money is clear, money is in the exchange but not of it. The work of art however, is either a product of the conceiver or executed by people known as performers. If the consciousness of the consumer has been effected, it is through interaction with this work. The work of art cannot simply be conciousness both for the obvious reason that paint and canvas, text and paper, movement and dance floor are not consciousness, and because it could not then be a mediation. The work is certainly in the exchange but it is apparently not of it. Yet it is not totally distinct from the end points or boundaries of exchange either, otherwise there

would be no conscious effects, for the materials of the work must be organized so that their interpretation or perception is possible. In the course of this study it will be suggested that for the case of art in particular and cultural communication in general that this quandry has two mutually inclusive solutions. On the one hand, there is a mediation operant other than consciousness, and on the other hand, there is a form of mediation other than exchange.

When the poet or painter comes in contact with the consumer, they take on a new role. In addition to conceiver of the work, they are performing it as well, were they not there, the reading or viewing of the work could be considered a performance as well in that the same mediation of the role of conceiver and consumer takes place. The performance, the presentation of the work, is a means of agency of the activity.[8] The performance is the spatial and temporal terrain upon which the conceiver and consumer meet. As mediating agent, it embodies rather than represents the parties concerned, providing a basis of interaction without equilibrating or quantifying their value.

It is not to be claimed that it makes no difference whether the performance occurs between person and thing or among people. More than a shift in medium, the distinction between the visual and the performance arts enlists con-

sciousness as part of the mediation. Living performers do not merely sit between the two endpoints and draw them together, rather they move between them; what they present is itself a totality of being.

To apply the terms conceiver, performer, consumer to the production of dance, what is mediation for the choreographer and audience, is experience for the dancer. Among the performed arts, performance generates not only the conditions for the meeting of consciousness, but for the performers involved the production of a social experience itself. The nature of this experience is as yet ill-defined and an exercise in its conceptual construction comprises the last section of the work. The study of dance that follows will attempt to give the reader a sense of what that experience is like. Art, as defined here, is that social activity bounded by consciousness, which can only meet on the grounds of some third term, a mediation in but not totality of it. Herein, the nature of that mediation, termed the work in the work of art will be explored. This problem, applied to a study of dance, seeks to decipher what is produced in the moment of performance.

Thus far, three positions have been sketched in the construction of the social activity defined here as art. Each of these positions generates its own product or useful thing, but not independently of the other. The

conceiver must have direct relations with their materials of production, whether animate or inanimate. This is often deemed skill or craft. They must also have real or imaginery knowledge of the recipient of their energies, as audience, spectator, witness or whatever. The elements of performance whether people or things are organized by the conceiver and contingent upon that prior consciousness. Yet if the performance is to exist as such, these elements must stand on their own, though they do not stand for themselves. It is not only that the organized elements become more than the conceiver's ideas, images, instructions, directives, but that they become so in order to be seen, that is, performance exists only en route to the consumer, not in the temporal sense, but in its reason for being.

Ironically, when conception remains in the forefront of performance, what is seen by consumers is the skill or craft of the conceiver, witnessed in the complaint after an evening of theater that the stage directions were seen in the actors' work, or that the director was the star of the show. This is not to limit what the conceiver can do on or with the stage, it is just to assert that they change roles (successfully or unsuccessfully) when they do so. To take but one example, when the Polish director of Cricot 2, Tadeusz Kantor, stands on stage in Wielepole, Wielepole, gesturing or physically manipulating

the actors on stage, his role as conceiver becomes precisely that of the performer. He has organized his position in the play and then inserted himself into it. We do not see him producing the work, or even his decision to be in it, these moments in the making of the performance have passed. Even in performances that feature the relation between conceiver and materials such as grafitti painting or tagging, or performance methods that seek to replace human with chance directives like the Cage-Cunningham events, the conceiver is located inside the performance rather than in the process of conceiving it. This distinction itself represents the shift from the formal rules and means of organization necessary to do work with the performance materials, to the actual structuration of those materials.

When conceivers become performers, they leave the realm of authority and enter the world of totality. The materials that had been brought together only through the external directives of the conceiver, coalesce into a social body with its own means of regulation or reproduction. Especially for the director turned actor, this transition occurs fully only before the spectator's eyes. Kantor leaves his position as director to play the part, his actions in the role of director are actions made to be seen by the consumers.

On the surface, the consumer's dependence upon the conceiver and performer is apparent; without them there would be no event to witness. For the performance to be seen however, the consumers must themselves produce a value, not just the category consumer but the consciousness that will complete this circuit that is the condition for artistic production as a whole. In market economics, this would be termed demand. Indeed, it is demand on some level that brings the consumer to the site of the performance. But the demand does not explain what transpires for the consumer in the moment of performance. To take the notion of consumption seriously, there is some process of digestion at work, call it interpretation, emotion, pleasure, sublimation, fantasy. Without privileging any of these at the moment, as products of the consumer they make possible the performance as a social relation. For it is only as a living being encounters the materials organized by another that a circuit of social relations, in this case art, exists.

As positions within a circuit of social relations, conceiver, performer and consumer simultaneously become points of view for both experiencing and analyzing the entire process. Each position contains its inside and outside, the means through which it is constituted as experience, and the way that experience is aligned with

the other positions within the circuit. One could approach the analysis of the art work by describing how the positions come together, each making their contribution. From the above discussion however it should be clear that all three positions share neither time nor space, conceiver and consumer never encounter each other directly as such but always through the mediation of performer. To decipher what is produced at each position, requires a separate history of each, a history of the concrete activities of each position that takes shape in relation to the other two.

Initially the position of performer was derived as the mediation of conceiver and consumer, but this itself is to look at performance from the outside in. If performance, and the activity of dancing in particular is to hold some insight to the social experience of any body, it must be constructed according to its own history. Hence, while the performer is found inside the social activity of art, the pedestrian at work or play finds in their own physical experience, a mediation within any social activity. The view of social interaction as a performance is by no means novel,[9] but how the experience of the performer, particularly of the body and the senses, is articulated has not been given much attention in this context. Here a study of dance can be helpful, for dance

is specifically the articulation of the body's sentient capacity for expression. By situating the performer within a choreographic process, from first rehearsal to performance, the history of what happens within that position in relation to the other two unfurls.

Given the perspective of the performer, there are still many histories that can be written.[10] Some dance critics, Deborah Jowitt pre-eminant among them, are fond of using their descriptive finesse to detail what the movement they saw looked like. In a typical snippet two dancers: "vault onto, roll along, fall along, somersault along, hang off, slide under, jump from two high narrow board runway." A history could be written in the same way, a verbal slide show of the dance in its various stages of development, tracing the appearances of the dance without defining how they were made.[12] The pictures however, would give scarcely a clue of how the experience is itself constructed, for clipped from the fame would be the very thing that makes the performer the mediation of something else which gives their work its dynamic.[13] Alternately what will be described here is a progression of methods, of ways in which the dance was put together. The changing means in the choreographic process detail the qualitative development of the movement itself and of the dancers as a collective body that perform them.

As the position of the performer is secured, totality eclipses authority in the move from conceiver to consumer. Having achieved their own means of regulation, the dancers no longer move by command but dance to be seen.

Hopefully what will emerge by describing the progression, from authority to totality, of the means of producing dance, will be the evidence of the physical experience of culture itself. The process of making a dance, like that of socializing a body, introduces the body to rules whose eventual impact will only be implicated in physical behavior.[14] For a social body to take on its own means of regulation, to be able to bound and thereby express experience through movement, the members of that body must constitute a community.[15] It is the dancers' passage from the authority of the choreographer to that of their own community that seals the distinction between conceiver and performer and renders the mediation with consumers a positive force, a source of cultural experience. Conspicuously absent from this account is any form of notating the movement that is constructed, though there is no scarcity of such systems of notation.[16]

At first sight it may seem curious to deprive the reader of the most familiar access to a dance, its visual imagery. It must be remembered that this is an account of performance, and the performers do not see what the con-

sumers view as dance, their predominant perspective is physical. That a story of dance can be written and read without a clear picture of what the dance looks like is itself an indication that there is something else going on in dancing. If the reader proceeds through these pages and is left with a sense rather than an image of what the dance was like, those senses engaged are the subject of the experience aimed at.

There are many forms of dance practiced in American culture: Native American, folk, ballroom, disco, break dance, ballet, jazz and modern. The range of modern dance, in its appearance and esthetics, is perhaps broader than all the others combined. Rather than denoting a specific way of dancing, modern dance can be distinguished among these others as most characteristically developing and innovating its own movement vocabulary. Given this commitment to exploration, the term modern dance can only be made sense of in historical perspective.

> The modern dance is a point of view, an attitude towards the functioning of art in the contemporary world. As that world changes, the modern dance will change, for the symbols will again--as they become acceptable--lose their power to evoke the hidden realities. They will have to be recharged, revitalized; even demolished and recreated anew in order to serve their function. Unless this happens, the modern dance is not modern--it is dead. The modern dance is an art of iconoclasts.[17]

Though this comment by eminent dance critic Selma Jeanne

Cohen tends toward the substitution of avant-garde for modern, and thereby gives little insight into modernism itself as an historical phenomenon, it captures the spirit of intent of many modernists.[18]

The commitment to new forms of movement is particularly significant to a study that seeks to trace the genesis of the performer's physical experience. It is not that the methods of modern choreography are any less rigorous than other forms. Rather, the rigors of the movement are found with the making of each dance. Hence, while the other forms express a kinetic experience in performance, a history of their choreographic process will reveal less of how the distinction between choreographer and performer is made. Where the development of movement vocabulary is itself part of the choreographic process, the choreographer tends to be more dependent on the dancers to materialize movement and thus the shift from the position of conceiver to performer is itself made visible in the making of the dance. While this tendency cannot be used as a template that exhausts choreographic processes termed modern, it does make modern dance a sensible place to draw upon for the problem of this study.

By the account of many self-proclaimed practioners, modern dance has already been augmented by postmodernism.[19] Twenty years after its declaration of inde-

pendence, post-modernism has yielded the same range of currents, on a smaller scale albeit, as its modern counterpart. Its emergence was a response to the psychologistic emphasis of modernists like Graham and Limon, and its commitment was to replacing the illusion in staged performance with the presentation of how the performance is put together, with an emphasis on the history of the materials involved. Interestingly, some of the pioneers of so-called modern forms of performance and visual arts, notably Meyerhold and Duchamp, developed very similar credos in response to identical problems. While more will be said of this history in the next section (specifically of Meyerhold), post-modernism recapitulates the critical problem of the nature of the perception and position of conceiver, performer and consumer of art.

From Ms. Cohen's quote cited above modernism would appear as a singular entity that could be dated from the turn of the century and will continue indefinitely. The claim to a post-modernism however implies a succession without specifying modernism's fall. Alternately, modernism in its historical sweep from the turn of the century to the present, can be understood as a tension between the "discovery of the self" in art--the fusion of conceiver and performer, and art as a new way of seeing--the fusion of performer and consumer.[20] Within this schema, post-

modernism would be the current manifestation of the claim to the position of the latter tradition. At the same time, the dance community and the society as a whole have certainly developed since the turn of the century. So too, the tension within modern dance has developed and in so doing it has developed modern dance. That the tension between psychology and taxonomy (as the explicit ordering of the performer and the consumer) persists in dance gives a self-consciousness to its history.

The polemic between psychology and taxonomy has nowhere seemed as sharp a motivator of dance history as Stanislavsky and Meyerhold's was for the theater,[21] yet the divergent poles have been a feature of the modern movement in dance whereas periodization in history is often a specious project. The very notion of modernism notwithstanding, there is a traceable succession to the antagonism defined here. Two of the earliest figures of modern dance fall across this fence. Isadora Duncan was genuinely radical in her challenge to the dominant notion of gender and politics; both in her movement and her life. Her vision of art was decidedly neoclassical and psychologistic:

> The artist without this first consciousness of proportion and line of the human form could have had no consciousness of the beauty surrounding him. When his ideal of the human form is a noble one, then his conception of all line and form in Nature is noblest:

> the knowledge of sky and earth forms--and from this the conception of line and form of architecture, painting and sculpture. All art--does it not come originally from the first human consciousness of the nobility of the lines of the human body?
>
> How shall woman attain a knowledge of this beauty? Shall she find this knowledge in the gymnasium examining her muscles, in the museum regarding the sculptured forms, or by the continual contemplation of beautiful objects, and the reflection of them in the mind: these are all ways, but the chief thing is, she must live this beauty, and her body must be the living exponent of it.[22]

In her words is evidenced not only the parallels with Greek philosophy but also the notion of art as pure consciousness emanating from the unified conceiver-performer.

Where Duncan could be considered the scion of turn of the century psychology, Loie Fuller was the avatar of its technology. Her performances involved collaboration with up to forty engineers, and in 1904, applied Madame Curie's discovery by extracting phosphorescent paint for her costume in "Radium Dance."[23] Fuller's dances were concerned with creating illusion for the audience. While she does not rebuke psychology, she supplants the primacy of self with the power the body of the performer can have on the audience's experience. "To impress an idea I endeavor, by my motions, to cause its birth in the spectattor's mind, to awaken his imagination, that it may be prepared to receive the image."[24] The manipulation of perceived effects is clearly different from the postmodernists' attention to revealing the workings of per-

formance. For Fuller, the distance between performer and audience is one of darkness and light, yet her very concern with this distance is itself a concern with the effect of her experience as performer on her audience's conscious perception of a new way of seeing.

The direct influence (in terms of repertory performed or movement technique taught) of Duncan and Fuller on the contemporary dance scene is scant.[25] Four personae, predominant in the thirties, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, Hanya Holm and Martha Graham, can be considered the seeds of the contemporary diaspora.[26] The latter two, Holm and Graham, are still working as I write and give evidence to the esthetic tension in modernism. Graham, in an introduction to a book of photographs of her work by Barbara Morgan, situates dance within the consciousness of the conceiver-performer:

> Dance is an absolute. It is not knowledge about something, but is knowledge itself. In that sense it is like music. It is independent of service to an idea, but is of such highly organized activity that it can produce idea. I am certain that movement never lies. The inner quality of the dancer is inherent in all that he does. I am not saying that a good person makes a good dancer or that a bad person makes a bad dancer. The motivation, the cause of the movement, establishes a center of gravity. This center of gravity induces the co-ordination that is body-spirit, and this Spirit-of-body is the state of innocence that is the secret of the absolute dancer.[27]

There is a striking continuity between Duncan's notion that the dancer becomes beauty as a pure form of consciousness,

and Graham's treatise that dance is knowledge turned spirit in the body. In both cases, it is the direct enlargement of dancer-consciousness per se that makes dancing possible.

Hanya Holm certainly does not eschew the psyche, but her approach to dancing emphasizes the dancer's develoment of emotional expression as a mastery of the space that separates performer and consumer. In an essay distinguishing what she terms the American verus European approach to dance, she underscores the role of space:

> This subjective and emotional approach colors even more subtly the use of space characteristic of the German dancer, it accounts at least in part for the greater consciousness of space, actual and created as a factor of tremendous importance. Space, rhythm, volume, proportion are realized both by the American and the German dancer of first rank. But the use of space as an emotional element, as active partner in the dance, is distinctly European.[28]

Here again we see the dancer's manipulation of the environment as the means of expression through movement. Implicitly at least, Holm acknowledges that the world beyond through chances in the formal elements that exist between performer and consumer. Space exists not as a state of consciousness within the conceiver but as a lived relation with the consumer. Holm, like Fuller, is working with illusions, now achieved through the body itself, that presuppose a concern with perception.

From the late forties into the fifties, modern

dance in the United States had a lot of the makings of an archetypal nuclear family of the period. Through the ranks of their companies, Holm, Graham, Humphrey and Weidman, sired the next generation of dancers who further developed their esthetic differences. Alwin Nikolais was a student of and teacher for Hanya Holm who has developed her motional theories and breathed life into the spirit of Loie Fuller. Nikolais' use of illusion in the theater is grounded in a perception of time and space derived from the new physics of Fuller's day:

> I became interested in exploring new dimensions of time and new dimensions of space. In my period of study we were still concerned with the Aristotelian principles of the unities of time and space, and one of my first actions was to destroy the unities and look upon them as relative. My point of view then became more Einsteinian. The whole structure in my works changed, the whole outlook of the dynamics of the human body changed, because the dancer no longer had to assume its previous role of actor. He now assumed the role of an instrument of motion rather than an instrument of emotion, in the mad, sad and glad sense.[29]

Not only is Nikolais' work a break with what he terms the "psycho-dramatic school of dance" but it also represents a heightened concern with the effects the dance has on the audience as a theatrical experience. This is not to claim that the "psycho-dramatic school" is in any way untheatrical but rather to illustrate how the two esthetic tendencies privilege different relations among the conceiver-performer-consumer positions.

Nikolais' reference to the psycho-dramatic pertained not only to his mentors but to his peers as well, among them Erick Hawkins, Jean Erdman, Anna Sokolow, Sophie Maslow and Valerie Bettis, and most eminently, the late Jose Limon. Limon's testimony of his esthetic ties is clear:

> I view myself as a disciple and follower of Isadora Duncan and of the American impetus as exemplified by Doris Humphrey and Martha Graham, and by their vision of the dance as an art capable of the sublimity of tragedy and the Dionysian ecstasies. I try to compose works that are involved with man's basic tragedy and the grandeur of his spirit. I want to dig beneath empty formalisms, displays of technical virtuosity, and the slick surface; to probe the human entity for the powerful, often crude beauty of the gesture that speaks of man's humanity. I reach for demons, saints, martyrs, apostates, fools, and other impassioned visions. I go for inspiration and instruction to the artists who reveal the passion of man to me, who exemplify supreme artistic discipline and impeccable form: to Bach, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Goya, Schönberg, Picasso, Orozco.[30]

It could be said that the power that Limon invested in the conceiver-dancer to express some universal human spirit itself became a burden for the dancers that came out of the sixties influence of Merce Cunningham and Judson Church.[31] The work of Trisha Brown, Steve Paxton, David Gordon, Robert Dunn, Deborrah Hay, Lucinda Childs and Twyla Tharp, to name a handful of Judsonites, was quite fresh in its exploration of performance time and space that self-consciously included consumers. As an esthetic position however, this falls within the tradition of the

modernist tension. Their work was unique and unlike Nikolais they confronted the illusion that arose in the distance between performer and consumer, but innovation itself does not provide a definition for change.

Modern dance today is a virtual accumulation of all the influences mentioned here. The plurality of perspectives has not dampened debate nor the tension that has continued to generate innovation in modern forms. Twyla Tharp, undoubtedly the most renowned of the choreographers to come out of the sixties, views Cunningham's formalism as a type of old guard:

> It's not enough now. We need that form to express something. Something in society won't buy abstract art at the moment. I certainly won't as an artist. . . . You know, once you learn to write, you've got to say something, to express something besides your skills.[32]

The contours of the tension become more subtle, more refined. Representation and abstraction, emotion and motion, content and form, psyche and environment, illusion and process, distance and integration, cannot neatly divide choreographers or even works within their opus. Perhaps Tharp, whose work has embraced both sides of all these pairings is indicating a shift toward a concern with the dance's perceptual effects on its consumers.

In her diversity of motifs, her exploration of sources of movement and her concern with the dance's ef-

fect upon its public, the single choreographer to be studied here share's something of Tharp's perspective, though nothing of her fame. This choreographer's discipline, persistence and commitment cannot be neatly explained by the promise of success. She, like the majority of dancers and choreographers will not have the cover of Newsweek to affirm her work.[33] The secret to the appeal that dance has for her lies in its making and that renders a study of its construction all the more valuable. She is a descendant of the lineage that runs from Holm to Nikolais and yet the movement for her dances is in no way derivative. Her deep contact with the traditions of modern dance have left her influenced but standing on her own. In this regard, she is of and outside the above typologies, in her atypicality, she expresses something of the general movement of modern dance.

Choreography is a very specific process. Not only do different choreographers have their own unique methods of making dances, but each dance within a repertory is generated through particular means. Part of what gives a dance its identity lies in the discovery of its own cheoreographic technique. For if we were to trace the real history of any given dance, we would find its source in a variety of changing elements in the choreographer's experience. The germination of an idea based upon visions

and feelings is but one of these elements. The rehearsal space is a limit and a resource. (Senta Driver for example bases her dances on the L-shaped configuration of her studio; in Trisha Brown's Roof Piece, the space becomes the piece, and in many performance/rehearsal lofts, the supporting columns become full company members.)

Dance is an intrusion into space. The parameters of the space bound the disturbance. The choreographer's vision takes place in front of her. The light from a window may illuminate a particular line of a dancer's body, or point out a directional pattern on the floor. The narrowness of the room may attract lateral movement or the height promote levity. The intruders disembark on an initially foreign terrain which they must make their own. A beautiful slide discovered on a smooth floor may not be repeatable in another space. Each space invites its own movement. Each imprints itself on the inhabitants' interior architecture. Each implies a transformation of choreographic intention to realize movement. While choreographers with established companies usually have their own rehearsal space, others who rent space may find themselves in a different one with each dance they do or even holding rehearsals at several different spaces. For those with their own space, it is not surprising they attain a structural consistency known as style. Not that

a room can create in itself a patterned similarity, rather it eliminates a certain range of difference. The lack of difference in a choreographer's opus is often more apparent than its similarity and to this, a space adds its dimension of stability. But what the spatially indigenous and nomadic choreographers share is the necessity to transpose the movement they create from rehearsal to performance space (though at times these are the same) and this is fundamentally the task of the dancers in the company.[34]

Dancers contribute another element of variability to the choreographic process. No matter what the division of labor in the making of a dance, a strict separation between the conception and execution of movement is rare. In the creation of anything, but especially dance, conception is carried by execution. Even for those choreographers (from Cunningham to Childs) who use chance or mathemathical models to generate movement those models remain ideas until transformed by dancers. Hence it matters very much who those individuals are. In established companies, a change in personnel will effect the kinetic effect of the pieces in reperatory and, more importantly, new works. Many choreographers work with a dancer in mind or by setting dancers' improvisation. For these the individual kinetic attributes of the dancers are fundamental. Paul

Taylor, whose dances are widely admired, says: "More often than not, the kind of dance we work together on turns out to be dependent on these different dancers as individuals, sometimes their limitations are as interesting as their strong points. The finest choreography in the world doesn't mean a thing if the dancers are not suited to it and they look terrible. That figures."[35]

In practice, Taylor's opportunity to know his dancer's intimately is founded upon an exceptional situation in modern dance. He is one of roughly a dozen choreographers who maintain a company year round.[36] Martha Grapham, Merce Cunningham, Alwin Nikolais, Alwin Ailey, Murray Louis, Trisha Brown, Lar Lubovitch, Twyla Tharp, Jose Limon Company, and until recently Erick Hawkins formed the core of the New York contingent. All but Brown, Lubovitch and Tharp are the directors of schools that offer technical dance training that bears their name (Horton is taught at the Ailey school and Louis is co-director with Nikolais).[37] These schools sustain the traditions of modern dance from the two generations prior to the sixties. In the decentered tradition of Judson Church, schools like School for Movement Research and Naropa East have relatively large affiliated faculty who teach periodic workshops. Outside the predominant concentration of dance in New York most urban centers have established schools and

companies with extended local and touring seasons. Nancy Hauser in Minneapolis, Margaret Jenkins in San Francisco and Jan Van Dyke in Washington name a few.

Despite their importance, security is not a hallmark of these institutions. Even the largest companies have had to forego traditional New York seasons because of costs (Graham and Taylor among them). Market economists might respond that the companies simply cannot draw sufficient audience, yet the largest, most renown dance companies, New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theater and Joffrey Ballet do not depend solely on audience draws, rather, they are funded by state and private agencies.[38] The two sources of support are related. The national Endowment for the Arts was inaugurated in the mid-sixties but its budget was small. Its aim was to stimulate greatly increased assistance to the acts from the business community and from the nation's private foundations." In its first year, 1966, the overall budget for the NEA was $7,250,000 with $177,325 going to dance--of that $125,000 went to the Joffrey.[39] By the 1970's it had jumped to over $100 million and became an integral part of the dance scene. The large NEA grants, and the three ballet companies, ABT, NYCB and Joffrey receive hundreds of thousands of dollars annually (in 1982 over $1.6 million of the total $8.4 million that was

budgeted to dance), are matching grants, which usually means that the company has to raise three dollars for every dollar that it gets.[40] Of course this requires both the organizational infrastructure and the contact with monied sources unavailable to smaller companies. In addition to this, grants had been given to presenters (theater owners) to lower the percentage of the house they would have to fill in order to make a profit on a lesser known company. The grant would cover the difference between the say 60 percent draw and 85 percent profit margin. These grants were cut when the Reagan administration came into office along with the assertion that the NEA would shift its priority to the maintenance of established artists and the development of arts management.[41] The administration's suggestion that private sources make up the difference was of little use to emergent artists who had not received NEA funding, since NEA grants function to identify and legitimate the grantee to private sources in the first place.[42] As in the early sixties, American tours have become problematic and companies must travel abroad for performances and support.

For the hundred or so "professional" dancers in the modern companies, constricted touring seasons are even more destablizing. A dancer who makes $300 a week touring for twenty weeks will make a fraction of that while the

company is in town and they are on unemployment. The much larger part of the dance community has not even the opportunity for such meager subsidies. Dancing is always a social practice but only rarely a vocation. Most dancers' training is employed in the balancing of plates and telephone receivers. A good proportion of the money they earn, between $100 to $300 a month, goes into taking one to three dance classes a day and renting rehearsal space, in addition to money spent going to dance concerts.[43]

Not only do the dancers support the professional schools (which are a mainstay of the professional companies), but they also support a middle stratum of professional independent choreographers. These independent choreographers have often themselves graduated through the ranks of the professional companies before striking out on their own, though this is obviously less true of the post-moderns. The independents are placed in the position of small entrepreneurs. They must organize their own classes and college residencies, produce their own concerts and tours (though the more established of these do have business agents and organizational assistance is available through groups like Dance Theater Workshop and Dance Umbrella).

When independent choreographers do group work, they form what are known as "pick-up" companies either through

auditions or from networks of people they have worked with in other settings; classes, workshops, or other people's concerts. Although dancers may continue to work together (David Gordon's pick-up company has been together for years), a pick-up company's existence is often as fleeting as the performance it was put together for. The usual financial arrangement is that the dancer's rehearse for free and either share the money made at the performance or get paid $50-$100 by the choreographer.

While esthetics have remained in flux, this socio-economic community has been an enduring legacy of the sixties, for prior to that time, one could not even speak of modern dance as a profession. Once the economic base for dance is created, with the aid of state funding, a dance community is created which is able to a certain degree to support itself from within. It should not be surprising to find that, in this community as in the larger one, those with the least resources (financial) support those with the most, though a life in dance is easy for no one.

Overall, the socio-economic pressures of sustaining a life in dance can make the span of a dancer's life quite brief. Years of daily training and a handful of performances can quickly become remnants of a dream. The economics explain less of the persistence of the dance

community than the obstacles to its development and its conditions of poverty. There is a vital cultural dimension of this community that renders its activities useful and meaningful even when they are not remunerated in exchange. The impending brevity of participation in this community yields an intensity, an excitement of possibility that is applied to the making of dances. The pick-up company organizes and expresses this experience. Sociologically, it is particularly interesting as an explicitly temporary voluntary organization that achieves acute cooperation and depth of shared experience without the coercive aspects of money or natural disaster or the perceived permanence of a religious institution.[44]

The impermanence of the pick-up company should not imply that those who come to it do so without a dance tradition or past. Dance life is characterized by mobility, both on and off the stage. This mobility, in turn, has its effects on the dancers, as each carries with her or himself their own history of choreographic perspectives and techniques. The choreographers imagination is augmented by the spontaneity of the company in formation. For each "pick-up" company the creation of a dance based on the culling of their unique experiences, is simultaneously the construction of a community. The larger dance community (in New York) specifically modern dance, although

this is an increasingly nefarious distinction, is an incessant construction and demolition of cells. It is a community whose internal migration patterns are somewhere between a bevy of cancer cells and an upwind forest fire. The aggregation and dissolution of a pick-up company generally occurs within one to four months and terminates with as many performances. The choreographer must draw upon the dancers to draw them into the culminating performance. The dynamics and relations established during this time become the practical choreographic process whose effects are displayed in performance.

The mobility of the New York modern dancer is expressive of the political economy of American art and the individualism of our culture. The paucity of venue-audience draw situations renders extended performances economically unfeasible. The constriction of touring funds makes New York City limits a dancer's tether.[45] Further, the prospects of upward mobility into a company that could unite work and dance supports many a terpsichore in Horatio Alger bootstraps dream. On the other hand, genuine kinetic devotion and addiction to dance engender an integrity and commitment to rehearsal that insulate the studio from the vagaries of the dance market place and the oft-absent cash nexus and above all makes dancing possible. While "getting into a company" is statistically

improbable, the steps up to choreography is not. Many a dancer that came to New York with the former intention wound up realizing the latter. The pick-up company is a major reason for this mobility. After completing one cycle of the proceedings, a dancer is indelibly part choreographer, something few workers can say to their employers. For however long the dancer can balance the strains of being unpaid labor and unrecognized talent, the saiety and frustration of the fleeting moments of performance generate the demand for more dances.

Within the peculiar and common contours of the community that generates dance performance, this study presents a single case. A case, it must now be evident, that cannot be generalized as a choreographic formula, but that intends to give some precision to the system of relations that becomes performance. The pick-up company to be discussed here was hailed by a choreographer to do three performances in as many months of rehearsal. The dancers had come to New York from all over the world (India, Austria, England . . . even California) for just such a purpose. While what follows is a chronological account from first rehearsal to performance, the dance itself began in the middle and progressed towards an only approximate end.

Before the actual rehearsals began, the choreo-

grapher called the dancers together to establish a kind of covenant for the company. The ten dancers are, for the most part, not new to each other. They meet on their common ground, the school where they have all studied and where the choreographer now teaches. Her selection of the company is based upon what she has seen of us in classes and supplants an audition. That she has been our teacher engenders a trust and affinity towards her, and conversely gives her a firm view of our capacities as dancers. More than this however, it gives our bodies a common history.

The choreographer has called this meeting to lay down the law, to establish the contract that will bound the company and the dances to be made. There is nothing written of course, the choreographer embodies all authority that instigates the project. Upon the voice of this body, we will model our own, not in the germination of our capacities, but in accordance with its rules. Formally, the company's constitution consists of "three cardinal rules," we are to come to rehearsal warmed-up and on time, we are responsible to remember all material from the previous rehearsals, and we are not to work on any "outside choreography" during rehearsal. In turn, she assures us she will have work prepared for us and if not, dismiss the rehearsal. These rules are never mentioned

again, rather, they establish the terms of exchange. The dancers acknowledge the authority of the choreographer, and in so doing, recognize themselves as a company.

The company is the raw material out of which the dance will be hewn. It is the social body that must speak the choreographer's mind. Against the singularity of choreographic authority, is the collectivity of the company that constitutes totality. The dance will develop in the dialogue between these two. The relationship is more than one of command and response. At first the company only knows itself through each member's relation to the choreographer. As the rehearsals proceed, the company will take on more of its own identity as totality itself becomes more prominant. Totality then, is not the group of dancers themselves, but what they are capable of producing as a group and this is certainly facilitated through their exchange with authority.

Authority and totality are relations particular to the creation of each dance. Choreographers and dancers have lives and movement resources that precede and inform each dance. In the interests of uniqueness, the choreographer must draw from those histories as well as break from them. She must create an inside to the rehearsal to which the rest of the world is an outside, while drawing from the riches of that world. Setting up a rehearsal schedule is the first step towards that break. The sche-

dule carves up the dancers' space and time to reallocate it within the rehearsal. The schedule correlates the diverse points of departure to their common arrival. Hence, the authority-totality nexus commences on its own coordinates of space and time.

The bracketing of time and space to make a dance is predicated upon a larger bracketing, that of the dancers' training. Even choreographers who have used people with no formal movement training must identify their knowledge of the body to use it in a context where the body itself bears focus. The performance brackets what had been an undefined history. Dance training further heightens the awareness of actions that could be performed. Dance training gives continuity to a project just as speech permits focus on the substance rather than the production of conversation. Dancers in effect enter the rehearsal process with a common language. In this sense the piece does not commence on the first day of rehearsal but rather, is a continuation of what is already known about the body. Though we have never performed together nor worked with the one who had been teacher as choreographer, the rehearsals begin with an established perspective towards the body. The rehearsal begins as a continuation of dance class until it can develop its own physical demands and kinetic responses, for hours of class have patterned

a range of kinetic responses into the dancer's body. Hence, while a rehearsal process may begin with new co-ordinates it may lack the means to establish those co-ordinates until midway through the process. It begins in the middle of the dancers' history until it creates the structural basis for producing its own. Any break then that is achieved by initial rehearsal towards the autonomy of the performed work will depend upon choreographic discipline. Here the teacher as choreographer as teacher is particularly symbolic. She embodies the juncture of past and future discipline, whose difference is itself choreography.

Technique is the product of training. In dance parlance, technique has a qualitative and a quantitative aspect. In any company there may be evidenced varying levels of skill and proficiency and at the same time (especially in pick-up companies), evidence of training in various traditions. These two implicit notions of technique are apparently distinct but often confounded. One could imagine highly skilled dancers in any of the modern traditions, but a question of measurement arises, is there a justifiable basis of comparison? The schools that have emerged out of various choreographic traditions, emphasize certain coordinations of the body over others in accordance with their stylistic demands. In this case, tech-

nique would be a purely relative term that referred to the seamless presentation of style, a moment of individual transcendance into pure form. The relativity of technique was underscored for me by an observation of the work of one choreographer being set on the company of another. The particular articulations of the torso characteristic of the one were consistently missed by the other, while movements of the legs were replicated instantly but danced with another quality. Both companies were intensely trained but to different ends through different means.

At the same time that technique expresses the commonality of tradition, it also refers to the distinctiveness of the individual dancer. Not only will the most skillful dancer stand out in a particular company, but the very notion of virtuosity indicates a transcendence of style which heightens the individual. For dance to be considered as a field composed of many traditions, technique considered as abundance of execution bounds the technique of style. As virtuosity itself is promoted as the saiety of performance, quantitized technique eclipses the qualitative, relative aspect. In the contemporary dance market, ballet approaches the union of this eclipse, a universal technique both as a stylistic model and as a metric of skill. Ballet readily calibrates the counting of the individual (turns, beats of the legs,

extensions, etc.) with choreographic method (absolute unison, speed, filling the stage). It threatens an esthetic with usurpation by the measurement of that esthetic.

While strong ballet training is often included in notices for modern dance companies, the peculiarities of diverse trainings, retains their inscription on the dancer's body. The balletic standard may clarify the tension in the technical ideal, but in practice, dancers come to rehearsal with a variety of kinesthetic resources. In performance, these resources may be evident in the sparkling of different dancers at various moments in the piece (particularly where improvisation has been included as a choreographic method). These individual differences indicate more of the varied backgrounds the dancers bring with them in their movements from school to school, a difference that particularizes the dancer, than self-consciously inchoate choreographic style.

Ironically, the dancers' diversity is a function of the search for technique. When the dance world looked more like a family tree than a furrow of moss, switching companies meant a substantial retooling of the body (the two companies in the aforementioned choreographic exchange that I witnessed have been around over twenty years). With the pick-up company, technique as style is

eroded. The teaching of a set of body coordinations as a function of a long term choreographic project is generally absent from the recent generation of choreographers. The space between the dancers' training and choreographers' projects hence become more and more abstract. That abstraction is in turn met by the quantitized technique which presents a demand (improve!) without necessarily responding to a need (express!).

Dancers can train and measure their progress in the absence of choreographic direction. The dancer's independence based upon technique easily becomes the esthetic raw material that the choreographer begins to direct. Hence it becomes possible to understand how technique brings the dancer to the choreographer with a logic beyond both of them. The choreographer must trade the demand that technique makes for her own, or for the demand of the piece. But, absenting the existence of the piece to declare its demands to the dancers, the choreographer draws her authority from that implied voice and begins to direct technique towards it. This is not to say that the piece literally knows where it is headed or that an end is contained in the beginning. Rather it is to indicate the complexities contained within such an apparently simple moment as a beginning. The beginning is animated not only by what has preceded it, but by the

shared expectation of what can follow. In the course of making a piece, those expectations become real dance structure. Yet the structure itself does not project its power as a system of expectations and possibilities. Rather the voice derives from the form that shapes experience.

A dance begins in the middle of an established form of communication just as a speaker is inserted into language. Like the speaker, what the choreographer says will be a product of her own history. The possibility of dance comes from beyond the individual dancers. It lies in techniques already braided into the dancer's body, lofts built into studios, the spatial contours of the urban landscape, etc. The sense, the realization of the dance comes from the selection of these possibilities by the dancers in rehearsal. It is not surprising then that this particular dance begins in the middle of what will be its completed structure. The rehearsal process is but one branch thrown into the stream of choreographic communication. The branch is at the mercy of the current of that stream until it begins to establish its own identity. It speaks the language of what dancers already know about dancing rather than what they are about to find out about this dance. The branch continues within the stream until it establishes its own means of navigation, until

it dislodges stones in the streambed and earth on the banks to alter the direction of the stream itself. That alteration is the imprint, the mark of the dance's coming into being, the artifact that establishes the dance's identity and now turns the tides by making choreographic communication dependent on the construction of real dances, rather than the motor of their growth. A first rehearsal contains the seeds of a direction but not of the completed dance, for a totality requires its own identity, and that is only now in the making.

In our first rehearsal, we generate steps whose precise placement in the overall structure of the dance is unknown. The dancers have been informed of the topic of the dance, victimization, but know nothing of the specific choreographic problems posed or the structural format of the piece. The choreographer who has some general schema of these, still does nct know exactly where the movements she is setting will fall, though she knows with certainty that they are not the beginning. We have been told to bring in a dance phrase, a sequence of movement which exhibits our own virtuosity as dancers prior to the first rehearsal.

On the first day we arrive at the rented space, a loft converstion to dance studio which has become a feature of the dance political economy, expressed in the

dictum that dancers' survival is dependent on other dancers. The dance space is flanked by a kitchen on one side and a bedroom on the other. Its smooth polished wooden floorboards are tight together, facilitating falls and slides. The red brick walls and sashes of fall afternoon window light give the space a warmth and its rectangular proportions give it the feeling of intimacy of being tucked inside an envelope.

Our initial instructions are to break into two groups and begin teaching each other the phrases we composed. After repeating the phrases three times, the dancers have a rough idea of what they look like and can approximately dance them. The choreographer does some editing, eliminating the arms from a turn and rearranging the sequence of movements, or simplifying a movement so that others can learn it more readily. We begin on the inside of the dance with our own movement becoming the movement of others. We pick up immediately where we left off before coming to the rehearsal, with movement we discovered before coming into contact with the group. By making adjustments, assigning counts and tempo according to the taped score, the choreographer places our individual movement into the context of the group and implicitly, of the dance that is to become.

The sequence of middles does not end here. The

dancers are not only inside of the work, they find themselves in the middle of the very movement they are apprehending. The process of learning a phrase appears to be one of imitation. A phrase is displayed and repeated several times. The others watch, first for the large details, directions, orientations of the body, perhaps they are swept into several moves in concert with the dancer/teacher. But what is seen by the others is only a visual approximation. This approximation is not, as we would expect from the logic of imitation, from generality to specificity. The dancer may pick up the minutest detail of the phrase and miss the grossest directional shift. As with conversational movements of the hands, the dancers receive the sense of the movement. That sense is more aligned to its kinetic intention than to its appearance; we respond in kind not with a mirror of the movement, but with a movement expressive of our own physical understanding. In the heat of debate we may not even see the flailing hands of our argumentor yet they may be truly driving the point.

The dancers must ultimately achieve a replication of movement but imitation is the result and not the means of apprehension. For in watching movement the dancers perceive only a shattered reflection of the image they view. Like a mirror lying in ruin, the shard showing the

curve of a finger may be central while the image of the torso is angled off to the periphery. Hence the image has detail but only approximate generality. When dancers respond to this shattered image they respond with all of their body, making their own kinetic sense of it so as to make movement possible.

