ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the historical context of choreography which brings literature to the stage, as well as to investigate the works and life of Theodore Seuss Geisel; and to discuss how this information informed the creation of Seuss Suites, an original work of dance, music, sets and costumes, based on the life and works of Seuss.

It is hoped that this study will inform other choreographers about the exploration of the creative process necessary for adapting a particular artist's life or literature to the stage. A secondary purpose for pursuing this study is to help others acquire a different perspective on creating dances by learning the process of creativity from the literary approach of Seuss and comparing it to the creative process of choreography. Additionally, this study will inform people who may be familiar with Seuss's books about other aspects of the writer's character and will draw hypotheses about how his experiences may have inspired his works.

Seuss's books were often characterized as absurd and nonsensical, however, they often contained underlying social and political issues. After investigating the fascinating life of this private man, I was compelled to bring his life and works to the stage through dance. Just as Shakespeare's plays have
been sources of inspiration to choreographers, so, I was inspired to capture the
essence of Seuss's stories and translate them to the stage through dance. My
interests were in seeking out any parallels between events in Geisel's personal
life and the books he created during those times.
Dedicated to the Alpert family and Darren Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my advisers, John Giffin and Angelika Gerbes, for their support, encouragement, and for challenging me to explore unfamiliar territory, which made this thesis possible.

I appreciate the time and effort Karen Woods gave to discussions and readings of the thesis, and for providing me additional support and confidence to complete this project.

I am grateful to Joan Nicholas-Walker for her continued support and friendship.

My deep and heartfelt thanks to Darren Page for endless encouragement and for providing me with strength.

Finally, I wish to thank my family for their continued love and support and for inspiring me to pursue my dreams.

This research was supported by a grant from The Ohio State University Graduate Alumni Student Research Award.
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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Dance
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I have always been intrigued by the ingenious combination of rhythms, words and characters found in every book written by Theodor Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss). His books were often characterized as absurd and nonsensical, however, they often contained underlying social and political issues. After investigating the fascinating life of this private man, I was compelled to bring his life and works to the stage through dance. Just as Shakespeare's plays have been sources of inspiration to choreographers (Mellen xii), so, I was inspired to capture the essence of Seuss's stories and translate them from a two-dimensional medium into a three-dimensional medium. My interests were in seeking out any parallels between events in Geisel's personal life and the books he created during those times.

Friends and journalists had always been curious about the oddity in Seuss's books and there was much inquiry into his creative process, yet he often claimed that he did not know from where his ideas came (Morgan 87). Never before has the nonsense style of Seuss's works been translated to the theatrical stage in pure dance form. My ambition was to discover whether this same
nonsense form found in Seuss's books could be translated to the stage through
dance.

The range of literature adapted for dance, from the fairy tales of Charles
Perrault to the tragedies of Shakespeare, is as extensive as the range of
choreographers who continue to be inspired by literature. This diverse range of
choreographers spans, for example, the nineteenth century classical work of
Marius Petipa and the late twentieth century contemporary dances of Mark
Morris. Often the problem with portraying stories or fables through dance is that
the production is either too literal and thus becomes insulting to the educated
dance audience, or it is so abstract that the audience does not understand the
choreographer's intent. In attempting a dance treatment of Seuss's work two
major questions needed to be addressed. First, What essential elements of the
stage production need to exist in order to translate the essence of Seuss's life
and work? Second, Can the process that Seuss used in the creation of his
books be adopted as a choreographic tool to create choreography?

Consequently, the primary purpose of this study is to examine the
historical context of choreography which brings literature to the stage, as well as
to investigate the works and life of Theodore Seuss Geisel; and to discuss how
this information informed the creation of Seuss Suites, an original work of dance,
music, sets and costumes, based on the life and works of Seuss.

It is hoped that this study will inform other choreographers about the
exploration of the creative process necessary for adapting a particular artist's life
or literature to the stage. A secondary purpose for pursuing this study is to help
others acquire a different perspective on creating dances by learning the process of creativity from the literary approach of Seuss and comparing it to the creative process of choreography. Additionally, this study will inform people who may be familiar with Seuss's books about other aspects of the writer's character and will draw hypotheses about how his experiences may have inspired his works.

The two investigative processes utilized in this study are historical research and action research. The historical research offers concrete information on Seuss, such as his birth place, schooling, and the books he created. Historical research also provides more subjective information about Seuss's character, such as his thoughts, beliefs, and values. Researching Seuss's history was vital in providing me with knowledge and insight, so that I could make appropriate decisions about how to portray him and his works. I have read, analyzed, and compared Seuss's books to provide information on his use of text and illustrative techniques.

To investigate, historically, how other choreographers have brought literature to the stage, the following six works were selected as notable examples: Marius Petipa's Sleeping Beauty; Leonid Lavrovsky's as well as Antony Tudor's Romeo and Juliet; Frederick Ashton's and Maguy Marin's Cinderella; and José Limón's The Moor's Pavane. Seuss's books have a sense of dichotomy, comprising both elements of fantasy and tragedy. Therefore, two fairy tales and two tragedies have been selected for investigation. Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella are two of the most famous fairy tales to be restaged again and again over the years. Choreographers Ashton and Marin were
selected because of their unique approaches to choreographing Cinderella. Ashton comes from a more classical traditional background while Marin has a more contemporary view. Sleeping Beauty has been staged in many countries and often modernized. However, according to Yuri Grigorovich, all versions of this ballet are based on Petipa's choreography, thus Petipa's version was selected for analysis (Grigorovich Vanslow 52). Lavrovsky's and Tudor's ballet version of Romeo and Juliet and Jose Limón's The Moor's Pavane, a modern dance dating from 1949, were selected to represent three different approaches to interpreting Shakespeare. Romeo and Juliet is a popular dramatic work that has been restaged by many choreographers including Vincenzo Galeotti, Maurice Béjart, and Kenneth MacMillian. The Moor's Pavane has long been considered by critics and dance audiences to be an outstanding dramatic dance. Since its creation, The Moor's Pavane has received universal acclaim, and its longevity testifies to its appeal to wide audiences. Additionally, these selected works are suitable vehicles for this study because all the choreographers come from different parts of the world, represent diverse backgrounds, and created their works in different eras. To uncover how selected choreographers use certain tools to create works, the following five main elements of each dance are examined: structure, movement, music, set and costume design, and choice of dancers. These basic structural blocks refer to elements of choreography but can be adapted to analyze and discuss Seuss's literary works as well. The slightly modified elements used to analyze Seuss's work include the structure, movement, rhythm, color and text design, and characters.
After collecting substantial information, I began to embark on the action research of this process. The majority of the action research came from the experience in the studio as well as from the staging of the thirty minute work, *Seuss Suites*, which premiered on April 9, 1998, in the Sullivant Hall Theater on the campus of The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. I collaborated with four musicians to create original music and text for the score. The set was created in collaboration with two set designers, and the nine performers working on the project helped to bring the characterizations to life. I not only choreographed the work, but designed and created the costumes as well. The technology involved in the project was created in collaboration with an artist who works in two-dimensional medium and an animator who creates three-dimensional animations. A portion of this research entails analysis of feedback received from audience members, who included Department of Dance faculty members and students at The Ohio State University. I have also included my own reflective critical evaluation of the final work.

There have been many critical interpretations of Seuss's books in various publications including *Book Review Digest*, *Parents Magazine*, *Time*, *Life*, *Children Today*, and *U.S. News & World Report*. However, there has been little research concerned with Seuss's creative methods or techniques. This study relies primarily on the only biography, written by Judith & Neil Morgan, which provides information about the personal aspects of Seuss.

Since Seuss has written over forty books, selections for this study were based on those books whose moral messages best represent his personal
crusade against political, social, and environmental injustices, including The Lorax, The Sneetches, and The Butter Battle Book. Additional Seuss books such as The Cat in the Hat and If I Ran the Circus were investigated to provide strong visual images of the shape of the characters, the colors he chose, and the relationship of the characters to the text on the page. Several television adaptations of his works have been examined, including the film The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T. This was the only non-animated film translating one of Seuss's stories into a three-dimensional medium. All other films translating Seuss's stories have been produced in animated form. Another valuable source was the 1994 film In Search of Dr. Seuss. This film integrates information about Seuss's personality and information about certain books that highlighted his career.

While a wealth of literature exists by writers discussing productions of fairy tale ballets, such as Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella, no published studies focus on individual choreographer's decisions about the use of structural elements in creating their works. Writings addressing the use of narrative in choreography are limited. A few sources, including Choreography and the Narrative by Susan Foster, and A Ballet-Maker's Handbook by dance historian, Joan Lawson, provide general frameworks for creating story ballets.