The dancer responds with her own kinetic imagination. The original image becomes kinetically rather than visually imaginary. Each dancer's kinetic sequence may be further refined by stepping out of the motional flow and making adjustments. The technical skill of picking up steps is really the ability to kinetically reconstruct an image into a totality of one's own body. In developing these skills dancers are defining a particular mechanism of memory, a memory of the muscles to a particular motional situation.

One of the company members who admits to having trouble with names can reproduce phrases she learned six months ago and has not done since. "I just get an image of the movement right away. I see what everything is doing at once. I see the hands and feet and everying . . . and then I never forget the images." The dancer is seeing differently from the way we are conscious of seeing. She is able to arrange and indel each shard of the mirror into a fixed relation within herself. By her own descrip-

tion, hers is a memory of totality and detail in line with the nature of her body's response to the movement.

When the dancers have learned the phrase, that is when they are dancing synchronously with the person who taught it, the phrase becomes raw material for the choreographic process. Not only will the phrases be cut and spliced into new contexts, but the very movements themselves which are now only means of locomotion through the space will take on qualitative meaning in the context of the piece as a whole. For now the movement's intention is transit and we approach this problem from very mechanical means (i.e., the engineering of the body in the time-space environment, mechanical problems involve manipulation of technique), rather than the metaphoric terms associated with art. As the piece unfurls however we will see a transformation from the rehearsal as a solution to a set of mechanical choreographic problems to sets of metaphorical ones expressed in motional terms.

Each dancer now has a vocabulary of several phrases, which also aligns them with a group of dancers who know and do the same phrase. The choreographer's intervention begins by calibrating all of the phrases to the same time removing them from their creator's beat and applying them to the standard of the musical score. The music applied to movement that knew nothing of it already

changes the rhythmic and kinetic sense of the phrases. The counting turns the individual phrases into boxcars on a train capable of being hitched and unhitched at any point. The structural manipulation of boxcars is primarily a mechanical task and is executed by the choreographer with the supervision of a trainyard controller.

We begin in two groups doing two phrases and in the middle of a phrase the choreographer will stop us and have an individual change group allegiance. This presupposes learning more movement and alludes back to the previous process. The choreographer must also select the spatial path of the groups, paths that utilize contrast without inviting collision. The space is largely undifferentiated by the existing movement and the choreographers control consists of her arbitration of difference at this point. There is no mirror in the studio and the choreographer is the only outer eye. While each dancer has authority over their own body, only she has authority over the group. While each dancer must command their own body, their internal space, the choreographer directs the overall disturbance in the space. We dance now through the direction of the choreographer rather than with each other. Our very isolation prohibits us from knowing difference, that is from knowing what the other dancers are doing in the space at the same time. We cannot see the

other paths and our focus on the purely mechanical execution and memory of the steps limits our feeling of the other dancers' presence. At this point, technique is what we all bring to the rehearsal but it is also what separates us within it.

The process of learning phrases in groups, cutting and splicing them and adding them to the existing sequence continues much in the same way for the first four rehearsals. The dance progresses not only in length but in complexity. Singly or in pairs or trios, we break with the phrase we are dancing to join together. Our memorization is both of phrases and the moments of change. The control that makes these changes possible are the counts. In contrast to the choreographer, the counts administer continuity. They serve to calibrate the individual dancer with the group. The counts are an external metric that, although based upon the music, are quite arbitrary delineations. After initially counting the movement in measures with four beats (4/4 time), the choreographer decided to change the counts to five beats to a bar (5/4 time). The musical score is highly poly-rhythmic and emphasis could be found for either pattern.

While counting is itself arbitrary, its effects on the dancing of the movement are not. The individual phrases were made with either a duple or triple feel (sug-

gesting four-four or three-four countings). Recalibrating the phrases lifted them from their original rhythmic contexts, and especially where phrases were syncopated, changed their kinetic feel. The more the dancers had to find new motional values for the forms they had produced, the more they mourned the loss. "But it just doesn't work in five. I can't make any sense of this turn. I don't know where it comes now." At this point, the counts did not create a new kinetic feel, for the movement was still driven by the inner musicality of the dancer's body; rather, the counts demanded new values. It remained the dancers' task to produce them. These new acts of production occurred on the terms and terrain of the piece itself. The counts represented the means of authority to wrest the dancers' corporeal temporality and redefine it as an external metric. If the five-four measures altered the dancers' temporal sense, the collection of measures into groups of 16 changed their temporal orientation. Hence a movement phrase that was brought into the rehearsal uncounted, counted into eleven measures of six eight when taught to others, split into two parts and used in different sections of the dance, and finally counted as a phrase of eight fives. These eight measures were inserted into a sequence of sixteen altering the dancer's own sense of what had been beginning and end, and as such, the way

this movement related to the other movement in general. Certainly as the rehearsal process continued, the dancers again made the movement their own, bound now by new surfaces of time and space. Whatever length the original phrase became, it would not necessarily begin on the first measure of the sixteen bar cycle, nor end on the last. Counts were the authority that wrested and redefined the movement from the dancers' own totality that came from technique, to a totality that could be based upon the dancers' collective experience. In subordinating all individual movement to a common metric, this initial authority rendered all dancers dependent on a count system that belonged to none. It could thereby provide a basis for a totality that was beyond and yet belonged to all. The recounting marked the first birth on the piece's own soil. When other sections of the dance were choreographed, this first section was dubbed 'the fives.' It was the only section named for the way it was counted.

At this point, the choreographer and the counts were the two primary authorities in rehearsal. Not only were they functionally divided into diachrony and synchrony, respectively, but they were also independent. When the material had accumulated and the sequence extended over several sets of sixteen bars it was run together. The choreographer watched to see how individual changes she

had made in the sequence affected the space as a whole. After counting out the pulse, she stopped counting after the first few bars. The dancers then grappled with the counts or their own discrepancies in counting.

The discrepencies threatened to discoordinate any run through. In the gap between synchrony and diachrony, a third authority was called for, an authority that could maintain the integrity of each group while marking the succession from one phrase to the next. The person who had originally made the phrase was expected to count out loud while what had been their phrase was danced by a cluster of dancers. Hence phrase and phrasemaker were reunited, now as authority rather than totality. Practically speaking, the phrasemaker knew more of the movement forms than any other dancer, yet at this point they were not being called upon to teach. Their authority was solidified in the naming of each phrase after the one who had introduced it. Throughout this first section, sequences of movement were referred to by the dancers' first names. Here naming marks the recognition of an authority.

The work of the phrasemaker now began to organize some group response as discrepancies in counts became differences among groups. The group leadership was always in flux, every time a cluster reformed, a new voice was

heard. The privileged knowledge that was the basis of the phrasemaker's authority resulted in a very temporary position. Hence phrasemaker was more a category than an individual source of control. The phrasemaker became a lesser star in the constellation of authority. They were responsible for the genuine version of the phrase and for counting and hence guiding it while others were dancing it. They brought together a continuity of counts and steps. Against the synchronous calibrations of the phrasemaker were the differences of individual dancers' bodies. The dancer's body is the ultimate limit of what is possible. When the choreographer would make an alteration in a phrase or other change, her question always addressed to our bodies was, "possible"? In this sense the choreographic process had come full circle. What began as expressions of the dancer's bodies, subject to a variety of external rigors, find their realization on the instruments that produced them. The limits of the dancer's body of what movements are possible to execute constitute an authority independent still from that of the choreographer, counts, and phrasemakers.

The systems of authority are like the scaffolding on a building. They are external supports to the structure that permit construction at several levels at once. At the same time, there are elements out of which the edifice

is constructed. Each one of these elemental materials contributes to the totality that is to become the completed building. In response to the relations of authority, these elements of totality at the onset of the rehearsal process are themselves technical in nature. For in the initial moments of construction, the building is particularly dependent on the scaffolding. Its rooms are mere shells that have yet to take on quality and identity of their own. The inside has only the structural detail imparted from without. It is not until the scaffolding is removed that the building speaks for itself. So it is with the process of making a dance. The guts are there from the beginning, but they are subordinate through their dependence on the relations of authority. By the time the edifice is completed, however, these initial elements of totality are no longer the same, they have been transformed in form and function.

The guts of the dance, the elements of totality are multiple from the onset. The most universal element is technique. The technical history of these dancers has a common denominator in their tenure at the dance school, which is imported to the rehearsal studio. While technique is a totalizing element, it structures a particular type of totality compatible with its subordination to authority.

The shared technical training defines a broad

field within which a range of motional qualities can make sense. But, more than a shared physical sensibility, with this technique comes a common descriptive vocabularly of movement. The dancers, as evidenced by the diversity of the phrases they brought in, move in different ways. At the same time, in teaching these phrases, a common understanding and perspective on movement was apparent. Hence, the technique in its reflexivity connected the diversity of movement and made it readily apprehendable. Technique then, itself embodies something of authority. Its demand for the execution of movement also yields a perspective on that execution. The unifying principle of technique is the metric is provides. What the dancers actually share in technique is the means to assess the movement and thereby, to learn it with a certain awareness of how (and as such, how well) it is done. Indeed, the early rehearsals are concerned with the 'how' rather than the 'what' or 'why' of the movement, for how is at the heart of technique. The mechanical feat of executing the movement in the established sequence is itself the binding that makes the activity called dancing possible. Technique is behind the mechanics.

Against the discursive means through which the dancers come to know the movement is a more local and specific language; the pool of movements that has been

generated from the phrases. Technique may constitute the alphabet and syntactical rules of dance, but the phrases and words of the local language are the practical field of the movement spoken in the studio. Initially, through technique, it is the language itself that is discussed. The dancers' first problem is to apprehend the pool of movements while the choreographer's first task is to delineate that pool. Herein lies the door between the authority of technique and that of the choreographer. When the choreographer edits a phrase or adjusts a path of movement, she uses the language of technique. Simultaneously, the movement pool that remains after these directives are eventually the words that the piece itself will speak. The choreographer passes one way through the door with the language of technique and the movement pool remains on the other side with the knowledge of technique. The process of this passage takes up the real time of the rehearsal. The creation of the movement pool is for now the temporal dimension of the dancers' experience.

Space is the other totalizing element which the dancers moving share. While each dancer has his own unique sequence of movement and changes of group affiliation, what all share is their cohabitation of the space. Space represents the integration and subjugation of the individual dancer to the group. While most of the dancers' con-

centration is on remembering and executing the sequence of movement, a very solitary activity, they must also navigate a path that subverts collison with other dancers. At this early phase, we had no idea where the other bodies would be, nor did the choreographer. Some of the near misses are what give the dancing its initial kinetic excitement and dancers adjust to these problems in flight through a visceral sense of where the other dancers are and where they are going. A space opened by the movement of two other dancers creates a kind of kinetic anticipation. One aims themselves in that direction and is seemingly sucked through the opening. In the constantly changing terrain, such openings are still individual possibilities made possible by others. In time, the grooves in the landscape will be set and settled but for now the decisions arise spontaneously.

This flexibility does not always exist and at other times, dancers must step out of dancing to decide and create spatial openings. Here authority is invoked to facilitate what had previously been possible through totality. The dancers will invoke the counts to determine where they "should" be at a given point and then adjust their paths accordingly. If the problem is one of overall distribution of dancers in the space, too many people in one place, the choreographer intervenes. The

counts adjudicate interpersonal rivalries while the choreographer placates the demands of the space.

While the elements of both totality and authority are in place, the company is in most respects dependent on the choreographer. While dancers are responsible to do the movement on the appropriate counts, and adjust individual spacing problems, most individual problems are common to all and require the choreographer's attention. In making the initial decisions to structure the piece, the choreographer is beginning to set the dancers free, to give them something of their own to work on. The dancers have brought in movement and technique, the choreographer must develop the means to organize these. Her ideas are tested against these means.

Beyond replicating the movement, the dancers learn the rules that govern it (e.g., the counts). In responding to these rules, the dancers find themselves as a group. At this early stage, the group is discovered more through the awareness of what it can't do, than through the experience of what it can. The company is now undeniably a collective entity, but the nature and product of their association will change as they move towards performance.

Second Movement: Dance from the Inside

The first four rehearsals proceed as a series of hows. The focus is on codeterminous execution of movement within the space. Caught up in the how, the dancers as yet know little of the why, or sense of the movement. From the first, there have been moments where the movement was exciting or engaging. There are passages for each of us where we feel we are really 'dancing.' But it is not clear what we are dancing for. The dancers have feelings of motional satisfaction that they call kinetic. But the sequence of movement has not formed a particular context that would favor one kinetic interpretation over another. Whereas kinetics have been stolen moments for individual dancers, by the third week with three rehearsals a week, this begins to change. The dancers' kinetic moments enter the real time of the rehearsal. The rehearsal process begins to concern itself with what will become the esthetic content of the piece; the movement's intent.

As the discussion and nature of the choreographic problem is no longer purely technical, so do the relations between authority and totality change. Where there was visible only scaffolding, now is visible something of the building to be, for the structure is given some basis of identifying itself that is not contingent on its support. Where totality was subordinate to authority through the

demands of technique, now the two meet on more equal footing. The new terms of encounter are a consequence of the demand for kinetic intention which is itself a product of that encounter. Kinetics are the dancers' response to a motional situation, though the choreographer must find the means to create those situations.

Between the third and the seventh week of rehearsal, authority and totality will make their contribution to the possibility of a specific kinetic intention. Authority establishes a means of exchange between dancers and choreographer that permits the creation of movement within and by the rehearsal process, improvisation. Authority generates a set of rules that bound the conditions for making movement. Through rehearsals, dancers erect a form of community that is both a bastion and expression of totality. The community is a response to the rules which permit the passage of the rehearsal from the production of movement to kinetic expression. This passage is marked by the shift of emphasis from technical solutions to mechanical problems (co-determinous movement), to kinetic solutions to technical problems (performance).

In this next phase of the choreographic process, the choreographer begins to speak of quality, the 'what' of the movement. Quality defines the nature of the movement's execution. It gives dancing a point of view which

can then crystallize into an intention. As such, quality is a window between technicity and kinetic motivation. It is a surface that borders both worlds. Quality is not itself intention, for just as in speech, the tonal manipulations of a word can change but not explain its meaning, so quality is only part of what displays a kinetic intention. It is the part that is accessible through the exchange between choreographer and dancers.

The way in which the choreographer introduced the problem of quality reveals something of its partial role in producing intent. It is the first time in rehearsal she begins to speak of what we are doing. Hitherto, words have been aimed at placing the movement in the space. Words at their best can approximate a movement. If they do, it is by suggestion rather than description. If a movement is described with precision, say the arm is extended shoulder level perpendicular to the torso, with the underside of the upper arm, forearm, palm, and fingers parallel to the floor, fingers parallel to one another, shoulder extended away from the neck and out from the shoulder blade (indeed, to be precise we would have to place the entire rest of the body against the part that would be moving, each part with its own rotational possibilities), the arm is then moved in a downward direction maintaining its relationship of parts until it comes to

rest parallel to the torso. Thus far two positions have been reported and the motion itself has only been implied in the change of positions. If we try to describe the nature or quality of that motion, the problem becomes all the more difficult. The time the movement took could be specified, say .78 seconds, and the variations in its rate of descent could be measured (not that this would help someone replicate the movement). The most difficult question remains, how was the movement done? As soon as one begins to describe the movement as soft, staccato, serene, abrupt or whatever, the analysis shifts from what the body is doing to produce movement, to the effects of that movement. The arm does not actually soften. Rather it is the motion that is soft. Soft is an image which is evoked by a particular motion produced by a movement. Further, there are all different kinds of softnesses; the penetrable softness of a cloud, the supportive softness of a pillow, the even softness of oil on skin, etc. The metaphors move even farther away from the production of movement, for they deal with what the images mean to the dancers rather than the nature of the motion. Hence, two dancers using the same image may produce different softnesses or the same one with different images. For this reason, the choreographer is spartan with words, for she wants her intentions to be danced and not told. That is

why she speaks of quality and not kinetic motivation. Images describe outcomes and not responses. Since images lack kinetic precision and reliability when interpreted by the dancer, quality becomes the dominant mode of getting at intent. It shifts a problem of interpretation to one of production of a motional situation which can then be interpreted.

Not only is verbal exposition used sparingly in these rehearsals, but, as part of the saffolding, it is used as a means of exclusion; words draw dancers away from certain possibilities. Hence, the choreographer, rather than attempting to describe the quality she wanted to achieve, told us what she didn't want. "You know all that stuff (Murray Louis) talks about, the sense of presence in the space, the light coming out of your eyes and all? Well, throw all that aside, I want you to do the opposite of that." The choreographer introduced quality as a negation of the qualitative aspect of the technique that we shared, for she was referring to one of the masters of that technique. Hence, technique not only patterns certain motional inclinations which are rerouted in the the course of rehearsals, but embodies a perpective on the way all movement should be executed. The qualitative aspect of the technique seeks to heighten that particular technique, while the unique qualities

discovered in rehearsal are what distinguish the piece from technique and performance from dance class. In restricting our trade with our own dance past, the choreographer opens the possibility of a new future. The conditions for the new are created by limiting the influence of the old.

Quality appears in the negative. By making the negation of the dancers' past specific, the negation suggests a specific response. At the same time, it declares its dependence on that response, on the dancers turning suggestion to certainty. It is not surprising that the dancers approach the unnamed quality as concretely as they do the other mechanical problems. Breaking with the past becomes a specific process. Eyelids are lowered slightly, angles and attacks of the movement are softened, extensions are foreshortened, aerial moves are clipped. The suggestion of what the dance isn't has led to a whole range of adjustments of what is. These machinations remain technical, external, conscious adjustments because they lack a larger context which would render them something more than the execution of movement. At the same time, these qualitative adjustments make the future context possible. What is now a consciously manipulated attitude of the body, pours a kinetic mold which can later be filled. Without belaboring a metaphor, this mold must be distin-

guished from the scaffolding. For the mold is created by and for totality. The scaffolding creates the conditions for the mold. The choreographer creates an opposition that the dancers meet. At the same time that she was fortifying the role of totality in the rehearsal process, she was entrusting in our research the basis for the danced identity of the work.

For the third week of rehearsal to performance, spacing as well as the execution of movement changes to facilitate the expression of intention. Spacing, the placement and relation of dancers in the space, organizes a group sense of dancing together. Spacing must be particularly precise for the structural clarity of this first section. The premise of the section is the constant change of dancers' allegiance to groups and group configuration. Spatial relations both define the configuration of the group, and register individual changes as changes in configuration. The spatial integrity of the group is vital to the legibility of the movement and as such, a structural demand for awareness of others is made on each dancer. While no one, not even the choreographer knows all the movements and directional paths of each dancer, each sequence is now defined as a change of group allegiance, rather than merely a new movement to be performed. Spatial anomie is subverted through the identity of one's own

moves as those of another.

The dance now only exists in groups. Just as the individual changes that dancers make are now always group changes, now individual kinetics depends increasingly on collective moments. The experiential change in one's own body is a function of the changing environment of bodies. The break with synchronicity, continuity, and allegiance are the same moment in which kinetic effects occur. That is, kinetics occur within relational differences rather than personal changes. By creating a form which can be filled, spacing like quality builds kinetic moments. The phrasemaker's authority which begins with teaching movement and regulating counts is extended to maintain the spatial integrity within the group. Dancers return to the phrasemaker for clarification of movement to achieve spatial uniformity within the group. The phrasemakers are called upon to refine the movement beyond its original exposition. The refinement is simultaneously the tuning of the group. As the group gains in spatial solidity, arrivals and departures of individuals have clearer resonance, and new kinetic moments are created. This creative process drives the life of the piece.

At the same time that quality and spacing are applied to existing movement, another method is added to the choreographic process. No longer is movement brought

brought to rehearsal from phrases dancers have prepared outside. Nor is the choreographer's selection limited to movements she invents and assigns. The emphasis shifts to improvisations as the source of movement. The choreographic problem is now posed directly to the dancers and it is from their solutions that the choreographer must select. To use an industrial analogy, she turns from supervisor to rigorous inspector, selecting for passage only the choicest of the motional products. Her criteria are relative to the range of our expression. If her ideas were preformed or prefigured she could design and assign the movement. Rather, what she knows is a question, an intent whose response is explicable only through dance. She must take this question and turn it into a problem that presents a motional situation. From our responses to the situation, her decision is made. It is a decision based upon real not imagined bodies, bodies she taps for their kinetic history. In dance idioms such as classical ballet where the movement vocabulary is established prior to a particular dance, an inventory of imaginery bodies is a possible choreographic process which retains the choreographer's supervisory role. But where vocabulary is established by and for each dance, the choreographer must abdicate some of that authority.

Improvisation emerges as the new structure which

embodies choreographic authority. It is the meeting ground of what dancers and choreographer give up, authority and technique, and what they each contribute, movement and its identification. Improvisation as a means to expand the pool of movement is itself beyond dancers and choreographer at the same time that it is the medium through which they touch. The choreographer cannot imagine the specific movements of ten dancers any more than they could improvise and select and set their collective movement. Dancers and choreographer contributed movement through their own individual improvisations. Now that improvs are a collective process not only movement but kinetic relations among dancers are discovered. When the movement is replicated so are the relationships among dancers such that the kinetics found in the moment of discovery do not recede in the process of structural refinement. Where quality followed the technique-based movement, it precedes movement found through improvisation.

The first improvisations were simple problems in search of a technical solution. In pairs we assumed a mutually encoiled position, one on the floor, the other standing. While the former uncoiled and slid away, the latter fell in an arch over them. The choreographer watched while we worked simultaneously, letting her eye get attracted from one couple to the next. Struck by

an event, she would call on the rest of us to replicate the actions of the one. "Let's all do what (Ginger)'s doing. Hold there, now bend your torso. There! Anne's got it. With the head on the floor. Yes." The movement is constructed as a composite across individual dancers' bodies. It is also the product of a collective body which is beyond each of theirs. For a moment the choreographer follows the dancers, the dancers forget what they have learned about movement and respond with the developed resiliency of their bodies to the demands of the problem.

The improvisation terminates when a working solution is found. Yet, at the moment of selection, the logic of what works is not clear. A working solution is not merely one that fulfills the problem's function. There were many solutions that achieved a balanced fall and recovery. The problem only suggested a response; it did not prescribe a means of selection. The composite movement is actually a series of selections, each sharing in the discovery. Like the premium awarded to uniqueness in an inspector's adjudication, the selection of movement is determined at the moment the bounds of the problem are transcended. The surprise of discovery eclipses the problem's demand and seals the decision. The choreographer finds what could not be imagined in setting up the problem; the body's response. Improvisation as choreographic

process disappears with selection. Dancing our way out of the problem led to a solution that would no longer be improvised. With the setting of the movement, however, the improvisational kinetics remain. The one dancer still triggers the others movement. The surprise in the discovery then are the kinetics themselves, unimaginable responses that speak directly to the body.

The investment of the body over the mind's intelligence, in the very materials of the work, transfers the source of creation into its mode of expression. This is not to imply that the medium is the message, but simply that it has one. The body speaks through its own kinetic means. But kinetics are possible in the dance because improvisational situations were imagined and assigned. The autonomy of the body's means of articulation is embedded within other systems of communication. In finding means to bound and transcend those other systems (improvisation), a space is cleared for the experience of physical intent. The filling of a stage or a canvas with a system of surprises-as-solutions makes a piece work. Work, not in the sense of fulfilling a function or imparting a message, but work in the sense of a formation of actions performed on a relation of objects. Dance is an intrusion in space and what it displaces is felt as a new spatial environment between dancer and audience. A

painting similarly moves visual orientation. Hence, in a literal sense, art works, and in working it has effects.

Later in the third week of rehearsals we began to improvise together as a group. We also began work on what was to be the next section of the dance. This section was much more situational in aspect. The mark of improvisation that initiated its choreographic process was stamped upon its final expression. We also began to work with objects, four foot dowels of wood, that served as a resource and constraint to movement.

At first we played games of follow the leader with the dowels, creating phrases which we then tried to set. Interestingly, it took more attempts to replicate the movement of the stick than it usually did to set a phrase on our own bodies without an object. The object had sense only as an extension of our own sentience. Having no kinetic force it had to be imagined and this implied being inside and outside of our bodies at the same time, a dilution of the construction of an inner totality described earlier. Once the sequence was learned the object helped concretize the movement's quality. The object did fortify a point of view in its very motional limitations. Its partial reflection of ourselves as dancers heightened our awareness of the movement's effect. Just as we straighten out the curve of a revolving door by resisting the kinetic

limitation it places on us, so does that motional abberation imposed by the object press on our physical awareness. We are made aware of our body's choice both by our displacement of the paths we did not take.

In some ways the dancers' world always implies a history of relation to objects whether they are there on the stage or not. The revolving door, the curb, the lamppost, the chewing gum, are objects that are part of our daily collective displacement. Our responses may be automatic but they are not without effect. The patterned displacements are catalogued within the body and when we move, whether as dancers or pedestrians, these patterns are implied. For the dancer, such patterns may be subordinated to technique, but when the object is reinstated into the studio, the reflexivity of the history of objects is again made explicit.

The section with the dowel was made up of a series of oppositions between the group, whose members had the object and an individual outside the group who didn't. The section itself had two parts. In the first, the dowelless dancer ran back and forth across the stage while the group, spread like a fence, made small etchings in the space with their sticks. After a fixed number of crossings, the lone figure would streak through the gauntlet, exchange places with a dancer in the group while the

group changed its configuration. The activity drew its effect from the incarcerating reality of the situation. While it had technical demand (setting the order of exchanges, the number of passes the runner made and the new configuration and motional quality of the dowel), it was animated from the start by a different dimension of relation between dancers than the previous section. In the first section, we divided the space through synchronous group movement. The divisions were maintained through the rigors of the movement. Our relations were defined by sustaining a prescribed distance in motion (spacing). Now however spatial proximity, took on a confrontational air and the totalizing aspects of the space itself animated our movement. It is the difference between the subway at rush hour and a bullfight. The rubric of the subway is distance in a scarcity of space while that of the bullfight, a proximity that makes us abandon our abundance. The spatializing kinetic effect of the bullfight is to make us the point of contact between sword and horn. There is (at times) a spatial cooperation in the subway (or bus or elevator) coordinated by shared means to ends that turns to necessity in the bullfight. The combative space seals a group relation and suggests a sentiently common response.

The second part of the section was to an even

greater degree an organization of our common senses through combative space. The confrontation between lone figure and group had intensified. The group made a bed of the sticks in the air while the soloist, after several crossings ran at the sticks and flung herself into them whereupon she was caught and lifted overhead on the sticks and placed down on another part of the stage. The bed of dowels regrouped across the stage and the soloist prepared for another flight. While the first section was set in three rehearsals and was, until the time of performance, reviewed for quality, the second part congealed during its first rehearsal and maintained its kinetic sensibility to the end. In catching and raising overhead the flying soloist with one swift motion, the group of eight moved as one from the start. There was no technical explication of how to execute the lift. There was no reflexive process of apprehension. The lift had from its inception to its performance the structure of an improvisational response to a real motional situation. The construction of such a reality that has no external referrents or meaning in itself (we don't go around catching people on wooden sticks), is born into the arena of kinetic intent that the first section is to become. The situational reality of this kinetic event bear not only the identifying intent of performance, but also the means to reproduce

that intent.

Although improvisation has been introduced into the choreographic process, it is limited to the solution of particular problems, absent moments in the choreographer's vision of the section under construction. Here, improvisation is not the logic that designs the section, but for discovering movement appropriate to it. Within that design, improvisation moves the gap posed by the problem, into the surprise offered by the solution. In the example of the fall, improvisation was formalized into set movement but retained its kinetic discovery. With the lift on the sticks, the preceding and antecedent actions were set, but the lift remained improvised in response to the situation, because formal synchrony of movement was not a demand. The motional situation evoked a shared kinetic response, but this does not determine a common or precisely reproducible form. Hence, kinetics may be the object of choreographic process, but they are not sufficient means. Improvisation bounds time and space to free the dancer within them. Improvisation is the limit that permits limitlessness, the scarcity that creates abundance, the rules that invite breaking. The freedom is relative. The dancer soars, shifts, stops, unaware of the structure that has become a silent authority; transcending the rules obscures their constraint.

The rule for selecting movement contained in these improvisations is that movement which cannot be apprehended in two or three tries by the group is excluded from the pool of possible movement. This rule, which becomes a social fact of the rehearsals, ultimately limits the distance the dance will travel from its technical roots. The proximity to the technique the dancers came to rehearsal with is maintained on two fronts. On the one hand, if the improvisational problem is close to the dancers' technical experience, their initial responses are likely to remain within the vicinity of that experience. Beneath the layer of familiarity may lie more unique responses as the dancer penetrates into the possibilities of the problem itself. Selection through surprise as solutions may also subvert responses that would be more surprising. It would be foolish however to reduce the problem of innovation to the length allotted for experimentation, either in posing the problem or in solving it. It is simply that time from an old experience (technique) is a necessary condition to distance the new.

The choreographer's real constraints subvert such a luxury. Under the pressures of a prefixed concert deadline, measurable progress (in the quantity of movement) from rehearsal to rehearsal confronts organizing the input to ten dancers. Within two hours, new movement

must be discovered, and old sustained. On the other side of the time constraints in producing movement are the limitations of aprehension, also a function of technique. Even when an 'exceedingly' surprising solution is found, its very distance from the movement sensibility of technique will make it difficult to replicate in a few attempts.

Scarcity of rehearsal time is a constraint placed on most pick-up companies which limits the extent of movement innovation beyond technique. It is also a factor in the similarity of movement to be found in many dances. In companies with salaried dancers, rehearsal times are generally longer (as dancers don't have to run to other jobs), and movement can develop over dozens of performances. On the other hand, movement in professional companies is all the more tightly bound around the stylistic demands of technique. Hence, when synchrony of movement is a structural requisite of the choreography, distance from technique or innovation, is unlikely to be the source of the movement's power. Instead, the power will derive from how much can be drawn kinetically from the movement. This is why more time is spent qualifying the movement than creating it. It is also why dancers are selected for a company within the contours of a particular technical stream; so that the movement can be quickly sketched

and the dancer's individual prowess is poised towards performance.

The work is bound by the technical basis that makes it possible. The degree of transcendence of the technical in performance is limited by the rules of the choreographic process. These rules will vary from company to company. Indeed, we can imagine variations in problems posed, responses, and trials allotted to replicate solutions generating other rules of movement selection. The proximity of technique stamped on the movement wears on its surprise value and fetters kinetic development.

As a means of selecting movement, improvisation fills a sort of communication gap between what can be talked about and what can be danced about. The problem however is that the improvisations are posed verbally. The negative descriptive aspect of language evident in the discussion of quality (this is what the movement isn't) is fine when the movement exists. When it doesn't there is obviously no referrent to represent, nor, since movement itself is non-conceptual, can a metaphor assert similitude. Hence, language itself can limit improvisation, yet once improvisation is set into motion, it transcends language.

Such a dilemma was evidenced in the early structur-

ing of the section with the dowels. The choreographer tried to explain a set of changes in group clusters that she envisioned. "When the stick is taken, fall to the opposite side to the person next to you on the downstage diagonal. Then, when 'A' comes through, regroup upstage and begin to move the sticks vertically." Her instructions were misconstrued several times with different dancers responding very differently to their own interpretation of the instructions. It was clear to her that she did not see what she imagined and what she imagined could not be described in elemental verbal terms. Later she turned to the group for the kind of stick motion that she wanted. "C'mon people, think with me. There, that's it," after a flurry of sticks. Hence, the description of an idea for movement will not necessarily yield that vision. The spoken language that describes its meaning does not contain the means to execute the movement. It is only when the dancers have experienced the problem and are invited to "think" with their bodies that a solution is found.

Once the movement is in place, verbal language plays a role in regulating the terms of dancing. The language the dancers speak describes the mechanical problems of the body and are expressed in terms of the internal referrents of this particular dance. Movements are named by their counts and labelled by locally agreed

usage (the three of thirteen in 'B's' phrase). These names, like words, tell nothing of the movements themselves. They only superimpose a context in which one can be distinguished from another. By regulating difference, words arbiter the means through which dancers attain synchrony. Yet the movement itself is not a difference. It is an unnamed sum, the concentration of a myriad of kinetic possibilities into a single response. The choreographer's adjustments of the danced paths are verbal in nature. "'S' make a wider arc downstage so you'll pick up 'R' a little later." If the dancer must change his arrival at a certain place and time, the adjustment is memorized in the body. Rarely will dancers think consciously of where they have to arrive, though they may be aware as they pass through the point of adjustment. Hence, language bounds physical activity but does not necessarily become part of it. Its distance from movement sustains the realm of the body's intelligence. It is the guardian that maintains the body's autonomy by taking significance only when the body is at rest. While language, whether conscious or unconscious, may regulate dancing, it does not animate it.

The only lingual structure that actually appears contiguously with dancing is counting. But counts continue to name difference and not the dancing itself. By

the fifth week of rehearsal counting appears and disappears from the 'fives' (this first section of the dance is run practically every rehearsal regardless of what other parts of the dance are worked on). There are long spans of movement where no counting is heard. Suddenly and consistently a phrasemaker will count at what is known to be a trouble spot, a place in the dance where synchronicity is lost. At this point, the pulsations in the music that the counts measure have been internalized into the body such that no record of the dancer's path is necessary. Where counts appear, they are the mark of authority recited by the dancers to affirm that the experience of one is compatible with the others. The trouble spots are identified by dancing and not counting. Counts serve as a banner which the dancers rally behind rather than a means of passage between music and dance. When the counts disappear, only their imprint remains, the mark of authority. Indeed in disputes between dancers over appropriate placement, counts are invoked as the only authority to mediate the dispute (since no one knows the others' sequence of steps). "Where are you supposed to be on 13? Well we change there and you need to be farther upstage." While such disputes, made before and after the section is danced, never fully disappear, there are run-throughs where counting does. The choreographer acknowledges, "You'll

get to the point where you shouldn't have to count any more." Implicitly she is remarking that performance will appear when all the reflections of creation have been removed from the dancing.

When language diminishes in function as an aid to construction of the dance, it rises as a tool to describe its effects. By the fifth week, we have finished setting the steps for all of what is to be the first section. That day the choreographer has added 32 measures of new material, more than usual. After the new part is run several times it is put together with the existing steps and the section run for the first time with a decisive beginning and end. After viewing this event the choreographer remarks for the first time on the significance of the movement. "I think it has just the effect I intended. . . . I feel sympathy for you. I see you all working so hard going from one thing to the next, never getting the chance to fully come out and arrive somehwere." The choreographer only names the movement's effects (sympathetic) once it exists as a structural whole, once it has assumed some nascent identity for itself as movement. Her comments however are addressed to herself as a dancer and made in terms of dance. Her sympathy derives from the loss we incur for the creation of movement separated from its parental technique. The general expectations of

the technique are replaced by the particular kinetics of this dance, for incompleteness as opposed to fulfillment (maximizing individual presence) is a negative effect which is itself a positive motional experience. Hence the loss the choreographer describes in terms of technique is really a gain for the dancers. But the gain, the particular experience of the dance, cannot represent itself; it merely presents. To speak of the dance, or its meaningful effects, is to speak through other dances or other articulations of physical experience. To say that a movement is reminiscent of a tree bending in the wind is to label kinetic effects and thereby give them meaning. The association with the label channels physical effects into the mind and can create a sort of kinetic amnesia. To recall the kinetic experience would be to feel the weight of the wind once again on one's own trunk. All this is to say that the preoccupation with meaning is the task of the viewer and not the producer of dance.

By the sixth week of rehearsals, there is more to what is inside and outside of dancing than the conscious and unconscious use of language and kinetic experience. Surrounding and feeding the dancing is a set of developing relations among the dancers. While rooted in and based upon their shared practice, the dancers are constructing the embryonic threads of community. As in other communi-

ties, there is a polity, culture and economy. The community is a form of social totality that contains and expresses the danced totality of the piece. But the community also gives the dancers a perspective on what they are doing in line with their collective experience. In embodying that experience, that community projects its own sets of expectations and demands. In effect, the community becomes the means through which dancers can view their own experience, dancing. As viewers of the dance, dancers themselves now make a demand for meaning. The development of community is not only a function of the time the dancers have spent together, but in their common experience as problem solvers (through improvisation) which makes it possible for them to pose their own problems. The three aspects of community will each be addressed in turn.

The polity of this community lies in the relations of authority which, as the rehearsals proceed, are less embodied in and directed by the choreographer and increasingly internalized among the dancers. Polity, the relations of power, is manifest in the process of making decisions over which option (or whose) is to be followed in the resolution of rehearsal problems. As the structure of the first section is completed many spacing problems and transitions are clarified as requiring consensus. After five weeks, the dancers have acquired an investment

in the particular way they do the section. Problems now consist of adjudicating conflicting needs which dancers must address to one another. At first, there being no history of expressing conflict in the rehearsals, the dancers approach each other shyly, as if having to deal with authority within a bureaucracy. It is the tone, not the content of the exchange that carries the conflict. "Should we move on 12 or 13? I don't know, it's up to you. Well, it's just that I can't get all the way up there by 12 and if you were downstage more it would be easy for you at arrive by 13." An argument is made with an appeal to a rationality which, while immediately personal, is couched in terms of an inputed group interest. The negotiation of power (who gets their way and who has to give up theirs) in turn creates the basis for the relations of power and a means of dealing with and defining conflict.

As relations of power and means of decision making develop in the course of rehearsals, two competing logics of decision polarize and define discussion. They apply to decisions from spacing problems to the implementation of choreographic ideas. On the one hand are dancers who want to figure out and discuss verbally what needs to be done, and on the other are those who prefer to work out problems through dancing itself. Individual dancers of course

switch positions from one decision to the next, but the same positions emerge as solutions time after time. The expression of conflict as a means of decision making takes on a bipartisan air. Through the institutionalization of choice, decision making becomes a collective process, as the positions support the participation of the choosers. The positions themselves mark the means through which the dance itself progresses. The dialogue between trial by fire and trial by jury is the transference of conception into execution. It establishes the poles of outside and inside dancing so that the dancers may commute between and in so doing, learn the dance.

For the dancer, dancing is the object of experience in their lives, the thing they live for. In addition, the activities of dancing themselves create experience for the dancer and in this sense, the rehearsals construct their own culture. The sense of progression towards performance gives the rehearsals their meaning, and kinetic fulfillment animates the desire for dancing.

The sixth week was the midpoint between the beginning of rehearsals and performance. A kind of lull was felt but expressed differently by dancers and choreographer. Amidst complaints of boredom, one dancer remarked, "I wouldn't mind it if we were doing something, but it's not fair keeping us there just sitting around. All we

do is just keep running the same thing over and over again. We never seem to get anywhere with it. We used to all be so high in the beginning. Now it's like everyone's energy is sagging." The choreographer picked up on the discontent and said, "I know you're all getting frustrated because I'm forcing you to pick up the steps fast and not giving you the chance to go back and polish. Well, I'm frustrated too and that's why I'm rushing you through this. I'm frustrated now with the big ideas of the piece and am trying to get them worked out right now. So, we'll be trying a lot of things and throwing out a lot of things and I hope you'll bear with me. Of course you want to polish, you should want to and I'd hope if you have a few moments when my back is turned you'd get together and work out all those details."

Ironically, dancers and choreographer are asking for the same thing, sessions centered on meaning. Yet each assumes that the others interest in them is for a purely technical set of prerogatives. That is, for the choreographer the dancers want to perfect steps, while for the dancers, the choreographer is using them as place holders to work out the mechanics of the new sections. The only part they get to really dance is the "same old one."

The misunderstanding reflects a moment of transi-

tion in the rehearsal process that appears as a loss of momentum in the work. From here on, group improvisation plays an increasing role in the choreographic process. Group improvisation both presupposes and transforms dancers' roles from executors to partners in conception. The dancers' apathy is the gap between their hitherto dependence on the choreographer for meaning (i.e., on relations of authority) and their emerging communal experience as creating its own demands for meaning. That is to say, the very articulation of a demand for meaning and kinetic fulfillment expresses the development of the dancers' own culture through the relations of totality. The rite of passage may be felt as a loss of authority for the choreographer as well, who, in organizing the rehearsal process through technical advance (the accumulation of movement) is left with the subject of the dance rather than its object (the dancers). The divorce permits the choreographer to experience the full burden of the work's burning question: what will I become?