A dissertation by Katia Canton Monteiro, "The Fairy Tale Revisited: A Survey of the Evolution of the Tales, from Classical Literary Interpretations to Innovative Contemporary Dance-Theatre Productions," discusses the transformation of fairy tale to the stage in great detail through investigations of the choreographer's socio-historical context. Additionally, a dissertation titled "A
Comparative Analysis of Othello and The Moor's Pavane: An Aristotelian Approach to Dance Based on Dramatic Literature," by Joanna Friesen, gives a detailed analysis of contemporary choreographer José Limón's version of Shakespeare's play Othello. Both of these dissertations provide valuable information on several choreographers' choices about the process of translating specific works of literature to the stage.

The study is divided into six chapters. This first chapter introduces the research, defines the parameters, and discusses the significance, the methods, and objectives. Chapter two is an historical analysis of four literary works that have been interpreted through dance by various choreographers. Five elements are used as parameters for investigating the choices these choreographers made.

Chapter three provides background information on Seuss's life, from his birth to his death. Chapter four is divided into three parts. Part one, delineates the framework for analyzing Seuss's creative process, while part two analyzes Seuss's creative process using the framework provided in Part one. Part three, analyzes Seuss's work through a close examination of his writing techniques.

Chapter five provides detailed information concerning the creation of Seuss Suites and why I chose to represent Seuss as I did. To conclude the study, the final chapter will reflect how the information uncovered about Seuss's creative process and his works enlightened my own creative process.
CHAPTER 2

ANALYZING SELECTED CHOREOGRAPHERS
WHO HAVE BROUGHT LITERATURE TO THE STAGE

As early as the sixteenth century, storytelling through dance has been a source of creative endeavors for choreographers. Themes based on mythical deities and heroes were evident in the earliest French court ballets during the reign of Louis XIV. Louis himself enjoyed dancing for nearly twenty years and his favorite role was that of the god Apollo (Au 18). In the late seventeenth century, dance became increasingly a more theatrical art form. Three artists whose works contributed to this trend toward theatricality were playwright Molière, dancer and composer, Jean-Baptiste Lully, and dancing master, Pierre Beauchamp. Molière's comédies-ballets required the dancers, the music, and the actors to contribute to the action of a single unified narrative (Au 24). This bond between dance, music, and drama, although transformed over the years, has continued to exist in some way or another throughout the centuries.

Whether it be in the form of myths, fairy tales, biographies, or poems, literature has often been a source of inspiration for choreographers. Just as some choreographers are inspired to tell stories through movement, so many audiences take great interest in the staging of stories. In the twentieth century, it
is in the world of ballet that we particularly find a fascination with dance which tells a story. Well known stories used by choreographers range from Charles Perrault’s fairy tales, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella*, to Shakespeare’s tragic tales of *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

In the 1940’s, story telling through dance began to emerge beyond its strong association with the ballet into a more contemporary scene. In 1949, choreographer José Limón created *The Moor’s Pavane*, based on Shakespeare’s well known tragedy *Othello*. Later, from the seventies and into the nineties, contemporary choreographers continued to explore the use of stories for the creation of dance works. Examples include German choreographer Pina Bausch’s *Bluebeard* (1977), French choreographer Maguy Marin’s *Cinderella* (1985), and in England, Peta Lilly’s *Wendy Darling, the Fairy Tale Becomes Adult* (1988). In North America, choreographer Arnie Zane created his version of *Peter and the Wolf* (1985), Ralph Lemon choreographed *Folktales* (1985) and Mark Morris crafted the clever piece, *The Hard Nut*, his 1970’s version of *The Nutcracker* (Monteiro 4).

As stated previously, I have chosen the following four literary works for analysis: Marius Petipa’s *Sleeping Beauty*; Leonid Lavrovsky’s and Antony Tudor’s versions of *Romeo and Juliet*; Frederick Ashton’s and Maguy Marin’s versions of *Cinderella*; and José Limón’s *The Moor’s Pavane*.

Several questions were addressed. What movement choices did the choreographers of these works make in order to represent the characters in the
story? To what degree are literally pantomimed gestures used in order to convey a truthful representation? How does each choreographer choose which plot elements are necessary in order to clearly portray the story? What choices do these choreographers make about set and costume designs? Do these choreographers choose to interpret stories as literal translations through movement or are they only interested in disclosing the essence of the story? I will be discussing how several of these choreographers deal with five key elements of bringing the text from the page to the stage. These elements include the overall structure of the work, movement vocabulary, music, set and costume design, and dancers. I begin by looking at the overall structure of the work before continuing deeper into the various elements.

The Structure

According to Joan Lawson, a dance historian and ballet reviewer since 1940, all types of ballets can be divided into three categories. There is the ballet that tells a story, the ballet that is inspired by a theme, and the abstract ballet. While they are all different in their styles, these genres have several features in common. They are all structured with a beginning, a climax, and an end. Lawson states that they should also conform to the unities of time, place, and action. These requirements for composition date back to 1635, when the French Academy codified rules for the composition of any literary work. Lawson claims that the story ballets which neglect these guidelines are usually less successful, because the story often becomes diluted, and as a result, the audience's
attention weakens (Lawson 55). In the case of the more abstract ballet where there is no plot, such as in Balanchine's work, the structure of the dance usually follows the thematic structure of the music (Lawson 57).

Typically, it is the first part of the ballet which serves to introduce the characters. The second part, considered the climax, is usually where the characters' conflicts are stated and developed. The third part of the ballet is generally the resolution of the conflict or the conclusion. Marin's version of Cinderella is an example of this structure. Marin's dance is organized into three parts: the first part takes place in Cinderella's home, and it is here that the characters Cinderella, the stepmother, and the sisters are introduced, the second part takes place at the ball and is where Cinderella and the Prince first meet, and their romance is delineated; the third part takes us back to Cinderella's home where the prince has found her, and they live happily ever after (Monteiro 173).

Since the ballet performance usually has to tell the story in a time period of approximately 60 to 90 minutes, the choreographer must make decisions concerning what is essential to the action of the story. In other words, how will the story unfold?

Often choreographers take liberties with the story line, and they may choose to add scenes that were not originally part of the story, or they may choose to omit scenes from the original story, as Ashton did in choreographing Cinderella. Ashton was more interested in the lyric and comic aspect of the story and decided to omit the Prince’s journey in search of Cinderella, because he
found the places to which the Prince travelled boring (Vaughan 229). However, both Ashton and Marin followed the three part structure that Lawson defines. Other works following this three act structure include Petipa's *Sleeping Beauty* and Lavrovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*.

How does it affect the story when the dance is condensed to one act as found in Tudor's version of *Romeo and Juliet* and in the case of Limón's *The Moor's Pavane*, where the dancers never leave the stage? Is the message lost or distorted as claimed by Yuri Grigorovich and Victor Vanslow who refer to the many versions of *The Sleeping Beauty* that have been modernized into one-acts (Grigorovich and Vanslow 52)?

Tudor's 1943 version of *Romeo and Juliet* was not a spectacular full-length ballet filled with episodes of swordplay, Renaissance court dance, and special *pas de deux*. It was condensed into one act with nine scenes (Reynolds and Torn 79). The action is intensely focused on the lovers and the events seem to flow out of one another. Dance historian Lillian Moore, and dance critic John Martin, wrote that Tudor was unsuccessful in translating the underlying meaning of the text (Howard 81). In the case of *The Moor's Pavane*, Limón was able to find his own structure even though it was not exactly parallel to the plot of Shakespeare's *Othello*. Although Limón drastically cut the number of characters down to four, omitted a number of incidents, and shortened the amount of playing time, according to Joanna Friesen, he was still able to capture the
essential elements of the plot with a sense of unity, requiring only twenty-two minutes (Friesen 191).

According to Lawson, once the basic structure of the ballet has been completed, the choreographer must find a way to link the sections together. Movement motifs that confirm a point of reference for the characters are one way of accomplishing the task (Lawson 59).