The common denominator between dancers' and choreographer's complaint is the scarcity versus abundance of technique. Indeed, technique is the basis of exchange of the dancers' community and displays a third dimension of the dancers' community, economy. Technique can be viewed as producing both the dancers' means of subsistence, and

the basis of exchange, both among other dancers and between culture and polity. An economy is a system of production and distribution. Technique is the means through which the raw kinetic materials of dance are transformed into movements which have an identifiable and repeatable value within a dance. Technique in this sense is clearly a productive system. That technique serves as exchange as well is evident in any dance audition. The ability to replicate steps, basic to these rehearsals, is also requisite to the audition. Only those that master the steps instantly have the opportunity to show that they can also dance. While dancers vary in their performance attributes, technique tends to be the measure of their value as dancers. As the recognized unit of exchange, technique is an entree to many dance situations.

Within the rehearsal, technique is what binds and underlies both the decision making and subjective dimensions. Technique figures in polity as what is given up when a decision is made. The dancers who "lose out" in the decision must abandon their own way (which has transcended technique) and pass through the technical in apprehending the new step or path. Implicitly, most conflicts are a resistance to technique which requires that kinetic fulfillment be traded (although momentarily) for the naming of the dancer's activity. Technique is a process of nam-

ing and codifying movement which wrests it from its experiential base. In this sense, technique is in opposition to the dancers' local culture. Naming the steps, organizing the mechanics of the dance, are decried as "boring" when dancers have projected their own demands for meaning and desire. At the same time, the local culture is identified through technique as the measurement of progress and development of the piece. The first section, which is brimming with technique, is the barometer by which the dancers measure their own performance and the coherence of the group (this will become evident later). Experience bears no evidence of itself, only its effects. When the dancers seek to view themselves, technique is the mirror that they use.

By the end of the sixth week there is a kind of send-off that marks the recession of authority as directing the choreographic process and the ascension of totality, albeit molded by the choreographer as constituting dance making. The functions of spacing and what is called picking (corroborating movement at certain points), shift from an inner to an outer focus. Spacing had been something to insure the survival of the dancers in the space. Spatial intervals were set to prevent collisions, create openings for groups to pass one another, and to maintain the identity of the groups to those within them. Now spac-

ing is set so that the section can be danced "full-out" (i.e., performed). The activity is the same but its different ends give it a more precise focus. Conversely, dancing with full energy and commitment (to intention) require more precise spacing. Positions and shapes of the body are approached with the same precision. All the dancers in a group would stand side by side and extend their legs to see whose was lowest, setting the position of the leg to that level. Suddenly dancers are dancing not to execute steps in concert, but to be seen. As the focus of the rehearsal shift from apprehension to performance, the dancers shift from input to output and their relation to the choreographer changes from leader to audience.

The choreographer states, "Now that we've got the steps it doesn't mean we're ready to perform them. Now we have to dig for the meaning inside the steps." Later she clarifies what she means by this. "It's all coming together now and there are some beautiful moments, but there're times when you let it drop and I can see the confusion. You have to be able to do the steps precisely and full out in order to make it legible. If anyone's doing someting they're not supposed to do it stands out right away." In effect the response to meaning in the movement is technique. Legibility is achieved through a

highly technical process, picking. The assumption is that when the movement is made coherent enough by unifying its form it will be read by the audience. These instructions appear tautological because they address only what is named in the choreographic process. On face value it appears that meaning in movement is attained through technique. But the question remains, what is fulfilled when the movement is danced "full-out"? Clearly there is an expressive intent to dance that is identified only by and through performance. The process of that revelation can be described as one of removing obstacles, of chipping away at incoherence and this itself is a technical process.

From this rehearsal on the dancers are pretty much left to do their own picking. They have been granted the autonomy to build their bridge between themselves and the audience and they must clean up after themselves. The dancerly maturity has spilled over into other realms as well. At the end of this particular rehearsal the choreographer suggested offering a presale discount on tickets to the performance. Still at first then one by one the dancers made objections until the entire group was offering counter-arguments to justify the full price. In effect the dancers felt they were worth the money. Perhaps it takes a moment for the dancers to shift gears and express common interests vis a vis the choreographer, but the

basis of solidarity as soon as it finds a voice in a community accustomed to a silent communiation, is strong.

Normally thus far in rehearsal not more than two sections are run consecutively. In the seventh week, we run the five sections that are completed thus far, while a friend of the choreographer, herself a dancer, watches. Afterwards the dancer-friend gave some feedback and the choreographer solicited from us "anything positive to add." The dancers' responses were all very specific and technical in nature. The accumulated impact of the sections did not yet add up to a statement of meaning or overall effect. The choreographer was steeped in the impact and significance of the piece. "I always go home so depressed after rehearsal. This dance is so heavy, you can see now that you've done the whole thing." The choreographer still sees and knows an entire world more than the dancers do about the piece, for the soul is still outside the work.

After the crits have been given we return to work on what the choreographer terms the closing image of the piece. A plumbob, a metal weight attached to a string used for construction, is hung from the studio ceiling. The plumbob's motional and spatial possibilities are to structure our improvisations. Unlike previous improvs where the choreographer gave a motional problem to solve,

for this one she gave us an image to work with. "It's as if the resources available to us are becoming scarcer and we have to deal with that more limited situation." The image is a general one that is at once kinetic and situational. For the first time, the choreographer is entrusting the kinetic-conceptual connections of the dancers as a group to develop the framework for an entire section.

The plumbob is started into circular motion and inscribes a conical space some thirty feet at the base. We enter the space one by one and respond to our shrinking environment as the bob slowly spirals inward. The choreographer sees, selects, excludes, but the eye of the process is on the inside. The dancers, acting on their own history of improvisations and calibrations are at the core of the choreographic process. Some of this initial material is kept for the performance. For the next weeks, the section is elaborated quickly and steadily through this means. There are no longer complaints of boredom among the dancers and the rality of the days of performance loom somewhere in sight as the approximation of an end is put to what was begun.

The dialogical process of choreography which is now prevalent is new both because we respond from the onset as a group but also because we are given tasks as a

group. Unlike the section with the dowels where the narrative was constructed piece by piece, the plumbob established its own time frame, an event with a beginning and end (the starting and stopping of the bob). The dancers responded from the start with a sense of the significance of the event. Input was not confined to movement but entered the verbal-conceptual domain as well as dancers began to enter the vision of the dance. The dancers, responding directly to the situation they were experiencing were confronted with the questions of meaning hitherto confined to the choreographer's domain. It would be two more weeks before the question of meaning became a group demand and only the eve of performance when the overall significance of the piece would be discussed. For now, words are used to describe movement behavior and an imagery of motion replaces the language of technique.

Choreography through the use of technique means that dancers become sentient through their consciousness of the movement of another. Technique implies a mode of reflexivity of the self to the other (the one whose steps are being replicated) that can be called learning. In this sense, the improvised sections are not a function of learning. While a technical section like the fives is made by summing parts to construct a dance edifice, the one with the plumbob begins with an edifice and seeks

only an entrance to that totality. The entrance takes the form of a kinetic image or premise. While the fives progresses from technical to qualitative execution of steps and finally to danced intent, the plumbob begins with intentionality which can be refined into a specific quality and given cues to coordinate dancers' actions. This is not to say that the two processes are reverses of one another. Improvisation does not deconstruct totality but rather re-forms totality as it articulates its own interior landscape. It always proceeds through a sentience of the whole. Technical processes move towards a kinetic whole through the subordination of conscious reflexivities (learning steps, counting, external authority) to their sentient expression. Both then are totalizing physical processes achieved through different means. Yet, at at the same time, the technical and improvisational produce different totalities, the former is a reflexive structure based upon synchronicity and replication of movement, and the latter is an essential structure permeated by a kinetic predicament or conflict (scarcity of space, plumbob against body). Both of course will contain individual kinetic moments and ultimately an overall kinetic sensibility. Where the refinement of kinetic moments will sum to a whole through technique, kinetic moments of the improvised section will evolve

through refinement of the relation among dancers. The more each dancer senses herself through others as opposed to knowing her placement through others, the more expressive will be the improvised section.

While the development of the dancers' community makes the creation of a group improvised section viable, it does not diminish the presence of technique. Within the dichotomous choreography, the dancers are in their very history, skewed towards the technical. Hence almost every rehearsal includes a running of the fives. It is a ballast to the dancers demand for meaning from the rehearsal, to know themselves as they have known their bodies.

The demands for meaning that the dancers make at this point have more to do with what goes on in rehearsal (the nature of progress), than the state of the piece as a whole. For it will take the completion of the structure of the piece to pose the question of meaning in its entirety. Each section is its own totality that requires kinetic refinement. The dancers communal demand is to maximize kinetic moments. The dance is not yet more than the sum of these moments and the accumulation of sections. It is for this reason that a soul or overall kinetic intention does not press through the dancers' needs.

As independent as the dancers now are in the nuts

and bolts of creating and refining movement, they are still children of the choreographer's conception. While they have expanded their task of execution to include conception, they do not direct that process. It is only through the completion of the dance that the dancers' social totality and the piece's structural one will be united and the performance of intent can be expressed demand. By the end of the seventh week of rehearsal, the choreographic process has developed sufficiently to make this final passage possible. Through the dancers' community, totality has embodied authority, and through improvisation the rules that govern the creation of movement have become part of the dancers' group sense. Through the refinement of quality, spacing and improvisational means, the kinetic forms have been put into place that give the movement a reason for being and establish a system of surprises. While the surprises are systematically related, they will become in a sense, doubly surprising when fit into and expressive of the piece as a whole. It will be only then that the piece's content, the movement's intent, will be able to speak for itself.

Third Movement: To See and Be Seen

Seven weeks of rehearsals have yielded a dance company. The company is a social totality, a community, that places demands for choreographic meaning and can articulate kinetic desire. That is to say it is a social totality that embodies choreographic authority and dancerly totality. Up to now the choreographer has held in her conception the soul or essence of the entire work, or at least a yearning for that essence that has driven the rehearsal process. The choreographer has something she wants to say, and forges the rehearsal process to say it. But just when she would find that voice, when the dance is complete, the body that her yearning implies, is materialized in those of the dancers. Her desire to speak becomes their movement.

The last weeks of rehearsal appear to accelerate. The audience to be sucks the dancers towards the performance date. The primacy of totality is both reflexive and essential. For the dancers who refine the movement through technique while they produce something beyond it, this time marks the receding role of the authority embodied in the person of the choreographer. For all the excitement of the creative process, perhaps one of the cruelties of choreography is that it leaves the choreographer not so far from where she began. Shortly before

a performance she laments, "I feel depressed, sort of let down and empty because now my part in the concert is over." As the essence of the piece is realized and passes into danced experience itself, the choreographer's loss makes performance possible. The dancers' gain has been continuous. The choreographer's loss is almost as sudden as the audience's surprise. The choreographer's effect on the dancers is concentrated in their effect on the audience. Performance, the moment when dancers are at their fullest as the subject of dance, when their experience of dancing is truly totalizing, is also the instance when the dancers' bodies are the pure object of the audience's eye. It is the dancers' vision that reveals themselves.

Improvisation has reached a new level of refinement and complexity in the rehearsal. Dancers improvise entire sections, and all the dancing takes on something of the freshness of kinetic problem solving. Needless to say, it is improvisation, without the benefit of the expanded investigation of a problem that the dancers enjoy, that characterizes the quotidian experience of the body. In our daily lives we have one shot to deal with the problems posed by motional situations. It is difficult to imagine repeatedly walking up a crowded staircase to find another path down, and yet this is what the

dancer does in the choreographic process. Perhaps this is why quotidian movements are so constrained and authority never yields to totality in a moment of performance. By successively breaking the bounds of the motional problem, dancers create an autonomy for totality, albeit a totality that has internalized authority. Even this independence is checked when the new found subject meets its object in performance (dancers dance to be seen).

For the streetwalker and the walker of the street, what the making of a dance reveals is something of the conditions of freedom for the body. The community the dancers erect which has the body's expression at heart, brings to the sentient fore what is peripheral in most people's lives. Hopefully, in the moment of performance, what the dancers produce can move the audience from periphery to centerstage. The public body departs the theater with the motion towards the forefront intact. Having anticipated the final bows, let me return to the process of completing the dance.

Work has begun on the final section but antecedent components remain to be choreographed. It is possible to imagine how the plumbob section which is to end the piece can be improvised without the process of learning characteristic of the technically based fives. We dance in unison but non-synchronously. Each dancer can imagine

the whole, while we have no idea of what the fives looks like. Yet improvisation should not be equated with structural simplicity, either in the rehearsal studio or in the street. The living and inert social architecture generates improvisational problems that embody the choreographic authority of our daily lives. The complexity of the urban landscape cannot be replicated in the studio, but something of the complexity of its effects can be.

Another section was made for five dancers after work with the plumbob had begun. It was created in one rehearsal where we were told, "We're really starting from scratch with this and I'm going to ask you to help me come up with the material we need for this sort of danse macabre." We began improvising in the way we had with the fives, finding solutions for "falls with distorted shapes." The choreographer selected from one dancer what was then learned by the group, then relearned when she selected another dancer's version; the copy was copied. When the fall was executed in concert, only the original dancer did it differently. The one's original kinetic memory was deprived of the consciousness that comes from reproduction.

After the fall had been set, we turned to what would be the beginning of the section. Here again, be-

ginning in the middle marked the continuity of this communication with others and gave the nascent section a sight to aim through. We each entered individually, spilling into the space on a roll, turn or lift. The threads rewound in the middle. One back rolled on another, the legs spindling over to be caught by a third who had come from the hollow underneath while another enmounted couple spun around to propel the lifted figure through the form. Each individual's body was unique and singly formed. Yet each played a functionally interdependent role in the changing whole. The choreographer had set up the problem to discover the next step and found herself with the better part of the dance she sought. The dancers had gone not only beyond the problem but beyond the decision making process that generates (individual) problems. The dancers had themselves embodied the choreographer's aspiration and transformed her vision into a collective body. That body could express, develop and retain things that the choreographer could never explain and perhaps not imagine, yet her assent to the process was immediate. It was not amplifying each individual expression within the logic of interdependence that a whole was constructed and reproduced.

Once the dancers recaptured and set what they had improvised, they returned to where they had left off. The

choreographer adjusted some of the bodies to cock the form kinetically in space. The dancers then improvised their way out of the initial shape to an ending and exit. That the dancers could go beyond the directives of the choreographer as a personage, while embodying to some extent her role, is evidence of the assent of totality in the choreographic process and secondarily, the internalization of authority. The choreographer has granted the dancers the autonomy to choreograph through totality, while the dancers, in the development of their internal community, have granted the means.

The editing process of the new section (called the gang of five in the local parlance of functional referents) was worlds simpler than that of the fives. After the two halves of the section had been improvised through and set, the choreographer cut one lift sequence and put the two parts together. When a section is cut from the fives (as it is in a continuous process of editing), chaos often ensues as dancers adjust their loss in time to the expanded space. The fives are counted in sets of 16 measures. The material is cut without readjusting the counts. We may find ourselves jumping from the thirteen of one set of sixteen measures to the eight of another. Since the loss is one not only of individual steps but also of group affiliation, confusion is endemic. In the

new section editing proceeds without this confusion both because there is not the same loss at stake, and because there are no counts to measure that loss. The counts, the voice of authority imposed on dancing registers the loss, experienced as a personal absence of steps which disorganizes the collective body. In the new section, a part can be removed from the whole without losing the organic unity because it is unmediated by external authority. There is neither demand nor need to replace what is absent (the lift) and the loss finds no expression in the consciousness of dancing nor in the field of language. The desire for dancing unnamed and unsignified by authority lives anonymously but in full view by the act of collecting the body.

It should be clear that our quotidian kinetic lives resemble the gang of five section more closely than the fives. Pedestrian life embodies a loss, of doors not entered, corners not turned and paths recharted (visually) in the aversion of obstacles (human or otherwise). Consider if you must, running after a bus during rush hour. Walking briskly through the crowd you catch the distinctive rumblings of the bus along the left side of your body as it passes you towards the stop. Shortly after the body alerts to pursuit, you imagine the possibility of winging through the crowd, cutting behind shoulder blades and twisting the hips around overstuffed handbags. Expecting

the trajectory to be realized, you loosen your knees and let the feet find the openings. Three-piece suits, two abreast prove an impasse and your momentum flows into the gutter. Body dejected, you shuffle around the back of your heels, glimpse the dwindling line feeding into the bus, skip to the side around an elbow and alight again replacing the body that has just disappeared into the door. Your body, a tide received by the shore, turns the jilted path into satisfaction as metal hits metal in the farebox. Any moment of the journey could have been named tragedy, but the body, re-collecting the kinetic deposits made enroute, knows only success.

As a temporal-spatial span, the improvisation could have been described for each participant, for whom you constituted just another abberrence in their kinetic field. On the street, there is rarely anything to measure the loss, the steps not taken or the kinetic moment unfulfilled. In naming the event we would likely say "I ran for the bus," and leave it at that. The naming seals the loss without recording it. The dancer's world however, is impregnated with kinetic surveillance. Indeed, it is only made possible through such surveillance. Dancers, unlike pedestrians, rarely get the opportunity to forget what they have lost. On the other hand, they make a life out of what they have gained, their kinetic awareness.

The ninth and tenth weeks solidified the transition of authority into totality. In this time, the piece was run twice for very special eyes, those who had created the technique we had all been trained in. Their approval bracketed that of the choreographer. The showing of the dance, still missing several parts and the final improvisational structure unfinalized, itself constituted a rite of passage that could wrest the dance from the shadow of its larger heritage. After the dance was run, most dancers said they felt bad about the performance. Their assessment was based upon the only barometer hitherto available to them, technique. In effect, the whole piece was measured by the number of personal mistakes made in the fives. "The fives were terrible for me." The dancers were worried about their technical master before they began, and afterwards imputed his expectations as the fulfillment of the technical ideal he embodied. But the emphasis of our maker was decidedly to the contrary. All technical elements were met with praise. He was impressed by the performance, and felt that we had dealt well (as dancers) with the problems of spacing, group sense and dynamics. His criticisms were structural in nature, founded in choreographic rather than dance technique. He sought to alter the relationship between the choreographer, who appears several times as a solo figure in the dance,

and the other dancers. Although the source of technique, he was at the same time beyond it. The eyes that saw through technique, saw only dance.

The choreographer's critical perspective lay between dancers and master. The dancers' still technical perspective made them view the dance in individual and partial terms, with the fives metonymically suggesting the whole. The choreographer's view mediated between individual technique and group quality, and as such reflected her position of being of but not totally in the piece. She commented on the third section of the piece (a section called stick dance which I have not previously mentioned), "The stick dance was beautiful in terms of quality but people were making mistakes on counts that usually never get off." The choreographer sees something the master doesn't, the history of the dance's construction. He, on the other hand, freed from the technical partiality, is outside of the piece in a way she can never be.

A week later we ran the piece again for the same eyes. By this time the missing pieces had been inserted, transitions between sections crafted, and the final improvisational structure set. The dancers' self-reflection after this showing was of a markedly different tone than the last. The technical solipsism was replaced by a hum of group feeling. Peeople seemed to agree that the piece

went very well. There was very little counting in the fives and the sections ran together very smoothly. Several people remarked that they were beginning to get a feeling, a sort of sentient through-line that develops during the piece. "I really get into this strange mood when we enter and by the time we roll on at the end, I'm so spaced-out, I can hardly dance." With the formal completion of the dance, a structure of feeling emerges through the steps which then permits the erosion of counts or some other scaffolding of unity. The piece itself became the ultimate totality which could support a life within. Technique had lost its functional necessity as a means of making the piece. The dancers now had a realm to enter that made for a real passage towards intentionality.

As the dancers left technicity to consumate their dancing around intentionality, the master picked up the banner they dropped. The dancer's no longer had to be coaxed towards totality, they were inside of it. A dancer asks him how to unify performance quality and his answer is purely technical. He states that picking or as he calls it cleaning, must include a corroboration of focus, facing, and musicality for each gesture. "When you clarify these things the performance quality will be there." Perhaps he sensed the dancers' development and offered a counter-balance of the technical. His comments also indicate the

inability to describe what is going on in performance and the need to open a common kinetic aperture by removing difference and technical obstacles. At the same time he acknowledged the autonomy the dancers had attained and implied whatever was left to be found in the dance was up to them. "At this point [two weeks before performance], the choreographer has no time for cleaning and that's not her job. You should be able to do it. It's what makes you a valuable company member." From his multiple roles as dancer, choreographer, critic and teacher, he speaks to us as teacher, the place where our pasts meet. He addresses us now, not as the producers of what he has just seen, but as consumers of authority outside the context of the experience we have shared. The bounds of performance cannot be re-entered from the outside.

What is in practice a continuity can only be spoken of as a sequence of moments when subjected to the rigor of description in the form of language. The master terms performance as the technical nexus of time and motion, which he calls musicality. "Figure out what part of the beat the gesture should fall on and you'll have your musicality." Time as measurement is abstracted from time as experience. The dancer must leave the subject of their desire to pursue its object. Parodoxically, the attainment of the ideal of synchroncity would turn the

group of dancers into an identity of form. Dancing as the presentation of form would collapse into one of the multidimensions of totality; the essence of the work would disappear into the reflexive.

The dancers cannot follow the letter of the master's advice. The concert is in two weeks and his project could take years. But clearly the spirit of his admonitions have an effect. The dancers call their own rehearsal and go through the rigorous procedure of cleaning for several "gestures." What the task serves is a further consecration of a fused totality-authority within the group by introducing a new degree of rigor as a referent of collective response. The group does not replicate the rigor of the cleaned gesture to the linear sequence but rather, absorbs it into the structure of the dance. Here technicity itself takes on a new significance in the organizing of the rehearsal. It moves authority from an external to an internal function of totality. Totality secures its dominance but in the name of the technical.

In the tenth week progress was very rapid in completing the missing components of the dance. In the formation of the total structure of the piece from beginning to end, the outline of the absent moments grew sharp enough to draw in their solution. With a sense of the whole, the work's structure could begin to broadcast its needs. The

dancers themselves became the communication posts of these needs. The second rehearsal of the "gang of five" was run by the dancers themselves. In it, spacing was rectified, cleanings made and quality spread. The auto-direction was not a question of discipline but of perspective. The dancers united around the section's kinetic intent. For the choreographer, there was no contention of authority. She affirmed the dancers' ability to engage in kinetic self-reflection. "It's definitely better." At the same time, she had been choreographing another missing section, a quartet behind her second solo. She was able to set the movement on the dancers (which she had designed beforehand), and run the section complete in an hour. In the acceleration down the final stretch towards performance, the dance almost seems to complete itself.

In the week before the performance, we went into a seven-day-a-week rehearsal schedule. The internalization of authority and the expression of totality became part of the daily regimen as the piece moved towards its performance identity. Each day of preparation brought new experiences and problems that had to be addressed. Yet each was absorbed into the community the company had erected. In the week's transition from rehearsal to performance, the structural foundation had been laid; the real transformation would occur only with the audience.

The Saturday before the show we worked in the theater space for the first time. It is considerably larger than any space we have worked in before. After running the piece through, the immediate problems were spacing and projecting the movement outside the dance space. The group seemed to naturally turn to the fives as the place to work out the problems. But immediately there was a polarization between those who wanted to discuss the points of difference and the ones who wanted to resolve the problems by dancing. The choreographer was busied with other aspects of the concert and did not mediate these decisions. Whereas four weeks ago, the dancers would almost shyly confront spacing problems, that air of politeness was absent from the current proceedings. The conflict, however, only served to strengthen the relations of polity as assent was given to argument. This time it was decided in favor of the whole, at another time a part was picked at. Tensions flared quickly as accusations were made on "mistaken" movements but just as quickly a decision would be negotiated and the episode would be dropped. There was an understanding, hastened by time constraints, that adjudication of difference was not only possible but permissible.

The second problem posed by the new space was how to project movement that was qualitatively introspec-

tive across a large space. This question was posed to the choreographer in a way that effectively demanded she articulate the meaning of the piece as a whole. Once the question of performance perspective was addressed to her, an overall statement was the only redress to the dancers' need to express meaning. The choreographer began by suggesting that the intensity of the movement be projected into the body rather than out into the space. The body's power was to be incandescent. This remained a technical explication and she admitted an uncertainty about the dramatic content and development of the piece.

To the dancers' internalized continuity and synchrony, the choreographer could only offer difference. She described the various sections of the piece as a "layering of images" and denied any linear continuity to the narrative. But the dancers' experience belied this disclaimer, not on the basis of any epic narrative but rather a sentient one. For the dancers, there was a cumulative kinetic effect that demanded articulation, though it would ultimately have to wait for performance. The dancers now could offer more than questions. Whereas previously they had been mute on questions of interpretation, now a stream of synthetic comments flowed. Statements were made on transitions, on the switching of roles from victimizer to victimized, on the recurring theme of

scarcity, on the development from dancerly to dramatic exposition of the movement, and so on.

Suddenly the dancers had a lot to say, and they spoke through their experience of the totality of the piece. The choreographer certainly mediated the discussion and her voice rose above the rest, but her setting of policy did not emanate from her own volition. When a dancer said she felt the stick-dowels controlled her the choreographer replied, "You should let the stick be an expression of your body rather than the othe way around. It is always you the human who is controlling the object." The dancers questions come from inside the work and express just as much of an understanding as a need to know. Without an audience, that need takes the form of a demand that experience be named, but when a public receives the performance, these needs are expressed in a way that is both apparent and anonymous. Kinetic intent is as yet without a home and takes the form of an esthetic problem. The demand for esthetic clarity surfaces however, only when the whole exists to impede upon the parts.

Up until the very afternoon of the performance, the fives remain the barometer of the whole dance. It is in rehearsal often the only section that is actually run. No matter how developed the relations of totality become, technicity remains the dancers' window to the

outside world. It is a window in which their reflection is blurred and partial, but it is their only means to external certainty, and as such helps to allay nerves that mount before performance. Consequently most of the work on the dance occurs with the fives. While grounded in technicity the metonymic function of the fives must also be recalled as developing totality. In one instance, frustrated with problems of counting, the dancers turned directly to the music to set cues. It was the first time since the piece began that we just sat still and listened to the music together. The music cues became physicalized signposts outside of any individual dancer yet experienced by all as an internalized objectivity. The musicalization of the collective body as opposed to the individual's movement helped to etch the kinetic divisions of the space.

The eve of the performance was a combination dress and lighting rehearsal. All of the elements (except the public) were introduced which would transform this space into a specialized performance sphere. The new bounds of the space (lights, equipment, and a black plastic cover called a marley floor), introduce their own set of technical constraints to the dancing. Although we have adjusted our spacing to fill the space, we must now readjust it to stay in the lights which have been set for fixed points. In the darkness outside the light, we cannot

see beyond the floor (and sometimes not even the floor itself) to the darkened cavity where the audience sits. Nor can we see the stage from the wings and so we lose many visual cues for entrances to new sections. In each of the wings there is now a lighting stand with tiers of lights, and other equipment which must be avoided, without diminishing the velocity of a backwards running exit. In short, the dancers' visual sense is eroded in the performance space both by bright lights and by darkness.

The effect of the loss of sight is to heighten the tactile senses in performance, and in turn contribute to the kinetic experience of the dancer. The additional boundedness of the performance space helps to crystalize the intent in performance. The space has been rendered special and also specialized in a way that gives closure to the rehearsal process and creates a distinctive realm of performance. Lights also contribute to the difference of performance with their own sentient effects. High and low intensity, reds or blues, excite the body in different ways, as has been noted in any stage manual. But lights also increase the partisanship of the space as a real landscape upon which the dancers intrude. The more strongly the space is carved by the lights, the more intense the dancers' disturbance of the space. The outer disturbance reverberates within the dancer's body and

draws the dancer ever more deeply inside the kinetic life of the performance.

Opening night was a full day spent at the theater. At 1:30 we ran through the entire concert for a videotape. It was the first time we'd run all four pieces, in costume, full-out, back-to-back, in the performance space. Most of the dancers were in two pieces and it was their first test of stamina. While all the elements were intact, the missing audience was felt. "It's different knowing your friends are out there. There's a certain edge to it." With a few hours left before performance, the dancers returned to their dressing room, nibbled on their particular blend of foodstuffs of the highest protein, and layed out to take a nap. The slumbering bodies, bundled in rehearsal rags, stirred about an hour before the show and the room shifted from potential to kinetic.

Fourteen dancers exchanging eyebrow pencils, looking for powder, stitching a last minute hem, pulling a leg overhead began to hum with excitement. The piece discussed here, some forty minutes in length, was the last on the program. The dancers whet their tastes for performance in their previous pieces. The house, while large and appreciative after a piece was done, was accused of being "a bit stiff," because dancers could not feel their response. It is clear that the dancers are

closely tuned to the audience while they are dancing and, more than applause, measure their success through their connection with what is beyond the darkness.

It is simple enough to state that what is produced in performance is kinetic intent, which has been expressed previously as the dancers' desire. The passage from authority to totality secures performance as the world of desire, whose expression is displayed on the stage but not named. The difference between the experience that that choreographer conceives and the audience consumes, and the one that the dancers perform can best be communicated by tracing the dancers' journey through the work. For this I can only turn to my own experience.

In the dance before the last piece, I played the comic role of a mime replete with clownface. The removal of that face aided my transition into another body. The new body already felt softer, more ragged and exposed than the other. When I took my place in the third wing, in the moment of silent darkness before the piece began, I felt strangely alone. As the choreographer entered to perform her solo that initiated the piece, the light downstage does not illuminate my condition. Although I do not see her, she is working the space, warming and coaxing it. Our entrances are marked singly by the discarding of the sticks that the solo figure bears. Four are dropped be-

fore the one that bears me. I am to replace an object. Not the one symbolized by the stick. But the space that I fill. I move to my spot. The light grays my vision. The space is warmed by those that enter after me and insert me into my position. The map is complete, the music comes on and I feel the surge drop through my ears down the inner chamber of my body to rebound as the initial movement. My head swings around with rour others and I feel my body widening to embrace the space we displace. I am a form inside of others, both my group's and the stage. The constant crossings and reformulations spark my kinetic responses. The first moments of the dance, I remain in the same place until I am swept into the path of a passing figure. My new allegiance takes me cross stage. The three of us form a wedge that cuts through two other groups. I am pulled through the opening only to bounce back at a different pulse. My body has not lost its softness, the quality I had before entering the stage. But that softness is now the membrane through which I register the changes around me and chart my own course. There are moments when I think of nothing, not the counts nor the movement I am doing, nor my next change. I am inside dancing. I am propelled between being drawn and drawing. The other dancers are my kinetic field and I a part of theirs. The possibilities appear

infinite, yet the choices are always specific and occur at the instant of their execution, not before. Time swallows itself as I make it. There is nothing to measure where I have been. There is only a sense of where the motion that is me is going. That is my intent. The time comes for the phrase I originally made. There is a flash of recognition. I am downstage of the others who have picked up the phrase and I feel the newly formed group constructed around me. I pull to the right and feel the group pull with me, lose and pick up a new member on a roll before myself changing allegiance again. Changes later, I have accelerated around the periphery of the stage and see there will be no slot for me to fit into if I do not suspend this movement just a little more before falling to the floor with the others. The fives have ended and we crawl our way towards the sticks that have been deposited downstage. I take a circuitous route to mine to avoid crossing paths with another dancer. Stealthing to my place in the line of sticks, my fantasy paints adversaries while my body maintains our physical compatibility. When my stick is taken, I bolt from the line and sprint across the stage only to be blocked by a stop I have put in the space that reverses my path. I run the gauntlet of the line and stop where another is standing; she becomes my body's motion and I am left

with my heart beating in my ears and a stick in my hands. The group bounds together into the bed of sticks. The last runner flings herself at us and we respond like a sprung trap. Her weight courses from my knuckles where I hold the stick along the outside of my torso to my feet. She crosses stage overhead, is released and my body leaves her. Regroup. Again. The final catch down-stage keeps her from the audience's lap. Against my back, the thanks. I exit for the stick dance though part of me is still on stage. Entering again with a long cloth five feet high, four of us partition the stage. My body tenses holding and moving the cloth while others are displayed in the gaps. I am replaced as holder and spill through the gap downstage of the partition followed by the others of the gang of five. I fall back to lift another dancer onto the stage. We are one shape until we jump away and the group moves in unison. We fall to the floor and I am anchor to four bodies arched above me. One rolls over me, another around and I am squeezed through the legs of a third to spin up and swath my own arc on the stage. I am alone now between the cloth and the pub-lic. The thunderous crossings have been reduced to one figure and my body bears that recent history. My body lurches to the air, and for that instant I am suspended seemingly in the middle of the entire space. The sharp

inhale that has brought me here feels as if it has been drawn from just beyond the seats and tousled a few hairs on its way to my lungs. I turn on my shoulder and feel the viscera touch through the darkness. The music warns me. Another distorted jump and I shoot myself into the wings, the cloth follows and the space is emptied of all but the energy that has been left there. The choreographer tickles through her second solo. I am still soft, and warm. The plumbobs are released. There are three that arc their way across the stage. We roll on underneath, pulled unevenly by the pendular magnatism overhead. I curl up to my knees as the bob is revolved around me. There are three of us on stage now, inside the circumference of the bobs. I feel my movement through the changes of the others. Weight drops to my right and I spring up. The bob swings closer, the sparks collide inside me. I catch the bob as the company enters. The center bob is run round again creating a cone that we enter singly until all are inside. The bob swings. The diameter narrows. We move closer. We are pressed on top of one another. There is nothing outside the cone, we have drawn in all the dancers, all the space, all the audience. I am alone in here. We help each other inadvertantly. We are pressed into a pyramid. There is no more singular action, there is no room. We are the avail-

able space. We draw our breath in. The audience deposits theirs with us. I am on top of the pyramid, my hand reaches up the center of the cone. The bob almost brushing our skins, still revolves. The lights and music fade.

SECTION ONE: NOTES

[1]In theories of art criticism, especially through the 19th century, the art object took on a progressive refinement in its imitation of nature--as if it had a life of its own despite and beyond its social context. Cf. Gombrich, Art and Illusion (Princeton University Press, 1960), p. 7. M. C. Albrecht alternately views art as an institution, a structure that organizes human activities to serve human needs. "Art as an Institution" in Albrecht, ed. Sociology of Art (New York: Praeger, 1970), p. 2.

[2]Some theorists have defined reflexivity as the essence of decidedly human activity. Cf. G. A. Cohen, Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence (Oxford University Press, 1980), or Sartre's critique of Husserl in The Emotions: Outline of a Theory (New York, Wisdom Library, 1948).

[3]The distinction between these two types of productive activities is captured in the Marxist debate on productive and unproductive labor. Cf. James O'Connor, "Productive and Unproductive Labor," Politics & Society, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1975). The service sector as a growing segment of the labor market that does not produce material values, does not seem inconsistent with Marx's definition of value as the production of a useful thing if use is put into a contemporary context.

[4]The expanding literature on the service sector often characterizes it as selling a presentation of self as a requisite of job performance. Cf. Louise Howe, Pink Collar Workers (New York: Avon Books, 1978); Arlie Hochschild, The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983).

[5]The issue of payment should not be held determinant in the nature of the social activity. The continuing debate on housework as unpaid labor is but one example of an activity mislabeled for social and economic control. The conceiver and performer's work is none the less labor expended--whether paid for or not, so long as it is part of a social system of production. On the housework debate, cf. Annette Kuhn and Annette Wolpe, Feminism and Materialism (London: RKP, 1978).

[6]The use of conceiver here captures something of the distinction between conception and execution employed by Harry Braverman in Labor and Monopoly Capital (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974). This is not to suggest however, as Braverman implies, that the position of execution is devoid of mental or conceptual activity; rather, these distinctions serve to situate workers and performers within a system of production and control.

[7]This is not to say, as Marx has pointed out, that money itself as the form of exchange is purely symbolic and without value. "The fact that money can, in certain functions be replaced by mere symbols of itself gave rise to that other mistaken notion, that it is itself a mere symbol." Capital Volume One (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 90.

[8]Kenneth Burke in A Grammar of Motives (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1962), also views agency as something "mediatory" but his analysis of it is on the symbolic level whereas its usage here is non-symbolic and material, cf. pp. 283-86.

[9]H. D. Duncan, taking from Burke, gives sociological perspective to culture as performance in Communication and Social Order (New York: Bedminster Press, 1962).

[10]Most dance histories however are written from the choreographer's point of view. Cf. John Martin, The Modern Dance (New York: A & S Barnes, 1963); Walter Sorell, The Dance Through the Ages (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1967); Curt Sachs, World History of the Dance (New York: W. W. Norton, 1937).

[11]Deborah Jowitt, Village Voice, Apr. 24, 1984, p. 97.

[12]Juana de Laban in listing the areas of dance research (Dance History; Dance Aesthetics; Creative Dance Research; Experimental Dance Research; Field Research), gives no indication that such histories have been written. Field Research tends to concern itself with recording the dances of other cultures. "Probings b. Dance Research: Inherent approaches," in Rowe and Stodelle, eds. Dance Research Monograph One Committee on Research in Dance New York, 1973.

[13]Where the sentient operation of dancing are discussed they tend to be seen as "Man's intuitive response" and thus studied in purely physiological terms independent of their social production in the practice of dancing.

Cf. F. Mary Lee, Discovering Rhythm Through the Senses: a theory of rhythmic perception, in Rowe & Stodelle, ibid., pp. 65-73.

[14]Sociological studies of bureaucracy have noted the way rules operate as a system of tacit sanctions. Cf. Peter Blau, Dynamics of Bureaucracy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), and Michel Crozier, The Bureaucratic Phenomenon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

[15]Sondra Forsyth (Enos) and Pauline M. Kolenda, in an ethnographic study of a ballet company take a similar view in terming it, from Parsons via Homans, a social system torn between competition and cooperation identifying phases that lead to integration within the system. Cf. pp. 221-55 in Albrecht, op cit. The use of community focuses on experience produced through activity without the assumption of functional reproduction inherent in the notion of social system.

[16]Cf. Anya Royce, The Anthropology of Dance, Chapter 3 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977) for an overview of notation techniques.

[17]Selma Jeanne Cohen, The Modern Dance: Seven Statements of Belief (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1965), p. 14.

[18]As Renato Poggioli noted in The Theory of the Avant Garde (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), avant garde must be seen as a position that exists in relation to traditional forms per se.

[19]Sally Banes, in an essay on dance post-modernism defines it as the avant-garde of modernism, "Their break with tradition carries with it the explicit notion that there need be no more academies; that rules are not sacrosanct but can be either useful or unnecessary. If it is a new establishment, post-modern dance is so pluralistic that it inaugurates a new type of establishment one that tolerates invention and welcomes change" (p. 19). Yet Banes never explains why this statement shouldn't be applied to dozens of modernists fifty years prior, indeed she implies that it does apply to Loie Fuller. (Terpsichore in Sneakers: Post-Modern Dance. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1977). Roger Copeland notes that post-modernism refers to different things in dance and architecture. He argues the two converge with pop choreographers like Twyla Tharp which Banes excludes from the category (Postmodern dance, postmodern architecture, postmod-

ernism, Performing Arts Journal 19 (1983), pp. 27-43). Ibah Hassan places the coinage of the term postmodernism back in the thirties literary criticism. (The question of postmodernism, PAJ 16 (1981), pp. 30-36).

[20]Walter Sorell, Dance in Its Time (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1981), p. 412. Don McDonagh, The Rise and Fall and Rise of Modern Dance (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1970), p. 203.

[21]Meyerhold split from Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theater in 1902 to embark upon a career that produced much of what is considered avant garde to the present day. Meyerhold, particularly as head of the Soviet Theatrical Department railed against naturalism yet sustained great admiration for Stanislavsky's work. Cf. "The Solitude of Stanislavsky," in Meyerhold on Theater, ed. by Edward Braun (New York: Hill and Wang, 1969), pp. 175-80 and also pp. 18 and 167.

[22]Isadora Duncan, The Art of the Dance New York: Theater Arts Books, 1969), p. 67.

[23]Sorell, op. cit., pp. 304-05.

[24]Loie Fuller, Fifteen Years in a Dancer's Life (Boston: Small Maynard and Co., 1913), p. 71.

[25]Though there are dancers like Annabelle Gamson and Lori Bellilove who perform reconstructions of Duncan's work.

[26]Each dance history has its own list of the modern masters. Helen Tamaris, Lester Horton, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn (Humphrey, Weidman and Graham had all been in the Denishawn Company) are most often also on the list. I have chosen these four because of their enduring influence upon contemporary choreography and technique.

[27]Graham in her introduction to Barbara Morgan, Martha Graham: Sixteen Dances in Photographs (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Morgan and Morgan [1941] 1980), p. 11.

[28]Holm in Walter Sorell's, Hanya Holm: The Biography of an Artist (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1969), p. 42.

[29]Nikolais in Anne Livet, ed. Contemporary Dance (New York: Abbeville Press, 1978), p. 191.

[30]Limon in Cohen, op cit., p. 23.

[31]Where the two did share Cagian notions of theater, Cunningham's choreography tends to be very technical though he stumbled into a predicament that Judson took as part of their credo, pedestrian movement performed by pedestrians. He tells of an incident at Brandies University in 1952: "The second, [a] dance for the company of 17 dancers I had brought from New York and the rest students from the university who were unskilled as dancers and inept as stage performers. I couldn't pretend that the majority of the company could dance well and did not like the idea of pretense. Again it occurred to me that they could do the gestures they did ordinarily. These were accepted as movement in daily life, why not on stage?" Quoted in _Changes: Notes on Choreography_ (New York: Something Else Press, 1968).

[32]Tharp from an interview with Deborah Jowitt, _Village Voice_, Apr. 24, 1984, p. 83.

[33]Tharp's picture made the cover of _Newsweek_ in 1976. Livet, op cit., p. 214.

[34]The effect of space on perception has been treated as both a philosophical and as a physiological issue. Cf. Gaston Bachelard, _The Poetics of Space_ (New York: Orion Press, 1964); M. Merleau-Ponty, _Phenomenology of Perception_ (Lond: RKP, 1962),James Jerome Gibson, _The senses considered as perceptual systems_ (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1966).

[35]Taylor in Cohen, op, cit., p. 91.

[36]The 1982 National Endowment for the Arts Annual Report (March 1983, U.S. Government Printing Office) claims 250 professional dance companies (ballet, jazz, tap, modern, etc.). Even among companies termed professional in modern dance, most work only a fraction of the year.

[37]A fairly complete and only slightly out of date listing of New York companies and schools can be found in Ellen Jacob and Christopher Jones, _Dance in New York_ (New York: Quickfox, 1980).

[38]For a detailed study on the economics of subsidies see Dick Netzer, _The Subsidized Muse_ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978). Netzer says the arts market fails because arts are like public goods, people can use them without paying.

[39]National Endowment for the Arts Fiscal 1967 (United States Government Printing Office) states that private support for the arts at this time was dismal. Only 1,000 of 23,000 private foundations made contributions to the arts. $125 million of $1.3 billion and of $800 million from corporations, only $20 million went to the arts. Prior to the NEA, modern dance could not be considered a profession. In 1966 Martha Graham's company was able to make its first American tour in fifteen years with the aid of an NEA grant (p. 2).

[40]NEA 1982 Annual Report, p. 10.

[41]The Reagan administration cut the NEA budget from $175,000,000 to $119,300,000 between 1981 and 1982. While $1.4 million is available to presenters for the big three companies, only $505,000 is available to presenters in all other categories. This in practice was the way the NEA started out in 1966: $394,830 was spent on an American Ballet Theater tour that 167,000 people saw while $25,000 went into the Graham tour with an audience projected at 130,000. Reagan-appointed NEA chair Hodsoll, states the endowment's present goals as "Our challenge in the 1980s is to maintain momentum for the best."

[42]The private sector share was $3.35 billion, up $400 million, but this represents only a slight increase of the share of monies going to the arts (NEA, 1982, p. 3). Meanwhile, seven big companies (Joffrey, Cunningham, Graham, Tharp, Penn Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, Paul Taylor) got over $1.1 million while $444,000 went to all independent choreographers both old and new. Most of these latter grants are $3,000.

[43]Precise statistics are difficult to obtain. These figures are based upon guestimates of many dancers' habits and the cost of classes, etc.

[44]Albrecht makes the distinction between institution and association. Lipset, Coleman and Trow identify strong cohesiveness in the voluntary organization of the Trade Union (Union Democracy, Glencoe, Ill., 1956).

[45]This is true for most dancers despite the fact that those companies that do tour capture the lion's share of tickets and 90% of the 16 million ticket buyers come from outside New York City (NEA, 1982, p. 4).

SECTION TWO

PLAYING POLITICS FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

Between Tragedy and Farce

Writing about political events in nineteenth-century France, Marx said that history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.[1] Marx's statement is relevant at first glance to the similarity of historical events and circumstances at different times. More profoundly, however, it refers to the dynamics and limits of the movement of history or social change. New characters who ring of old ones have appeared in many types of social dramas. In particular, in the spheres of culture as well as politics. The legacy of political theater in the twentieth century is in many ways a travesty of tragedy into farce, not in the sense of the specific content of the theaters involved but in their social consequences and relation to culture as a whole.

It is important but not adequate to say that twentieth century capitalism has consolidated under the culture of the commodity or consumerism a form of domination that feeds upon innovation and opposition.[2] But if we simply study domination, we are left with the critical but politically hopeless Marcusian position of one-dimensionality.[3] It is vital therefore to examine the history of oppositional ventures in culture not only to

understand the possibilities they reveal, but also to gleen their conditions of repression. Each repressed possibility is structured into domination as a new antinomy.[4] The chewed bits leave their mark, they pit the cogs' teeth. The machine is subject to indigestion. The dominant culture that can render opposition farcical may ultimately do so at its own expense. But even the ultimate question of whether such tendencies of the limits of a mode of domination can bear fruit, can only be posed in the context of the concrete historical analysis of oppositional expressions.

The history I propose is not of the contours of political theater in this century. While admittedly beyond my resources, such a project would not address the conditions of development of that aspect of physical culture I have termed desire. The possibilities repressed in the assimilation of oppositional forms are not merely political theaters lost, but, as I have attempted to show with the case of dance, expressions of desire which have been transformed. The fate of two theaters, Meyerhold's of Revolutionary Russia and the Living Theater of the American sixties, approach the rubric of tragedy and farce, and serve as two guide posts in the mapping of desire. It is hoped that these posts can serve both as kaleidoscopes to the cultural, political and institutional frag-

ments of their respective eras, and to bound the conditions of the development and repression of contemporary desire.

The continuities between these two specific theatrical forms reveals something of the terrain to be bounded by these seemingly disparate historical contexts. The theaters of Meyerhold and the Living Theater are both responses to the dominant idioms of their day, naturalism. Indeed the growth of Stanislavsky's method was the background for both the State Theaters of Moscow, and Broadway.[5] In proper tribute, Meyerhold's innovations embrace most of what has been considered new theater throughout the century. The Living Theater is connected to this legacy more explicitly than anyone else in the American avant-garde of the sixties through their own experiments with Meyerhold's system of biomechanics, and through Erwin Piscator who was in contact with Meyerhold and a teacher of Judith Malina[6] who, along with her husband, Julian Beck, founded the Living Theater. Further, both theaters occur in a cultural milieu of a sense of extended possibilities and self-consciousness of the role of cultural forms in social change.

There is a more fundamental theoretical underpinning for the selection of these cultural moments. Most rumination on the Russian revolution has centered around its political efficacy. While the institutional

forms of those politics shaped culture, little attention has been given to the significance of those revolutionary cultural forms to contemporary directions.[7] In terms of world history, the Russian Revolution comes not at the dawn of a global capitalist order but at the demise (and defeat in World War I) of the cultural forms of the ancien regime. On the eve of the old order's burial, fundamental innovations in science and art forged a perceptual break that formed the basis of a new cultural mode. The revolutions in 1917 that most explicitly willed the downfall of noble dominance, embraced along with their political acts these cultural oppositions as well. The story of the dissociation of the political and cultural moments of opposition to the ancien regime, therefore, speaks not only to political developments in Russia, but to the fate of cultural developments worldwide.

Between the turn of the century and the start of the First World War, particularly in physics and painting, the world was being viewed differently. The theory of relativity, Futurism in Italy, Cubism in France, and Suprematism in Russia were re-equilibrating time, space and motion. While distinct in origin and esthetic form (though by 1913 when F. T. Marinetti, the leader of Italian Futurism, visited Russia all the artistic movements had been exposd to one another), Futurism, Cubism and Supre-

matism shared with the new physics the notion that time and space could not be represented by fixed coordinates on the same plane.[8] The solution for the three painterly movements was to depart from realistic depiction or representation of the phenomenal world. What the Impressionists had begun decades before, the likes of Picasso, Severini, and Melevich bore to fruition.

But where Impressionism appeared to distort reality by including motion in its representations, expanding the time in which the image on canvas takes place and shortening the distance between canvas and viewer, the image is still a singular one bound and fixed within the canvas frame. Accepting the fixed space of the canvas, Futurism, Cubism and Suprematism can be viewed as presenting the image at several different times concurrently and hence, seemingly moving the viewer around the image. In this regard, the abstract painting is not just a distortion of the naturalistic one but a means of essentializing an experience. By presenting a movement of images, rather than a single one in motion, the abstract canvas decenters the viewer, taking away the illusion that the world emanates from their position (in relation to the canvas), and setting the viewer into the motional context of the painting itself. Just as Einstein put the viewer of the world into a position of constant change when he asked,

"What time does Zurich get to this train," so the abstractionists made their viewers aware that the world was not something out there that they could passively watch go by.

The perceptual insights of the abstractionists served to challenge not only the artistic techniques and scientific theories of the day, but the very experience of the mechanistic world view. Where an entire system of power had based itself upon the certainty of knowing one's place in the world, as one could know the precise position and orbit of a planet around the sun, the perceptual abstractions worked to bend the anthropocentric universe. The knowledge of self based upon faith in the supreme rights of the powerful (whether as sovereignty or manifest destiny) paralleled art, science and religion, three of the major organizers of feelings and understanding in society. The totality constructed between human and god, a whole bound together by reflection to an external symbolic source of power was replaced by a more complex structuration of the self or subject to other subjects and objects. In removing points of fixity and maintaining relative motion among all the parts, this new structuration, an abstract totality, belied hierarchy, blind faith in the order of things and a monological reality. Hence, abstraction embodied more than new forms of art and science but the possibility of transformed social relations

as well.

The introduction of new possibilities in the arts and sciences neither prefigures nor guarantees their introduction in the social totality, despite their persistence in artistic and scientific practice. At the same time, the uneven presence and absence of certain modes of perception is also a product of the social totality.[9] Paradoxically in the new physics, the very perceptual insights that might have implied alternate forms of social relations have been turned to the development of the ultimate symbol of hierarchic power, nuclear weapons. Similarly, abstract art is more often cried for at expensive auctions than in the streets. Reflecting upon the progressive potential of what was (and still is) new leads to the question of just what has persisted and proliferated of the perceptual explosion eighty years ago. Since it is assumed here that there is a potential that has not been fully realized, the other side of the question must be, what has been repressed of the innovations in perception, and through what means.

The very notion that the society as a whole makes for both the persistence and repression of certain artistic possibilities, presupposes some form of distinction between the source of those possibilities, the artistic community, and the larger one. As the former takes on a

life of its own only within the confines of the latter, so the process of confinement, of isolating the artistic community will also be the dissemination of its esthetic wares. Since artistic community and society are themselves in flux, it should be expected that what constitutes and bounds the former will also vary historically. Where a particular form of artistic expression appears similar in different historical contexts, in this case the theaters of Meyerhold and the Becks, the indications of persistence can reveal something of how the relations between the artistic and the larger community shape the development of the former, and how those limits of development are expressive of the social system as a whole.

For all of the massive social changes that have occurred since the turn of the century, capitalism can be considered the dominant global system.[10] A great part of these changes can be seen as contributing to a change in the nature of capitalism itself. Three broad tendencies can be said to summarize this shift: 1) the historical transition from an Instrumentalist to a relatively autonomous capitalist state, 2) the consolidation of monopoly capital in an international context, 3) the rise of consumer society as the dominant cultural form.[11]

The movement from instrumentalism to relative autonomy is an indication of the institutional separation

of the capitalist state from the dominant class. Where members of the dominant class directly exercise their political will and organize the economy to suit their interests through the state apparatus, the state can be said to be an instrument of that class. Through the turn of the century, however, unfettered competition among capitalists, unmitigated conflicts between labor and capital and unregulated trade between countries proved destructive to the capitalist system as a whole. The particular interests of individual capitalists tended to undermine the projected interests of the capitalist class as a whole; that is, maintaining the conditions through which aggregate conditions of the accumulation of capital are possible.

Against the failure of the capitalist class to govern itself and develop policy in its collective interests (the maintenance of a stable and placated labor force paramount among those interests), the state began to assume the powers necessary to organize the conditions for economic activity as a whole and coordinate the interests of labor and capital. In the United States, this process began with the reforms of the Progressive Era, took shape under New Deal policy and was solidified with the programs of Johnson's Great Society. Each of these systems of reform was a period of adjustment between the disorienta-

tions of capital and the demands of social movements in which the state developed the institutional basis to enter more deeply into the organization of political, economic and cultural aspects of society.

Within the logic of a growing need for the state to manage and control capitalist society, the adjudication and palliation of conflicts among capitalists, labor and other social groups are focused upon the state. Whether and how the state deals with these conflicts will be a focus of the last section. The mere existence of state institutions not controlled by capitalists yet working to assert the perceived needs of the capitalist system against other interests, a sort of partisan plurality indicates the growing social terrain that the state occupies apart from the dominant class. To analyze the capitalist state as relatively autonomous is to understand its internal dynamics as developing against yet attempting to supercede, its external constraints.[12]

Geo-economic expansion certainly antedates the development of capitalism, as evidenced by the imperial thrusts of the Greeks, Romans and European Crusaders. The world markets that developed out of the crusades and the crisis of feudalism laid the groundwork for the international system of capitalism that developed through later colonial expansion. The breakdown of the colonial system

in the nineteenth century, and the economic collapse of the colonial powers in World War II, shifted control of the international system from directly political to directly economic. What had been the colonial domain of single countries became the economic turf of companies without deference to national stripe, supported by intermittent military intervention from one of the industrial powers. After World War II, international politics and economic entities found new organizational forms in the multinational conglomerate, the United Nations and the Marshall Plan. The undisputed reign of the multinational, the Pax Americana, can be dated to the fall of the international dollar at Bretton Woods in 1970, although sources of cheap labor have been more deeply challenged by the revolutionary movements from Cuba to Angola to El Salvador. The multinational, no less than the state, is a relatively autonomous institution. Its dynamics, its interests, its possibilities and projections of power, occur within a logic of their own carved out against the logic and constraints of various governments, workers, international agreements, and other corporations. The multinational's power and the conditions of its monopoly is organized and sustained through the capitalist state policies and interventions, both military and economic and as such, the growth of the multinational is part of the broader histori-

cal sweep that has developed the relatively autonomous institution.

The notion of relative autonomy cannot be limited to formal organizations but is rightfully applied to less rigorously administered social relations. Hence, capitalist culture in general and the development of a consumer society in particular can be considered within the development of the relatively autonomous form of social relations. The development of a consumer society converges with that of the state and the multinational. The satisfaction of social want through the purchase of commodities taken in historical perspective, has a political and economic face as well. The diversification and expansion of the economic base of industrial capitalism of the nineteenth century was predicated upon the inclusion of the working population in the commodity market. Through increased wages gained through labor struggles on the one hand, and the rise of advertising, mass media and the role of experts, on the other, a sphere of popular consumption was erected. The interest of the consumer over the worker competed not only ideologically through ads that attempted to negate the work place as an unpleasantry to be left behind at day's end, but also politically. Where labor organizations have placed the social in the hands of working people, the voice of the ads, experts and media situ-

ated the common sense, truth and valuation of the social in a "friend" that could not be spoken back to. The demands for social justice were met with individual buying power. Herein, culture as a domain of leisure and consumption separated itself from the work place, yet deriving its autonomy only against one's participation in the work force. All of the examples of social experience examined throughout this work underscore that the culture of commodities is not the only culture. Yet through its historical role in the assimilation of oppositional social energies and its ubiquity in social relations, in particular the organization of the family, consumerism can be considered the dominant culture.

The rise of the contemporary capitalist state, the development of a multinational economy and consumer society all constitute and are characterized by the movement towards relative autonomy as a totalizing institutional form of society. Whereas bureaucracy has been invoked to characterize a ubiquitous internal organizational form, relative autonomy speaks not only to the internal dynamics of institutional forms but their external relations as well.[13] As with the theater social histories that follow, the preceding historical sketches are not meant as an empirical proof of the facticity of the concept relative autonomy. Rather, it is hoped that

enough substance has been provided to raise the question of the utility of relative autonomy within an historical comparison. Specifically, the thesis here is that while aspects of the three dimensions of contemporary capitalism were present in the early years of the Bolshevik transition, the qualitative analytic difference between Soviet and American societies of the twenties and sixties respectively, was the presence of relative autonomy as the institutional aspect of social control. By examining the relation between theater and society through the development of the theater in different contexts, a sense can be garnered of the institutional forces that govern that relationship. At the same time, by revealing something of what shapes the dynamics within the theater, an understanding of what and how certain esthetic and perceptual possibilities are repressed can be gleaned.

The Soviet Union, by account of most of its inhabitants and many more outside it, is a socialist society. Considering the Soviet Union as a case for comparison in a study of capitalist development is, therefore, at the very least unpopular. Without pretending a contribution to the highly complex debate on the character of Russian society,[14] I would simply like to schematize some of its features to establish a comparative framework. What can be lost in such a schema are the subtleties that would

permit a fuller understanding of the Soviet social formation, while what can be gained are insights into the nature of the movement of capitalist society on a global scale.

As has been well explained by Lenin and Trotsky, Russia on the eve of the Revolution was a feudal system in collapse at the dawn of its capitalist development.[15] Czarist Absolutism passed to capitalist instrumentalism in February of 1917. The Kerensky government was wed to the bourgeois parties dominated by large industry already integrated into the caitalist world order. The state structure and institutional arrangements inherited by the Bolsheviks in October was consistent with the unity of economic and political power that characterized the Soviets. Hence while the substance of state power changed after the Revolution, its institutional relation to the dominant group did not. The concentration of capital proved to be a benefit to the organization of the party in large factories, capitalism came to Russia in its monopoly form. The Civil War and the New Economic Policy (NEP) only highlighted the degree of the Russian economy's interdependence and integration into the capitalist world system. The trade embargoes created severe conditions of austerity, and the autonomy given to capital under the NEP indicated the real power they still wielded over

the economy. The practical limitation of consumerism to the elite prior to the Revolution only strengthened the symbolic power of the commodity as unattainable or elusive pleasure, which is itself the basis of consumerism. Again under the NEP, conspicuous consumption was parallel to the decadent forms in the West as Nepman lived out the boom in twenties glory. All this is to state the obvious; that the revolution's political transition did not immediately transform the entire social formation. What is less obvious is that among all the bourgeous forms of social life where genuinely alternative forms of life, some of which met their demise with the transition from the old order.

While the particular means through which the new abstract esthetic forms rose and fell were not a function of capitalist social forms, the conditions under which they came into being were. By 1914, Russia had recapitulated both the modern art history of the West and the European sociology of art as well (avant-garde communities, shows, art markets and collectors), and added its own contribution in Cubo-Futurism.[16] The Russian Futurists were a self-conscious response to capitalism, whose ultimate pronouncement, as we shall see is somewhat ambivalent. Italian Futurism shares this self-consciousness (and ambivalence) while Cubist doctrine is less explicit

about its social connections. Hence abstraction, a perceptual break from the ancien regime is itself the harbinger of contemporary capitalism. The esthetic products of the new order are quickly brought under its social control. Italian Futurism is absorbed quite literally into Fascism and Cubism becomes the complacent commodity of the art market. As a social phenomenon, abstraction gets farthest in Russia in the early twenties and for that reason it is most interesting to study it there. While Italian Futurism and Cubism are experienced by limited sectors of the population, Constructivism, or at least its direct influence, touches hundreds of thousands in Russia. The very relationship between the artistic and the larger community that promulgates Constructivism's mass appeal, also permits its rapid demise.

The few brief years in which abstraction has its reign in Revolutionary Russia and the few decisive figures who are responsible for its emanation render the Russian case something of a pre-stained microscopic slide. Between Malevich, the painter, Mayakovsky, the poet, and Malevich, the director, is a conduit through which the core of the movements in abstraction can be viewed. The Russian case will begin with a discussion of Malevich's seminal influence and focus on Meyerhold's practical impact.

The turn to the Living Theater will show how some of Meyerhold's theatrical innovations reappear forty years later in a very different cultural context. The limits of the Living Theater's impact will be viewed in terms of institutional arrangements absent from the Russian twenties. The isolation of the avant-garde from the dominant culture is less a posture of the artistic community than a feature of relative autonomy institutionalized under contemporary capitalism. The abstraction in art that had heralded new social relations now becomes the principle of social organization that isolates artistic products from everyday life.

Judging solely by its artistic output at the turn of the century, Russia would be the least likely place for innovation in Modern art or, more broadly in the field of perception. At the forefront of the Russian art scene was a group called the 'Wanderers' committed to an austere, precise form of realism that contained the seedlings of the Socialist variant of the thirties. Yet within ten years, not only would Russian artists "catch-up" to several decades of European developments, but embark in the next five years upon a continuous stream of painterly innovation.

Cubo-Futurism first emerged in 1910, Larionov's Rayonism in 1911, elements of Malevich's Suprematism in

1913 and Tatlin's Constructivism by 1915.[17] Malevich's personal painting history recapitulates that of modern art up to that time ("Impressionism [1904-08]; Neo-Primitivism and the embodiment in it of different Post-Impressionist trends [1908-11/12]; and Cubo-Futurism with its variants and accretions [1911-15]").[18] While the changes in Russian art are unmistakeable, the tendency to characterize them purely in terms of painting is problematic.

Characteristic of Russian painting from 1910 on is that its development and practice was inextricably tied to other forms of expression. The very coining of the term Cubo-Futurism is exemplary of this: "'Cubo-Futurism' as a general and widely-accepted label gained currency at a time when both critics and general public lumped together the pictures of the Cubists and the poems of the Futurists as equally incomprehensible." As Malevich also wrote poetry "All the Cubo-Futurist poets also painted or drew."[19] Mayakovsky, a founder of this group, was no exception.

Although a plethora of groups flourished during this time that appear to represent different schools, in practice individual affiliations were multiple and fluid. Malevich is again a prime example. In addition to the Cubo-Futurist exhibitions, Malevich showed his works with

the Cézannist group "Knave of Diamonds," and with the "Union of Youth," an organization with departments in both visual and performing arts. Hence the very notion of a discipline as a formal category which contains and regulates a particular form of practice is belied by the Russian experience. In other words, change within art is here co-determinous with new forms of its practice. Further, these new movements were viewed, from within and without, as social statements made against a decaying regime.

The self-consciousness of art as an oppositional current is expressed in Malevich's own formulations and declarations of his work. These unequivocably polemicize positions available to painters between old and new, left and right, and associate with the new, nothing less than a new constellation of subject and object in painting. "For the new painter . . . the fundamental formative principle is the sensation itself, which he attentively registers, then attempts to render on canvas the most accurate detail of its movement."[20] Examples of such sensations are "the sensation of the currents in a telegraph transmission," "the sensation of magnetic attraction," "the sensation of flight."

The basis of Malevich's abstractions in art are to be found in the kinetic experience of urban life. He

even employed color as a motional phenomena. "The role of color in these works is to locate spatial structures lying at various distances from each other and to identify the movement of shapes towards or away from the spectator."[21] The shapes and colors in Malevich's work are meant not as a representation of urban life but to express it as a sentient experience. "In the non-objective stages one is not dealing with the representation of phenomena 'as such,' but with the communication of definite sensations which exist in the phenomenal world."[22] Malevich's painting speaks to what is common not in the urban landscape as such but in the experience of urban life. When one leafs through the pages of a document like Suprematism, 34 drawings, UNOVIS, Vitebsk, 1920, the simple forms of increasingly complex arrangement evoke not so much a particular situation in the city but a summation of the physical relations it presents. The motional sensations of the drawing apply just as easily to a traffic jam as to a skyline of buildings or the view of the landscape from a plane. The particularity of the work therefore is not of what it represents, which in itself cannot be named, but of the kernel of specificity within the generality of urban scenes.

The relativity in these sketches becomes an absolute as the very prospect of scale disappears as an analy-

tic tool for viewing them. By generating the sentient aspect of a bundle of situations, the drawings create or make one aware of a circulation among subjects. Since the object in the Suprematist work signifies nothing, all that remains for the viewer is the effect of the work in its relation to other phenomenal effects. Since they represent nothing there is no symbolic value to mystify or fetishize the object in relation to the subject. When we actually look at a cityscape the level of sentient experience is most often obscured by what we think about. We may become aware of what it would be like to own an apartment in one of the buildings and how much money we'd have to be making etc. We enter into a symbolic exchange of commodified ideas. Assuming one is not already thinking about such things while viewing a suprematist work, these non-symbolic, non-representational presentations have the capacity of unifying and thereby totalizing the subject and their kinetic environment. The suprematist work in short, de-alienates sentient experience by creating subject-object relations where the experience of the kinetic field is primary.

Suprematism brings the subject's physical experience to the fore through the display of a new form of totality. Where the interpretation of art has relied on a set of esthetic referents external to the art object-

subject relation (beauty in an object is "known" through its absolute value as a symbolic phenomenon). The mediation of subject and object is now achieved through the internal history of the kinetic convergence of painting and person. The external history of sensed objects appears in the scaleless portrait of kinetic relations. Malevich provides a clue to the internal relations of the new totality in a simple statement about the relation of the parts (individual forms) to the whole (canvas).

Each form is free and individual.

Each form is a world.

An analysis of the sentient dimension of the work makes such a contradiction plausible. The principles of connection, regulation and authority are contained within the structure, rather than alluded to (symbolically) outside it.

In abstract totality the principle of authority is the very movement of the parts within the space which is determined mutually by their relation to each other (the whole) and by their individual properties as forms. In this artistic totality, alternative forms of social relations are visible. An abstract totality under socialism indicates the maximization of individual autonomy (movement) as the motor of the community which in turn creates the spatial field for the movement of individuals. This

motionally overdetermined structure bears suspicious resemblance to the Althusarian relative autonomy.[23] The principle of some essence (economy/motion) multiply permeating and organizing individual form is a common feature but we must remember that the Structuralist-Marxists are speaking on an institutional level of analysis. It is indeed the subversion of the individual by the institution (Weber's complaint) that becomes the hallmark of contempory capitalism.

Malevich's model of social totality is but one of the ones to emerge at the time of the Revolution and clearly it is not the one that became dominant in Soviet society. In the arts can be seen the focusing of broader political polemics and in some cases the suggestion of the form and substance of those polemics. A comparison of Malevich's statement on the relation of the parts to the whole with the Futurism of 1918, reveals something about the changing organization of artistic groups and the role of art as concrete utopia. In passing it is important to note that the Futurism after the Revolution was not the same as the Futurism before it. Mayakovsky, whose name is associated with the movement above all others, declared in December of 1915 that "Futurism is dead."[24] At least the Futurism that Mayakovsky and Malevich brought into prominence was no more. It was replaced by a much broader

and vaguer notion that sometimes referred to all "Left artists, and sometimes to all new movements in art."[25] At any rate, Natan Altman wrote concerning the nature of "futurist" totality in 1918: "And indeed if you take out any one part from a futurist picture, it then represents an absurdity. Because each part of a futurist picture acquires meaning only through the interaction of all the other parts; only in conjunction with them does it acquire meaning with which the artist imbued them. . . ."[26] As evidence for his point, he adds, "Try to distinguish an individual face in a Proletarian procession." It is this subordination of the individual to the mass identity of the whole that is often cited in pejorative assessments of socialism as a whole.

What must be noted is that the socialist revolution itself generated a number of possibilities, the selection among them was a function of the particular developments between the Revolution and Stalinist era. Four years after Altman's remark the first official group of Socialist Realists is founded and by 1934 it is "ratified as the only acceptable form of art."[27] Now the labels, new and old that had separated adherents and opponents of the Revolution, denote acceptable and unacceptable positions within it. "Conscious collectivism transforms the whole meaning of the artist's work and gives it new stimuli.

The old artist sees the revelation of his individuality in his work; the new artist will understand and feel that within his work and throughout his work he is creating a grand totality--collectivism."[28] The language of totality was therefore quite consciously up for grabs by different artistic-political factions. Through the early twenties, this competition was an indicator of the profound plurality of visions conjured by the act of revolution, only as the groups themselves became institutionally entrenched did the rhetoric of the polemics carry a weight beyond the tongue.

The defeat of Malevich's vision was not ultimately at his own hand. The proponents of "Realism" won out over networks of groups that bore some of his influence (UNOVIS, GINKhUK, IKhK, etc.). But the limits of his own formalizations of his ideas did play a role in their dissemination to the other arts. This is borne out in Malevich's involvement in the theater. He first designed the sets and costumes for Kruschenydh's opera "Victory Over the Sun" in 1913 as part of the Cubo-Futurist theater project (along with Mayakovsky's "Vladimir Mayakovsky: A Tragedy") at the Luna Park Theater. The show played only twice there and can hardly be said to have had wide influence as a social phenomena (though certainly as an esthetic one). Malevich also collaborated with Mayakovsky and Meyerhold

on Mystery-Bouffe, termed "the first Soviet play." The work will be discussed in greater detail later but suffice for now to remark upon Malevich's position towards the performance of his art. "I regarded it as my task to create a new reality, rather than to set up by association a reality that existed beyond the footlights," commented Malevich to A. Fevralsky in 1932. Fevralsky stated that Malevich approached the stage "exclusively from the point of view of painting." His inability to translate his expression from one media to another proved frustrating to his other two partners who were dissatisfied particularly with his drab costumes. Malevich did not participate in the revival of Mystery-Bouffe in 1922.[29]

Meyerhold's Carnival

There is, in a sense a literal passage of the project of abstract totality from Malevich to Meyerhold. Its points of contact between the two men is Mayakovsky's Mystery-Bouffe. Meyerhold, like Malevich, spent the years prior to the Revolution, recapitulating the history of dramatic literature. But with the revolutionary break came Meyerhold's departure from the shadows of literary genre into a productive sensibility determined by the needs of theatrical expression. At the height of his political-theatrical power as head of the theatrical department. Meyerhold proclaimed to the company he was inaugurating (November, 1920 R.S.F.S.R. Theater No. 1):

> The artistic Soviet of the R.S.F.S.R. Theater has compiled a repertoire plan which includes The Dawn (Verhaeren), Mystery Bouffe (Mayakovsky), Hamlet (Shakespeare), Great Catherine (Bernard Shaw), Golden Head (Claudel) and Women in Parliament (Aristophanes). But since all this is merely literature, let it lie undisturbed in the libraries. We shall need scenarios and we shall often utilize even the classics as a basis for our theatrical compositions. We shall tackle the task of adaptation without fear, fully confident of its necessity. It is possible that we shall adapt texts in co-operation with the actors of the company, and it is a great pity that they were not able to help Valery Bebutov and me with The Dawn. Joint work on texts by the company is envisaged as an integral part of the theatre's function. It is possible that such team-work will help us to realize the principle of improvisation, about which there is so much talk at the moment and which promises to prove most valuable.[30]

Hence in breaking the connection between literary and

theatrical genre, Meyerhold in practice opens the theater to all literary inputs, contemporary and classical; major and minor. Secondly, Meyerhold announces the connection between art and politics. The principle of improvisation is itself the means of realizing the "artistic Soviet" in formation. The nature of the actors' work will constitute their communal existence. The Soviet, at this point in the history of the Revolution, is an organizational form which coordinates the need for the discovery of socialist techniques (of acting) and the relation of the particular to the whole (the theater in the service of society). It was also Meyerhold's moment as the apotheosis of political theater. Prior to the Revolution, the threads of theater and society had been intertwined very differently. To get a glimpse of this we need only look at Meyerhold's career.

In 1898 Meyerhold graduated from the Moscow Philharmonic Society and was asked to join the "Moscow Popular Art Theater" that Nemirovich-Danchenko, a teacher at the Society, and Stanislavsky were founding. He faired well for a 24 year old fresh out of drama school and appeared in 18 roles (including Treplov in the premiere of Chekov's "The Seagull," 12/17/1898) in his four years with the Art Theater. Already however his acting and directorial styles were forming in opposition to naturalism.[31]

Naturalism combined and expressed the maturity of nineteenth century positivism and the dawn of twentieth century psychologism. The "slice of life" presupposed an object that could be so partitioned. Stanislavsky's aphorism that "all art springs from mood"[32] attempts to generalize individuality. The actor's truth, the unit of production in naturalistic theater is the synthesis of the universal and particular of positivist object and psychologist subject. Meyerhold's was a personality of fiery antithetical spirit that at first glance would perfectly fit the mold being forged by the Art Theater. But this antithetical character acted within the context of an emergent theater and society. These new choices widened the field of choice and enticed negation. Meyerhold, writing to the playwright Chekhov on April 18, 1901, spoke of the intersection of persona, theater and society in posing possible choices:

> I am frankly indignant at the arbitrary actions of the police, such as I witnessed in St. Petersburg on March 4,* and I cannot calmly devote myself to artistic work when my blood boils and everything calls me to join the struggle.
>
> I want to burn with the spirit of my time. I wish that all those who give their lives to theater would become aware of their great mission. I am disturbed by my comrades who don't want to rise above their narrow caste interests, interests foreign to those of society as a whole.
>
> Yes, theater can play an enormous part in the reconstruction of the existing order. . . . The social

movement of these last days has raided my spirits and awakened in me such desires as I had not dreamed of. I again want to study, study, study.

I must know whether to perfect myself or join the fight for equality.

---

*On March 4, 1901, a student demonstration took place at Kazan Cathedral. It was dispersed by police and Cossack cavalry. The students were brutally beaten and several were killed. [Rudnitsky's note]

Against the penetration of social movements into the theater, was the question of the audience and supporters of the arts. Patronage was basic to the Russian arts and the instrumental will had its effect on entertainment value. Meyerhold began to question this servitude in performance: "The bourgeois audience, wants impressionism, moods, words deep to the point of incomprehensibility, not their real meaning. It likes the fact that in these works of literature it is not touched, criticized, or ridiculed. But as soon as something simple but ticklish to the self-love of the bourgeois audience occurs, indignation of the work begins. So you are monotonously halfheartedly silent."[34] Hence, the spectators become the materialization of the array of factors which give theater its sensibility. Only through performance does the actor experience the public as social gauge and the difference between seat and floorboard as the space between intent and desire. The audience's silence lies in the absence of resonance with the actor's plight. The one that chal-

lenges their right to hear, to judge at the edge of their own mirror, is stimulated by the silence that threatens their very existence as audience. While the audience waited for the actor's illusion, the actor gauged his own anticipation in their confusion.

Meyerhold, in search of an enemy views Chekhov as the free standing figure beyond the theater. In his polemic against naturalism, "The naturalistic theater and the Theater of Mood (Petersburg 1908)," Meyerhold sees in Chekhov the "depth" missing from the theater controlled by baroque techniques that ridicule the actor. "The naturalistic theatre teaches the actor to express himself in a finished, clearly defined manner; there is no room for understatement. That is why one so often sees over-acting in the naturalistic theatre; it knows nothing of the power of suggestion. . . .

"In the theatre the spectator's imagination is able to supply that which is left unsaid. It is this mystery and the desire to solve it which draw so many to the theater."[35] Literature is the solution to the naturalistic bondage of the actor. "I read somewhere that "the stage inspires literature.' This is not true. If the stage is influencing literature, then it is in one respect only: it is tending to arrest the progress of literature by creating a group of writers who are influenced by the pre-

vailing tendency (Chekhov and his imitators). The growth of the New Theater is rooted in literature."[36] Meyerhold, himself a product of naturalism, rejected the autonomy of the artist's craft in the perpetuation of naturalistic theater. He had to move beyond the boundaries of the theater to understand its limits and the forces that create them. His major transformation of theater into carnival would come with his re-entrance to the stage as the scion of the symbolist movement in literature. In the abstract form of the word, he was able to uncover a motional sensibility that he would later bring to the stage.

In Meyerhold's production of Maeterlinck's The Death of Tantagiles in 1905, the principle of "motionless theater" and musicalization of the word, parallel in certain aspects the 1905 Revolution. Both set the stage, named the characters and conflicts for the time when the role of word and deed in the equation of symbol and signifier (on stage and street) would be reversed. Meyerhold and the Bolsheviks sought in their acts an amplification of the possible that the symbol provided. "My Symbolism was born of longing for an art of large generalizations."[37] The stillness of actors against the motion of their words, spoke to all social agents of the significance of the posturing of that first revolutionary act. Meyerhold's formal innovations expressed these social limits. "He

wrote that the work on 'The Death of Tintagiles' had 'inspired a method of placing figures on stage in bas-reliefs and frescoes and a means of expressing interior monologue with the help of the music of plastic motion, and provided the possibility of trying out in practice the force of mystical accentuation instead of the former logical accents and the like. . . ."[38] While a literary idea is applied to the stage, it is the word itself that is transformed. The breach in the logic of the word itself, which is preserved in the text, becomes in its performance, a distension of its meaning. Hence, what Meyerhold calls 'alogicism' is more than the generalization of the actor into a supra-character; it is a revelation of the placticity of tonal intent. In the distortion of the word, actors are not only speaking beyond what they themselves represent (i.e., individuals) but beyond the representative aspect of words themselvse.

Ironically the formalism that was held against Meyerhold in later accusations[39] was closer to a "contentism." The word appears as a purely formal manipulation (devoid of meaning) only if one ignores its physical tonal impact. The lack of support for Meyerhold's Symbolist productions expressed the gap between the spectators who watched Meyerhold and those he sought. Looking to the theater for meaning they themselves had lost, critics

could only bemoan the death of the word, whereas Meyerhold as yet lacked the access to speak to those he had prepared his theater for. It would take another revolution to remove the curtain and solve both parties' problems.

As Meyerhold moved to the Komissarzhevskaya Theater in 1906, he ccntinued his connection to Symbolist drama. Perhaps the changing social backdrop led him to re-examine his own. In Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler" Meyerhold introduces painting (through N Saponov the designer) as a symbolic element of the drama instead of being background to it. The blues and oranges of the scene cloth were to represent the dream world into which Hedda longed to escape.[40] While firmly representational in nature, the introduction of pure painting, like Meyerhold's self-purefication through literature set the terms through which he would launch his development. At the same time we see the construction of a theater to house the constellation of innovation across the arts. The abstraction of acting as it was understood and of the spatial and visual context in which it occurred, would alternately change in all of Meyerhold's productions, but would receive their most dynamic attenuation only when played to a public which in 1906 was still imaginary.

In the movement between actors and backdrop in social and theatrical events between 1905 and 1917, Meyer-

hold's turn from the body of the text to that of the actor is decisive. In 1909 he stated: "The actor whose figure did not dissolve in the decorative draperies which were now removed to the background, becomes the object of attention as a work of art. And each gesture of the actor becomes increasingly extractive; simple, precise, set in relief, rhythmical."[41] The means for this bodily expression lay in the tradition of the Italian commedia del'arte. Meyerhold himself had danced the role of Pierrot in Mikhail Fokin's production of "Carnival" in 1910. The distance between conception and execution found its way into Meyerhold's body and laid claim to his own future carnivalisms. Fokin's remarks are amusing but pcint to this germinal gap. "I believe that this was his first contact with the art of rhythmic gesture set to music. . . . He was a man from a different world at the first two rehearsals. His gestures lagged behind the music. Many times he 'showed up' at the wrong time, and 'took off' from the stage without reference to the music. But by the third rehearsal our new mime had matured, and in the performance gave a marvelous image of the melancholy dreamer Pierrot."[42]

Meyerhold's courtship with commedia can be dated to his use of masks in The Puppet Show (1907) and continued with explicit commedia characters in "Harlequin The Marriage Broker" (1911) and Masquerade on February 25, 1917,

the eve of the Revolution. Macquerade presented a well coordinated cacophony of the scenically ornate and the bodily austere. It was reported to be among the most expensive Russian theatrical productions, a production of excessive eighteenth-century Venetian objects, flowing costumes and dazzling curtains.[43] But the symbolic dis-utility of these objects found their value in their spatial division of the stage. The scenes were sub-divided into episodes that were re-spatialized by the arrangement of the curtains which expanded and contracted the playing area. Masks hid the subtlety of facial gesture and revealed the actors' bodies choreographed in precise rhythmicization of the text. The spectators were the Petersburg nobility on their last evening out.