The Movement

The language of dance is the vocabulary of gestures and the expressiveness with which the gesture is given life. Lawson defines clearly the parallels between the dance and the text when she states that the steps are the verbs of sentences and the nouns are the postures or gestures. The punctuation of the sentence is in the expressiveness of the dancers and the movement phrases are the sentences of language (Lawson 65). We could then go one poetic step further to say that the message is spoken through the choreography. It is the expressiveness of these phrases that supports the mood of the atmosphere for the audience, and it is the role of the choreographer to give the dancers motive to move. For example, in her 1985 version of *Cinderella*, Marin creates stiff angular movement for the dancers to portray the characterization of dolls. Monteiro elaborates on the roles and movement qualities of the stepmother and stepsisters: "The stepsisters and stepmother are fat, bad and overconfident and they move heavily, with bent knees" (171).
Because ballet is built on a foundation of movement vocabulary that is codified, such as the "arabesque," a position of the body in profile, supported on one leg with the other leg extending behind the body and at a right angle to it, many steps are found repeated from one story to the next. However, some choreographers such as Frederick Ashton, Antony Tudor, and Leonid Lavrovsky have created ballets which have unique movement vocabularies. In Leningrad in 1940, Lavrovsky presented the first Soviet version of Romeo and Juliet to Prokofiev's music (Reynolds and Torn 75). Lavrovsky was concerned with creating a ballet which emphasized a very close translation of Shakespeare's text into dance. In order to communicate the meaning of any real life story or theme, choreographers must take into account all aspects of the characters including the personal moods, emotions, and actions of each (Lawson 130). The choreographer must develop a style of movement which reveals not only the physical attributes of the character, but also a particular character's mental and emotional state.

The expressive power of gesture, as developed by Greek and Roman pantomimes, is the ultimate model for theatrical dance even today. In casual usage, the terms mime and pantomime are often used interchangeably to refer to the use of the body to communicate without words, but there are many theories about the differences between mime and pantomime. In general, the word pantomime refers to the performance and the word mime to the performer (Hunt 8). Early twentieth century audiences were fascinated with pantomimed
narration. These performances relied solely on gestures to portray realistic accounts of human feeling and action (Foster 13). Lavrovsky too expressed a fascination with the use of expressive gesture in the story ballet:

In ballet, words are absent and the effect of every phrase of mime must correspond with the spoken language of the stage characters. Mime should never descend to trivial, commonplace, imitative gestures, but become a genuine theatrical performance, in which characters, emotion, and passion are expressed by the movements of the body, instead of by the varied intonations of the voice (Balanchine 359).

Lavrovsky's view of the ballet is not surprising considering the early training he would have received at the former Maryinsky Theatre, and the fact that the Russian ballet was heir to the pantomimic tradition of the ballet d'action. Ballet d'action was born of drama and dance (Howard 13). The early influence of choreographers like Jean Georges Noverre, Franz Hilverding, Gasparo Angiolini, and Marius Petipa, helped shape the Russian tradition. Noverre had a strong belief that dramas made suitable subjects for ballets. He once suggested "the masterpieces of men like Racine, Corneille, Voltaire and Crebillon ....as subjects for ballet in the grand style" (Howard 13).

Lavrovsky's production of Romeo and Juliet married the pure, classical technique with the pantomimic style inherited by the Russians from Angiolini and Noverre. However, Lavrovsky furthered the dramatic content through both dancing and pantomime. His greatest innovation was the integration of movement and gesture to tell a story (Howard 51). His ballet showcases a wide range of dance genres from pantomime to comedic character dance and
Classical *pas de deux*. Some examples of his use of pantomimed dance were shown in the many stylized dueling and fighting scenes which he choreographed and, which were balanced by pure dance sections including duets, trios, and variations for the *corps* (Reynolds and Torn 78). Pantomime can be used to etch out conflicts, reveal robust, aggressive emotions and to delineate the action. For example, the minor characters such as the nurse and Friar Laurence develop their characters through pantomime and gestures. In fact, the nurse and the Senior Capulets were played by older, no longer dancing mimes, who were cast for their dramatic abilities (Howard 55). The scene in which Juliet's body is discovered by her family is entirely pantomimed. Gestures of hands and face help further the action of the story ballet (Foster 8). However, the more intimate scenes between Romeo and Juliet show evidence of a classical ballet style because of the use of codified steps. For example, the maturation of Juliet is expressed by the stronger more technical use of her pointes (Reynolds and Torn 78). Both dramatic gestures and pure dance movements were tied closely with Prokofiev's music.

In part, it is the degree to which each choreographer uses pantomime that determines his or her particular style. For example, Tudor's approach was quite different from that of Lavrovsky. In fact, Tudor's choreographic concepts were radically different from those of most of his contemporaries in ballet. He had studied with a disciple of Mary Wigman and was strongly influenced by Kurt Jooss (Chazin 3). Both Wigman and Jooss were students of Rudolf Laban, the
teacher, theorist, and inventor of the dance notation system called Labanotation, who explored the expressive movement trend in Germany in the early 1900's (Au 96). Tudor's choreographic concepts can be directly related to predominant philosophies about choreography reflected at that time in the works of modern dance choreographers. As in works of significant modern choreographers of his time, Tudor's movement ideas derived from intense psychological notions. Tudor was also influenced greatly by Michel Fokine, a pioneer in expressive ballet who championed the use of classical vocabulary to support dramatic intent. Tudor studied acting and had a strong interest in theater artists and of characters driven by psychological concerns (Chazin 61). It was these influences that aided him in his unusual approach to Romeo and Juliet.

Tudor demonstrated that classical technique could be used to portray the psychological drama. He experimented with compositional structures, with the subtle nuances of dramatic gesture, and with the manipulation of classical ballet vocabulary (Reyna 214). Tudor did not need to use literal pantomimed scenes to translate the story; instead, he found delicate variations of the pantomimed gestures. Although Tudor's style was subtle, he gave his ballet the integrity of the Renaissance period. Tudor distilled the essence of the play rather than choosing to communicate the plot literally through specifically pantomimed movement (Howard 79). Critic Deborah Jowitt wrote in the Village Voice, "Tudor has built the dancing out of gesture so subtly and naturally that you are not aware of anything but the continuous unfolding of this lyrical disquisition on
Marcia Siegel wrote in the *Boston Globe*, "the story moves quickly, building to its powerful tragic end, without the long interpolations of sword play and ceremony that pad our more grandiose Romeo and Juliet ballets" (Balanchine 366).

Tudor set the ballet in the Italian Renaissance, and much of the movement is reminiscent of the paintings and court dances of the period: the men stand with one leg turned out, pointing a fashionable toe, while the women tilt back with their weight thrust mincingly forward (Balanchine 366). According to Reynolds and Torn, Tudor did not want to interrupt the flow of the ballet with a *pas de deux*. Unlike the balcony scene as interpreted by Lavrovsky, Tudor keeps the lovers separate as he does during most of the ballet. Juliet danced on the balcony curving and stretching her body in response to Romeo who was leaping and turning on the stage below (Reynolds and Torn 80). Deborah Jowitt noted, "Antony Tudor, alone of the many choreographers who have tackled Romeo and Juliet, keeps his protagonists separated during the balcony scene despite the urge to create a showy ecstatic *pas de deux*." This choreographic choice represents the kind of restraint and emotional selection for which Tudor is known (Chazin 126).

Tudor studied character and period dancing, so it was important to him to convey the mood of an era, in this case, the Renaissance. This interest in historical accuracy was demonstrated by the women dancers pushing their hips forward and tilting back for the gliding steps, and by the men standing erect.
In the ballroom scene, the male dancers used Basque steps, with hands above the head, clicking fingers, and stomping feet (Chazin 125). According to Susan Foster, these gestures aided in the power of the drama because dance not only translates the words but expresses all that words never could (Foster 11). Howard claims that Tudor's gesture choices were not easily identified with academic steps, but it was his creation of realistically derived gestures for the actual movement device that found expressive function. Thus, realistic gestures were transformed into a "poetic movement metaphor" (Howard 82).

An even more contemporary approach to movement representation is found in Limón's movement choices for his characters in The Moor's Pavane. In choreographing movements for the representation of characters, Limón captured the very embodiment of each character's movements, emotions, and moods. For example, for each character, Limón created an individual opening gesture which served as expression of his or her individual thought and which was used as a motif that ran throughout the performance. An example of this can be found in movement devised for the character, Iago, who is consistently evil and plotting throughout the story. Limón created a simple gesture of a clenched fist with one hand, and an open hand with fingers spread on the other to communicate this man's range of emotions from hate and jealousy to love and devotion (Friesen 166). These types of movement motifs can be helpful in clearly communicating the roles of the characters in the story. Consistency of movement, emotion, and
expression brings realistic representation of the story. Often these motifs are found in the music for the story as well.

The Music

Choreographers can choose to have music specifically commissioned for a particular work, they may have music specially arranged, or they can choose existing music for a particular work. First, I will discuss the idea of choreographer and composer working together to create the music for the work as in the collaboration for creating Sleeping Beauty. Even though composers had collaborated with choreographers before, I chose the collaboration of Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Marius Petipa to discuss because never before had the collaboration been so close, nor had music and choreography been so integrally related (Grigorovich and Vanslow 29).

Before Tchaikovsky composed the music he met with Petipa to discuss the general plan. Petipa had drawn up a detailed plan of the production based on Ivan Vsevolhsky's libretto. Petipa's notes included outlining the musical composition by requesting specific tempos, time signatures, as well as specific numbers of bars (Lawson 37). Although Tchaikovsky studied the plan carefully, he did not comply with Petipa's plan unquestioningly. Tchaikovsky sometimes offered his own suggestions as well, which Petipa adapted with occasional resistance, but eventually the two produced an integrated vision (Grigorovich and Vanslow 16). The following is an example of Petipa's musical and choreographic plan.
"The King, Queen, and four Princes appear on the palace terrace. The music is in characteristic noble style. Eight bars for the entrance to the terrace. Four bars for the question and four bars for the answer; this repeats four times. Broad 2/4's..." (Grigorovich and Vanslow 17).

The composition of Sleeping Beauty was completed in a short nine month period. Tchaikovsky, who stated that he had no fear of orders or deadlines, claimed that it was one of his best compositions. According to Grigorovich, Tchaikovsky's work was very significant because he reformed the role of the music in choreography. This was the first time that an integral expression of the theme of the work was based on a musical description of the characters and the drama (Grigorovich and Vanslow 29). Several examples of this meshing of music with the choreography can be found in the public gathering scenes. The music is lively and cheerful during scenes representing large crowds or processionals, and the movement is often pantomimed. Together, these elements create the atmosphere of a large chaotic crowd. On a more specific level, the music and movement of the fairy characters are introduced as motifs. For the Fairy Canari qui Chante (singing canary), the music is lively, graceful, and high pitched and the movement is made up of mincing steps, and flapping arms like wings of a bird. In the case of the Fairy Violent, the music is based on quick, sharp rhythmic accents and her movement is swift and forceful (Grigorovich and Vanslow 32).

Sometimes the music exists first, independent of the choreography, as in the case of Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet score. In 1935 Sergei Prokofiev
composed the *Romeo and Juliet* score with the aid of a Shakespearean theatre expert (Lawson 38). The score provides the ballet with a musical libretto, complete with a sequence of episodes, crescendos of action and emotion, and a separate musical motif for each of the main characters. Within the music there is a recurring, swelling melody expressive of the love of Romeo and Juliet. The score unfolds in a prologue, three acts, thirteen scenes, and an epilogue, following the structure of Shakespeare's tragedy of the star-crossed lovers (Reynolds and Torn 75). It was important to Prokofiev that the listeners find melody and emotion in this work.

Essentially the music portrays each character in a specific way. When Juliet enters, the music is a slow tempo, and is orchestrated mostly for strings and woodwinds. The climax, when the two lovers meet, is a section Prokofiev calls a "madrigal," meaning a lyrical outpouring of love, translated through themes for violins and violas. Humphrey Searle, a music historian, describes the music in the ending death scene as "lyrical and expressive and its lightness of texture somehow underlines the tragedy more than heavier and more obviously mournful music" (Howard 53).

It is this music structure that framed Lavrovsky's ballet. Tudor, on the other hand, thought Prokofiev's dramatic score imposed a cumbersome narrative on the ballet (Howard 86). Instead of selecting the Prokofiev score, he chose to choreograph to selected works by Frederick Delius, which had not previously been associated with ballet. The music Tudor chose from Delius is extremely
unusual, but the choreographer felt Delius's music enhanced the movement in a subtle way (Chazin 127). Tudor also felt that the English landscapist's music would fit the mood of Shakespeare more closely than did Prokofiev's. Delius's music meanders along its own path, painting a lush, summer atmosphere that is neither dramatically nor rhythmically assertive, but full of feeling (Balanchine 365). In this case, music and narrative were independent elements which Tudor merged to create his story ballet.

Another example of this sort of contrapuntal interaction of music and dance can be found in the court scenes. The dancers performed constant stepping and tapping which seemed ominous against the inconclusive, almost dreamy music (Howard 86). Tudor's ballet is not structured in the manner of those works using the Prokofiev score. Unlike Lavrovsky, Tudor wanted music that was subtle, so as not to be tied to the structure of the score. Tudor's choice of music was impressionistic and supportive, giving a particular emotional tone and background to the ballet (Reynolds and Torn 80). In fact, Delius's music provided no theme, hint of plot, or even musical counts. This use of musical abstraction made it difficult for the dancers to follow. While rehearsing, the dancers missed many cues and had a difficult time shifting their balances to flow with the music. It took many performances to understand the delicate aspect of the score that Tudor selected. Tudor's choreographic use of abstraction through the collaborative influences of music and design are the elements that made his Romeo and Juliet significant. The use of the musical element, even used in
abstraction as Tudor did, can still be an integral part of the language of dance which is representing the story. There are, however, elements of the story that are not directly related to the language of the dance but are part of the presentation, such as the costumes and sets.

The Set/Costumes

Since the communication of the story, in these dances, is dependent on the movement of the dancers, decisions regarding the costumes are crucial to the success of the dance and usually are of more concern than the decisions surrounding the set. Lawson believes, few choreographers have taken a serious interest in the work of other artists as sources for creation of sets and costumes (Lawson 33). Typically, sets are more limited in dance then they are in the theater. This is due to the space demand which is needed to allow for the movement of the dancers to take place (Friesen 210). As limited as the set may be to the dancers, traditionally in ballet, the story dance is often framed by a backdrop of scenery and a few other moveable props, such as chairs, to help support the atmosphere of the work. However, in Limón's The Moor’s Pavane, it is the absence of the set that makes a statement. The dance is performed on a bare stage where the four dancers appear in a center pool of light and never leave the stage until the end of the piece. However, the one prop used in this work took on great significance, the handkerchief that was given to Desdemona as a gift of love. This handkerchief is the through-line of the work (Friesen 141). Limón gave great attention to costuming his characters which were designed and
constructed by his wife Pauline Lawrence. Joanna Friesen gives a description of the characters as follows,

The "period look" of the Pavane costumes is an important factor in conveying the underlying dignity of the piece, yet the warm colors of gold, orange, and maroon at the same time provide a contrasting message of underlying emotional tensions (Friesen 210).

Friesen points out how the costumes are an integral part of the movement of the dance. When the Moor moves, his long heavy robe displays its own kind of flow and rhythm. Limón's costumes have symbolic meaning as well. Desdemona is dressed in a white dress, which is representative of purity and innocence (Friesen 210).

Not all contemporary choreographers avoid using sets to enhance their productions. Some choreographers use sets to make additional statements about the story even if they do not exactly mirror the story. Such is the case with Marin's set design for Cinderella. In her aim to maintain a childlike feeling, Marin envisioned a gigantic dollhouse with nine compartments to frame her dance. This set defines the stage space in a specific way and reveals to the audience the particular view she had of the fairy tale (Monteiro 170). Marin sees no need for the baroque style, gold embroidered outfits or slippers contemporaneous with Perrault's stories, nor does she see need to depict the transformation of the pumpkin into the coach. Instead, in Marin's updated version, she has the fairy present Cinderella with a sword, red dancing shoes, a skirt, and a miniature car to drive herself to the ball (Monteiro 181).
Marin takes another interesting twist in representing the emotions of the story by costuming the dancers in masks to prevent them from using facial expressions. Marin's vision for these masks was to make the dancers look like old wax dolls. The masks actually aided in developing the clumsy look of the doll characters, because the dancers' vision was hampered by the masks (Monteiro 169). The overall design of the sets and costumes Marin uses gives the piece an overall sense of fantasy.

Tudor, like Marin, took similar liberties with the set and costume design for Romeo and Juliet, but he had a different intent for their use. Marcia Siegel describes Tudor's approach, "He uses all theatrical elements to suggest the depth and universality of the theme, instead of just letting us recognize what we already know about it" (Balanchine 367). One of these theatrical elements was the choice to use the set design of Eugene Berman, after the original plans of working with Salvador Dali failed. Berman's costumes, marvelous pillars, archways and porticos were derived from Renaissance paintings which shaped the action. It seemed that the critics were intrigued with the beautiful architecture (Chazin 124).