At this point both Meyerhold and the revolutionaries had turned the tides and, at the very least, had mastered the setting. Meyerhold's grotesque farce gave the nobility everything they wanted and nothing they could use. It created in the theater a circulation that when confined to its own walls was meaningless, but relevant to the social stage that was truly being watched. While Meyerhold sequestered the nobility in the theater, the details of their permanent isolation were finalized. The rigor of the actors' movement expressed a refinement that was now inaccessible to the dead class. Meyerhold ex-

pressed this in the antimonious principle of the production, Demonism vs. Gloss.[44] These elements can be seen as simultaneously mask and core of the character. The tragic juxtaposition of the faces of janus are tied to the festering and superficial position of the uprooted spectators.

In the first days after October, the relationship between art and revolution can be witnessed in the events that involved Meyerhold. The Bolsheviks took the arts and the role of the artist in society quite seriously. "Several days after the October Revolution the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (TsIK), just elected at Soviet Congress II, undertook to establish contact with masters of literature and art. Petrograd writers, artists and actors were invited to the revolutionary headquarters at Smolny. Only five came: Blok, Meyerhold, Mayakovsky, N. Altman and R. Ivnev."[45] At the Alexandrinsky where Meyerhold was director, 45 of the 83 members decided to leave the company. Lunacharsky, the Commisar of Education, personally convinced the actors to remain. The choice of Lunacharsky, himself a playwright and critic, was significant both in the autonomy he was given to organize the arts and in his sympathies and knowledge of the avant-garde (though he, like Trotsky and Lenin used the undifferentiated label 'Futurist' to identify them). The bourgeois

press was still intact immediately after the Revolution, and Lunacharsky's active role in critical polemics shaped Meyerhold's rise to prominence as a popular cultural figure.

It is evident that Meyerhold's decision to join the Revolution immediately (and the party in 1918) was a dissident one among artists. Rudnitsky argues that most artists were anti-Tsarist and critical of the bourgeoisie but were dubious of the Bolshevik's stability, and foresaw their defeat in the civil war. He also argues that Meyerhold's political positions were neither explicit nor consistent.[46] But this is precisely because the political significance of Meyerhold's work is not its position on events but its relation to them. It is not until after the Revolution that cultural events and political organization were conjoined such that Meyerhold's choices as to the nature of his theatrical direction became themselves explicit political choices. In spite of the convergence of institutional forms of revolutionary life and the theater, Meyerhold's political commitment retained its implicit dimension. Hence his is a political theater not merely in its instrumental functionality to the "poster-rally" period of the Revolution but in its commitment to structural transformation of culture itself.

Daily political events were the textual idiom in

which theatrical innovation occurred. In 1926, Lunacharsky expressed this dynamic when he wrote: "The connection between Meyerhold's theater and the Revolution is very simple and, I might say, primitive. It is contained partly in the conscious and partly in the unconscious sensitivity of Meyerhold.[47] It could be added that Meyerhold's theater sought to express not only revolutionary unconsciousness, but its social body as well. In the dynamic interaction between object and subject on the stage, between stage architecture and actor, we can view this development and its intersection with the organization of culture and public.

Mystery Bouffe is revolutionary theater in the multiple sense discussed above. It contains both conscious, didactic connections between theater and revolution, and uses theater as a site for new forms of physical culture. The vessel bears the mark of these unusual bedfellows. It is a combination of biblical allegory, medieval play, futurist poster-rally, circus, social satire, news tableaux, and art exhibition. The show has the prologue-epilogue format of the medieval street show, and is the story of seven pairs of clean and seven pairs of unclean (bourgeois and proletariat) thrown together on an ark (which the unclean build) after a great flood has swept the earth. The clean, an international elite that

includes Lloyd George and Clemenceau, are thrown overboard by the clean in the second act, to be encountered again in a hell (Act III) inhabited by acrobatic devils who complain of the cleans' appetites and fail to impress the unclean with their nefarious antics. Paradise (Act IV) is impressive only to the lone menshevik (originally called a compromiser) who meets his idols Tolstoy and Rousseau. In the land of chaos (Act V) the unclean save a locomotive that has been overworked by the bourgeoisie, and wind up in The Promised Land (Act VI), an electrified place with giant plugs and anthropomorphized forces of production.

The prologue not only introduces the play but is a template for viewing it. It simultaneously offsets and integrates the play into the spectator's experience. A part reads as follows:

> First, let me ask you
>
> Why is this playhouse in such a mess?
> To right thinking people
> it's a scandal, no less!
> But then what makes you go to see a show?
> You do it for pleasure--
> isn't that so?
> But is the pleasure really so great, after all
> if you're looking just at the stage?
> The stage, you know,
> is only one-third of the hall.
> Therefore,
> at an interesting show,
> if things are set-up properly,
> your pleasure is multipled by three.
> But if the play isn't interesting,
> Then you're wasting your time

> looking at even one-third of what's happening.
> For other theatrical companies
> the spectacle doesn't matter:
> for them
> the stage
> is a keyhole without a key.
> "Just sit there quietly," they say to you,
> "either straight or sidewise,
> and look at a slice of other folks' lives."
> You look--and what do you see?
> Uncle Vanya
> and Auntie Manya
> parked on a sofa as they chatter.
> But we don't care
> about uncles or aunts:
> you can find them at home--or anywhere!
> We, too, will show you life that's real--
> very!
> But life transformed by the theater into a spectacle
> most extraordinary!

Here we see the unmasking of connotation and morality that permeates the language of the play. The "right-thinking" and the "clean" appear as universal values. The prologue, spoken by one of the unclean, expresses its sympathies to an audience that may feel unsettled by the playing space that has exceeded its bounds to include them. While seemingly denouncing the quotidian as a basis for theater in the unveiled critique of the Art Theater's naturalism, the show is more interesting in changing the relation of watched to watcher in daily experience. By making the architecture of the theater the boundaries of the stage, Mystery-Bouffe calls attention to the spectacle within and among the spectators. Therefore it is not "everyday life" per se that is rejected in this production, but the

very alienation of experience and image contained in the position audience-voyeur. Hence the prologue is an apologia not for the content of the play, for few in the audience would need the caricatures explained, but for the space it occupies. It is as if to say, "This reality may be strange but it is indeed your own." For, without the Revolution the caricatures would be clean, but with it, the strangeness of the space that the Russian people now had to make their own, needed a digestive aid. The theater of the Mystery-Bouffe, was the tablet.

As has been stated earlier, Malevich was the designer of the 1918 production, but the principles of suprematism, in particular, what I have termed abstract totality, were not limited to set construction of costuming. In Meyerhold's production, painted forms are replaced by theatrical events, and canvas by carnival. As with dance, improvisation is the essentializing principle. Like the selection of movement, the carnival offsets the rigor of costume and caricature (the rule) with the system of surprise (kinetic) that transcend them. The carnival both permeates each individual event and their succession, such that their totalizing effect is, like the suprematist canvas, to eliminate representationality and evoke the motionally conjunctive aspect across different social situations. Hence the theater establishes a kinetic con-

nection between its single intervention (the real-time of Mystery-Bouffe) and the specialness of the respatialized revolutionary class. When the body itself knows only a history of its sale as labor power, there must be a means to reclaim and occupy what had been (at least partially) a commodified form.

Rudnitsky relates the events in Mystery-Bouffe to Eisenstein's theory of attraction in montage as "the basic unit, the molecule of theatrical action." But this speaks of the logic of the parts and not their construction into the whole; in any event he lists the attractions in the first act of Mystery-Bouffe: "1. The clownlike entrance of the fisherman and the Eskimo who has plugged the hole in the globe with his finger. 2. the Frenchman's expository monologue. 3. Two paired clownlike entrances (the pair of Australians; the Italian and the German). 4. The fencing duel between the Italian and the German. 5. an acrobatic trick: the merchant falling onto the head of the Eskimo. 6. The parade of the clean and the unclean. 7. the rally scene. 8. Farce: commencement of the construction of the Ark."[49]

In this list of events we see the formula of Malevich's: "Each form is free and individual. Each form is a world" applied to the theater. Read as they are presented, the events have no explicit cumulative logic and

hence no specific temporality. They are related in their kinetic sense of the carnival (the world) and yet they retain an autonomy made possible by their very state of relativity. That is, taken as a whole system of events within a common spatial fold (the theater) they suspend time as object and heighten the subjectivity of space. This is the converse of utopia. Past, present and future are absorbed into a single temporal referent so that space can be generalized; not the space of distance and the object but of the subject. Hence the Greek 'no place' of the future is replaced by the Russian some place in history. And the worker, whose apparent alternative to the commodified body had been its materialization in the architecture of socialist production, could now find a place among the social body.

The totalization of events illustrated in the first act that effects the realization of a collective subject can also be found among the different contributions to the production. While there remains a tension between scenic construction, the actors' execution, text, performance space, spectators, and social context, these six elements share a carnivalized suspension of time and eternalization of space that they enjoy at no other point in Meyerhold's theater. In his very next production, The Dawn, the text itself becomes an improvisational element

as news from the civil war's front is handed to the actor as his lines, and as such, text loses its autonomy in the sexagon. Over time, each of these dimensions (save perhaps the acting) will yield to the institutional forces that harken Socialist Realism. To indicate the significance of this constellation of dimensions, it will be valuable to sketch each in turn.

Since the limits of Malevich's scenic execution have been discussed, it is more useful to use the realization of their spirit in the second, 1921 production of Mystery-Bouffe designed by Kiselev, Lavinsky and Khrakovsky. These three were able to transform the canvas into a real-space built environment for the performers. The scenic architecture was set both to unify playing and watching space, and to facilitate sightlines between performers and spectators. Hence, the multi-leveled set consisted of scaffolds, ladders, bridges and a hemipshere, literally spilled over the bounds of the stage box to be met by an array of ojbects and machines coming from the loge boxes. What had been the Zon Theater, built to contain illusion,[50] had now been absented from the conventional barriers that measure distance and affirm the reality that the stage professes.

The new space was a playing ground for all because performers and spectators inhabit a place that is equi-

distant from them. If in the naturalistic stage, spectators witness the estrangement of what is familiar to them in their daily life, the strangeness of the Mystery-Bouffe space becomes familiar as it is utilized in performance. When "The Man of the Future" appears near the ceiling and speaks to the inhabitants of the theater, not only are the sight-lines that fix the ratio of value broken once again, but the scale of the relationship between seer and seen is shifted as well. This is a kinetic moment which has the effect of recontainerizing the whole into the subject much in the way we may feel filled with skyscraper when we look up at one. In the end, the single dimension re-inserts itself into the whole by spilling the space of play into carnival.

The performers were unsparingly people from the circus. Besides the acrobats and clowns from the first act, there were the devils on flying trapezes of the third. Mayakovsky's play calls for some seventy-five characters and Meyerhold probably used more; among these were a handful that became prominent Meyerhold actors. Perhaps the most distinctive was Igor Illinsky. Illinsky was considered a Russian Charlie Chaplin. He is the archetypal actor for the theater of "revolutionary tragedy and revolutionary buffoonery" that Meyerhold proclaimed the project of RSFSR (Theater of the Red Banner). Illinsky

played the Menshevik-compromiser, a locus of satire in the show. He had the plasticity of motion and imagination that Meyerhold demanded from his actors. In a rare and teasingly short film clipping of Illinsky (in the 1924 production of the Forrest), the angular fluidity of his body reminds one of such Cubo-Futurist canvases of Malevich's as the Knifegrinder. The play of the parts of the body against the social mask Illinsky portrays, creates an internal satire (rigid-fluid) that becomes the kinetic form presented in performance.

The ability of the actor's body to stand out from his or her role promotes in the public the autonomy of their own physique. It is the celebration of actors laboring against character, where characterization is the conduit between street and stage conflict. The masks are all known to the spectators through their political life outside. But when this knowledge is acted upon in the theater, the finite bounds of what the mask represents, gives way to the motional response of what is behind it (in this case the rest of the body). The thread of Meyerholdian acting that reappears under the rubric of Biomechanics and then pre-acting is the display of bodily motion as the possibility of the subject beyond the assigned conscious connotation of their position in drama and/or social life. This conscious-sentient split achieved by

the actor threatens to turn into mere fascination, pure spectacle, without those dimensions which determine and offset its autonomy. Just as the masks would not anchor consciousness without their roots in social context, so the body would be an absolute virtue if not offset by this theater's new spatial domain. This of course is to speak just of the visual, without including the other sense-stimuli of the theater.

Since Futurist theater was born with "Vladimir Mayakovsky: A Tragedy" in 1913, the poet's texts were written and spoken with a unique sound. Rudnitsky reports that the sharp accents and word distortions were toned down for Bouffe,[51] but even in the English translation, one gets a feeling for the slivery rhythm of the verse (cf. excerpt from prologue). While there are pictures that give a general record of the visual elements, without a Russian soundtrack, interpretation of aural viscera is difficult. We can see a parallel split between body-mask and speech-text and can examine the content of the play to explore the latter members of the couplings.

The play is a form of the poster-rally which attracted Lunacharsky to Futurism. It is didactic not just for its news tableau characters but for the sharpness of its edges. For the acts seem more divisions of a single story that takes on drama of their own, than

an accumulation of pieces that bear a moral response (as was undoubtedly the case of much agit-prop inspired by it on themes like "don't drink" or "keep sanitary conditions at home"). The unclean, though they express confusion and doubt at times, nonetheless are driven within each act to the realization of the power of their collective labor. Yet this power does not end history but is a precondition for history-making. With each act a new place, the uncleans' power can only be the unintended consequences of their own actions, the other force in Marx's dialectic of history--that both propels them through the play and reproduces the surprise at each turn. So, if Mayakovsky's text is a poster, it can only be an announcement of the circus that is coming into town.

In Mystery-Bouffe, as was seen earlier, performance space is defined and fully occupied by scenic construction so as to change not only its contours but its quality as well. To be more precise, it is the blending of space and the intrusions upon it (whether of stage boards or bodies), that create an architecturally complete theater. The play of positive and negative form becomes part of the theater experience with spectators aong this play rather than watching it. But while the old theater was intended to become a performance space in toto (and indeed was used as such as when the American millionaire

arrives from the back of the auditorium to the stage area on a motorcycle), it imposed its own set of limits. Rows of seats were removed to extend the set construction to the auditorium floor, but spectators still sat in the rest of the seats. Even with the curtain removed, many of the theater's appointments harkened to other types of play making. That the theater may have reminded the spectators of the past, only sharpened it as a site of carnival. For the carnival circulates the familiar into the strange and strange to familiar as it feeds time into presence.

Tickets were distributed for performances directly through the trade unions at this time. Each union got a certain allotment, and at times sections of the theater were filled by Red Army soldiers replete with banners.[52] The show was immensely popular. It played consecutively from May Day, 1921 to July 7, the end of the season. E. M. Beskin, a critic, spoke of the spectators' participation during the show. "It is possible to enter the auditorium during the performance. Expressions of approval (applause) and of protest (whistling) are permitted. Actors respond to calls after each scene and during the performance." After the show "the performance is over and some of the actors, still in costume, mix with the public.[53]

The carnivalizing element the spectators bring with them is the street itself. Familiarizing the strange is not a passive process and the dialogue between spectators and performers during the show is not merely a change in theater etiquette. The barker and the barterer are evenly distributed between performer and spectator positions as are their needs to express their reactions to the common circumstances they find themselves in. Conversely, theater had invaded the streets at this time to carnivalize the public. Carter estimates that up to a hundred thousand people would take part in street theater events and a hundred thousand yards of banners had been painted by Futurist artists to commemorate the Revolution.[54] A new sense of inhabitance was being attenuated through the arts. It was the energy of the rallies that the public brought with them everywhere that drove the theater.

The period of the civil war, militant communism and the theatrical October, were elements of a social context organized by the primacy of the political. The separation of power and administration were subordinated to the enlistment of participation by all sectors in the Revolution. The strategy to achieve this was the coordination of existing resources and its institutional means was the Soviet. Without a single state power that could consolidate itself within each institution, the Soviet

identified common interest beyond all institutions (the survival of the Revolution) and granted each rule over their own world. It wasn't until later in the twenties when a Central Theater Board (that Trotsky sat on for a while) administered the theater and approved productions. Hence it is the importance of the theater itself that is institutionalized through the control of the text. But before the Board was set up and Lunacharsky dismissed Meyerhold as head of the Theatrical Department, Lunacharsky made clear the power that the theater soviets had wielded:

> The enthusiastic Vsevolod Emilevich immediately mounted a warhorse of the Futuristic type and led the followers of "Theatrical October" in a storming of the "counter-revolutionary" substance of academism. With all my love for Meyerhold I had to part with him, since such a one-sided policy was in distinct oppositional not only to my own views but to the views of the Party. It ought just to be noted that the circumstances of that time permitted leftist artists in the field of the representational arts, for instance, to take into their hands a kind of semi-dictatorship, and that the Central Committee of the Party in a special resolution clarified the incompatibility between Futurist artistic forms and the real requirements of post-Revolutionary social life. . . . In any event, I repeat, in full agreement with the staff of the Commisariat for Education and the directives of the Party, I was compelled to consider Meyerhold's extreme line unacceptable from the State-administrative point of view.[55]

If the administration was to be centralized as a condition of the consolidation of Bolshevik Russia, the principles of exchange that had governed institutional autonomy would themselves become part of the state appara-

tus. The irony of the New Economic Policy, not unlike Reagonomics is that centralized state power is consolidated under the rubric of the free movement of capital. This is what ultimately stops the run of Mystery Bouffe (Theater RSFSR 1 closed September 6, 1921). Lacking a form of socialist production did not arrest the theater of revolution so long as a socialist politics (power and administration) held sway. But when political exigencies of adopting capitalist development (e.g., Lenin's embrace of Taylorism) found an organizational form, the bureau usurped the Soviet. Ultimately it is the compartmentalization of power (a pre-commodity form) that pulls the plug on the carnival.

The demise of the carnival represents more than the passage of a moment in post-revolutionary developments in Russia. In Meyerhold's theater were the seeds of a popular folk humor expressed through the revolutionary form of abstract totality. On the one hand, his theater was a contribution to the continuity of a popular culture in socialist society. Bakhtin, in the conclusion to his study of Rabelais, stresses the role of such cultural forms. "We cannot understand cultural and literary life and the struggle of mankind's historic past if we ignore that peculiar folk humor that always existed and was never merged with the official culture of the ruling classes . . .

every act of world history was accompanied by a laughing chorus."[56] At the same time that Mystery-Bouffe provides the object for a laughing subject (and by so doing fortifies the position of that subject), it also provides a new totalizing form for the experience of the subject's role in history.

Bakhtin's study, which describes the respatialization in the cosmic terms of the renaissance, speaks to the movement of the body in any historical transformation. "We shall conclude by stressing that the carnival awareness of the people's immortality is intimately related to the immortality of the becoming of being and is merged with it. In his body and his life man is deeply aware of the earth and of the other elements, of the sun and of the star-filled sky."[57] In Mystery-Bouffe, this natural setting is replaced with the electrified future of the Promised Land, the autonomy of the part predicated upon its movement within the whole (abstract totality). In short, Mystery-Bouffe is an expression of the becoming of revolutionary corporality. But with the dismantling of abstract totality, the being is separated from the becoming and the body continues with only the repressed possibility of the occupation "promised" by the revolutionary terrain.

The decline of the power of the left which Meyer-

hold headed, was spearheaded by the institutional changes of the relation of arts to society under the New Economic Policy. Not only was administration of theaters centralized in the Commisariat of Education, but the critical voice that evaluated theatrical productions, took on an authority that spoke to the direct producers from the outside. The polemical tenor of the critical forums that Meyerhold played a role in establishing, developed into a means of formal attack against his work. As he moved into realist forms under Lunacharsky's proclamation of "Back to Ostrovsky," in the mid twenties (A "Profitable Post" in 1923 and "The Forrest" in 1924), the Left denounced Meyerhold and the Right continued to criticize his innovations.[58] In his production of the "Inspector General" (1927), can be seen a mourning of the loss of folk humor as the comedy is turned into tragedy. A year's debate generated three volumes of critical commentary and exacerbated Meyerhold's estrangement from any established artistic faction.[59]

In 1936, 'Meyerholdism' is coined as an expression for formalism in the theater. Meyerhold is virtually tried by a group of critics and attempts apologia with a speech "Meyerhold against Meyerholdism" and stages only realistic plays before the lquidation of his theater by the Commisariat on Art in January of 1938. My intention

here is not to sketch the course of the arts in the Stalin period but merely to illustrate the fall of a social and theatrical possibility at the hands of institutional developments beyond the theater.

Meyerhold's theater spanned the waxing and waning of a broader set of social possibilities in Soviet society. For a brief moment, epitomized by the production of Mystery-Bouffe, the carnivalized movement of social expressions inside and outside the theater forged what has been termed an abstract totality, a circulation of essences with its own internal dynamics of regulation. The words, movements, sensations on stage neither emanated nor were directed at a single source. Rather they expressed a special moment in history when people could look at their situation from many angles at once, yet move from one view to the next as if carried on the winds of a parade. Against the complaint of the illusiveness of such idealizations of revolution can be posed not only the concreteness of the theatricalized events of 1918-20 in and out of the theater but also the concrete demand that contemporary political culture grasp the importance of such events. In the years of militant communism in the Soviet Union there were not the institutional impediments to connecting politics and theater faced today. Initially at least, as an organizational form, the Soviet permitted the totaliza-

tion of theater, culture and politics. In turn, as political, cultural and economic exigencies clashed and the survival of its revolution secured, Soviet society consolidated a state formation that would replace the carnival with the bureau. The blood of Meyerhold's theater was the laughing chorus of its history. As the laughter was turned from the theater, the theater began to exsanguinate.

Where Meyerhold's theater fell victim to the rise of an institutional separation between theater and politics, the Living Theater was born into such a separation. Where relative autonomy rose with the tragic face of the Revolution betrayed, it haunted the sixties theater with the suppressed laughter of the chorus. Meyerhold's theater was formed amid meaty questions about what to do about the nature of the state, international constraints and consumerism. The emerging and changing answers to those questions shaped his theater. The Living Theater's attack on the state, their anti-consumerism and strident internationalism together constituted evidence of the persistence of the very things they were opposing. The Living Theater's goal of unifying theater and life were also a testimony to the separation of the two, and the relative autonomy of theater itself within the society. The Becks' fight was against this form of social control as much as it was to construct a socially relevant theater.

Living the Symbolic

The sixties expressed for many the revival of a significant relationship between art and politics. The Cagian rebellion was an attack on the very institutions (the museum, the concert hall, the theater) that had kept art a prisoner locked away from society. In the manifestoes and street happenings, in the found-objects and pedestrian behavior, could be found a search for forms that would unite people and operate on the terrain of daily experience. The sensibility that had attempted to engage the broader community in a critical appraisal of its own relation to art and creativity, was being sounded as a theme. In theater, the premise that was again being questioned was naturalism. First within the theater, then without, the format of theatrical presentation was also under contention. At the beginning of the sixties, as at the beginning of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Becks' Living Theater appeared to be in as decisive a position as had Meyerhold's. But where Meyerhold fell victim to a set of developing institutional forces, the Living Theater was a product of such forces. Hence, the ember of revolution reappeared as the stamped-out cigarette butt; the nomadic tribe of the sixties.

In the 1950's, the Becks had been instrumental in bringing people together from different artistic dis-

ciplines. Their theaters were a meshing ground for writers, poets, dancers, actors, musicians and visual artists. In one evening one might view a collaboration of Cage's, Cunningham's and the Becks' work.[60] By 1960, the Living Theater could list as sponsors John Cage, Jean Cocteau, Merce Cunningham, Willem deKooning, Jean Erdman, Wallace Fowlie, Paul Goodman, Erick Hawkins, James Mensil, Charles Weidman, Tennessee Williams, William Carlos Williams and later, Shelley Winters, Larry Rivers, and Allen Ginsburg among others.

Most of the Beck-produced plays had original scores (with Cage among the composers). Among them, Ladies Voices, Gertrude Stein 1951, Desire Trapped By The Tail, Pablo Picasso (1952), Ubu, The King, Alfred Jarry (1952), The Age of Anxiety, W. H. Auden (1954), The Young Disciple, Paul Goodman (1955), and Many Loves, William Carlos Williams (1959). In addition, the Becks produced a variety of events. The music of Cage, Christian Wolffe, Henry Cowell, Robert Rauschenberg; dances by James Waring, Aileen Pasloff, Judith Martin; children's theater by the Paper Bag Players; poetry by Dylan Thomas, Ginsberg, Goodman, Edward Dahlberg, Gregory Corso, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Anais Nin; films by Stan Brakhage, Maya Deren; jazz and Baroque music concerts; in short, virtually a who's who of performance art.

Living Theater manifestoes rang of clarity. A 1960 statement read:

> The purpose of the Living Theater is to establish a repertory company for the presentation of plays of the highest artistic standard at a minimum charge to the public, and to explore untried methods and techniques for the extension of the boundaries of theatrical expression.
>
> It is the aim of the Living Theater to establish a stage for which poets and playwrights can compose new and experimental theater works, and to train and consolidate a company of actors, directors, designers, musicians, dancers and allied theater artists devoted to creating a modern art theater.[61]

In other writings, Beck described the nature of these "new and experimental theater works":

> With obstanate devotion we believe in the theater as a place of intense experience, half dream, half ritual in which the spectator appraoches something of a vision of self-understanding, going past the conscious to the unconscious, to an understanding of the nature of all things. And it seems to us that only the language of poetry can accomplish this, only poetry or a language laden with symbols and far removed from our daily speech, can take us beyond the ignorant present towards these realms.[62]

In light of Meyerhold's developments, there is nothing new about this proclamation. Indeed, symbolism appears at parallel moments in the careers of both the Russian and the Becks. But the replacement of cosmic mysticism with the carnival for the former is a development that never occurs for the latter. Almost a quarter century later these statements, the same mystic symbolism, can be viewed in the Becks' "Archeology of Sleep" (1983). Aside from the interest in Biomechanics (another fleeting attraction for

Meyerhold himself), Symbolism seemed their main point of convergence (Meyerhold had staged Strindberg's "Miss Julie" in 1906 and the Becks "The Spook Sonata" in 1954). But Symbolism itself had to be read differently in 1954 than in 1906, for adopting the same vehicle for an attack on naturalism fifty years after its appearance is merely to trammel a possibility that had already been repressed. The Becks' project was to be more serious than serious drama, to be deeper than naturalistic emotionality, to make their theater more exceptional to life than the Broadway stage: in short, to beat the mainstream at its own game. While proposing a radical break with the present, the Becks were presenting a return to the past. While offering "Tonight We Improvise" (1955), they were giving more of the same.

The farcical repetition of the discovery of symbolism embodies more than partisanship for a particular literary genre. Meyerhold used literature to find the autonomy of the theatrical. The Living Theater's output is not limited to a particular genre but rather seeks to impose a literary principle, "a language laden with symbols," across an entire range of dramatic texts. To render the symbol a dramatic principle, a motive force for the production of plays, it was necessary to find a means to project the symbol from actor to spectator. Unlike the

carnival as a means of circulating meaning and desire through the theatrical space, the symbolic presentation speaks to another form of totality. The "understanding of the nature of all things," lies beyond the spectators' conscious grasp and can only be achieved by a guided tour into the unconscious. The symbol is the map the actor uses to guide the spectator, but the spectator who lives in the "ignorant present," has nothing to offer in this exchange. Hence the symbol is not a means of circulation which derives its power from its motional prowess but an authority that stands beyond--the subject is pure representation. The threatrical space is unified or totalized through its recognition of this common authority in the universe beyond the present. The actor is the representative of this authority and must carry the symbol physically to the audience.

The apology for the burden the actor must bear (and that the public must receive), is found in the Artaudian theater of cruelty; that theater is a violence inflicted upon the public. While with Artaud the theater's power lies and is projected through the actor's schizophrenia which creates an irrational position for the spectator. The violence is mutual and the theater creates some means of exchange. But in the Living Theater's degradation of Artaud the force of the theater lies in the

mystic cosmos beyond, in some place of extreme exceptionality, and the actors must appeal to the public's faith in that possibility. The public is left with nothing to offer to that faith and the actor must press all the harder for their belief.

The Living Theater actors' monopoly of authority through symbolic totality is rendered all the more farcical by the demand for participation that they place upon the public. But the form of their response is prefigured by the actors' demand. In "The Connection," the rise and fall of the Living Theater comes into its own, and we can see these dynamics in unadulturated form. "The Connection," like "Mystery-Bouffe," was a highpoint in the development of elements, inside the theater and out that gave the Living Theater its definition and prominence. Unlike Meyerhold's production, however, "The Connection" set into motion a stream of antinomies that would animate the Becks' future ramblings.

"The Connection," written for the Living Theater by Jack Gelber, is the first play written especially to their theatrical needs and it is with this play that they attained widespread acclaim. In the fifties the Becks relied on their own network, the artistic community itself, as the source of their audience. But with "The Connection," there is an attempt to bring in the critics to gain

a wider public. Critics from major and minor newspapers were invited to measure the distance between the artistic and the larger community as they had developed through the fifties. In a press solicitation dated July 5, 1959, Beck prepared the press for the distance they should expect:

> I would like to invite you to the world premiere of a very exciting and important play,"The Connection," by Jack Gelber. For the first time on the American stage the true story of narcotics is being presented with no holds barred. Using jazz as part of the structure of the play, "The Connection," showed the daily life, torture, humor and sorrow of a group of "junkies." The play is no hoked-up version of the narcotics-jazz scene; it is a dramatic, hard-hitting story of one of the important social problems of our times, written in prose that is plain and hard and modern.[63]

Here again we see the privileged claim to authenticity contained in the theatricalization of symbolic totality. The truth and reality inaccessible to people on the streets will be presented without the mystification of daily life. The critics are warned against trying to penetrate this absolute world with their own softness. The hardness of the story and language is the anticipation of the response that has been prepared for the audience.

The play opened July 15, 1959 at the 162 seat theater at Sixth Avenue and 14th Street. For those not of the press the message of the true voice of authority is repeated in the prologue to the play, a conversation between the author, producer and musicians who enact the

play. The producer, Jim, says: This magician here has invented me for the sole purpose of explaining that I and this entire evening on stage are merely a fiction. And don't be fooled by what anyone else tells you. Except the jazz. As I've said, we do stand by the authenticity of that improvised art. But as for the rest, it has no basis in naturalism. None. Not a bit. Absol . . ."[64] If the authenticity of the text is a magic act which is removed from the stage, then who speaks for the predicament the actors and spectators find themselves in? Presented with hard language separated from genuine authority (power) is a situation that is more bureaucratic than dramatic. But the separation of power and administration is the theatrical effect of the performance. The symbolization of bureaucracy beyond the theater merges with the mysticism of symbolic totality. Reality is presented as a dream. The spectator is assigned the role of dreamer, witness to their own acts. At the same time a response is demanded from them that is beyond any language they have to respond with. There is no one to turn to. The only verifiable truth is the music and yet truth is out there somewhere beyond the facetious tone of the speaker. This is the Kafkian nightmare, the language of the bureaucratic unconscious, created by this theater of dreams.

The Living Theater is acting out the predicament

of political culture of the sixties while falling victim to it. They could be free to practice their dreams so long as they confined themselves to their own turf. The arts could pray to the muses or any other mystic god so long as they accepted their own institutional separation from society as artists. But to try to engage the larger community was merely to point to that distance. To shout down from the tower of truth was to highlight the very separation between art and life. The institutional situation of the arts in American society was expressed not only in the distance between actors and audience. Other theater groups such as Bread and Puppet and The Pagent Players would surmount this as a theatrical problem.[65] Rather, the relative autonomy of art itself would create a terrain of struggle to maintain the institutional existence of the theater itself. This was the other theatrical travesty that the Living Theater played out.

A perusal through the Living Theater's archives reveals the complexities of running a theater in this society. There are bills, agreements of all sorts, leases, licenses for plays, permission forms for child labor, fire code inspections, legal memos, union fees, prop rentals and lights, international rights to productions, touring offers, receipts for toilet paper, agreements for use of entrances by other tenants. The documents seem endless.

But so might the records of any small business, a restaurant, clothing store, food market, hardware store, etc. All must meet certain inspection codes, they are subject to state surveillance. Theater, however, is much more deeply embedded in the juridical structure. Hence, not only are they constantly under the watchful eye of the state, through the myriad legal transactions involved in each production, they are also constantly put to the test.

It was this test that the Living Theater failed. The test of institutional autonomy. Three times their theaters were closed by fire code violations. For the better part of the four-year run of "The Connection," the Becks were embroiled in a legal tete a tete with the author Jack Gelber. Violations of the conditions of contract, overdue royalties, illegal negotiations of foreign rights, all escalated legal proceedings. On October 17, 1963, the Living Theater closed, some $45,000 in debt and requiring around $90,000 to stabilize. The Becks decried the absence of audience as the void behind the collapse. "The past five years have proven to us that such an audience does not exist in sufficient numbers. . . . Nevertheless it is true that we never really counted on such support completely from the public."[66] They left the country resolving to go directly to the

people.

It is true that the Living Theater's audience draw was highly fluctuate. Earlier in 1963, a box office accounting of the receipts of five performances looked as follows: January 12, $256; January 13, $71; January 15, 23; January 19, $314; January 20, $73.[67] It appeared as if the invisible hand was the true authority beyond the theater, whose hard language would awaken people to the truth; competition on the market is a form of cultural control. The dependence on the market for an audience undermines the theater's privileged position. For it becomes a commodity like any other which must assert its valid representation of needs in order to be offered for consumption. That the market comes to represent need is itself an expression of the very distance between art and community.

For the artistic community, output of any kind retains the functionality of art found in primitive societies. Art is what integrates the communities, what binds it together in a (locally) universal embodiment of meaning. The artistic community truly needs and lives through art. But with a consumer society, need is generalized and embodied in all commodities. A single set of rituals (arts) is replaced by ritualized behavior (consumption). All this is to say that the move from avant-garde to

popular is not a merely voluntary decision and herein lies the farce of the Living Theater's actions. Their's was an attempt to generalize the avant-garde community through the very means of its institutional separation (the market). But this drama was not of their own making.

Symbolic totality is not just the organizing principle of the Living Theater but is the form of emotionality dominant under contemporary capitalism. The symbolization of emotions and the representation of need in commodities converge in the market place. The theater (not the building but the productive relations) is not a commodity but an institution. Its existence is contingent upon some equilibrium between its internal structural supports, and its connection to the market (realization of value). The institutional interior is a relatively autonomous one. It is a construction of a society within a society permeated by the exigencies of the large entity. Its internal state, labor markets and culture must be specific to the institution to ensure and secure its unique relation to the economic. In other words, relative autonomy ensures the entity's institutional particularity and symbolic totality organizes its relation to generalized need. The tension between the unique interior and generalized exterior constitutes a sort of survival guide for the individual organization. The Living Theater at-

tempted to invert these these spatial relations through an act of will. Generalized need is brought into the theater in the form of symbolic authority, and the ritualized unity of the avant-garde community is projected as the market place. Where Meyerhold in his moment of glory was able to magnify (to use Mayakovsky's term) the respatialization of society, the Living Theater offered a looking glass obscured by clouds. The only affordable view was of its own insides.

The particularity of the cultural institution would be worked out in the course of the sixties. It would become an institution with an inside and two outsides; the market, the state and private funding. The advent of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1965 and its meteoric budgetary expansion through the early seventies itself reshaped the market into a specific institution organized through an artistic community that was now itself infused by the economic. The transformation from an avant-garde to a relatively autonomous artistic community made the kind of theatrical venture the Becks attempted in the early sixties a real possibility by the seventies (Off-Broadway is the most firmly entrenched case). The Living Theater did not take this course. They remained an avant-garde in search of a ritualized community and as we can see in their later work, they retain this position

even without an institutional base of their own.

The Living Theater has returned to the United States several times since leaving the country in 1963 after their theater was closed mid-performance by the Internal Revenue Service and they stood trial for non-payment of taxes. In 1968 they returned with "Frankenstein," "Antigone," "Paradise Now," and "Mysteries and Smaller Pieces." Again in the early seventies they were here to perform from their cycle of street performances "The Legacy of Cain." Most recently they have returned to New York for a season at the Joyce Theater (January 17-February 19, 1984). In repertory are three of their most recent productions: "The One and the Many," by Ernst Toller (1980); "The Yellow Methuselah," by Hanon Reznikov, a company member (1982); and "The Archeology of Sleep," by Julian Beck (1983), in addition to a revival of "The Antigone of Sophokles" by Bertolt Brecht (1967). The production of "Archeology of Sleep" is of particular interest both because it is autobiographical in nature and has a commedic thread running through it. As such it can serve both as a barometer of the Living Theater's development and as a comparison to Meyerhold's Revolutionary Buffoonery.

The "Archeology of Sleep" is perhaps the closest thing to the realization of Julian Beck's 1959 incantation

of a half-dream, half-ritual theater. On the surface it has many things in common with Mystery-Bouffe. The entire theater is occupied by the performance, scenic construction affords multi-level action, the text is non-linear and full of satire, there is physicalization of the action, and less analogously, spectators and social context position and bound what goes on inside the theater. At $20 a ticket in the heart of a gentrifying neighborhood in Manhattan, the Living Theater returned to the matured Off-Broadway they had initiated as a source of popular theater. The show they offer is a revelation of their own lives (told through the dreams of five company members) herded by the repressive authority of science and technology (as portrayed by Julian Beck's The Doctor). The show is a sequence of episodes (or perhaps Foucaultian epistemes) whose format is the four phases of sleep, alpha, beta, gamma and delta, which Beck has formulated as follows:

> During the Beta phase of sleep, the wish is expressed; during the Gamma phase the wish encounters censorship; during Delta the wish and the censorship contend in thought; then in the succeeding Gamma phase comes a reiteration of the censorship factor; during the next Beta phase that follows is a recapitulation of the wish--and then during the First Alpha phase of the night comes Act I--the presentation of all of these ideas and materials, conflicts, thoughts and visions, in the form of a play with a highly artistic/poetic quality.[68]

Not unlike "The Connection," not only are the ideas pre-

sented in the play but they are interpreted for the public as well. The play satirizes scientific research as engaged in an inane search for pure knowledge at people's expense (Beck's Doctor asks, "We need to find out if dreams are physiological of psychological. Right? Right? Right!). And then proceeds to replace this authority with a higher one, the mystical interpretation that lies beyond play and text. Ultimately the actors find themselves in the same predicament that they had in "The Connection"; they are the agents of authority in a theater of pre-figured response. While the play's topic is the softness between the mind's sheets, it is treated as obdurately as the "hard-hitting" story of the "narcotics-jazz scene."

In order to represent the hidden authority of the play, the actors either confront the audience directly or narrate their own actions. This is not the same as Brecht's alienation effect where the actor speaks from inside and outside of the character.[69] When the actors are themselves the symbolization of authority, the narration of their acts takes on the voice of interpretation spoken for the spectator.

In a typically straight-faced and conceptual bit of Living Theater humor, The Sleeping City (Isha Beck) paces the stage and in insomnious tones declares that she is looking for someone, reaching for them in her darkness.

Finally she stops and pulls a phone book out from one of the five beds on the stage and begins to intone the names and addresses of several New York residents. Her movement is in many ways the opposite of Illinsky's; it is a reductive characterization of humanity as opposed to an overflowing of the body's limits. Indeed, in the movements of the actors it is the limitations of the body itself which are presented as redundant. The company has at its disposal no more than three motional qualities; tense freize movements, stuttering slow motion, and invaginated expressionist releases. This is not simply a problem of technique. The source of this tension is the actors' embodiment of symbolic authority which renders their entire body into a mask. Recall that the carnivalesque actor opposes the parodic masks of the face to the transcendent movement of the body. In the Living Theater, the part serves the whole but the whole is beyond the actor.