Contrary to Tudor's more subtle approach to the set design, again Lavrovsky takes a more grandiose approach in the use of sets and costumes. Pyotr William's costumes and sets, that were meticulously detailed settings for the scenes, aided in the literal interpretation of Lavrovsky's Romeo and Juliet (Balanchine 354). He designed the set so that it would enable the performance
to flow without interruptions. Joan Lawson reported that "curtains and transparencies, by which sections of the stage could be isolated or opened up as scene succeeded scene, allowed for a virtually unbroken continuity of action" (Howard 54). While critics were fascinated by his sets, they were not so impressed with his choice of costuming Juliet in a simple draped frock. William's defense of the costume was that the light weight dress allowed her to move more fully (Howard 55).

The Dancers

If choreographers seriously contemplate the characters in a story and how they relate to one another, then they must take that same serious approach when choosing dancers to portray those characters. Lawson claims that choreographers are more satisfied with their choreographic ideas when working with a group of dancers they are comfortable with and know well. This way, she claims, the choreographer can cast individuals best suited for the role (Lawson 49). It is important that the dancers not only be able to do the physical work of the role, but they must also be emotionally inspired in order to express the part.

As early as the eighteenth century, dancers have been classified into categories. Jean-Georges Noverre describes four types of dancers in his 1760 Letters on Dance. They are noted as the danseurs nobles, dancers best suited for the aristocratic roles; danseuses classiques, dancers who were usually shorter and plumper but who were technical perfectionists; demi-caractère dancers, somewhat out of proportioned dancers who played comedic or jester
roles; and the character dancers, actor-dancers who's vital role is in
classification and pantomiming.

Today, the ballet world may not use those exact categories to classify
dancers, but, instead, dancers are often categorized as either technically
virtuosic types or expressive types. In some cases the dancer is blessed with
both technical virtuosity and expressiveness. In Lavrovsky's Romeo and Juliet,
Galliina Ulanova performed the role of Juliet and is said to have had beautiful
technique as well as a strong dramatic sense, as demonstrated in the
impassioned flinging of her capes, the breathless runs, and the exaggerated lift
of her upper body (Reyna 202). Whatever the strengths of the dancers, it is
important that they are able to bring themselves to their roles.

Limón was a choreographer who asked his dancers to bring their own
personalities to their characters. There was a likeness of the dancers to the
characters portrayed in Limón's Pavane. Clay Taliaferro, a black man who
played the Moor in 1973, had brought his racial background to the role because
he could relate to the Moor's feelings of suppression and mistrust (Friesen 176).
Betty Jones, a shy prim lady, suitably danced the original role of Desdemona.
As part of the process of helping the dancer become more like the character,
Limón allowed some of the dancers to choreograph parts of their roles. Jones
was one dancer who was entrusted with this choreographic responsibilities for
some of her own parts. Lucas Hoving and Pauline Koner were also known to
have re-choreographed two duets a day before opening night because new music was decided on at the last moment (Friesen 176).

Sometimes the characters do not seem to match up with the dancers. The effective casting of roles can be vital to the success of a work. Such is the case with Frederick Ashton's role in Cinderella. He and Robert Helpmann, a principal dancer with the Sadler's Wells Ballet, danced the roles of the step sisters. Ashton’s role turned out to be the hit of the ballet, not only because of the comic element of a man playing a woman’s character but in the way he brought the character to life on the stage. In later versions of Cinderella, when the step sisters were played by women, the ballets were not as successful. It seemed the comic element beneath these female characters was achieved by the performance of Ashton and Helpmann (Vaughan 234).

After investigating the choices these choreographers made in translating certain works of literature, I conclude that the interpretations of literature through dance are limitless and purely based on the intent of the choreographer. Sometimes the choreographer may choose to do a very close translation of the story as in the case of Lavrovsky and other times, they may choose to modify the story in order to please a contemporary audience like Marin chose. In either case, the story is told through the vision of the choreographer and thus translations will very broadly.
CHAPTER 3
BACKGROUND OF SEUSS

Theodor Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss) is known as one of the greatest children's authors of the twentieth century. He has entertained and educated four generations of children and their parents with his flamboyant style. His colorful illustrations, mismatched characters and simple rhymes have made his work recognizable throughout the world. His books, which have been translated into twenty languages, not only help children read, but encourage them to unleash their imaginations as well. Dr. Seuss's books are even accused of putting to rest the Dick and Jane books, readers for beginners, that were so popular in schools in the United States in the 1940's. However, these accomplishments did not come easily for Seuss. His success was accompanied by many years of struggling, hard work, and criticism by publishers, school boards, and writers, none of which compared to his biggest critic of all, himself.

To understand Theodor Seuss Geisel as the man who presented sensational wild fantasies through his books, is to understand Seuss as a child and as a man. He did not set out to capture the hearts of children and adults with his absurd sense of humor; instead he followed his own imagination, and invited us all to explore.
Theodor Seuss Geisel was born in 1904, in Springfield Massachusetts. Seuss's grandparents were German immigrants who came to Springfield to harvest their dreams in a new world. Although Seuss's grandparents met in the United States, his grandfather was born in the town of Muhlhausen in Baden, while his grandmother came from the German state of Württemberg (Morgan 6). In 1876, Seuss's grandfather, Theodor Geisel, began a brewery business with Christian Kalmbach, another German immigrant. This brewery would become the most influential and prosperous Geisel contribution to the community, as well as provide employment for Seuss's father, Theodor Robert Geisel. Seuss's father met and married Henrietta Seuss, the daughter of a well respected baker in the community. In 1906, the Geisels settled in a pale gray house on Fairfield street with their four-year-old daughter, Margaretha Christine, nicknamed Marnie, and their two-year-old son, Theodor Seuss Geisel, whom they called Ted (Morgan 4). During this time in Springfield, the German American community was growing and numbered about a thousand (Morgan 5).

Some of the influences on his work inevitably came from Seuss's early childhood experiences. Seuss was inspired and shaped by both of his parents, but in different ways. His father, who imposed discipline, taught Seuss the importance of perfecting anything undertaken through self-belief and determination. His father worked for thirty-five years at the Kalmbach and Geisel brewery until prohibition became law in 1920 and caused the brewery to close. After the brewery shut down, Seuss's father, who had already been appointed to
the Springfield Park Board, turned his interests to designing the city parks and running the zoo (Morgan 24). Seuss had a good relationship with his father despite their lack of common interests. Seuss was tall and gawky as a young boy and avoided athletics, but his father seemed to always be pushing him to toughen up. Instead, Seuss preferred the music of the Episcopal church, introduced to him by his mother, Nettie.

Nettie influenced the artistic side of Seuss, as well as his sense of humor. Seuss's mother played the piano and attended church regularly. Early on Nettie discovered that her son responded to rhyme and repetition because he would memorize all the words to the hymns. Additionally, Nettie would frequently read to her children (Morgan 7). Seuss and his sister could speak both German and English fluently since these were the languages of the household. A book Seuss cherished as a child was The Hole Book, by Peter Newell. He loved the holes punched through every page. He also remembered the rhyming verses of the Goops books, by Gelett Burgess. At an early age, Seuss fell in love with books, and his mother soon realized he could be bribed with books. If he did well at piano lessons, he could then select a book at Johnson’s, the local book store (Morgan 14). As Seuss grew older, he spent as much time in the Springfield Carnegie Library as he did attending Central High School (Morgan 20). Favorites authors included Charles Dickens and Robert Louis Stevenson, but he was especially fond of Jonathan Swift.
Books were not the only interest of Seuss. He also grew excited about the talk around the dinner table focusing on what had been invented in his father's personal workshop. He also enjoyed the family's gathering around the piano and singing after every meal (Morgan 13). As Seuss grew older, he and his father seemed to find more common ground, especially after his father was appointed to the Springfield Park Board. The two often went for walks in the park and the zoo, and Seuss always carried a pencil and pad of paper in hand and sketched along the way. These early sketchings began to reflect the personality and the craft of what was eventually to emerge from the mature writer. Seuss would sketch the animals but would exaggerate or mismatch features (Morgan 12).

While his father encouraged his drawings, his mother encouraged his pleasure of words. Seuss's childhood years were filled with tenderness and love. The closeness he felt toward his entire family helped him evade the growing animosity toward German Americans, and the pain of isolation that often plagued him in his teen years.

In 1915, the British Ocean Liner Lusitania was torpedoed by the Germans. The hostility toward the German Americans was beginning to swell as U.S. involvement was moving closer to war. Seuss began to feel set apart from the community. Local children began to harass him and even chased him home throwing objects at him and shouting out "Kaiser." On April 6, 1917, German submarines began attacking American ships, and the United States entered the war against Germany. Almost instantly the German-American culture was
suppressed. Only English would be spoken now, and the word German would be dropped from the common German-American phrase. During this time, Seuss grew even closer to his sister Marnie. Marnie was much more disciplined than her brother. She practiced the piano every day and spent most of her time reading and studying, thus setting an example for her younger brother (Morgan 20).

It was during Seuss’s teen years that his personality started to show, and his unique interests began to emerge. While his sister was diving into her school studies, Seuss was much more interested in what was happening in the community and often ended up at the movie theaters. Seuss’s teachers considered him bright but not dedicated. His early drawing experiences were disapproved of by his teachers. They wanted him to draw real things, the way they seemed to appear in reality, but he wanted to draw them as he saw them (Morgan 20). Later, he became more absorbed in school life but still followed his own style. He began drawing cartoons and commenting on school debates in the school weekly newspaper, The Recorder (Morgan 23). Ultimately, Seuss was voted Class Wit and Class Artist. It was through the influence of his high school English teacher that Seuss began to consider writing as a career and discovered the writings of Hilaire Belloc, whose verse he came to admire exceedingly (Morgan 24).

In 1921, Seuss enrolled in Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. Planning to major in English, Seuss’s interests fell not on his studies, but
focused on the humorous school magazine, *Jacko*, for which he soon began to create cartoons (Morgan 29). Dartmouth is where he began to unite his drawings with titles. Seuss took many English courses while at Dartmouth and eventually advanced at the magazine to the position of editor in chief. However, that all changed when Seuss and some of his friends were caught with bootleg gin during prohibition. He was relieved of his duty as editor in chief. However, Seuss continued to write for *Jacko*, but under several false names including what was to become his signature, "Seuss" (Morgan 36). Later, he would also produce thirteen books under the pen name T. LeSieg. [Geisel spelled backward.] On the whole, Seuss seems to have been ambivalent about his time at Dartmouth. He reflected back on those years sarcastically when he said, "English and writing was my major, but I think that's a mistake for anybody. That's teaching you the mechanics of getting water out of a well that may not exist" (Morgan 37).

After graduating from Dartmouth in 1925, Seuss enrolled in Oxford. He went to Oxford in hopes of becoming a professor of English literature. He wanted to discover the beauty of literature. However, Seuss fell into his own world again. The theory of literature didn't interest him. He wanted to experience life rather than analyze it. He preferred sketching rather than reading the required books. This was evident in some of Seuss's unpublished papers of which sketches were found amongst lecture notes (Morgan 44). Seuss decided he would never teach at a university and finally, after only a year, left Oxford.
Seuss said goodbye to English Literature, stating “I am now reading for ideas, wherever they may be found” (Morgan 49).

Oxford, however, was not a total loss for Seuss. It was there that Seuss met his future wife Helen Marion Palmer, a woman who ultimately would support him throughout his career. Helen was born in 1899 in Brooklyn, New York and like Seuss, seemed to have an aptitude for languages and literature. Seuss was intrigued by Helen’s strong will, and at the age of twenty-three, in the Palmer living room, he married her (Morgan 61). During their years together, Seuss and Helen travelled to over thirty nations. Seuss felt that travelling across Europe, the Middle East and Latin America sparked his creativity. It was also during this period of travel that he adopted a new philosophy about life. He thought adults took life too seriously and he vowed to enjoy life and retain a child’s perspective on life. He knew from experience that adults and teachers could smother children’s imaginations, so he was determined to never let that happen to himself.

Before Seuss began his career in writing books he spent a great deal of his time in advertising. In 1927, Helen and Seuss moved to Manhattan. He saw New York as a great source of inspiration, a place where his life would happen. Helen started teaching in New Jersey at Miss Baird’s, a private girls’ school and Seuss began submitting humor pieces and cartoons to New York editors. He even sent samples to Dartmouth classmates who were already established in New York. After receiving one rejection after another, things appeared bleak for 36
Seuss, until he finally landed a job working for the Judge, a well known social humor magazine (Morgan 60). This is where he really began to learn and develop his craft. He developed a repertoire of characters that became part of his life's work. Scientific satire was created there. "Science from Seuss" is the origin of the Dr. before his name. It would also be there that Seuss's cartoons would be noticed by Standard Oil of New Jersey. He began working for Flit, an insecticide company owned by Standard Oil, and it was this association that gained him national exposure. He created slogans for the company for seventeen years. "Quick Henry, the Flit" became a household catch phrase (Morgan 65). Seuss also created the "Seuss Navy" for Standard Oil Company, a campaign for lubricating boats. His contributions to the success of the Flit campaign went down in advertising history and earned him celebrity status (Morgan 65).

Seuss's first break into books came when a Viking Press editor requested him to illustrate a collection of children's sayings called Boners. As a result of the favorable reviews, Seuss tried his hand at creating an ABC book of strange characters. This time, however, he was not successful (Morgan 72). Despite the book's lack of success, Seuss continued his career in advertising and continued to spend his free time travelling around the world with Helen. Later, in 1936, Seuss would complete his first successful book, And To Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street. However, the success of the book was not immediate. In fact, finding a publisher who would reveal his creation to the world was not an easy
task. Seuss was rejected over and over again, and he was convinced the world would never accept his style. The most common rejection claim was that it was "too different" from other children's books. The other complaint the editors voiced was that there was no moral message in the book and that fantasy didn't sell (Morgan 81). This of course enraged Seuss to the point that he intended to burn the book he had just written. Coincidentally, on the way home to carry out the act of destruction, he encountered Mike McClintock, a classmate from Dartmouth, who worked at the Vanguard Press. McClintock introduced him to the president of Vanguard Press and they agreed to publish the book. In 1937, after over twenty-seven publishers had rejected his work, *And To Think that I saw it on Mulberry Street* was finally published. The reviews were positive, but Seuss would still have a long road to travel before he would be able to quit the advertising world. Seuss was thrilled and confident his first book would be a significant breakthrough. He was the first to link drawings as equal partners to the text. He wanted children who were not able to read to still understand the meaning of the story through the illustrations.

During the next four years, Seuss continued to work for Standard Oil and also completed a few more children's books. However, all that would stop for the next seven years of his life. With the outbreak of World War II, and Seuss's hatred for Hitler, combining with his feelings that life in New York was fizzling out, he and his wife decided they needed a change. They closed out their apartment in New York and headed for California where Seuss joined the war effort as
Captain Theodor Seuss Geisel of the Fort Fox Cavalry in Hollywood (Morgan 106). While in the army he created a series of stark cartoons that protested against Hitler as well as made attacks against the Americans' slowness to get involved in the war. Seuss also produced a number of indoctrination films that earned him a Legion of Merit award. In 1946, he won an Academy Award for best documentary short subject entitled Hitler Lives. This was an anti-German film that warned of the perpetual German militarism. The film sent a stern message stating that just because Hitler was gone, Germany could not re-enter civilization by merely extending its hand and saying it was sorry; when it seemed that it was only sorry that it had lost the war. The film was also aimed at audiences at home by warning that even in America racism must not live, and that we must be a "united world of tomorrow." Even though Seuss did not want anyone to forget what had happened, he had some reservations about certain messages in the film. After all, his own heritage was German (Morgan 111).

After Seuss finished serving in the army, he and Helen decided that they wanted to live in a warmer climate for the rest of their lives and settled in La Jolla, California. They converted an old observation tower into a new home and referred to it as the "tower" (Morgan 127). It was in the original tower part of the home that Seuss had his studio. Here he started experimenting with water colors and ultimately wrote McElligot's Pool, his first book in seven years, since the outbreak of war (Morgan 121).
Of course living in California made it much easier for Hollywood to be knocking on his door. While Seuss was fascinated with Hollywood and the idea of animation artists bringing his characters to life, he struggled with certain compromises that the producers set forth (Morgan 131). The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T. was the only (non-animated) film ever made of Seuss's work. The project started out as a dream come true for Seuss, but would end up marking the worst mistake of his career. The screening of the film was a flop and the critics agreed it was an embarrassment for Seuss. During the screening, a disheartened Seuss watched the preview audience trickle out of the theater until only a few people remained. According to Seuss, the preview night was the worst night of his life (Morgan 135). Even though not all of the reviews were negative, Seuss gave up on Hollywood and returned to his focus on writing.