The spectator is the witness to the internalized tension of the actor which should have been the tension between them. When the actors breach the aisles and confront the public, the theater could just as easily be empty. The actors march right up to the spectators and pose their questions (e.g., Would you mind if I touched you like this?), but they don't wait for a reply, or even

register the spectator's shock (if it were there). In practice the actors' questions are contradicted by their own prior responses. As soon as the actors left the stage they took the distance between themselves and the spectators with them. They are protected from any counter-invasion coming from the aisles by the ossification of theatrical relations that is carried in the tenseness of their bodies. It is no wonder that the "Archeology of Sleep" is the Becks' private nightmare, that they will finish the performance exactly where they started it twenty-five years ago.

A tough skin is the key to survival. This is the message of life contained in the Living Theater. If this is so then they have only proven that a commitment to change is only a sufficient condition for staying the same. This is the lesson of a theater that exiled itself from the sixties rather than be party to those changes. Hence, the Living Theater is not so much representative of political theater of the sixties or the possibilities of change contained in that moment. Rather, it is the condensation of the forms of cultural repression that defined the terrain of struggle in the sixties. The Living Theater acted out the separation between art and life, between institution and community that are still imposing problems for producers of cultural forms. Where

Meyerhold watched his isolation grow from the heart of his culture, the Living Theater isolated themselves from their cultural roots only to witness the freezing of their own heartbeat.

The value of the Living Theater is to show the cost of defiance turned in on itself. No matter how many times they take to the street, they will erect the same boundaries of a theater that does not understand its institutional position within the society. The attempt to unify the sources of social liberation within the theater can only become a mirror of cultural repression outside of it. The Living Theater has attacked naturalism to do it one better; they have shattered the reflection of reality only to launch a charge in at themselves, 'through the looking glass." In Meyerhold's day the movements of society and social movements were neatly arranged so as to be readily expressed within the theater. The dawn of the sixties afforded no such opportunity. But the need to render actions in the theater into movements that are truly social remains a requisite of political culture.

Looking back on the artistic developments of the twentieth century, it is not possible to point to a moment where innovation is arrested. Indeed, culture under contemporary capitalism, whether in the artistic community or at large, is marked by incessant change. The repression

of the social possibilities expressed through the perceptual insights of abstraction is a part of this process of change. From Meyerhold's removal as head of the theatrical department in 1921 to the Becks' exodus from the United States in 1963, institutional constraints have severed the potentially political connection between theater and audience. At the same time that the institutional constraints have grown in the form of relative autonomy, the potential impact of art on social perception has also shifted.

Art can claim no monopoly on control over the way in which it is perceived. It is difficult to imagine one of Malevich's Suprematist canvases having the same impact on a viewer after they have looked out of the window of an airplane or taken in a cityscape. Nor can the 1920 production of Mystery-Bouffe seem as astounding after an eveing of "Star Wars" in 70mm Dolby. This is not to claim that the possibility of artistic impact on social life has been permanently pre-empted, but rather to suggest that the specific light first emitted by twentieth century modernism has been eclipsed by the perceptual and sentient experience of contemporary daily life.

The quarks and quanta of a new communicational perspective were sketched in the early part of the century and they have been embellished upon repeatedly since then.

All of this innovation within art has lost some sense of changes outside of it. This is not the fault of the artist but is a product of the institutional separation from the larger community that now defines art. Against the instrumentalism of artistic patronage on the one hand, and popular communal art (which Meyerhold's theater came to be briefly) on the other, has emerged the relatively autonomous artistic community of the present day. The Living Theater attempted to revolt against its conditions of relative autonomy and wound up moving away from the abstraction of the twentieth century to the symbolism of the nineteenth. But this was also a social movement in its attempt to create a world within the theater. The Living Theater found itself caught between its appeal to a power beyond the stage and its institutional separation from that power; this is where the politics and perception of theatrical innovation disjoin. The Living Theater fell victim to institutional forces beyond the theater the more it attempted to confront them, and usurped its audience's response the more it tried to open their perceptions.

As communities emerged out of oppositional social movements in the sixties, other theaters fared better in integrating the specific demands of theater with the specific demands of a broader community. Bread and

Puppet, Pageant Players, Open Theater, San Francisco Mime Troop, just to take a sip at what was brewing in the Living Theater's wake, negotiated the relative autonomy of art and politics without developing on Meyerhold's perceptual problematic. The question is not whether such a development in theatrical innovation would have made theirs better or worse theater, but whether it would have activated the promise provoked by those of Meyerhold's day, of new ways of seeing and feeling integrated into political practice.

No degree of relative autonomy, economic constraint or esthetic disorganization have terminated the relation between art and politics. The most recent expressions of artistic political practice have utilized rather than resisted the relatively autonomous base of the artistic community. From this base, they have inserted themselves into emergent political movements. Hence, Performing Artists for Nuclear Disarmament and Dancers for Disarmament were organized around the June 12, 1982 rally for disarmament in New York City, and Artist's Call has exhibited, performed and demonstrated against United States intervention in Central America. At this writing, the former two organizations have a nominal presence, and the latter a relatively active one particularly in the organization of an artistic political

practice that lives beyond single demonstrations. The challenge from the perspective of this writing is not so much their persistence as groups per se but in their group's ability to confront the institutional and esthetic constraints of the artistic community. Like the primer of a new language, Meyerhold's legacy continues to state a vocabulary, but, as with a list of words, these elements do not themselves constitute communication. They must be organized together and put into motion.

SECTION TWO: NOTES

[1]Karl Marx, 18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon in Robert Tucker, ed., Marx Engels Reader (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972).

[2]This "top down" approach to the history of consumer culture can be found in Stewart Ewen, Captains of Consciousness and Channels of Desire (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976 and 1982 respectively) and Herbert Schiller, Mass Communication and American Empire (New York:

[3]According to Marcuse, domination has become so complete as to digest resistance, collapsing the multi-dimensionality of a critical consciousness into one dimension. (One Dimensional Man, Beacon Press, Boston, 1964, p. 14.

[4]The notion that the assimilation of resistance breeds new contradictions informs many dialectical accounts of social change from Foucault's History of Sexuality and Madness and Civilization (New York: Pantheon, 1978 and Vintage, 1973 respectively) to American structuralist marxist accounts like E. O. Wright's "Crisis Tendencies in the Capitalist State" in Class Crisis and the State (London: NLB, 1979).

[5]So called method acting associated in the United States with Less Strasberg has gone through many permutations since Strasberg and teachers like Stella Adler "brought" Stanislavsky's teaching to the United States.

[6]Cf. Judith Malina, The Enormous Despair (New York: Random House, 1972).

[7]John Berger looks at science and art in the period similarly but only retrospectively in The Moment of Cubism (New York: Pantheon, 1969).

[8]Ideas for this section are drawn not only from the viewing of numerous paintings and exhibitions but from accounts from and on these movements. Cf. F. T. Marinetti, Marinetti: Selected Writings (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1972); Kasimir Malevich, Essays on Art (Copen-

hagen: Borgen, 1968); Guillame Appolinaire, Appolinaire on Art: Essays and Reviews 1902-1918 (New York: Viking Press, 1972); John Berger, The Success and Failure of Picasso (New York: Pantheon, 1980); Pablo Picasso, Picasso on Art: a Selection of Views (New York: Viking, 1972); Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld, The Evolution of Physics: the Growth of Ideas from Early Concept to Relativity and Quantum (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1938).

[9]Cf. John Berger, Ways of Seeing (New York: Penguin, 1981); James Jerome Gibson, The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966).

[10]Precisely what and when this system has been constituted depends in great measure on one's definition of capitalism. Marx emphasized the rise of a system of production in Capital, citing the 16th century as the watershed (Volume I, op. cit., p. 146); Perry Anderson emphasizes the rise of a political form in Lineages of the Absolutist State (London: NLB, 1974); and Polanyi and Wallerstein a market system in the 16th versus the 19th century, The Great Transformation (Boston: Beacon, 1944) and The Modern World System (New York: Academic Press, 1976).

[11]The discussion of these three points is drawn from various social, economic and cultural histories: T. J. Jackson Lears, No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture (New York: Pantheon, 1981); Stuart Ewen, Captains of Consciousness (op. cit.); Lawrence Goodwyn, Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); Gabriel Kolko, The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History: 1900-1916 (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963); Ellis Hawley, The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly: A Study in Economic Ambivalence (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966); Gaston Rimlinger, Welfare Policy and Industrialization in Europe, America and Russia (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1971); Ian Gough, The Political Economy of the Welfare State (London: Macmillan Press, 1979); James Weinstein, Ambiguous Legacy: The Left in American Politics (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975); Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy (Monopoly Capital (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966).

[12]This notion of relative autonomy is widespread in Marxist literature but it has received seminal development in the work of Nicos Poulantzas. Cf. Political Power and Social Classes (London: NLB, 1973) and State, Power and Socialism (London: NLB, 1978).

[13]Hence a Marxist account of organization does not deny bureaucracy but rather situates it within a broader structure of control. A brilliant example can be found in Michael Burawoy, Manufacturing Consent (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

[14]The debates range from the view of a theoretical deformation (Herbert Marcuse, Soviet Marxism, New York, 1961), to arguments about Soviet model state and class structure. Cf. Ivan Szelenyi and George Konrad, The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power (New York: Harcourt, 1979); Rudolph Bahro, The Alternative in Eastern Europe (London: NLB, 1978); Raymond Williams, "Beyond Actually Existing Socialism," in Materialism and Culture (London, NLB, 1980).

[15]Cf. Lenin, State & Revolution (New York: International Publishers, 1932) and Trotsky, The History of the Russian Revolution (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1936).

[16]Cf. Charlotte Douglass, Swans of Other Worlds: Kazimir Malevich and the Origins of Abstraction in Russia (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Press 1980).

[17]Much of the history presented here depends on a close reading of Larissa Zhadova, Malevich: Suprematism and Revolution in Russian Art 1910-1930 (New York: Thames and Hudson), especially Chapter I. Malevich's own writings are profuse. See also William Simmons, Kazimir Malevich's Black Square and the Genesis of Suprematism 1907-1915 (New York: Garland, 1981).

[18]Zhadova, ibid., p. 35.

[19]Zhadova, ibid., pp. 16, 18.

[20]From Malevich's "Analysis of the new figurative trend in art (Paul Cézanne)" Nova generatziya no. 6, 1928, p. 439 quoted in Zhadova, ibid., p. 53.

[21]Zhadova, ibid., p. 47.

[22]Kazimir Malevich, Essays on Art, 1928-33 (Copenhagen: Borgen, 1968), p. 8.

[23]Cf. Louis Althusser, For Marx (London: NLB, 1969), especially "Contradiction and Overdetermination."

[24]Zhadova, op. cit., p. 42.

[25]Cf. Leon Trotsky, Literature and Revolution (New York: Russel and Russel, 1957).

[26]Quoted in John Boelt, Russian Art of the Avant-Garde 1902-1934 (New York: Viking 1976), p. 163.

[27]Ibid., p. 203.

[28]Ibid., p. 179.

[29]Zhadova, op. cit., p. 333.

[30]Quoted in Braun, op. cit., pp. 169-170.

[31]Ibid., p. 17.

[32]It should be noted here that much of the discussion on Meyerhold will be drawn directly from a single source: Konstanin Rudnitsky, Meyerhold, the Director (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1981). Of the circulated sources on Meyerhold in English, Rudnitsky's not only bears the advantage of being written by a Russian, but eclipses the others in both detail and overall context. What follows is an interpretation of Rudnitsky's Meyerhold rather than a composite drawn from the others. Cf. James Symons, Meyerhold's Theater of the Grotesque: The Post Revolutionary Productions (University of Miami Press, 1971); the book about Meyerhold by Braun, The Theater of Meyerhold: Revolution on the Modern Stage (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1979); Marjorie Hoover, Meyerhold: the Art of Conscious Theater (Amherst University Press, 1974), particularly strong on Biomechanics and the acting training and Paul Schmidt, Meyerhold at Work (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980), also rich in detail but limited in scope.

[33]Rudnitsky, ibid., p. 14.

[34]Quoted in Rudnitsky, ibid., p. 13.

[35]Braun, op. cit., p. 25.

[36]Braun, ibid., p. 34.

[37]Rudnitsky, op. cit., p. 47.

[38]Rudnitsky, ibid., p. 58.

[39]Rudnitsky, ibid., p. 537; the accusation was printed in a 1936 edition of Pravda.

[40]Rudnitsky, ibid., pp. 87-88.

[41]Rudnitsky, ibid., p. 142.

[42]Rudnitsky, ibid., p. 147.

[43]Rudnitsky, ibid., p. 233.

[44]Rudnitsky, ibid., p. 234.

[45]Rudnitsky, ibid., p. 252.

[46]Rudnitsky, ibid., p. 247.

[47]Rudnitsky, ibid., p. 248.

[48]The Complete Plays of Vladimir Mayakovsky, trans. by Guy Daniels (New York: Washington Square Press, 1968), pp. 45-46.

[49]Rudnitsky, op. cit., p. 254.

[50]Ibid., p. 274.

[51]Ibid., p. 252.

[52]Huntley Carter, The New Spirit in the Russian Theater 1917-28 (New York: Avco, 1970), p. 108.

[53]Rudnitsky, op. cit., p. 279.

[54]Carter, op. cit., p. 138.

[55]Rudnitsky, op. cit., p. 280.

[56]Mikhail Bahktin, Rabelais and his World (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968), p. 474.

[57]Bahktin, ibid., p. 256.

[58]Rudnitsky, op. cit., p. 329.

[59]Rudnitsky, ibid., p. 419.

[60]The material on the Living Theater is drawn from archives of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Billy Rose Theater Collection. In addition to written materials, this section also draws from a video of the 1968 production of The Brig and Mysteries and smaller pieces, two performances of the Living Theater at the Joyce Theater, January 16 and February 2, 1984 and an act-

ing workshop in the techniques of the Living Theater from two former Living Theater members with over twenty-five years experience with the company between them.

[61] NYPL Archives.

[62] New York Times, "Why Vanguard," p. 1, Mar. 22, 1959.

[63] NYPL Archives, press release.

[64] MS of script, NYPL Archives.

[65] CF Arthur Sainer, The Radical Theater Notebooks (New York: Avon Press, 1975), for a discussion of 1960s theater.

[66] NYPL Archives, memos and statement.

[67] NYPL Archives; this was on a scrap of paper in a folder.

[68] Program, Joyce Theater, Jan. 1, 1984.

[69] Brecht on Theater: The Development of an Esthetic (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964).

SECTION THREE

THE MOMENT OF DESIRE IN CULTURE

While political theater may conjure up a specific form of drama for each person, in practice, a wide array of productions have appeared under the banner of political. It would be easy to start a list of differnt criteria for political drama. Each item could be a definition unto itself. For example, political theater could be the use of theater for the expression of political ideas or a political position. The Nazi dramas of the thirties would certainly fit this description. Or, theaters that take a stand in opposition to an existing government, such as contemporary dissident drama of the Soviet Union. Then there is theater that intends to incite people to action, like the Agit-Prop of the German Communist Party in the thirties. Plays that dramatize the current historical moment, like Clifford Odet's "Paradise Lost" could also be considered political, as could plays whose characters represent social groups like Tennessee Williams' "Streetcar Named Desire." And then there are plays that enact a utopian vision, for better or for worse, on the stage like Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World."

Listed in this manner, it is evident that the definitions are really not discrete and that they pose questions about political theater rather than answering

them. German Agit-Prop could be said to embrace all the definitions, and when the Nazis were in the minority in Germany, the same could be said for their dramas. Are plays political theater, therefore, is the question what is politics. But there are still many stones left unturned by our list. Don't all plays express some position that is represented or addressed by a political organization in society? Is political theater always a conscious act? Most plays are set within particular historical circumstances and if they are not, they usually manage to evoke the present merely by the contemporaenity of actors and public. And certainly characters who portray possibly real people are members of social groups. Are all plays inescapably political? It should be clear from these problems that it is not possible to define politics without situating them in a social context in which certain acts take on a political significance. The discussion of how social actions acquire importance in a society is the domain of a theory of culture. Finally, if political theater also has the possibility of inciting people to action, then it is not adequate to explain how individual acts acquire meaning, but rather, how one act plays a role in motivating another. This in turn raises the question of the relation of theater as an individual act to culture (as the circulation of both meaning and motivation in

society) as a whole.

As soon as we consider the different things that political theater could be, we are left with a quandary, for it cannot be explained solely in terms of itself. We need a theoretical framework that can relate the visible and the hidden terms, politics and culture, respectively of political theater. By the same token, we cannot illucidate a theory of politics and culture in isolation of how they interact in a concrete society.

The diversity of things that have been called political theater presents a perplexing empirical mosaic. So does the process through which social actions occur and take on political significance pose a complex theoretical problem. Taken separately, these puzzles lack the tools to maneuver their individual pieces. Together, they comprise a three dimensional space and provide an axis by which the contours of each can be explored.

The axis, the third dimension must logically be an element of both the particular (political theater) and general (politics and culture) levels of the problem. A mediation of the general and the particular that coalesces two sides of a problem is itself an aspect of culture. Culture is a means through which individual and community, subject and object can relate through a shared social terrain. It is what makes the experience of the individual

subject a response to the array of external objects that renders human existence as necessarily social. This first approximation of culture as the terrain of social experience is useful only insofar as it can help to locate the common denominator (mediation) between the terms of our problem. It is in the experience of the individual which appears so expressedly personal and particular that the general and social can be identified. For the uniqueness of the subject is always found in the specific relationship to the object beyond.

So it is with political theater that what is most unique to its expression of experience reveals its most profound connection to politics and culture. Politics aside for the moment, if we were to ask actors, who are the living agents of theater, to describe what is particular about their work, a typical response would be the revelation of the emotional life of the character on the stage. While many different forms of esthetic expression are emtionally evocative, the actors' paramount work is emotional. It is the presence of this work that makes the theater particular. It need only be mentioned in passing that in film, which seems most akin to theater, the appearance of actors (in the strict sense) is not required (e.g., Stan Brakhage). It is the work of actors, what they produce on stage, rather than the people themselves, that

link theater and culture. To anticipate the exposition of the problem for a moment, if politics is to preface theater or culture to alter or further specify them, then the means through which this new link is achieved is a political emotionality. But first things first. How are emotions, often considered to be a sacred univeral of humanity subject to culture which is so explicitly social? How can an immutable human essence be subject to society, the paramour of history? Indeed, this is where Marx embarked upon his journey, and strikes me as a nice idea as well.

At first glance it would seem that a study of the emotions would be appropriate to the field of psychology rather than sociology. Most sociological interest in the emotions has, in practice, grounded itself in the theory and literature of psychology and rendered the sociological aspect a purely empirical one.[1] But what has been made clear in psychoanalytic theory from Freud to Lacan is that the autonomy of the individual can only be identified against some other that is explicitly social (i.e., language). Culture and personality are both attempts to identify the human of human behavior. It is not surprising therefore to find an implicit, though often tacit, sociology in psychology. Behavioral psychology of the fifties and sixties from whence the sociology of emotions came is no exception.

Two themes that tie behavioralist theories of emotions to sociology are rationality and normativity. Berlyne in Conflict Arousal and Curiosity seeks the origin of emotions in physiological responses to the environment.[2] Two or more "incompatible" responses to stimuli generate conflict and the individual seeks to reduce conflict through the acquisition of knowledge. Hence the individual battles to eliminate what lies beyond consciousness and achieve a state of rational control without the uncertainty of response contained in emotional expression.

The treatment of conflict as an irrationality peripheral to human existence is reminiscent of Durkheim's treatment of the "abnormal forms" of social relations to be found in industrial conflicts. The association of the unconscious with abnormality (neurosis) is juxtaposed to the felt tendency towards the good and away from the bad of "normal" emotions in Magda Arnold's theory.[2] Action as opposed to appraisal is non-emotional and based upon the rational decisions of reflective judgment. For Arnold, consciousness is conjoined with morality in the movement towards the good (the normal or pleasant). Such a morality seems quite benign until we consider what constitutes the "bad." Arnold lists such things as depression and anxiety as "departures from normal functioning."[3] In other words, behavior that could be itself considered

a response to deleterious effects of society is identified as disfunctional. Here in germinal form is a theory of social control which touts rationality as the personal transcendence of the social.

Properly, the relation between psychology and sociology in the development of a sociology of emotions is a two-way street.[4] We can find a fairly well elaborated theory of emotions in the work of the great scion of American sociology, Talcott Parsons. Parsons, whose earlier work had distinguished sociology as dealing with "common value integration" and social action as latent in social structure[5] gave weight to the emotions precisely at the moment he turns to speak with psychoanalysis ("The Superego and the Theory of Social Systems" was written for presentation to the American Psychiatric association in 1951, and Parsons himself was a lay analyst). An explication of the emotions now becomes essential for his theory of culture in social structure:

> Culture, however, is a system of generalized symbols and their meanings. In order for the integration with affect, which constitutes internalization, to take place, the individual's own affective organization must achieve levels of generalization of a high order. The principle mechanism by which this is accomplished appears to be through the building up of attachements to other persons--that is, by emotional communication with others so that the individual is sensitized to the _attitudes_ of the others not merely to their specific _acts_ with their intrinsic gratification-deprivation significance. In other words, the process of forming attachments is _in itself_ inherently

> a process of the generalization of affect. But this generalization in turn actually is in one major aspect the process of symbolization of emotional meanings--that is, it is a process of the acquisition of a culture. The intrinsic difficulty of creation of cultural patterns is so great that the child can only acquire complex cultural generalization through interaction with others who already possess it. Cathexis of an object as a focal aspect of identification is then another name for the development of motivation for the internalization of cultural patterns, at least for one crucially important phase of this process.[6]

The critical function of the emotions then is to provide motivation for the integration of the individual into the social structure. At the same time, emotions which like other forms of culture for Parsons are communicated symbolically, are the means through which the general is internalized in the particular individual. In effect, however, Parsons has eliminated the individual subject by making it a constituent element of the object (social structure). The term acculturation takes on a literal meaning by collapsing the distance and any tension with the object. The means through which individuals internalize the general order so as to become part of it, renders culture an element of the object rather than a product and facilitator (mediation) of the relation between subject and object. To understand how subject is collapsed into object at the expense of subjectivity (the possibility of individual motivation beyond social structure and as such the transformation of those structures), the operation

of the symbolic system in Parson's schema of culture must be examined. Here a quote from a companion paper is revealing.

> It must not be forgotten that when we speak of communication here there is always a cognitive component, but the distinctive feature of expressive symbolism is its communication of "affect" or of "feeling." Because the expressive sign, particularly the sign-performance, has cathectic as well as cognitive meaning for both ego and alter, its "interpretation" by ego is not only its cognitive "understanding," but is the "arousal" in ego of the feeling corresponding to the motivation of alter in performing the act. It is crucial that what is communicated is not only understanding of motives in the cognitive sense, but is mutuality of affective meanings. Only so far as this is the case can we properly speak of expressive symbolism. But since the sign is an object, and there is always cognition as part of the action process, the sign object is always also interpreted in cognitive terms for its cognitive nature of the case include his motives. It is very easy to be confused on this point.[7]

Parsons rightly alerts us to a confusion, his. In attempting to give precision to the workings of the emotions, he opens up a box that he cannot completely close. Beginning with the assumption that cognition is present in all communication, Parsons proceeds to carve an autonomy for the emoticns against this ubiquitous presence. The expressive sign, the means of emotional communication, contains a cathectic component responsible for the arousal (as opposed to acknowledgement) of motivation. The "mutuality of cognitive meanings" is something other than cognitive. Here is Parson's tacit recognition (or at least space for) the

body in what is otherwise a disembodied theory of social action. Parsons, by the end of the passage, must seal this opening by collapsing human exchange into the cognitive object because there is no possibility of a kind of expression that is not symbolic. For while he claims that arousal is a wholly symbolic process, its means of communication is not only representation (understanding) but a mutuality of feeling, a sharing between bodies. Parsons may be accurate in his description of the repression of the body in social action, but he presents this absence as a logical necessity rather than a social process. Hence his theory of the emotions is limited to the extent that the repression of the body (and of feelings themselves) is a necessary feature of the socialization of the mind.

Agnes Heller, in A Theory of Feeling seeks to rescue a theory of emotions from a reductionism to the object (Parsons) or the subject (behavioralism). She begins with the premise, "To feel means to be involved in something." Hence, feeling, rather than being a property of self or other becomes a social relation, a mediation of the two. For Heller, the social in human experience is an external essence (as opposed to genetic traits), the "species character proper,[8] that is, the social is a project in the process of fulfillment, a project which re-

quires the "final unity of feeling, thinking and morality." Like Parsons, she is interested in a unified theory of social action, but unlike him, she is aware of the historical and political dimensions of that claim.

In Heller's work as well, consciousness is the idiom of emotional expression. In her presentation of the problem, she too implicates another dimension to the problem of feeling:

> Man as a being with intentionality, oriented towards the future, is essentially a "longing" being. What we call "longing" is nothing but involvement in the extension of the Ego in general (insofar as the mere preservation of the Ego may be blocked, there is also involvement in that preservation--e.g., the wishful fantasies of the starving person, revolve around food and feeding). The longing can be without object--an involvement in the extension of the Ego without knowing, without becoming conscious of what it is which it will be extended to, in relation to what. The desire which is conceptualized in any fashion (which Ernst Block has analysed so beautifully) is connected with anticipatory thinking.[9]

Desire, the motivational aspect of behavior, which without conscious object becomes pure feeling (involvement) is ultimately bound to consciousness through anticipatory thinking. Heller, however, does not close this tension, but lets it reside as an antinomical feature of the emotions: "1. we express our feelings and thus we communidate them 2. our feelings in their totality and in their concretion are uncommunicable."[10] From Wittgenstein she cites as examples of the latter, "tone of voice, inflexion,

gestures." Here again we find the body as an absent term unrepresentable and as such uncommunicable.

The antinomy of feeling and its identification is common to daily experience. But the problem of how to characterize the emotions, and specifically the communicability of the body is one of how theory itself represents experience. "'Being involved in something,' that is, feeling, is not merely a subjective experience, but an expression as well. Feeling is expressed directly: in mimicry, in gestures, in phonics (e.g., ouch!, hm), in inflexion, in types of reaction, in action (including abstention from action), in behavior in general. It is expressed indirectly through reports about feelings."[11] From Heller's own formulation we can pose the question, what would a communication of direct expression be like? Is there a communication without representation (i.e., without signs or symbols)? The illusiveness of the body in these writings on emotions is not reducible to its repression in contemporary society but itself poses the problem of how to understand corporeal communication and physical culture. While there is an extensive literature on body and kinesic communication as social formations, these studies model bodily exchange on linguistic behavior and as such preclude the possibility of a non-semiotic means of communication.[12] In effect the body appears as

an instrument of the mind which acts through a consciousness which is not its own. The emptiness of the body goes back to the Cartesian split between body and soul which has shaped the Western view of consciousness. To grant the body its autonomy therefore is to liberate it from its Cartesian boundaries, and to render the body a subject in its own right.

To constitute the body as a subject is to look at it in its own terms as it would experience the world as a thing both in itself and for itself. This is precisely the tack taken by Merleau-Ponty in his phenomenology of the body:

> We have become accustomed, through the influence of the Cartesian tradition, to jettison the subject: the reflective attitude simultaneously purifies the common notions of body and soul by defining the body as the sum of its parts with no interior, and the soul as a being wholly present to itself without distance. These definitions make matters perfectly clear both within and outside ourselves: we have the transparency of an object with no secret recesses, the transparency of a subject which is nothing but what it thinks it is. The object is an object through and through and consciousness a consciousness through and through. . . . The experience of our own body, on the other hand, reveals to us an ambiguous mode of existing. . . . I am my body, at least wholly to the extent that I possess experience, and yet at the same time my body is as it were a 'natural' subject, a provisional sketch of my total being. Thus experience of one's own body runs counter to the reflective procedure which detaches subject and object from each other, and which gives us only the thought about the body, or the body as an idea and not the experience of the body or the body in reality.[13]

Where Merleau-Ponty intends to give us the body as subject, it is a subject by and under certain conditions. Rather than being apart from consciousness, the body is constituitive of consciousness. "Consciousness is being towards the thing through the intermediary of the body."[14] The body is a mediation that contains being and becoming and the Cartesian split is mended, the body is both full and reflexive. The means through which this operation is performed however is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, "My body has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of my 'symbolic' or 'objectifying function.'"[15] Yet, at the same time the body "uses its own parts as a general system of symbols for the world."[16] Merleau-Ponty resolves this tension in favor of the symbolic by viewing the body as capable of infinite positions which are symbolized in a process of exchange. "This is because the normal subject has his body not only as a system of present positions but besides, and thereby, as an open system of an infinite number of equivalent positions directed to other ends. What we have called the body image is precisely this system of equivalents, this immediately given invariant whereby the different motor tasks are instantaneously transferable."[17] Bodily action in particular and consciousness in general is hereby a positive process. The ability of the body to meet the

demands of the system of positions is prefigured and assured. Communication is a functional act, a cybernetic expression of intent. This is belied however not only by the uncertainty of communication but by the uncertainty of being itself. Where Merleau-Ponty has sought to overcome Decartes, he has done so within the individual being and becoming and as such, rendered the individual subject a self-contained and self-sustaining system of communication. But communication is a social process and so is the being-becoming of the subject. It is not adequate thereby to speak of a body subject without a social body, a body which becomes subject only by being something more than individual. An attempt to outline the social body will be made shortly, for now it is valuable to explain its absence in Merleau-Ponty's theory.

With being and becoming merged in the body, all bodily acts and experience are intentional. While the body is said to be a mediation of consciousness, it is treated as if it were consciousness itself in the form of pure mind. Lacking any repression in the relation between a self and other (for there is no other to the body subject), there is no place for the unconscious in Merleau-Ponty's theory, and not surprisingly, no place for desire. Since the symbolic is constituted by the body itself, demand is contained within the body and motivation

is pre-empted by action. "We ought therefore to reject not only the idea of causality, but also that of motivation. The alleged motive does not burden my decision; on the contrary my decision lends the motive its force."[18] Given the problematic of perception, the body is already in experience, once inside the body, there is no need to get out. The gain of transcending Cartesian geometry must be met with the loss of the historicity of the body. This is an unacceptable loss for the purposes of this project, for if the body is to be part of culture and not just individual being both its constitution and forms of expression and experience must be explicable in historical terms. Here the notion of repression must be resurrected and with it both the unconscious and desire. The attempt here however, will be to view repression as a means through which social communication of the body becomes possible, for repression is itself the tension between self and other.

With Merleau-Ponty, the body is granted an autonomy in human experience but it is body lacking in social or historical specificity. If the body and the desire it implies is a part of culture, it stands as a direct appropriation of social space.[19] The body does not represent something else, that it is not a metaphor, but rather constitutes its own being. Merleau-Ponty hedges on the body

as metaphor when he analyzes it as a symbolic system. He implies but does not elaborate what an alternate system of expression might be. Gaston Bachelard, in distinguishing metaphor and image as separate processes within a poem points the way to an alternative system that is useful to our analysis of culture. Echoing the objection to the reduction of communication to representation, he states: "It is as though for [Bergson], imagination were entirely metaphorical. Now a metaphor gives concrete substance to an impression that is difficult to express. Metaphor is related to a psychic being from which it differs. An image, on the contrary, product of absolute imagination, owes its entire being to the imagination. . . . Contrary to metaphor, we can devote our reading being to an image, since it confers being upon us. In fact, the image, which is the pure product of absolute imagination, is a phenomenon of being; it is also one of the specific phenomena of the speaking creature."[20]

The notion of metaphor fits well with the theories of culture discussed thus far. The mediation of subject and object (expression--impression, above), is represented through metaphor. This is Clifford Geertz' popular definition of culture. "Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the

analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one."[21]

We have seen that meaning, with its semiotic structure constitutes but one dimension of culture. The other, motivational dimension, desire, cannot be explained in the same terms. The workings of the body, as evidenced in the emotions do not parallel those of the mind though the two are bound together. This is where Bachelard is helpful in pointing to the autonomy of the poetic operation. The image is not represented, yet it has the effect of linking subject and object. The direct ontology, the presence of being, is a sentient form of communication. It makes itself felt rather than known and these shared feelings return us to a sociological theory of emotions.

The autonomy of meaning against desire, of mind against body, is not self evident. Implicit in such relations is nothing less than a theory of social action, but of a different order than the one that Parscns sought. Rather than placing the sociological against other disciplines, a theory of culture that can explain the workings of political theater must address the complex interaction of different levels of human experience and expression such that the social (society in history) emerges as the ultimate field of activity. The theorist who has perhaps most fundamentally established a framework for the interac-

tion of conscious, unconscious and desire between the subject and object is the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan.[22]

Lacan's task is to revivify Freudian theory through a grounding of psychoanalysis in the linguistic model of Ferdinand de Saussure. For Saussure, "language is a system of signs that express ideas."[23] We see here the roots of the dimension of culture termed meaning. Meaning for Lacan is situated between the conscious and unconscious of the subject and governed by what he terms the discourse of the other. Language is both a part of and beyond individuals. It is a social process not only of the conscious but as Lacan says, "the unconscious is structured like a language." It is in the movement between conscious and unconscious expression that desire can be located. The subject relates to object or Other through the tension between need, the physical outlet of the body (what Freud terms drives) and demand, the authority that requires representation of experience. Demand is never a pure reflection of need. Because the Other is a complexity beyond the individual need, demand appears as a shattered image whose pieces give only partial placement to the subject. Hence there is always a distance between need and demand. Desire is that difference that mediates the tension between the two. This establishes

the dependent or relative autonomy of desire vis-à-vis meaning. Desire must be present and is reproduced in the social interaction that connects self and Other.

Desire, defined as the tension that animates meaning, does not explain the workings of desire itself. Lacan concurs that desire operates differently from meaning, but because he views it in relation to linguistic structures (conscious-unconscious), desire itself takes on a purely negative presence, it is an absence of language. He says desire "is not so much a pure passion of the signified as a pure action of the signifier that stops at the moment when the living becomes a sign, rendering it insignificant."[24] Here a parallel can be drawn with Bachelard. The pure action of the signified and the absolute image are both motional terms. Motion is not represented but it has effects which are themselves a subject object relation. But if something is to be made of motion as a social sense, ways must be found to express its structuration in positive terms. Desire is not speech between need and demand, but it is also more than "the impossibility of such speech."[25]

Desire is the motion of social interaction, <u>it is</u> the physical agency of activity. Where meaning is the process of signification that reproduces the social possibilities Parsons calls values, desire is the complex of

sensations that fill them. Meaning is possible through the interaction of conscious and unconscious, which are not properties of the subject, but as is evidenced through language, mediations of subject and object, within and beyond the individual. Hitherto, the interaction of a social conscious and unconscious has been a sufficient definition of culture. But we have seen that an examination of meaning implies desire, that action requires agency and not merely cognition. While desire is in (moves through) the conscious-unconscious dimension of culture, it is not of it. What is needed now is to explicate the dimension in which desire operates such that its effects or absence animates meaning. Since desire has been described as sensations of motion, its social terrain, the spatial and temporal conditions for the action of the body, need to be made concrete.

As opposed to the cognitive operants of meaning, desire is experienced through the articulation of sensation termed sentience. Sentience is the direct communication of the social body both beyond and within the individual body. Consider the life of the individual in society from the point of view of the body, a sort of phenomenology of social physics. Walking down the street it is easy to become aware of the surrounding environs as a complex of objects. But rather than identifying (giving

representation to) the objects (building, person, light stand, etc.), we could become aware of them as physical obstacles, as forms with which we cohabit space for a period of time. These forms are not only spaces in time that we do not occupy, but masses which displace form within our own body. In this way, sensation is the re-form-ation of the constellation of objects in the subject; the presence of their continual displacement of the moment in the world which the body occupies. Hence the body of the subject is experienced only through its physical relation to objects. The experience of motional displacement can be termed kinetics. The people, buildings and other objects of the environment constitute the kinetic field of the subject. At the same time the subject is kinetic field, or an element of it, to any other subject. The body of the subject is constantly registering this field in the sensed reformations of motion.

The direct mediation of subject and object through the formal properties of space is not adequate to define agency. There must be some means through which a tension is created that would generate and appear as a moment of bodily selection for the subject. It is one thing to say that the objects of the environment have a presence in the body of the subject, and another thing to explicate how this presence shapes the body's actions in the environment.

There are, in Heller's usage, different levels of involvement in surrounding objects. We are much more likely to sense the presence of a person behind us on an empty street than on a crowded one. On a dark isolated passageway that figure may signify a threat or make us aware of an uncertainty. In a situation that does not bode or cue fear, there might not be any such anticipation, and the other may be registered for its purely physical impact. At this moment, the other becomes a real image that binds the difference of the object to the subject or in other words generates a specific displacement of the body (a kinetic moment).

Independent of whether the body of the subject responds motionally, the kinetic moment is felt as the delimitation of a particular subject-object difference against the sum of all such possibilities in the kinetic field. The real image therefore is a boundary, a slotting of subject into object without any necessary significance or meaning (manifest as response). While the subject's physicological apparatus (nervous system, musculature, skeletal structure) clearly play a role in this process, that role is not simply one of reflex of response to stimuli. The actual response of the subject, the deployment of the body, is a product of a network of mediations such as involvement, situational significance, power of

the real image, condition of the body, etc. In other words, if stimuli and response are to have any explanatory value, it is only as a relationship which is the product of other relationships beyond the subject. It is in this sense that our bodies are not wholly our own but are genuinely social bodies.

Our bodies exist in perpetually social situations through which they develop a history. To the extent that there is a systematic continuity to the elements of the kinetic field, there is a structuration to the range of real images. While each body has a unique placement (by virtue of the particular combination of elements in the kinetic field that constitutes its other) in the kinetic field the terms of exchange between field and image are common to a particular society. The consistency of rhythms, shapes, motional qualities, timbres, density of objects, scale, acceleration, and the rate of change of all of these within a given social topography generate the range of sentient products that constitute desire.

It is common to architecture, urban studies and social geography to analyze the effect of the "built environment" on social experience. Yet the bodies of the people within those environments have not only produced the useful things around them, but the conditions of existence for the bodies themselves. The difference be-

tween building and body as environment is that the body responds to the history that it is a part of. The body of the subject is constantly reproduced as social body through the workings of desire, while retaining its specificity as subject. In turn, the animation of the subject is both intrinsic to and beyond meaning.

The body must be socialized in order to act but not all socializations of the body are themselves socially significant actions. The body responds to the environment but only under conditions of signification do these kinetic moments take on social meaning. Conversely, there are processes of signification (e.g., conversation) where the body is not corroborating with every meaningful turn. Finally, there are instances of correspondence between meaning and desire (e.g., gestures) where the movements of the body themselves constitute a signifying chain.

Even in the case of gestures, however, meaning and desire retain their relative autonomy. The body may take on formations that signify something other than a sentient communication, while the quality of kinetic interaction may vary without necessarily changing the meaning of the conversation. For example, a person standing by the side of the road may extend an arm with fingers clenched and thumb protruding perpendicularly towards another person driving a passing car. The driver may return the gesture

with a raised arm with all the digits contracted save the middle one. The meaning is unambiguous (on the representational level of expectations) in this description yet the desire is not clear. A picture is given of what the two bodies look like as interacting symbols but not as animate motion. Whether the thumb jerked suddenly into place or ascended languidly as the car approached, and whether the middle finger of the driver was flicked or raised limply, may or may not affect the meaning of the exchange, but it will determine what the two bodies felt in that moment and possible after it. Physical energy was necessary to execute the gesture but not all of that energy turned to motion was signified. Why does this matter? What would be different if more of the motion were to be signified or sensed? How would this difference have an impact on the social? This question will be addressed empirically in the next section, but for now its theoretical possibility must be established.