Seuss never liked the short term life of his cartoons in the advertising industry, so he decided to devote all his energy toward writing children's books. John Hersey, a well known novelist, felt that children were bored with the Dick and Jane books. William Spaulding, who directed Houghton Mifflin's education division, challenged Dr. Seuss to write a book for children using words from a list of 225 words (Morgan 154). Seuss began to write the book and in nine months The Cat in The Hat was created. It sold a quarter of a million copies which helped establish the Random House publishing company, which remains the sole publisher of Dr. Seuss books to this day. Seuss could finally devote his career to writing books. However, these books never made it into the schools,
because nervous school boards saw revolution in the absurdity of the books and their lack of seriousness. Nevertheless, Seuss, at the age of fifty-three, was breaking new ground in the world of children’s literature, and despite the schools, a new generation was being drawn into the imaginary world of Dr. Seuss.

In 1967, after years of battling illness Helen died. Seuss’s father, mother, and sister had all passed away, and he was in a severe depression. Audrey Dimond, a close friend of Seuss, stood by him through his difficult times. She eventually divorced her husband to marry Seuss. Some people felt Audrey gave him new vitality, and kept him alive longer (Morgan 200). Seuss continued creating more books with each new year. He also continued travelling, giving short speeches at colleges and book stores. In the nineteen seventies and eighties, Seuss was in and out of hospitals. He had battled cancer, a heart attack, and eye disease, but he kept on writing. In the meantime, Hollywood was constantly nagging him to go commercial with his works. However, he despised the idea of commercialization, because his characters were like a family to him.

Toward the end of his life, Seuss’s books started to reflect more adult themes. For example, *You’re Only Old Once*, is a story about a patient’s view of life in the hospital. During a time when Seuss was having severe vision problems, he wrote *I Can Read with My Eyes Shut* (Morgan 236). By 1990, Seuss was starting to go in and out of creative periods and depressions. He slowly began retreating from society. His final tribute would be *Oh, The Places
You'll Go. After the reviews Seuss exulted, "This proves it!" I no longer write for children. I write for people!" (Morgan 283).

Theodor Seuss Geisel died in 1991 at the age of 87. Throughout his life, his biggest concern was illiteracy, and the cultural disintegration of our society. This concern is clearly seen in the following quote, "I hope for the children a world of peace and that they never loose their sense of discovery and wonder" (Morgan 287). Seuss once received a fossil print of a dinosaur from his father when he was in his twenties. This was to remind him that even though we would all be extinct, we all have an opportunity to leave a footprint in the sand (Morgan 74). By the time of Seuss's death he had written forty-seven books, which sold over 100 million copies and which were translated into twenty languages including braille. He had received numerous awards throughout his career including an academy award, a Pulitzer prize, and many others. Clearly Dr. Seuss has left an imprint, not only with the four generations in which he lived, but with many generations to come.
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF SEUSS'S LIFE AND WORKS

In order to tap into the creative process of any individual, it is important to understand individuals as a whole including background, personality, environment, and their creative product. Each person's cognitive abilities relating to his or her biological make-up is also an important factor, but is beyond the scope of this paper. Some of the influences of Seuss's background and environment have been discussed in Chapter three. In this chapter, in order to gain insight into Seuss's works, a closer look at Seuss's inspiration behind several of his works and the methods he employed to translate these inspirations to the page are examined. But first, before embarking on a discussion of Seuss's creative process, the term 'creative process' must be put into context and framed.

Framing the Creative Process for Analysis of Works

Analyzing the creative process is difficult because it involves studying not only human behavior, but the mystery of the human mind and all the varying factors surrounding the individuality of each creator. Often, curious followers of a creator's work inquire as to how the individual's work manifests, to which the
reply is frequently that of "I don't know" or "it just comes to me". Seuss, too, would simply reply that he had no idea where his ideas came from when asked this question. Sometimes if he was feeling particularly clever, he would respond, "somewhere in left field", or if that failed, he might create a story that he had travelled to an Arizona desert where he picked the brain of a refined thunderbird (Weidt 37). However, not all artists are so evasive. Some seem to have a basic idea of where their work might have originated. For example, Doris Humphrey, a modern dance choreographer from the nineteen forties and fifties, discussed her theory about creating dances in her book, The Art of Making Dances. After exploring Seuss's work, I found evidence of origins of many of Seuss's books. Although, part of creation stems from the unconscious mind, a place that seems to evoke magic and mystery, here I am interested in uncovering those ideas and thoughts that arise out of the conscious thought process.

The fascination with creativity has led to many discussions on the topic by philosophers and scientists, such as Plato and Francis Galton; by psychiatrists, like Freud; and artists like Picasso and Mozart. Due to the complex nature of creativity, the theories surrounding creativity are vastly different from one field to the next and many assumptions are formed. In The Creativity Question, Albert Rothenberg and Carl R. Hausman simplify creativity as the act of bringing into being and they suggest that creativity consists of at least three components including the creative process, the creative product, and the creative person (6). However, it is the work of Carl R. Rogers, a noted research psychologist and
Graham Wallas, professor, political activist, and researcher of human social behavior, that I will use to analyze Seuss's life and work. Together their theories cover the three elements of creativity described above. Rogers' theory on creativity is suitable because of the holistic approach he employs in defining creativity. His approach portrays the characteristics of the creative person, and describes the creative situations most conducive to creativity. Wallas' four stages of creative thought process serve as a more systematic way to look at Seuss's work. Though derived from his own reflections rather than empirical observations, Wallas' phases have been widely accepted by theorists researching creativity (Rothenberg 69). These two theories complement each other based on the realization that the uniqueness of the person is represented also by the uniqueness of the individual's thoughts.

Carl Rogers' definition of the creative process addresses the idea of the individual:

My definition, then, of the creative process is that it is the emergence in action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the materials, events, people, or circumstances of his life on the other (Rothenberg, Hausman 297).

Rogers presents three conditions within the individual that are associated with the creative act.
A) Openness to Experience: Extensionality: The individual is open to all experiences including those of form, color, sound, sensory, kinesthetic, and memory. The person has a level of awareness not bounded by predetermined rules, categories, concepts, or beliefs (Rothenberg, Hausman 297). For example, instead of perceiving a spoon solely as an item with which one eats, it is conceived that a spoon might serve as a hat to protect the skull against falling hardened oatmeal.

B) An Internal Locus of Evaluation: Internal evaluation is the most fundamental condition of creativity. The value of the product is determined from within the creative person and not by the praise or criticism of others. It is not that the judgement of others is completely ignored, however, the basic evaluation lies primarily within one's own satisfaction (Rothenberg, Hausman 297).

c) The ability to toy with elements and concepts: The ability to play with concepts is associated with openness to experience, in that one must have the ability to play spontaneously with ideas, colors, shapes, and forms, and establish uncommon, juxtaposed, or even ridiculous relationships. Through this playing, new ways of looking at life are discovered (Rothenberg, Hausman 301). Since it is Rogers' belief that the creative product is the individual stamp of the person, and related to the individuals' experiences, he claims that every individual possesses creativity which could be released given the proper conditions (Rothenberg, Hausman 298). While Rogers theories provide a thorough look at
the importance of individuality, Wallas has developed stages of the creative thought process he believes people experience during creative thinking.

As Wallas was formulating his theory of the thought process, he adapted the first three stages from Hermon von Helmholtz, a German physicist, and added a fourth stage (Qualter 69). Wallas calls his first stage, Preparation, and in this stage information is received and investigated. The second stage, Incubation, is a process where one is not consciously thinking about the initial thought or idea, but mental exploration is still happening. This is a difficult stage to analyze because it addresses unconscious thought. The third stage, Illumination, is the sudden realization of the problem. This stage directly relates to the Incubation stage but within no specific time table. One could be incubating for years before an illumination occurs. The final stage, Verification, is the stage where the validity of the idea is tested or reexamined. Wallas remarks "In the daily stream of thought these four different stages constantly overlap each other as we explore different problems" (Rothenberg 70). Within this theoretical framework of definition of creativity Seuss's creative process is examined.