Let us return for a moment to Lacan's formulation of desire and integrate it with the positive notion that has just been introduced. Desire in my usage emerges as a tension between the kinetic field and the real image. It is what is set into motion by the confrontation of infinite possibility beyond the subject and the connection to the specificity of object within the subject. Desire

is the release of the subject's body from the universal in to the particular. Lacan sees only the shadow of this motion, as the difference between need and demand. It is a weakness of Lacan's theory, to the extent that it can be appropriated to a sociology, that the movement of desire is always in the direction of the authority of the Other (demand) and can only be decoded and liberated through the intervention of another authority (the psychoanalyst). When desire is viewed as a positive formation emanating outside the conscious-unconscious dimension of experience, its repression in the propulsion of meaning is but one moment of its operation. If all the motion of desire would "stop at the moment when the living becomes a sign," then the agency of the subjective would be wholly in the service of the authority of the objective. This is not so distant from rationality in Parsons' social system, the fulfillment of social function latent in the individual. Without the ability of the subject to change structures by acting upon them, there would be no historical agency. Nor would the empirical study of society be possible, for sociological analysis is the examination of the movement of individuals against some social totality.

The repression of desire in meaning is a partial process. Its partiality is determined by the particular

conditions of the production of both meaning and desire and the general conditions of their interaction, all of which are historical processes. Foucault, in the History of Sexuality, details how the church's ambition for the peasantry was "to transform their desire, their every desire into discourse." The implication is that the very role of language, the authority of the Other in meaning, is a development of social control, the marshalling of the participation of the people in their own domination. The movement, of course, is not a simple one. At the same time that lingual repression is put into place through church, law, bureaucracy, mass media, etc., each "prison house" introduces a new literacy, a new outlet for consciousness. Language is a medium of social control but it is also a spontaneous act on the part of its practitioners.

Desire too has an antimonious history. At the same time that the church demands confession, Cartesian coordinates separate mind and body. The conceptual awkwardness of the body in western society, its formulation as an impediment to the clarity of mind, is not the same as the repression of sexuality that blossoms under the sheets. For the sexuality that has run rampant from Victoria's parlor is, as a walk down Anytown's 42nd Street will tell us, a preponderance of the signifier and

not the signified. Where has the body gone? It's distance from the conception is not to decry its nostalgic disappearance, for a quick look around will belie that myth (start with your toes and work up). No, the body is running, perhaps not free, but within an antonomy etched between the play of kinetic field and real image.

The outlet of the body in desire is epitomized in contemporary urban life. But since desire is not represented through some signifying system, a day in the city can leave nothing but a headache. The interiorization of form and motion in the body of the subject, attains a difference of kind over degree in the contemporary expression of desire. Whereas in the fableized primitive village or even feudal estate, the non-human elements of the built environment take on a practical consistency in quotidian regimen (even though human tasks may have been more diverse than the officeworker's) so that they approach the unity of a symbol (cf. Bachelard's idealization of the hut as a unity of spirit and cosmos), the city cannot boast the same articulation of boundary.

The Empire State Building against passing bus against moving garment bag against jet plane are unified in the kinetic field of the subject and yet do not permit the unity of interiorized reflection of the village-physique-as-symbol. As opposed to the symbolic order of

a body "integrated" with mind, the contemporary body is an abstracted response to its environment. It is not a picture of the Empire State Building or what have you that displaces the interior space of the body but its effect as object, its imposition on the subject, in kinetic terms. As such it is the physical characteristics of the object, rather than its appearance, that occupies the subject. We may not see the top of the building but we can experience its height as upward motion. The inhabitants of the village may have also experienced their huts abstractly in this way, but to the extent that that motion felt no difference, and the people knew only that village, the motion could become involvement in life that would be represented by the village physique. To carry the fable to conclusion, the possibility of pure reflection of the body in the surroundings found an alignment with the signifying processes of meaning. The village, the hut, meant what they felt and this set of social conditions can be considered the pre-Cartesian unity of body and mind.

The village fable is intended to establish the conditions whereby the terms of meaning and desire could be viewed as historical. Yet historical developments are uneven ones. The idealizations of symbolic and abstract can appear only as tendencies within some actual social

phenomenon. Symbolic and abstract therefore, cannot merely correspond to meaning and desire, but like Durkheim's use of Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft, are organizational principles of social totality. From our attempt to understand emotions as social phenomena, we have redefined culture as consisting of dimensions of meaning and desire. Now, in returning to the analysis of emotions as they appear in contemporary society, the historicized terms of symbolic and abstract can be usefully employed to articulate both the repression and the progressive possibility of emotionality. Finally, the progressive possibility of emotions will be used to define political theater.

Emotions lie at the juncture of meaning and desire, they are in effect evidence of the interpenetration of the two dimensions of social experience. Emotions are more than sensation, for not every physicalization of the social finds a particular expression in the subject. Rather, emotions are the identification of feeling in terms of sensation. Remorse, joy, fear, are concentrations of the physical against some situational significance, the friction of that involvement being emotionality.

Tears rubbing against the face, laughter jostling the vocal chords, or the contrasted twist of muscles appear in popular conception as human universals. Yet no two smiles, nor other facial flickers take on the same

form the world around, nor has anyone even established the existence of some universal gesture. Not only are bodies different in various societies, but so are the realms of response of the body. The same could be said for meaning. Even within Western literature, it is impossible to establish that a tear or a smile has always had the same significance. Emotions therefore are as historical as the conditions that generate them. The particular expression of emotionality cannot be so much defined, as situated within the existing status of meaning and desire.

Under consumer capitalism where the entire population's participation on the market place becomes an economic and cultural underpinning of society, meaning, permeated by the demands of this new Other (consumption), is the guardian of the emotions. In the representations of love and its reflexive association with things (chocolate hearts, diamonds), sensation itself is symbolized. These symbols of love or any emotion, enter into the realm of human exchange. This is not to say that feeling is eliminated under capitalism. Not even the staunchest Mad. men want to eliminate desire, just marshall it. But at the same time, pure desire is presented as impossible and irrational. Under this logic, not only must the body be controlled (lest we defecate where we should accumulate) but so must the emotions be rationalized such that the

self, cast upon the market place, not take on the latter's uncertainty.

The conditions of capitalist production whereby subject winds up chasing the tail of object as if it were its own (so brilliantly highlighted by Marx and Lukacs) are given ameliorative respite to the extent that worker takes on the identity of consumer. It is this identity that becomes a commodity in the market place, the possibility of certainty of the self in a context in which each purchase undermines that certainty by underscoring the difference between people and things. So it is that the meaningful aspect of emotions are commodified and through this process, meaning appears as the only aspect of emotionality. The channeling of the expressions of emotionality into consumption, whether directly, as in depression-shopping spree, or indirectly as in depression-movie-symbolization of feeling, does not replace need, but makes its control the essential value. The source of uncertainty, that which cannot be signified, must be obscured, and commodification acts as a kind of palliative. Emotional control, or at least the rationalization of its expression, appears as the repression of desire.

The commodification of the emotions, the representation of feelings as symbols in a realm of circulation which the subject can enter but not remain, appears

to subsume desire under meaning. That is feelings cannot exist without knowledge, and knowledge as the certification of feeling can only be found in the signifying chain beyond the subject. The animation of this chain appears as an internal self-regulating process only to the extent that the evidence of desire is buried in meaning. Without the authority of the signifying chain, demand is a property of the object itself. So too in the circulation of commodities demand (in the economic sense) is a function of supply. But the eclipsing of desire by meaning, that is to say, its repression, is precisely what maintains the free space of desire. Just as Foucault documented the burgeoning of sexuality under its apparent repression, so the commodification of emotions grants a special place to desire. If, "when you care enough to give the very best," assures the certainty of expression, it also secures the autonomy of that which is not signified in the exchange.

It is said that love can drive one to do strange things. The adoration of a movie star is an affair with meaning. The spontaneity of the adolescent body is not captured by or in the exchange with the idol. Indeed the equation could be reversed and one could say that the significance of the star removes the impediment of meaning and gives full reign to desire. It is exactly at the

point where meaning commands a spatial regimen, as in a monogamous relationship or a job, when the bounding of desire is manifest as a longing for lost youth. But to define the historical freedom of the body thus, is to fall victim to the nostalgia of a pre-responsible time as strange to the cave dweller as it is to the contemporary adolescent. Rather, if the sensations of the body are to resonate as historical movements, the progressive moment of the represssion of desire must be located. Located not only in relation to meaning, but in the concrete expression of radical emotions.

The expression of emotions as they have been sanctioned and rationalized in this society is a predominantly symbolic process. As a consequence, affects of the body are ascribed to the mind. In this misrepresentation feeling is resolved through thinking. The symbols themselves are analyzable in terms of alternate strategies of explanation. The focus on the symbols themselves instead of what or how they might signify, has bounded both critiques and apologies of contemporary experience (The Frankfurt School vs Human Relations or Post-Industrial Society). So too have politics focused on competing rationalities (class consciousness vs consumerism). The absent term in these politics, just as in the theories of culture is the animation of the social body

in the process of political activity.

For bourgeois politics, the emphasis on rationality is clearly an apology for social control that only starts with the Lockian citizen's alienation through representation. But the notion of class consciousness (Lukacs) has also rested upon a rational representation of totality as a basis for political activity. Yet moments of class consciousness can be found in the daily experience of workers throughout the industrial world. More simply, from a strategic point of view, people are often well aware of problems, local or global, and do not necessarily "do anything" about them. Indeed, poverty, Central America, deficits, nukes, unemployment, etc., are daily represented as problems, but their very symbolization can homogenize their impact on the subject. As mere symbolizations, problems appear as an endless stream, unattainably "out-there." Traditionally, political analysis has been the solution to this distance. But the transformation from symbols on the horizon to totality still leaves something symbolized, the body.

Take the American anti-nuclear movement as an example. The movement has succeeded in making Americans aware of the nuclear threat. The movement, at this point well within the bounds of conventional political practice in the United States, grounds its tactics in the symbolic

nature of control (consent). The missiles represent a threat which the administration attempts to defer across the seas. The movement has been able to organize large rallies (New York, June 1982) based upon the existence of networks of grass-roots organizations. Yet the expansion of nuclear activists from the pool of the vast majority of Americans who support disarmament has been miniscule. This is a complex issue of political culture, organization and strategy. But desire plays a role as well to the extent it explains the impediments to entering and sustaining political activity in the formalized political arena. The threat is well represented by the movement (as threat rather than political strategy) yet this representation has not been adequate to animate activity. In other social contexts such as El Salvador, the distance between the signifier and the signified of the threat is often contained within the personal experience of the Salvadoran. This is the consequence of coercive control, and the body knows coercion better than the mind knows consent.

An oppositional politics based upon consent cannot pre-suppose the presence of desire. Nor can it assume that understanding can supplant emotional support. The feelings that can attract and sustain the vagaries of collective dissent must somehow flesh out or spatialize political

totality. An agent of political activity is possible only within the context of a particular configuration of social relations, a totality. It has been argued earlier that meaning and desire belong to two different systems of communication, a signifying and a non-signifying. When applied to social structure, these two systems indicate different totalities, the symbolic and the abstract. That contemporary emotionality is predominated by the symbolic is an alignment with the symbolic nature of the social totality in its political (representative democracy) economic (commodity exchange) and cultural (the signification of experience or alienation) dimensions. In each of these symbolizations, there is a representation of subject as object. The expansion of the realm of desire, constitute a possible move away from the symbolic. Desire, which abstracts the world of the object into the body of the subject, is the model of a totality where authority and agency are not beyond the subject but mediated through it.

From the point of view of political culture, abstract totality locates the problem as interiorized authority rather than objectified demand. Agency is no longer animated by the possibility of goal attainment or knowledge of success represented by both commodified emotionality and politics. The subject no longer lives to see itself reflected in the object as an alignment of the self with

the symbolic power of the other. Rather, power is a function of the sensation of totality in motion of which the subject is a part. The channeling of desire from its representation outside the community in god or the dictator, into the kinetics of the community itself, shifts the object of the community, expressed in the goals and aspirations of the individuals within it towards the sensations of subjectivity. Agency is navigated through the motional referents of community rather than through oblique references to the stars above it.

For the possibility of the shift from symbolic to abstract to be more than fictive, it must be located within existing cultural forms, and this is precisely the significance of the repression of desire. The means of desire's repression is the symbolization of that which cannot be symbolized. Hence the body's absence in the commodity form is as beguiling as its presence outside it. The body is quintessentially a social product. It is not boundless. The relative freedom of the body is derived from the progressive moment of capitalist topography. The development of kinetic field and real image in the urbanized environment has broken the symbolic physique of society much in the way that industrialization collapsed individualized production. Bourgeois emotionality does not express the ambiguity of the city but rather attempts to represent

it as authority (something to be feared). Yet the kinetic principles of the city, even as they are found in suburbia and elsewhere, belie such representation and deny the subject through it. Capitalism creates not only abstract labor, but abstractions of the conditions of its reproduction (experience). Rather than simplifying a complexity to the symbolic, it makes sense to move the common denominator to that level of complexity. This is the process of abstraction of subjectivity within the subject bounded by abstract totality.

Aside from identifying the progressive moments within a system of domination, the notion of abstract totality as society is purely utopian without actual political movements, organizations and strategies that could present its real possibility. A lived utopia stands at great distance to a viable social movement because of the impossibility of getting "outside" of society. Yet a lived utopia is at the essence of political theater. That is, political theater as a single intervention in the expression of repressed possibilities. Political theater in this sense is historical not only in its form but also in its content. It is utopian not in its portrayal of a new vision of society but in its enactment of the progressive possibilities of the existing one.

What makes theater political in the sense employed

here, is the realization of the particular nature of its intervention, its unique contribution as a cultural form. Those theaters that continue to bring to fruition the theories of Brecht give continuity to a powerful tradition and technique. Yet what made Brecht's theater so powerful in its time was an understanding of the particular role of theater as an intervention in political culture. Coming at a time when the organizational and communal aspects of a political opposition were intact, Brecht's theater focused on developing critical facilities necessary to those times. Under current conditions of political stage fright, a replication of Brecht's theories, with the implicit replication of the relation of his theater to the KDP (German Communist Party), obscures what could be theater's greatest contribution to existing obstacles to organization and action. While the contribution of a single intervention like an evening at the theater can only be realized in relation to a developing political culture, the organizations of such culture do not necessarily develop political theater. The power of theater must be developed from within with an analysis of its conditions of possibility which extend beyond the theater.

The task at hand is to develop such an analysis. The search for an appropriate form of political theater will be grounded by what is suggested as the role of thea-

ter in the analysis of culture. Since theater has been a stage for emotions and the presentation of politics has been characterized by their absence, the basis of a radical emotionality seems an apt place to look for their convergence. An alternate emotionality can only be found in its current repression. The place to locate a political theater is through the means of expression of desire itself. To understand how desire is produced, we must study the workings of the body. Yet in the theater the body often takes on a gestural form; it is difficult to develop the tools to differentiate and analyze meaning and desire when they are so encased. What is needed is a performance form which highlights the physical and allows the lingual to recede, a form where the interaction of bodies is the subject of the performance. Dance is just such a form. While an analysis of dance seems an unlikely place to look for new models of theater, it, at the very least, is sound terrain to investigate the conditions of political theater as they have been described above. More pointedly, dance, whatever else it may be, is the production of desire, the display of bodily interactions of the subject wedged between kinetic field and real image aimed at the audience's demand. It is in dance therefore that all the elements of physical culture can be examined.

To understand how the desire is produced as a

social phenomena is but half the story. For the body to be understood in the context of others does not establish the terms of its transformation, its history. Nor does examining a particular work of dance establish the connection between dance and its cultural milieu. An additional necessity to establish the conditions of political theater is the explication of how desire could change historically, what possibilities are represssed and how that repression is carried through and expressed in particular works of theater. Such comparison of political theater under different conditions of desire is called for in order to evaluate its contours of change.

The first two empirical sections have implicitly analyzed dance and theater as partial moments of a political form centered around desire. This third section has situated desire within cultural experience so as to render political performance in particular and emotions in general historical phenomena. It remains to give some broader political context to these cultural interventions to understand the limits and possibilities of desire in performance.

SECTION THREE: NOTES

[1]For two recent overviews of the sociology of emotions see: "A sociology of emotions: some problems and some solutions," by Theodore D. Kemper, and "The sociology of Emotion: some starting points," by Susan Shott. Both are in Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology, Scott McNall, ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), pp. 431-462.

[2]D. E. Berlyne, Conflict, Arousal and Curiosity (New York: McGraw Hill, 1960).

[3]Magda Arnold, Emotions and Personality (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).

[4]Indeed one of the pioneer American sociologists, George Herbert Mead was a social psychologist very much interested in how elaborated social behavior sprang from emotion laden gestures. Cf. Mind, Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

[5]Talcott Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, 2nd ed. (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1949).

[6]Talcott Parsons, Working Papers on a Theory of Action (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1953), pp. 24-25.

[7]Ibid., p. 38.

[8]Agnes Heller, A Theory of Feeling (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1979) p. 18.

[9]Ibid., p. 27.

[10]Ibid., p. 55.

[11]Ibid., p. 51.

[12]Hence Ray Birdwhisell, perhaps the most sophisticated of these analyses thousands of picture frames to view body gestures. CF. Kinesics and Communication (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970).

[13]Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1962), pp. 198-199.

[14] Ibid., p. 138.

[15] Ibid., pp. 140-141.

[16] Ibid., p. 237.

[17] Ibid., p. 141.

[18] Ibid., p. 435.

[19] This is Merleau-Ponty's position as well, "to describe the body as the place where this appropriation occurs." It is at this point that he speaks of desire but only in the limited sense of sexual being. Ibid., p. 154.

[20] The Poetics of Space (New York: Orion Press, 1964), pp. 74-75.

[21] The Interpretation of Cultures (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 5.

[22] Since Lacan, other writers have focused on these relationships particularly upon desire. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatari in Anti-Oedipus (New York: Viking, 1977) have articulated the concept as a social expression that develops in opposition to the symbol. The mechanisms of desire have been explained disparately from the instinctual drive towards a lost infantile joy (Joel Kovel, The Age of Desire, New York: Pantheon, 1981) to a contradiction between a subject and a signified object (Julia Kristeva, Desire in Language, New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

[23] Course in General Linguistics (New York: Philosophical Library, 1959), p. 16

[24] Lacan, Ecrits (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), p. 265.

[25] Ibid., p. 269.

SECTION FOUR

TOWARDS A CRITIQUE OF POLITICS AS SYMBOLIC ACTS

Beyond unity, what's left?

There has been no paucity of left social movements in the period of American history that corresponds to the development of modernist expressions in art. Just as reverberations from impressionism to suprematism can be found in current artistic output, so can the integuments of social movements from late nineteenth century populism and syndicalism through socialism and communism be found in contemporary political forms. Indeed, at a large rally such as the anti-nuclear demonstration in New York on June 12, 1982, the various strains each had their corresponding choruses.[1] The legacy of the left in the United States continues as a plethora of concrete political practices and theories. Given this plurality, one temptation is (and has been) to try and unify the left for some shared goal through some set of common means. According to this logic, objective conditions produce a shared object which generates the conditions for a common subject in the form of a single oppositional political practice. The authority to conjoin various movements appears as the privilege of that analysis which can most clearly identify the shared object as a projection of the implicated collective subject.[2] In this sense, the authority, the objectifying process of politicization, is a symbolic one for a unified

left. The very claim to objectivity, as a correct line or practice, is an appeal to the symbolic.

The symbolic is not the only appeal contained within and expressed through a social movement, yet such an appeal has often expressed the tension between the movement's moment of greatest popular strength and political power. Hence, the populist movement exploded beneath the silver standard in 1896, and the June 12th rally (which is interesting because it constitutes an empirical site to look for the outer boundaries of what could be considered left) jelled and dissipated around "the freeze," a no less ambiguous symbol. These symbols, at once full and empty, represent common aspirations while they annul the movement of the collectivity. Silver appeared as a grounding of exchange in popular soil when the final putsch of American industrialization was leaving land and labor anemic.[3] A freeze seemed a rear exit to a cold war atmosphere menaced by the warmer climes of apocalypse. However cleverly or poorly these symbols are decoded, such operations reveal little of how the social movements came into their predicament of strength turned to weakness. The process through which a movement, coalition, discipline conceives its own agendas, strategies, symbols, against social and historical constraints and prospects must be identified both to explain the predicament and

the course that charters a protagonist toward it. Even when political output has neither the robustness nor the momentum of the examples given above, the symbolic as an organizing principle is discernible. Further, where unity or a correct line are not explicit components of the protagonists' representation, the structural impression they leave as aspects of the symbolic is evident.

The varied textures of 1960s political practices appeared at once emblematic of emergent forms of opposition and problematic for accumulating the gains each could make in their own hands against the corrections to methods of social control embodied in the Great Society. Into and out of the more amorphous political forms like Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), left political parties tackled the specific problem of consolidation of the opposition. In the parties' approach to their implicit and explicit public, their empirical diversity is affirmed, yet captured within the implicit unity of the symbolic. Without explicitly calling for the assimilation of a left public into their ranks, the parties invoked an authority, to which they tacitly claimed privilege, that would organize all possible inputs towards a common end. Hence the logic of unity within a language of diversity and a centering of objectivity among decentered subjectivities.

If it is fair or adequately fashionable to place

the height of new left developments in 1968, the moment when it could most stand for itself, it is interesting to examine left parties' courtship of the movements as they waxed and waned. In this respect, the communist party's dialogue with the new left bounds the latter's ascendency, and the socialist workers party's appeal to potentially radical segments of the population in 1971 speaks to a historical moment in decline. In the discourse of both can be read the logic of the symbolic, a logic which, it will be evidenced, plagues the new left as much as any other.

The factional splits of the late fifties that nearly destroyed the CP organizations did not demolish its historical importance as one of the patriarchs of the left. Studies on the Left, one of the first new left institutions, drew many of its editors from people who had been in the CP or its Labor Youth League.[4] While this would give pause to an emphasis on the discontinuity between old and new left, the party itself recognized this distinction as the basis for its call to unity.

> One particularly insidious promotion of Left disunity, which is very fashionable among enemies of the Left, attempts to drive a wedge between the "Old Left" and the "New Left." In Reality, there is one Left, new and old, with all the variations and differences we have noted. One compelling reason for Left disunity is to maximize Left strength by the most effective fusion of new and old.
>
> We do not anticipate instant unity or easy unity. We realize that the only principled basis for even

> short-range united effort is agreement on the short-range objectives to be sought and that even in this sphere there are differences. But we are persuaded that in the course of common action, in coordinated efforts, in the exchange of views and experiences, in the discussion of differences, the basis can be found for a unity that will become ever firmer. This, in time, may or may not take the form of one united party of socialism. But even the existence of different political organizations of the Left is no insurmountable obstacle to long-range unity for we do not envision a one-party system as a condition for American socialism.[5]

Since the end of the self-determinative policies of the Third Period of the CP in 1935, the party had subordinated itself as a coalition partner. In this the 1966 party program, they advocated the formation of a new people's party as an alternative to bipartisanism (and their own party). Yet what privileges their position is not their political power but rather their analysis. They are "persuaded" that through "common action" based upon "agreement on the short-range objectives" that unity, "will become ever firmer." It is this unity which appears as both the means to and the essence of their "American socialism."

The progression of unity emanates from their own persuasion. By what are they persuaded? Is it something beyond their analysis itself? Rather than postulating an explicitly spiritual animation to the program's belief or persuasion, it is the analysis itself that can be seen as standing in the place of supra-authority. Where unity is

a symbol for a left political practice its particularity is but an emblem for a broader symbolic process. Where diverse practices are promoted by the party, divergent analyses are not. It is here that the emphasis on the objective in the symbolic process can stand as an impediment to the development of political practices. If, for example, groups of women and blacks do not have common short range objectives at a particular juncture, the demand for common action is itself an impediment to practice. Conversely, a common action between the groups based upon unity as a condition of their mutual participation could tend to replace what has forged their particular experience with a representation of an anticipated general experience. The exchange of experience for its anticipation is precisely the dilemma described for the populist and anti-nuclear movements at the moment of their greatest visibility. The tendency in the symbolic call for unity is to prophecize this dilemma.

The communist party was no more able to dissolve the distinction between old and new left than the Students for a Democratic Socity (SDS) were able to unify various factions in the 1969 national convention. While the CP survived the sixties, the SDS split in 1969 between Progressive Labor and the Revolutionary Youth Movement seeking to exclude the other, did not.[6] In its wake, political

parties and organizations themselves became symbols of an anticipated revolutionary resurrection. For one party, the Socialist Workers Party, this anticipation took the form of a political momentum drawn from all oppositional groups termed "the radicalization." In their 1971 convention, radicalization replaces unity as the authority that gives privilege to their analysis:

> A second point relates to the stage the radicalization has reached. As the radicalization has advanced, a new factor has come into play. That is the cushioning effect of new struggles from new sectors coming into battle, new forces coming into motion, when forces that have been involved get tired, suffer a partial defeat, pause, or step back to reflect. The radicalization is too broad to be dependent upon any one sector or one set of struggles--it is not just the antiwar struggles, not just the women's liberation struggles, not just the student struggles, not just the Black and Chicano liberation struggles. . . .
>
> We can't predict the exact characterization of the unevenness as the radicalization develops. The important thing is that a pause or setback in a single sector of the struggle doesn't stop or decisively reverse the radicalization as a whole. Rather, the continued eruption of new contradictions and new forces in action cushions these pauses and setbacks.[7]

The radicalization is a sort of symbolic resolution of unity. Where unity necessitated a coordination of the short term objectives of various groups and movements, the radicalization assumes a common political object garnered from the SWP's analysis of the contradictions which inexorably lead to crisis, sweeping and mobilizing participation in its wake. Unity re-emerges when the radicalization shifts to a "revolutionary situation." Presumably the

diverse struggles have all chipped away at the same set of late capitalist contradictions, hastening the final crisis. The closure of the capitalist system is represented not by the actions of people but by the movement of the object itself, the sui generis radicalization. As with the quasi-spiritual aspect of unity, the radicalization evokes the image of the laissez faire market regulating the equilibrating imbalance through the invisible hand, a supra-authority beyond the system itself. The radicalization then, also displaces experience with the symbolic; for the parts (the individual struggles of Blacks, women Chicanos, workers, students) each contain the entire set of capitalist contradictions.

In effect, then, the programs of the Communist Party and the Socialist Worker's Party exhibit two symbolizing processes, metaphor and metonymy. With unity, each part is aligned with the whole as the diverse short term objectives run parallel in the common action. The radicalization is a whole contained in each one of its parts. As political symbols, metaphor and metonymy correspond to two problems diverse political practices have faced. Metaphor anticipates an alignment of parts to a projected whole which usurps subjectivity for the authority of the object. Metonymy presupposes the fusion of the particular subjectivity with a universal object,

collapsing the difference between political struggles without postulating the grounds for their interaction. In short, metaphor occludes the autonomy of the particular and metonymy renders the particular autonomy as an absolute.

The problem of how to deal with political difference within a concurrent framework of opposition indicates the need for a non-symbolic means of totalizing the parts, such that each retains a degree of autonomy within a field of interaction.[8] Where the previous sections have explored non-symbolic dimensions of art and culture through a focus on the product of the social body termed desire, this last section will be a rumination on the non-symbolic dimension of the political. Far short of elaborating a new form of politics, hopefully a space can be opened to establish the need for such forms.

To clarify terminology, a symbol is a representation of a whole by a part or parallel to the whole (metonymy-metaphor), where representation is the exchange of subject for object and exchange is the replacement of a value with an equivalent, an expression of difference. As in the strategies for a political totalization discussed above, the symbolic is ultimately an organizational principle of subject-object relations, i.e., a totality. Distinct from the means through which totality is produced

is the means through which it is reproduced or regulated, which can be termed authority. Symbolic authority is the product of a process of exchange whereby representation appears as a thing in itself. The symbol stands as object which eclipses subject because it gives grounds for the subject's being (the objectivity of analysis empowers the subject) and lends certainty to the subject's becoming (the symbolic object as unity or radicalization poses as the subject's future). In the process of exchange, the subject is not eliminated, only its means of representation. The replacement of the subject's value with its symbolic equivalent gives the object the appearance of the subject, of the latter's own being and becoming.

The symbolic in effect creates a false scarcity, a metaphysical scarcity of truth and of practice that compels competition.[9] Cooperation is sustainable under material scarcity: there are countless examples of this from nomadic societies to victims of natural disaster. Metaphysical scarcity however occupies a place beyond any real object; the metaphysical appears as a single place which must be competed for. It is this place that the symbol represents and from whence it derives its authority. Diverse practices invoke the objectivity of their analysis as their privilege to truth. But in competing for truth in its imaginary place, it is precisely truth and practice

that are separated. By sustaining the metaphysical place of the object, symbolic authority reproduces and regulates the competition.

So long as truth resides in the symbolic beyond the object, practice will appear as an obligatory movement towards unity. Yet the practices themselves are separated by their very distance from symbolized truth. The tautology of practice, in its movement towards truth generating its separation from truth, is itself the system of exchange that constitutes symbolic authority. Practice invokes objectivity as a unified truth which in turn justifies its practice. Without the means to cohabit the single metaphysical place, demands are created for an impossible consensus whose anticipation arrests practice. In this instance, a hesitancy of practice results from the presence of theory rather than its absence. As long as theorizing operates under the authority of symbolized objectivity, a unity for theory is implicated as well. But this is a unity which may be inaccessible from the diversity of theoretical practice. This unity, the synthesis of theory and practice in praxis retains the sanctity and singularity of the objective conditions which regulate and "know" that unity. In this sense, the symbolic presents a dilemma as much for the left academy as it does for left social movments.[10]

The symbolic places its ultimate constraint upon the proposition of socialism itself. What socialism is or could be is a product of the manner in which its possibility is constructed, both in theory and in practice. Its possibility has both a material dimension in how the challenges of capitalism are met and a metaphysical dimension as a set of alternatives to existing conditions and situations. To the extent that socialism becomes a goal, the projected object of a system of representations, it moves towards the symbolic and away from the subject-object relations that constitute its movement. That is to say, in the very process of representation of the subject, the difference of exchange is lost to the unity of the symbol. The terms of historical development (the road to socialism) take on the character of an absolute whose movement is prefigured by its very postulation.

To return to the observation that began this rumination on the symbolic, plurality appears as a problem which must be resolved to unity rather than totalized (in the broad sense of a totalitarian state--a state of being of the body politic) through some organizational principle which restructures the contribution of each element to some whole. The symbolic as well posits a totality, but a totality whose authority is a reflection of an external

projection. Hereby, an alternative future is as much an idealized picture as the one dreamt-up by the guardians of the present.

This is not to admonish dreams but rather to insure their germination. Dreams are suspended only by awaking; they are not terminated. Their autonomy is sealed by this interruption, for in waking dreams are both displaced and perpetuated. Yet the place sustained for dreaming never excludes the subject. While the unconscious itself may lie in language beyond the subject, the regulation, that is, the authority of dreaming is renewed and maintained by the subject's activity. If dreaming and waking constitute one totality for the subject, it can be said that the principle of authority as well, lies within bounds of this totality rather than appearing as a symbol beyond it. Dreams therefore are not defined by what is beyond reach but rather, precisely what is touched in the process of aspiration. Politics is an aspiration to some difference, but if that difference is contained within the object, it ceases to be difference in relation to the subject and loses its character as aspiration, as a process of reaching and touching as opposed to the thing reached for. To conclude the metaphor, the various political theories and practices confront each other without touching, they presuppose a common object without consti-

tuting a shared subject.

Against the temptation to unify the left, another can be posed. Unity refers to one possible form of totality, the symbolic. Yet symbolic totality presents an authority that is out of reach and as such, a unification that is always elusive, an empty place that represents the whole for which the parts compete. To re-situate the object that is the source of authority within totality is to alter not only the relation of the parts but their regulation as well. Authority as object beyond totality now becomes essentialized within it--that is to say, the principle of regulation is abstracted as an aspect of the parts in relation to the whole. The new organizational principle that results will be termed abstract totality. Each part, each practice or theory, contains within it both a functional uniqueness (its contribution to the whole), and a principle of regulation (its relation to the parts). Here, plurality is not a value of the whole as in a bourgeois democracy, but a feature of its organization. Confrontation is not curtailed, but debate is framed as a ratio of internal to totalizing development.

Competition and unity, righteousness and selflessness, patience and fervor, are just a few of the antipodes that come to represent the place denied the political subject. Indeed, each polarity is an opposition of objects

that only implies a subject but in practice precludes one. That such dynamics of politics persist despite the awareness of them, indicates that consciousness itself may not be sufficient to grant oppositional politics its necessary autonomy. The divisiveness on the left is paradoxically an expression of a lack rather than abundance of difference. Politics develops its own agenda in relation to the one it opposes. This is not to say that opposition is necessarily a reflection of domination, only that it mirrors the object it opposes at the level of totality without alternate means of totalization. The capitalist state itself is a reflection, an anticipation of class interests converging at some future point while the present witnesses only divergence. The state is a symbolic totality for capital and for opposition it is mere surface. The cherubial face of capital is so shiny that confrontation becomes a reflection. That is to say, the totalization of capital is an illusion. What opposition sees in this mirrored surface is not its own totality, but merely symbolic authority that disembodies the spatial collection of the subject known as community. Hence the left community takes on some of the attributes, appears with the personality (righteousness and selflessness, etc.) of the imaginary bourgeois community, that is to say, it appears as symbolic.

In a symbolic community, the basis of the spatial collection of the subject is exchange, the subject-value is replaced by its object-equivalent. In an abstract community, circulation sustains the collection of the subject within a sphere of social activity. Circulation is the mobilization of value. Unlike exchange, where the movement of value is measured by its equivalent, circulation does not anchor value in a fixed movement but engenders value with a motional quality. In circulation, values are in constant motion there are no fixed time-space referents from which to measure increments of movement because the place of the values themselves is not fixed and hence not replaceable. Circulation is describable in terms of its direction and motional quality and measurable only at the level of totality, the aggregate of motional effects. At one point in volume one of Capital, perhaps anticipating the physics of the next century and at least harkening its arrival, Marx speaks of circulation precisely in motional terms in the section, "The medium of Circulation." "For instance, it is a contradiction to depict one body as constantly falling towards another, and as, at the same time constantly falling away from it. The ellipse is a form of motion which, while allowing this contradiction to go on, at the same time reconciles it."[11]

The difference between the symbolic and abstract

is akin to the perceptual shift implicated in the move from a mechanical to a relativistic view of the universe. Accepting measurement as a special case of perception that implicates the measurer as authority beyond the subject-object relation measured, the new physics resituated the human measurer within the motional totality of the universe. Einstein, in a rumination on the relation between physics and reality underscores the effects of the insights of relativity on human experience of the world:

> The illusion which prevailed prior to the enunciation of the theory of relativity--that, from the point of view of experience the meaning of simultaneity in relation to happenings distant in space and consequently that the meaning of time in physics is a priori clear--this illusion had its origin in the fact that in our everyday experience, we can neglect the time of propagation of light. We are accustomed on this account to fail to differentiate between "simultaneously seen" and "simultaneously happening"; and, as a result the difference between time and local time fades away.[12]

As Einstein presents his theory, the main obstacle to its development lay in the maintenance of an illusion which pre-empted a relativistic perception of "everyday experience." Here, as outlined in the historical section on theater, movements in modern art that emerged around the same time as the new physics could play a pedagogical role. The abstractionists in France, Italy and Russia were framing the new way of seeing as a representation of objects within the relativistic world of the subject. "The meaning of simultaneity in relation to happenings

distant in space" was evidenced through the relativity of scale in Malevich's painting and was also what moved the spectator in and out of Meyerhold's theater. As was demonstrated in the case of modern dance, the effect of such motional collections was the production of desire. In sum, abstract totality, in science, art--and politics comprises a common spatial form of opposition to the dominant symbolic mode. The historical significance of the emergence of abstraction is that oppositional forms emerge precisely at the junction of the consolidation of dominance. Abstraction challenges both the strength and weakness of the symbolic.

Since oppositional politics have been forged in connection with an imaginery state (the hegemony of consent) these politics have been stamped with a tradition of the symbolic rather than a transcendance. Modern art has seldom adopted this self-conscious a position. As opposition it has defied a mechanistic way of seeing without introducing a means of looking critically at the mechanicalization of the social world. Yet, in its explicitly political dormancy, art has sustained an alternate form of totality in abstraction. The task of political art therefore is to mobilize elements of community without losing a concrete object of opposition in the process. This section is committed to defining the nature

of such an intervention.

The Anti-state of Theater

In the sections on dance and theater, these performance forms have been treated as two dimensions of the same problem, the production and reproduction of desire. What separates them has been largely ignored up to this point. If something useful is to be made of their separate contributions to new forms of political performance, this separation must be articulated. At the same time, it must be stressed that the distinctiveness among elements within an abstract totality is not absolute. Rather, the collection of subjects that share an object in abstract community, come into being both in relation to community as a whole as object and, in the subjects' relation to other elements as objects. In other words, the subject is multiply or overdetermined.[13]

The distinction between subjects in community can only be gauged against the movement and moments they share as a result of community, they have a relative autonomy. The problem with symbolic community is that the autonomy of the object opposes that of the subject (the individual as distinct from god or state) and the only reconciliation is a unity which embodies the whole in the part (religiousity or citizenship as the personification of god or

state).

It has been the tendency of the left to mirror symbolic authority (reproduction) and totality (principle or organization). This has been the case even where left communities have in practice recognized the relative autonomy of the subject (e.g., anti-imperialist and labor coalitions). Within the symbolic, synthesis implies the notion of unity critiqued above. But within abstract community, synthesis describes a movement towards the formation of a new relatively autonomous subject. The multiple placement of objects in abstract community assures that the regulative aspect of authority will have dominance. What is synthesized to conjoin the particular subject with the community as a whole, is the direction of the subject's motion rather than the projection of its object. Within the social space of abstract community, there is room for new elements. Since theater and dance have individual histories in that broader sweep termed modern art, it becomes possible to speak of a synthesis that would address the demands of an abstraction into the political without their being absorbed into a unitary form of expression. In short, the conditions of synthesis can be named through the distinct contributions of theater and dance to a new performed subject.

Thus far, symbolic and abstract community have

been presented as two possibilities as if they were different options to be picked by the subject. This is misleading. Symbolic and abstract are idealized forms of community which are in tension in empirical communities. Indeed, exchange and circulation as processes of spatial collection of the subject that constitute community may be at play at different moments or simultaneously. For example, the dance company described in the first section moved from a choreographic process of exchange of authority (choreographer) and totality (production of movement) to a circulation of the two in performance. The move from symbolic to abstract was a removal of the scaffolding of meaning and the construction of desire. Yet throughout dancing, which is about the production of desire, symbolic moments appear. Dancers judge how well they are performing against the audience's response. Audiences get an image from the movement and ask what it means. The dancers' community is constructed for and through the production of desire as a movement from symbolic to abstract authority embodied in the dancers themselves. Even synchronicity of movement, an apparent unity that would allude to the symbolic, is produced through the relative autonomy of dancer and company, kinetic form and its dissolution.

For most communities, the moments of dominance

for meaning and desire are not so distinct. Abstract and symbolic as distinct relations of totality and authority are often obscured through the dominance of meaning as an operation of the symbolic (as was pointed out in the previous part). Desire is at play, but its structuration of community is not made explicit as it is with the dance company. Abstraction, however, as an organizational principle of totality is not limited to desire; it refers to a bounded formation of subject-object relations in circulation. To speak then of a movement towards abstract community is to articulate the intervention of the subject into the relations of totality and authority such that these latter two are constituted abstractly. This is a process of politicization of the subject, a reorganization of difference within the community.

The cases of dance and theater addressed in the first two sections, at first glance would divide into political and non-political forms. Such a facile distinction however would undermine the critique of the symbolic and reduce politics to meaning. Granted the dance company neither presents itself as a self-conscious intervention in political culture nor is it aligned with particular social movements, but it does create a realm of circulation. The Living Theater on the other hand has expressed explicit political significance and yet has offered a

directly symbolic exchange in the theater. Importantly, the Living Theater is symbolic not only in relation to its present, but also in relation to its past. Emblematic of the Living Theater's homeostatic body, a source of the internalized tension in their performance, is the turn to Meyerhold's biomechanics as a rubric for movement. Ironically, Meyerhold's biomechanics are not his own either but versions of Italian Commedia dell'Arte etudes. The body that is contemporary for the dancers is doubly borrowed by the Living Theater. This is not an attack on their innovation, but rather the uncovering, like the receptors of a vitamin, of a potentially co-catalytic effect. Nor is it a rumination with the powers of hindsight on what could have happened with political theater if only the body were more expressive. All theater is bounded by and inherits social conditions over which it has no control, conditions which appear in the form of demand placed upon the theater. Meeting or exceeding those demands (e.g., carnival as circulation for Meyerhold) can and do alter social conditions. The place of desire as the agent of physical activity is in the realization of possibilities posed at a particular juncture. This is to anticipate somewhat the discussion on the significance of single interventions that will follow. Suffice to say that for now the lacks or absences in the two theaters

of Meyerhold and the Becks establish the demand for a new performed subject, a subject contemporary with bodily desire and political meaning.

Meyerhold's interest in carnival antedates the Bolshevik revolution by ten years and carnival anticipates Meyerhold by several hundred years. In spite and partly because of the civil war, its threat and uncertainty and excitement and hope in overcoming world opposition, the Soviet community was predominated by carnival, a form of abstract totality that maintained the circulation of political culture. At a time when outdoor rallies with agitprop theater drew tens of thousands of people, the houses of theater were also brimming. This is not explicable in terms of supply and demand or exchange. The appetite for the theatrical was generated by the presence and involvement in the moment. Popularized involvement (feeling) was the social condition that gave rise to Meyerhold's theater. The carnivalization of elements within the theater (performance, text, scenic design, architecture, and public) were aligned with and overdetermined by the social conditions of carnival. Yet if we were to isolate performance as the site of the carnivalized body, the body set in motion in the communal circulation, there is a disparity between implied and actual movement.

From Meyerhold's Symbolist productions at the turn

of the century to his efforts at Socialist Realism in the thirties, the director sustained a search for the animation of the body on stage. It was a courtship of the body that was constantly in flux. Commedia characters, ballet dancers, acrobats, and the techniques of biomechanics and pre-acting all held his attention for a few years at a time. His principle actors, especially Ignor Illinsky, were masterful movers. The chorus, prominent in his affinity for large casts to overwhelm the stillness of the stage, were often posed in freize-like bas reliefs or set in lines surrounding the main action. So too do biomechanics and pre-acting look like the shuffling of still photographs. Eisenstein's montage was inspired by Meyerhold's episodic particularization of a play into dozens of bits. Yet where Eisenstein found a way of animating these episodes or attractions in film so that a kinetic of circulation was sustained, Meyerhold was fettered by the temporal distance between his images.

It can certainly be argued that stillness implies movement, and that the arresting of motion in a frieze of actors, continues it in a frozen public. But herein lies the question: are these friezes motion, or do they symbolize motion, when does a shape reverberate in a kinetic field and when does it contain it. Without witness to the actual performances it is difficult to judge. It

is interesting to note that as the social and scenic backdrop of his theater changed, and his popularity waned, the logic of Meyerhold's approach to the body continued. Meyerhold had always been willing to change the substantive elements of his theater in response to his perception of the public. In certain ways his scenic and textual innovations were self-fulfilling and could be abandoned. Perhaps the absence of a motional form for the body, plagued and gave continuity to Meyerhold's approach, variations on a theme that never fully materialized.

While Meyerhold never found a technique for the actor's body as his alter-ego Stanislavsky did for the actor's psyche (method acting), grounding the body in the etudes of commedia made sense in the context of the broader vision of theater as carnival. Ultimately, however, the absence of an actor's technique made Meyerhold's theater dependent upon his own personal genius. Meyerhold's suppression after the thirties explains in part the relative obscurity of his work, but even so it is directors who predominantly read Meyerhold and actors who study Stanislavsky. It is also the case that the directors who seem to have read Meyerhold most closely, Brook and Grotowski[14] are grouped apart from the mainstream of the descendants of Stanislavsky who bring us Broadway style naturalism (Strasberg, Kazan, Clurman).

The absence of a technique for Meyerhold was the incompletion of a project, indeed, the method we attribute to Stanislavsky was constructed near the end of his life and refined posthumously. The Living Theater made a principled position of this lack, not only by replicating the empty place of the body borrowed from biomechanics but by reducing the problem of technique to theatrical intent. The actors of the Living Theater literally hurl their bodies at the audience because their bodies' real place is occupied by the symbolic. For the actors represent the authority beyond the theater. The difference between intent and exposition of feeling has no means of expression and is collapsed into the tension of the actor's body.

Here the relation between technique and kinetic intent in the dance company is instructive. Technique begins the production of the work as the history the dancers' bodies share. Technique makes possible improvisation which affirms totality and interiorizes authority. Intent is made into a structure through the kinetic forms of the movement rather than remaining an idea in the mind of the choreographer. As the explicit supports of technique and authority recede from the execution of the work, improvisation and kinetics appear as the realm of circulation between public and performer. As authority is structured into the movement through improvisation. As

authority is structured into the movement through improvisation, it no longer needs to be represented in the individual dancer. The dancer may be nervous in anticipation of presenting the work to the public but not tense in the attempt to become work and public. The nexus between technique and improvisation is what sustains the relative autonomy of both performer and performance. The individual dancer is placed within a kinetic field built up in the process of rehearsal so that the body attains motional freedom through structural support. The performance as well initiates and sets the terms for kinetic circulation with the audience in order to generate the momentum for their involvement. Without the means to map such physical involvement, the Living Theater and their audience retain a more absolute autonomy.

It is through the dancers' technique that performance takes on a relatively autonomous character. Technique relieves some of the burden of the difference between the dancers and audience's bodies by bounding physical motion with movement made to be seen by another. As an authority beyond all individuals in the space, technique acknowledges the distance between performer and performee, so that the difference can be communicated kinetically. Yet, in many performances, technique is not a silent authority. It leaves its mark upon the audience not in the hope of

arousing the body to activity, but in the despair of pointing to the body's lack. Indeed, technique as virtuosity fixes the distance between stage and chair as a permanent aspiration. The exhiliration of Baryshnikov's leap is the space the audience travels with him. His landing and exit to applause is a closure to the dream of possibly sharing his place. The distance is set in the viewers' mind, and the body laid to rest until its next nocturne. For technique to be an end in itself means that the measurement of distance becomes its main effect. The question for technique must be, to whom it is addressed, and how? The case of virtuosity shows that technique itself cannot assure a relative autonomy between performer and audience. The Living Theater's attempt to turn viruosity on its head does not bring the two any closer either, it presupposes that distance can be merely willed away.

For technique to arbiter the distance between viewer and viewed, it must disappear into the improvisational quality of performance. But it must also be a technique grounded in the physical culture of the people it addresses. This in turn presupposes the circulation of the dancer's body in physical experience beyond the rehearsal studio. Even dancers that live in their studio lofts, or in ballet class, have the streets beaten into their bodies, and yet technique is presented as a respite

to this harsh externality. If one walks around Lincoln Center in New York, they are certain to encounter a number of bodies apparently pinned up right against the winds and wearing the cloak of the dance class they have just left like a brace against the pavement. Dissimilarly but no less to the point, a careful scrounging of the Soho district in the same city one could find a Judson Church disciple reinventing the pedestrian, imitating the technique rather than absorbing the kinetic.

There are of course dancers well aware of this Scylla and Charybdis, who through their experiments with the elements of street life are developing movement techniques that abstract the physicality of the city onto the stage. There remains however a chasm between what is termed the uptown and downtown dance scenes in New York that is fundamentally sociological in nature. It is not simply that ballet is earmarked as elite culture and appropriately enshrined and experimental forms are marginalized from within and without. A separation such as this one would present a Horatio Alger like ladder to the top that could be traversed by dancers one at a time. For those that make it "selling-out" is tempered by mass appeal and metered out in an orderly career succession. The model of success and failure, of established forms with larger audiences and emergent or residual forms with

small draws is demographically accurate but obscures the commonality of the two extremes that is a function of the relation of the artistic to the larger community.

Break-dancing or breaking is an archtypal example of a kinetic form grounded in the experience of urban life and community being vaulted into a posture of dominance. Within a few years of its humble beginnings it is performed before a president and would-be king on national television. Back on the home front, slabs of cardboard appear on every street corner and the kids of the block dance for the stars. While the conditions of assimilation are by no means a unilinear process and breaking genuinely theatricalizes the streets, the rags to riches paradigm that spins between the cardboard and the sneakers juxtaposes individual success to abandonment of collectivity. The rich experience that remains on the sidewalk is a depoliticized one.

The situation of dance is different in the United States, for upward mobility is a movement within the dance community rather than a migration from it. Post modernists may have as little actual contact with ballet dancers as street-breakers have with superstars like Michael Jackson, but the former still circulate in a technical world of dance, while the latter break contact with the roots of their technique. In other words, the dancer is already

separated to some degree from the larger community. Whether a part of pick-up or more permanent companies, dancers' experience is formed around and expressed through the specialized domain of dancing. Break dancing on the street is an integral part of a larger complex of social practices that constitute urban community. Making it not only transforms this part into a whole, but shifts the whole into another arena of community. With this shift comes an infusion of new blood, a transference of communal experience into images controlled by the culture industries. The process of appropriating experiences into images, of "discovering talent" is what maintains the buoyance of commodified culture, the demand for new ideas turned genres turned products.

Dance is partially outside the culture of commodities positioned as dominance over community. Certainly choreographers like Twyla Tharp draw heavily on media images to popularize contemporary dance. But for many choreographers, the material for their dances comes from within the dance community. Modern dances that parody ballet, jokes about favorite teachers or local dance personalities, movement that is instantly identified from that afternoon's technique class, all are symptomatic of a broader accusation of incestuousness in the arts. Dancers make dances about dancing for other dancers. The very

distinctiion that gives the dance community a life of its own becomes a barrier that both constricts the movement of dance into the larger community, and distills the larger community into dance technique. Paradoxically, the process of assimilation that keeps the dominant culture healthy, maintains the relative autonomy of the artistic community as a marginal difference. Absorption through mass appeal of the community's particularity, even if only partial, becomes the symbolic cost of popularizing one's art.

The gulf between performers and a public that is both an impetus and an outlet for performance is not unlike the gap between the left and some aggregate expression of politics. Granted that left refers to a relation to practices rather than a particular practice as implied in a community of performers and an aggregate level to the expression of politics is more a mythology of consensus than the notion of a public, the parallel is striking nonetheless if viewed in terms of relative autonomy. A left presence thrives in thousands of "grassroots and community" organizations whose existence is made to appear as an aberration by the media when thrust into national prominence. The five organizers murdered in Greensboro, North Carolina, the socialist mayor in Burlington, Vermont, even the network of grassroots organizations that helped collect a million people in Central Park Manhattan, June,

1982 are presented as exceptions to the rule of a silent majority. The disparity between the existence and representation of the left is not merely a function of their suppression by the media. It points to a broader problem of organization within the community and the organization of communities.

Access to people is not the same as access to "the people," and herein lies the logic of an oppositional redress to the state as a centered if not centralized entity of contemporary capitalism. The shattering of social life such that it appears as a string of single issues, initiates the independent crystalization of opposition groups ultimately dependent on the string (the state) itself for their political continuity. Democratic alternatives focus on the legislature, tenants' groups on the housing authority, that is, on state institutions as local expressions. Here, what identifies the shared object as the basis of organizing, bounds the community as a localized politics. The left power retains its power in the particular, its ability to generate an oppositional practice but at the point of its extension beyond the local the only totality is a symbolic one and the left is mirrored back as a demand for unity which, as was mentioned before, only highlights divisions. In the absence of some means to mobilize the parts, the fragmented communities

that now constitute the left into some form of circulation, relative autonomy remains ultimately a means of social control.

The question for a left that can work collectively without requiring a unity in the symbolic is what constitutes an alternate relation of authority, a demand that can operate to intersect the local and the centered in shared circulation. Thompson and Jameson have argued in different ways that an experience of circulation in community is prior to conscious involvement of the subject in political activity.[15] A political unconscious is a field for the development of political activity as well. If demand is not only beyond the subject in the unconscious, but beyond the spatial collection of subject (community) in political unconscious, then community's only appeal to authority is through the symbolic. Under these conditions, meaning as symbolic exchange is sufficient for the political subject. But what is a preparation to the political if not desire, a form of communication that is decidedly non-symbolic?

For desire, demand is not the same as it is for meaning. To reverse Lacan's equation for the field of language, demand is the summation of need and desire. The summation of desire that had been only difference in the production of meaning, implicates the body in a new sense within community. The body carries a question that only

demand can answer, but in so doing, it anticipates demand. While a conception of the body constructed simply around need leaves demand as formative of the whole, the physicalization of desire anticipates demand and renders the subject as being in preparation of action. To the extent then that an intervention into community, whether as political organizing or performance structures the anticipation of demand in its work, it not only prepares the political, but the community as well for circulation as a totalization of communities. It is the alignment of internal and external demand that would render an already abstract totality like dancing part of a political process.

The dancer's desire to move as a social practice is channeled back into dancing. But for dance to align itself with others' social practice, it must motivate more than dancing. Pure movement in circulation gives sentience to a collective body whose spatial co-habitation is an essential element of the pre-political. More pointedly for political performance however is the demand that the public relive the kinetics in the theater as motivation outside it. Performance is a boundary that sets the terms for passing beyond what has transpired in the theater. Certain kinetic moments continue to press on the body much in the way that waves persistently crash after departing from the beach. Yet there seems nothing specifically

insurgent about the shadow waves, nor is it clear how an exciting performance even when it reappears in dreams can arouse the political subject in community. Of course when sleep rather than the confrontation with a polemic follows the kinetic intervention the effect of the latter is difficult to gauge. The dance cannot create the larger political community or social movement, but it can release the subject into circulation as part of a collective physical being. For, unlike the waves, performance as a social act can align and coordinate the motional response of a public as a shared object. If that object is to be a political object, not only must technique be grounded in the quotidian physicality of the public, but improvisation must initiate the sentient collection of the public as grounds for the history of its social body.

A history is not merely a sequence of events but a posturing of the subject into a social predicament. Even where technique flows from city into studio, the kinetic moments of contemporary dance do not construct a tension that poises the public in a situation they would otherwise not face on the streets. By using kinetics cumulatively to spring the social body, the subject is loaded with a juxtaposition of kinetic effects. It is at this point that movement expresses not only motion but emotion. These emotions are a collective involvement both

because they twist that group into a body whose only recourse is a movement deeper into community.

Martha Graham is well aware of these bodily tensions, but creates them as part of a symbolic totality, the emotions are symbolized by the movement and it is the individual spectator that bears witness to the higher authority that is invoked on stage. Pina Bausch, a German dance-theater maker comes closer to the problem of political performance sketched above. First, Bausch's work is exhausting both for performers and public. A production entitled "1980" (viewed in Venice, 1983) lasted over four hours. Like much contemporary theater work, there is no narrative linearity, yet unlike most such work, fragments are placed within a totalizing structure that circulates both performers and public. The fragments reappear to implicate the whole but never explicitly bound it so that the totalization does not stop with the termination of the evening. In Bausch's work, the shifts from pure movement to absurd enactment to melodrama are a process of abstraction from the known into the knowable. The specific content of the piece "1980" is an expression of the fantasy and imagination of those who produced it. It is certainly possible to imagine the producers' insertion into a more explicitly political context infusing its way onto the stage.

It seems foolhardy to continue the discussion of what a political theater could look like both to avoid raising false polemics with theaters making vital political contributions based on the validity of those contributions, or to too closely hem emergent political performers that have anticipated these problems and gone beyond them. Consequently, no final synthesis of dance and theater will be attempted. The challenge should only be posed that demand and desire live as tension initiated in the theater to be circulated outside it, but the rest is a matter of practices that depart from the boundaries of the page.

Bodybuilding Techniques

Thus far the conditions of a contemporary political theater have been sketched. Between the theater's ability to build tension through conflict and dance as a source of kinetic circulation, a collective emotionality that aligns without reducing the demand of part to whole is possible. As such, an evening's performance can instigate a tension in the social body that gives significance to this single intervention in political culture. This should be just the beginning of the story, for the performance of politics and the significance of single interventions (ruptures in the conditions of reproduction of dominance), constitute the basis of a critical and structural moment of an alter-

nate oppositional politics. Critical, in that the abstract totality produced in performance realigns subject and object such that the symbolic is displaced as the solitary authority. Structural in that abstract totality yields relative autonomy as community practice rather than social control.

The capitalist state as the purveyor of social control is in some ways the inversion of the bourgeois sentiment it seeks to protect and liberate. Bourgeois emotionality was said to render abstract relations into a symbolic commodity form. The polyphonous circulation of human feeling is identified in things. Tokens of affection, bursts of rage, slips of the tongue can all be captured on a Hallmark card, while the body continues to laugh or bleed. The state, on the other hand, derives its authority from the symbolic and takes on and seeks to maintain the form of relative autonomy, an abstraction. The state's power as a representation has little to do with its concrete practice of maintaining the boundary between the social, political and economic. It is the antimony of symbolic and abstract that must be elaborated if the state as the only available totalization of dominance (however partial) can evoke the critical and structural moments of an oppositional community.

Seen simply as an institution, the capitalist state

is a mess. It is heralded as guaranteeing conditions of accumulation of capital and the legitimation of capitalism, both to capitalists and workers.[16] The state will build roads where capitalists only want to drive. It will invest where capital finds risks high or conditions unprofitable. It can even make profits as long as it doesn't mix these in the coffers with tax revenues. Similarly, it must raise tariffs for domestic capital (farmers) and lower them for multinational capital, raise the minimum wage for collective capital and lower it for individual capital, break-up monopolies to limit competition, etc. The state not only lacks the prescience to perform these magical functions, but it also lacks the place.

The state is not at the physical heart of society, it only implies a centering so that real institutions are decentered (relatively autonomous) in their spheres of power. Storming the capital would certainly do less to upset social control than occupying a welfare office. This position too however can reduce to drivel in Althusser's internal state apparatuses spreading out like a film over every stone and pore in the society.[17] The many institutions of the state have a materiality but not a material unity. Their only unity is a representation in the symbolic. To the extent that a state center is addressed by oppositional practices, the political subject is dis-

embodied through its attack on an empty place.

Among the various appellations of contemporary capitalism, the welfare state and consumer capitalism seem most appealing, not because they do the best job of describing society, but rather, that they describe a certain tension that specifies the state. What is common to the mltiplex of functions, institutions and appatuses of the capitalist state is the attempt to organize subject--object relations against the totalization of subject and object in community. The two names of symbolic authority are juxtaposed to the abstract authority of community. The empty place occupied by the state is, in effect, a dual disembodiment. Its effort to shatter the subject is mirrored back as symbolic authority.

The development of consumer capitalist is at first glance predicated upon a level of material expansion that demands universal participation in the market. The mass suffrage of purchase is anticipated in the anthropomorphic sociologies of the nineteenth century. The project of a social body is hereby posed by free and therefore socialized wage labor and this is part of the progressive thrust that excited Marx about capitalism. This image of of the social body as a division of labor not only separated the mind and mental activity of the body, but establishes in this separation the basis of power over the

body. The physical is dependent on the mental not only as to what it should execute, but in the regulation of execution as well. Hence the participation of labor in all the circuits of capital, turns into a form of social control.[18]

The emergence of advertising in the 1920's as the voice beyond the body that represents the impetuousness of need and the certainty of its satisfaction, is at the same time an attempt to regulate capital, in the form of the corporation, as the universal organization of social life. The agitated circulation that crashed at the end of the '20's, proved the power of that voice and at the same time demonstrated once again the impossibility of capital to congeal into a single concrete object. The welfare state that emerged on the heels of Progressivism, was to take on the regulation of the object, in this case the commodity form and leave to the market place the formation of the consumer citizen.[19] As every policy and ad from the New Deal to Reagonomics has indicated, this is at best a process in anticipation. Capital is never actually regulated, nor is the body really occupied. These fictions however, themselves constitute dominance.

The power of fiction is that truth appears as an internal construct of the exchange between subject and object. Yet at the same time, truth, or its authority emanates from beyond the exchange as a belief already held;

we needed that deodorant or, this check is helping us. Hence, the incessant attention to an empty place, masks the actual site of occupation of the body. But the body itself is not masked, only its means of recognition is. The state attempts to capture desire but can only hold meaning because its dominance is a purely symbolic one.

In the split between conscious and sentience, the mind's eye seeks its affirmation in the state, while the body's real movements takes place only in community. In turn, the forms of dominance such as surveillance[20] divide the subject into the seen and the unseen, creating not only a domain of control, but also a domain of freedom. The boundaries of community as the real place of the subject are not simply delimited negatively as the blind spots of the state or tarnishes in the mirror, but by the positive development and history of circulation as well. In short, dominance is not the only form of authority, it is not the only regulatory force. The symbolic authority of welfare state and consumer capitalism is a dual disembodiment only at the level of meaning, an attempt to represent the body in exchange. The abstract authority of community is an actual spatial collection of the subject. Desire as sentient experience has possibility only where the object takes on concrete form in relation to the subject.

The difference between desire represented in bodily exchange through the subject-object relations totalized by the state and desire as sentient experience in circulation through community is perceptible at the level of the political. The political is the posturing of the subject for historical intervention. To the extent that symbolic and abstract are opposed in state and community, the formation of politics will be set in uncertainty. On the one hand, the response to the symbolic is an attack on dominance through an appeal to the empty place occupied by its authority. The empty place is only a reflection of the real and the subject is mirrored back as disembodied.[21] On the other hand, the spatial collection of subject through community is the construction of a social body as a sentient entity in circulation through the alignment of demand of the parts and whole. Community as the site of actual desire (as opposed to its representation or lack), takes on the political in its development of agency as a collective sensibility. The circulation of the social body in community itself becomes the place the state attempts to represent. Whatever the structural limits to the continued existence of capitalism; expansion of markets, class factions, rates of profit, ecological exhaustion, etc., the halting and uneven development of dominance can be counterposed to the fluid expansion of desire in community.

It should not be supposed that state and community operate independently such that these two forms of subject-object organization are literally split. Rather the split is a tension which confronts the body, both individual and social. People are often no more aware of the power of community than they are of the market as a face of the state. Yet, since awareness is but one dimension of experience, desire motivates people irrespective of the appelation community and is felt as a lack regardless of whether one is in a store. The individual versus the social, the atomized as opposed to the collective is essential however to sustain the political. To trace the bounds of disembodiment is to define the conflict between symbolic and abstract, for it is to discern what is masked and what is set free in the movements of physical culture. If physical culture becomes political only at the level of the social, it is useful to identify both the individual and collective moments of the body. Two examples will be used here, a complex of eating disorders known as anorexia and bulimia, and a composite of that archetypal form of protest, the sit-in.

In the course of twenty seconds or twenty years, the body does not stand still. When enough time has elapsed to establish distance, change is visible, provided of course that the body is the object being viewed. The habituation given to those differences known as gender

associate the eye of the viewer and the body of the woman. Certainly men's bodies are also the objects of attention, but the power of the category woman is more often crafted around a notion of beauty. As beauty is commodified in dominant media images as object as opposed to an immanence of the subject, more and more flesh is revealed to replace tbose qualities of the body lost to representation. Nineteenth century voluptuousness winds its way into 1960's fleshiness as sexuality seethes from the body's experience and is displayed in the image. Sexual experience has no a priori parameters. The body can find new folds whether clothed (or not). The image of the body is much more constrained to the extent that it seeks to represent subject as object for the purposes of sale. In commodification of the body it is the image that is bought and sold and this exchange poses as experience. Ultimately, however, it is experience that presents demand to the image to approach the fit of a reflection. This is the mystery of commodified beauty, to be out of reach yet one step before experience.

When the body is fully exposed in the image, it has reached the end of a particular line of development of its representation. The logic of a linear degradation of the body is a problem of the image and not necessarily of experience which cannot be reduced to a single dimension. Flesh comes to the fore in the bodily imagery of

the sixties but having reached the end of a certain line of exposure, it has nowhere to go but back on itself. Between Marilyn Monroe and Christie Brinkley, a pound is dropped for every passing year. Even for the slightly more submerged images of pornography, the body is literally chipped away to the blood and bones of an imploded orgasm. Where has the body gone in the images of the last twenty years and more significantly for experience, do these images report on a missing person?

While experience can never be reduced to an image, the tension between the body and its representation becomes ever more pressing as the images depict the body as an absence rather than a presence. It is not only ad copy and movie stars that present women's bodies as a disappearing act, but the conflicting place that poses as success for the "new woman." The contemporary woman is a career woman just as professionalism is the touted ideal for men. For the woman to occupy the role of professional, we see in the imagery of the body a non-androgenous hybrid of male and female typed pictures. The woman must be beautiful and assertive, soft and sure, daring and patient, perfectly primed and ready-to-wear. These depictions of the woman executive do not excuse her from the domestic realm. She is seen as gourmet chef instead of cook, confidante instead of mom, seductress instead of partner. For the

proportionately few women actually in these positions, keeping the parts summed is an exhausting practice.

It may also be the case that many women negotiating these positions are the farthest in their actual experience from the images meant to represent them. Indeed, it would seem that those for whom the real images have the most power are those who do not occupy the real positions of the representations. Working mothers, for example, view their distance from the imagery against both the lacks and rewards of their own experience. For women of teen and college years, particularly daughters of professionals for whom the potential place appears inevitable, the image represents a future experience rather than a bodily presence. It is for these women whose present body is the means to another that images presented in the market place, whether Cosmo or Bloomies, are more decidedly symbolic state authority.[22] Even as the images of women in ad copy change from the emaciated lines of high fashion to the musculature of the bodybuilding "active woman" (Having virtually exhausted the woman's body, the image turns to the man's.), the predicament of the woman to be remains a difference between experience and images whose distance lies in different directions. These women must constitute a bodily practice of the present impinged upon by a future body that is either empty because it has

disappeared, or many places at once and as such, no place.

Given that the future is presented as a disembodiment, and the image poses as satisfaction to an existing need, one response of bodily experience is to anticipate its disappearance. The image as an agent of state authority signals reflection as a means of fulfilling the social (becoming successful). For a subject split as meaning and desire, the conscious and sentient response to the image diverges. Among reported cases, anorexic and bulimic women tend to have the skills and capabilities that make success, both as ideology and practice possible.[23] In terms of the production of meaning the image is tagged to actual experience, or least one dimension of it. The sensual fulfillment implied in the image however is belied by the sentient practice of the body. For both anorexics and bulimics, one symptom is a disorientation of the senses. A shrinking body appears as an expanding one and the content of intake of food and output of waste is reversed. The individual body moves away from the kinetic field that would supply a tension that could identify the physical. Desire is in effect routed into meaning where it is assessed as an attempt to fill the empty place of the symbolic. The look in the mirror or the vomiting are denials of the symbolic in the self, a rejection of the command of the empty place while

remaining within the dominance of the symbolic. The symbolic place, future career, beauty, happiness all sealed in a unity of perfection is itself a representation of the social. Perfection is guaranteed by making all the right choices, yet the choices as becoming, as positions to take on are impossible to occupy simultaneously.[24]

The rejection of the symbolic in the self is a movement away from the social. Like the state that sustains it, this social is also a fiction, a fiction that constructs its truth as a practice of the real body. The battle in anorexia and bulimia is clearly over the control of the body.[25] The rejection of the social as symbolic has a severe cost in part because there is no actual social practice to supplant the symbolic. The actual practice of making the body disappear, whether through starvation or the purge after a binge, is itself a process of abstraction of the body. The body is transformed into an essential movement from the symbolic. This however is an individual practice and as such is not an abstraction that makes possible circulation. The eating practices of a bulimic person are most often couched in secrecy. The secret is as much imposed by the absence of a real social alternative as it is a refuge from a symbolic one.

The preceding comments are not intended as therapy

for people who suffer from anorexia or bulimia. Basic differences between the two problems are glossed over and the coarseness of the categories objectify the subtleties of any particular case. Rather an analysis was attempted of a malady centered around the body that catches the individual between the symbolic and the abstract and obstructs an important level of sentient circulation. Cases of anorexia have been reported upon for hundreds of years. Measured against the vague indicators of popular awareness and persons seeking help, the problem has passed the elusive line from medical to social only in the past few years. The recent prominence of eating disorders, and images of shrinking flesh as beauty compose a problematic that presupposes both a commodity system elaborated all the way to the body and a bodily practice particularized to the point of response. Were it not for the real movement of the body, its susceptability to the command of such images would not be possible. It is against this freedom of experience that the commodified image seeks some control.

With anorexia and bulimia, bodily practice is subverted from the social and thereby absented from the political. It should be noted that groups have sprung up around the country around the issue of eating which take the political as a point of departure[26] and pose a critique

that exceeds the image as control. Where bodily practice begins at the political, it does necessarily organize a social circulation. For the purposes of isolating the physical dynamics of the political, a fableized account of a sit-in will be used as an analytic device. As with the eating disorders of the eighties, the sit-in does not originate in the sixties but rather becomes emblematic of the social protest during that time. It is also by the sixties that the cultural form of dominance is congealed in the dual disembodiment termed the state. If anorexia and bulimia develop in response to the market, the sit-in responds to the welfare state as symbolic authority. Just as the individual body confronts the controlled placement of subject and object by the market, so the sit-in is a redress of the social body to its position within the welfare state. Where the individual problem of the body showed abstraction without ciruclation, the collective dilemma indicates bodies in motion without abstraction.

The sit-in attempts to materialize the state through an occupation of its institutional manifestation. Arresting the normal flow inside the building will signal something to the authority beyond. Hence the sit-in is a collective physical appeal to the symbolic. The sit-in is a symbolic political act not only in its attempt to

replace the empty place of the state with a real one but also in the way it organizes its bodies into the social. It is usually the office of administration that is the target of the attack. That office is both head of the institutional body (metonymy) and representative of the big State out there (metaphor). It is this duality that gives the sit-in its political meaning as allegory, as the term is employed by Jameson.

With allegory, "the local issue is meaningful and desireable in and of itself, but is also _at one and the same time_ taken as the _figure_ for Utopia in general, and for the systemic revolutionary transformation of society as a whole."[27] It is clear that this particular duality is meaningful to a political process beyond the local, it is less certain what the figuration of the general does for desire. For if the social body must represent the empty place of the future as a negation of the empty place of present dominance, then a unifying meaning is exchanged for a realm of desire. Where the social body itself becomes a representation, meaning is burdened with the sustenance of desire and consciousness must sustain the senses. The reduction to meaning moves commitment to the act into the symbolic. If the sit-in is to display its resistance. invariably there is the moment of truth, disoccupation. A silvery haired cop on a bullhorn

announces that five minutes remain before the hall is cleared. The united symbol of the social body turns to individual decision. "Should I get arrested?" The abrupt realization that there is no flesh between the individual body and the bullhorn's master has often resulted in a fissure between the minority that carry the symbol into the jail cell and the bulk of the disoccupied and disembodied. This rift perhaps absorbed many activist bodies of the sixties.

The fableized sit-in's success lies in its representation of commitment. If the media are present and reproduce images of people dragged from the place meant to serve them, a signal is given to the folks at home of the seriousness of the issue. What happens, however, to the body exchanged for the display of commitment, the social body of the movement itself? To the extent that commitment is exchanged at the symbolic it is subverted as circulation. To the extent that the body is posed as a figure of meaning, it is occluded as a site of desire. Meaning and desire are not exclusive as a result of the sit-in per se, but rather, of political practices that do not organize a practice for the body.

The sit-in is a reasonable tactic and the symbolic is a necessary level of the political but if an act is to retain action that sustains the political subject as a

real place, neither is sufficient to reproduce commitment. The allegory may be a form that can contain political meaning, but the figure arrests the body in the representation of the general. The body in the production of desire must have its own duality, a duality of demand made possible through abstraction. For the social body to be both a real place and a site of reproduction of future places (Utopia), the individual body must essentialize the whole not as part, but as motional alignment of demand. The motional abstraction of the whole does not represent it as figure but rather is connected through a common field of circulation. The bodies of the occupied building are not so much unified before some common goal, but connected in their embodiment of the place they want the building to be. Goal is abstracted into the movement towards it as a lived experience of the social body, that is, as desire. For desire to permeate abstract community, there must be an alignment at two levels. First, the demand of the individual body for a place to move in in anticipation of the symbolic moment of decision, and second the demand of the social body to present exit-from-the-building as a continuation of its occupation. These two levels must be aligned in their motional direction within a field of circulation.

At the moment the vision of the social body as

outlined above is a Utopia in search of a home. It is a vision suggested in part by the demand of the sit-in or other political act that has not been fulfilled. The organizational talents garnered in the sixties (and before) have not been lost on recent social movements. The continuity has glossed one of the lessons of its history, that the movement must be able to reproduce its frontiers if it is to hold its ground--not as opposition to dominance but as community. It is here that political theater can play a role. It has been said that a contemporary political theater poises the social body in a kinetic tension that launches the body into circulation beyond the performance space. It is just such an intervention into the history of social movements that could constitute an accretion of desire.

It is not only that desire traces its own contours within community, but that bodily theater as a practice of desire finds its place in a distinct relation to a broader community. This implies that performers organize a particular subject-object relation in their own political practice. When political performers leave the stage they enter subject-object relations organized by others, whether as witness to or performers of other acts. It is precisely this relative autonomy of particular practices that constitute the organization of any totalizing activity, and

the relative autonomy of practices that any real person as multiple subject moves among, that materialize community against the fictive state. For community, relative autonomy makes possible the circulation of totalities as people move from one subject-object organization to another. This is the progressive moment of the abstract. The state, which occupies no place of its own, seeks a division among social totalities as a means to construct its own symbolic unity. For the capitalist state as dominance, relative autonomy is a mode of social control. Between these two moments of relative autonomy lies a paradox for capitalism. Social control is the marshalling of opposition. The disembodied reflection is beholden to the body it seeks to displace. If the relative autonomy of the state is a mirror of the circulation of real bodies in social practices, then it is not only community but capital as well that holds positions of opposition to capitalist dominance.

The organization of the factory system as labor control (cf. Marglin) initiates a process of abstraction of the subject in circulation that becomes integral to the history of capitalist development. So too are developments of the circuits of capital abstraction that develop with capitalist practices. There is a juxtaposition of concrete and abstract in Marx that has been read as the root of alienation itself (cf. Cohen). Alternately, ab-

straction like division of labor can be read as a gift of capitalism to the conditions of its own transcendance. Splits create tensions that themselves motivate history. If political subjects are to fully occupy history, they must do so not in the unification of some imagined primordial split, but on the heels of the energy that that fissure releases. Echoes of Einstein have given us shoes that can run in many directions at once, so long as we do not stand still. Now we must find our feet.

SECTION FOUR: NOTES

[1]At this rally one could find the banners of small vangardist parties, social democrats, trade unions and community organizations--to name a few of the groups contained in the contemporary left spectrum. At the same time between the midtown and Soho galleries, all the classic moderns and their reiteration of post-modernism can be found.

[2]This logic, for example, is evidenced in a manifesto by one of the leaders of the Italian Communist Party, Palmiro Togliatti, "The sole correct path for mankind," _Political Affairs_, Vol. 21, no. 1 (January, 1952).

[3]Populism was the final resistance to 19th century corporatism that in its collapse left the Alliance farmers not only disorganized by impoverished as well. Cf. Lawrence Goodwyn, _Democratic Promises_, op. cit., especially Chapter XVII "The Irony of Populism," pp. 515-556.

[4]Cf. James Weinstein, _Ambiguous Legacy_, op. cit., p. 124 and chapters 7 and 8 on the new left and SDS, pp. 114-159.

[5]Quoted in _New Program of the Community Party U.S.A._ (New York: Political Affairs Publishers, 1966), p. 116.

[6]See Winstein, op. cit., pp. 151-159.

[7]Quoted in _A Revolutionary Strategy for the 70s: Documents of the Socialist Workers Party_ (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), pp. 79-80.

[8]Fredric Jameson who discusses the text as a symbolic act views this as the first analytic horizon to be followed by the ideologeme ("the smallest intelligible unit of the essentially antagonistic discourse of social classes") and the ideology of forms, "Traces or anticipations of modes of production" each of which has a relative autonomy. Yet each of these lies within the only one dimension of cultural experience. Cf. _The Political Unconscious Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act_ (Ithaca,N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 76.

[9]For a view of a left metaphysic that sustains subjectivity see, Michael E. Brown, "Ideology and the Metaphysics of Content," Social Texts, 8 Winter 1983/84.

[10]The tensions within the left academy to fill the demands of its particular discipline while attempting to transcend its orthodoxy create heightened conditions for symbolic objectivity, cf, The Left Academy: Marxist Scholarship on American Campuses, ed. by Bertell Ollman and Edward Vernoff (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982), pp. 6-7.

[11]Capital, Vol. I, op. cit., p. 104.

[12]Albert Einstein, Out of My Later Years (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), p. 69. See also, Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld, 1938, op. cit., for a history of physics for the lay reader which outlines this shift.

[13]Jameson's reading of the Althuserrian concept views structure or mode of production as determinant in the last instance of economy polity and culture, each with a relative autonomy. Here however community itself becomes the structuring device. Jameson, op. cit., 1981, p. 36.

[14]The Stanislavsky books are seminal texts for the American actor and Meyerhold has no equivalent treatise. The latter's influence can be found in Jerzy Grotowski, Towards a Poor Theater (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968) and Peter Brook's The Empty Space (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968).

[15]E. P. Thompson's notion of the pre-political finds cultural formations in community generating the conditions of their political expression (The Making of the English Working Class, New York: Vintage, 1966). Jameson views the political unconscious as an absent cause accessible only through the symbolic (op. cit., 1981).

[16]There are a number of overviews of Marxist theories of the state which underscore its contradictory position within capitalist society. Cf. Ollman, op. cit., "The State and class struggle," by Mark Kesselman; David Gold, Clarence Lo and Erik Olin Wright, "Recent Developments in Marxist Theories of the State," Monthly Review, 27, 1975; Bob Jessup, The Capitalist State. My own remarks are not meant as an overview but simply as an indication of what is missed in the above institutional accounts of the state.

[17]Cf. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in Lenin and Philosophy (London: New Left Books, 1971).

[18]Hence, Harry Braverman's notion of deskilling emanating from the separation of conception and execution as control over the capitalist labor process can be applied to the sphere of consumption as well. Though as with deskilling, consumers confront control over decision-making without being themselves constituted by that control, op. cit.

[19]As T. J. Jackson Lears has noted in his study of bourgeois "anti-modernists" during this period there were many responses to this movement. Op. cit., 1981.

[20]Foucault discusses the occulusion of the body and the supervision of its anticipated movement in Discipline and Punish.

[21]Murray Edelman also sees the symbolic of politics as a form of social control without however giving any structural specificity to that control; "Political acts, speeches, and gestures involve mass audiences emotionally in politics while rendering them acquiescent to policy shifts through that very involvement." Edelman assumes the subject to be wholly captured by the symbolic rather than reprsented--or misrepresented--through the state. Cf. The Symbolic Uses of Politics (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), p. 15.

[22]Marlene Boskind-White and William C. White identify the "Middle class" college aged woman as most susceptible to anorexia and bulimia. "On the other hand, the young women are expected to excel academically to be attractive and have an active social life; on the other, they are encouraged to remain 'invisible,' which translates to mean not too self-reliant, assertive or serious." Cf. Bulimarexia (New York: Norton, 1983), p. 104 and especially chapter 5.

[23]It has been argued that historically, "slenderness" has been dominant during periods of popularization of "woman's Liberation." But who these women were both in the twenties and the seventies must be analyzed in class terms which understand the burdens of "success" focused through family socialization. Cf. Kim Chernin, The Obsession: Reflections on the Tyranny of Slenderness (New York: Harper and Row, 1981).

[24] For an overview of anorexia's and bulimia's physical effects and manifestations, see Boskind-White, op. cit., Chapter 6, "Bulimia and the Body."

[25] For dancers, the demands on the body image are especially acute, particularly as the Balanchine Ballet dancer's body, which has evolved only since the fifties, becomes paradigmatic; the body as line replaces the substance of the body. Dancers have undergone more radical transformations in this regard than movie stars. The body image melded with the dancer's daily regimen tend toward including anorexia and bulimia as forms of physical control. Cf. L. M. Vincent, Competing with the Sylph: Dancers and the Pursuit of the Ideal Body Form (New York: Andrews and McMeel, 1980).

[26] Susie Orbach, Fat is a Feminist Issue (New York: Paddington Press, 1978).

[27] Fredric Jameson, "Pleasure: A Political Issue," in Formations of Pleasure (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 13.

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