Investigating Seuss's Process

Seuss's books were filled with nonsense humor, but they usually had underlying moral messages. He created books carrying messages about the environment and politics in addition to tackling racial and gender issues. Seuss
was an avid reader and was extremely knowledgeable in many areas in general. Later in life, Seuss would read up to four or five books a week, mainly history, biographies, and detective stories, along with at least one newspaper a day (Weidt 50). This is part of the Preparation stage, the gathering of information. However, Seuss did not embark on this intensive reading to investigate a specific idea, rather it was already a part of his every day routine. It was not the amount of information Seuss absorbed that made him a creative thinker, it was, instead, the unique way Seuss viewed the information he received. He once stated that he viewed things through the wrong end of the telescope (Morgan 10). It is exactly to this freedom from normal associations or predetermined ideas that Rogers was referring when he describes being open to the experience. Even as an adult, Seuss was able to let his imagination be unfettered. For example, The 500 Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins was inspired by a commuter train ride when Seuss lived in New York. A very stuffy man was sitting in front of him with what Seuss considered a ridiculous Wall Street broker's hat. Seuss was wondering what the man's reaction would be if he took his hat off and tossed it out the window. Seuss said to himself, "He'd probably just grow another one and ignore me" (Weidt 29). Seuss's wife, Audrey, often said her husband never grew up. It is a common thought and a curious statement that adults who have wild imaginations are people who never grew up, and that only children are entitled to imaginations. If this were the case, we might have been deprived of inventions
such as Edison's light or the Wright brother's airplane, and we may never have had the pleasure to read about all the wonderful worlds of Dr. Seuss.

After the Preparation stage comes the Incubation stage. According to the available evidence concerning Seuss's work methods, it seems he hardly let himself incubate a thought. He would set a goal, and once the initial thought came to him he would work feverishly until the job was done. However, there are several instances where a more lengthy period of incubation might have existed in Seuss's process. One example can be found in the creating of The Cat in The Hat. Seuss said the true inspiration to The Cat in the Hat came from an experience he had a year prior to writing the book. He thought back to an elevator operator he once encountered in a publishing company. Seuss described her as a woman with a "secret smile" and who wore only one glove. This same "secret smile" was used to describe the Cat in the Hat (Morgan 153). Another example of this incubation period could be found in connection with the writing of one of his most famous stories, How The Grinch Stole Christmas. Seuss mentions that he had been thinking about the meaning of Christmas for about twelve years. He thought people forgot the real meaning of Christmas and he disliked the fact that people thought more about the gifts than love. But when he actually sat down to create the Grinch, it only took him one week, except the last page, which he said took him two and a half months to finish (Weidt 42). Wallas defines this notion of having ideas transmitted back and forth between the unconscious and the conscious over a period of time, even years, as the
incubation period of the thought process. Then all of a sudden it comes to the surface in a creative outlet, leading to the next stage of Illumination.

Again, it is difficult to uncover Seuss's experiences pertaining to the third stage, Illumination, however, some circumstances arose during the creation of several books, that show instances of this stage. Seuss described one of these situations, which resulted in the creation of Horton Hatches the Egg. He was sitting at his drawing board searching for an idea. The window was open and a gust of wind blew some of his sketches around on his drawing board. He noticed that a sketch of an elephant had blown on top of a sketch of a tree. What is an elephant doing in a tree, he asked himself. That was the moment that launched the idea for his story and it was solving the problem of the elephant in the tree that concluded the tale (Morgan 97).

Being able to toy with the concept of an elephant sitting in a tree when in reality that situation would never happen, is one of Rogers conditions for unleashing creativity. Seuss realizes the potential of this ridiculous relationship and he solves the problem by suggesting another impossibility, the elephant is babysitting a bird's egg. Even into his late sixties, Seuss was having sudden illuminations. By this time, his work started to show signs of more personal and emotional reflections than found in his earlier works. The Lorax, grew out of Seuss's anger at the damage that he perceived was being done to the environment. Although he felt passionately about the subject, Seuss had difficulty putting his ideas into the form of a story. To take a break from writing,
he and Audrey flew to Africa. While gazing into the plains of Kenya, he spotted a herd of elephants coming over the hill. This scene triggered something in his mind and he wrote *The Lorax* that afternoon (Weidt 52).

The final stage, Verification, is one stage where a clear connection can be found pertaining to Seuss's work methods. Verification is the testing and examination of the idea or creation (Rothenberg 70). Seuss labored over his books, sometimes for years. He would rewrite and reevaluate, rewrite and reevaluate, and rewrite and reevaluate. In 1936, on the way to Sweden, Seuss was listening to the rhythm of the ship's engine and came up with the rhyme of his first book, *And To Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*. The words did not flow easily. He repeated and questioned every word of every verse, rewriting draft after draft. He insisted on momentum in his work and demanded excitement. Seuss wanted his readers to be enthralled by his book. It took him six months before he was satisfied (Morgan 79). He never seemed to be satisfied with his work. His wife said she would have to keep him from tossing out his books when they were nearly complete (Morgan 62). At the end of the day, Seuss's wastebasket and floor would be piled high with sheets of discarded paper (Weidt 36). This behavior, exhibited by Seuss, is the fundamental condition of internal evaluation that Rogers maintains is part of the creative state. Seuss himself was his biggest critic, and it was the constant re-evaluation of his creations that resulted in his greatest works.
Seuss seemed to have ideas springing from his mind all the time and from many different directions. This, according to Rogers’ theory of openness to experience, is because Seuss had a high level of awareness to the events happening around him. The revelation to write *Bartholomew and the Oobleck* came during World War II, while Seuss was in France. Seuss and some other soldiers found themselves trudging through mud and rain for many days and nights (Weidt 37). His memory and physical sense of that journey inspired, Oobleck, a green, gooey, gummy, glue like substance that fell from the sky in the story. It covered everything in sight. The Oobleck was used as a metaphor for appreciating things that we have, such as varying seasons. Even into his seventies and eighties, and while he was ill, Seuss was hard at work transferring his thoughts and ideas to paper. During these years, he spent much of his time in and out of hospitals. Seuss became very impatient with the long waits while visiting doctors, so he started to bring along a pad and pencil to sketch. Seuss would let his imagination go wild thinking of all the strange contraptions that the doctors might be placing him in. Out of this experience *You’re Only Old Once* was written. This book was written out of protest for the health care system which Seuss felt was overpriced and wasteful (Morgan 261). Ideas seemed to flow endlessly for Seuss, but this was not always the case.

Many times Seuss found himself in a rut, and when this happened he would lie on the floor and stare at the ceiling, sometimes all day. Other times, he would pace the floor and toss a stuffed dog into the air. Finally, if no inspiration
came he would put on a "thinking cap", as he called it, from his hat collection consisting of several hundred hats. Whatever hat he chose, usually sparked an idea in his mind (Weidt 36).

If a pattern exists at all in Seuss's process it can only be summed up by Seuss's own words when he stated that his creative process consisted of time and sweat (Weidt 48). Seuss gave the following advice to students who were pursuing careers in writing:

Write a verse a day, not to send to publishers, but to throw in waste baskets. It will help your prose. It will give you swing. Shorten paragraphs and sentences, then shorten words....Use verbs. Let the kids fill in the adjectives... (Morgan 124).

Whether ideas flowed or not, Seuss worked at least eight hours a day. After investigating the work of Seuss, it is evident that his stories were created in various ways and by a multitude of inspirations. Seuss used problem solving, chance, goal setting, and even betting techniques to create works. He was once bet fifty dollars that he could not write a book using only fifty words. Hence, **Green Eggs and Ham** was created. So, while different techniques can be used to create a product, the actually process is very difficult to sort through because of the complexity of its nature.

Now that the creative person and the creative process have been discussed, the last element framing this study is the creative product. A product is considered creative when it has value or it is determined useful (Glover 211). The concept that the idea must have utility or value to be creative can be
controversial due to the subjective nature of who is deciding the value of the product. How do we decide what has value? Is it based on majority opinion? Even in terms of utility there are some issues to be raised. For example, Seuss's first book was rejected by twenty-seven publishers. The most common rejection claim was that it was “too different” from other children's books and that fantasy did not sell. The schools would not use them because the school boards were nervous about the absurdity in the books and the lack of seriousness they showed. He was seen as a revolutionist in their eyes. Nevertheless, Seuss was breaking new ground in the world of children's literature and whether the schools liked it or not, the world was being thrown into his imaginary world. Then years later, the books were being published and adopted by schools. Additionally, his books turned out to help children read better. The point is that what was not useful at one point in history has become useful later on. Similar situations have happened throughout history in many fields including science, health, and the arts. This would be the weakest area to use to determine the creative elements of Seuss's work, although, today, children and adults find tremendous value in Seuss's work. His books give readers a chance to gain new skills in an enjoyable way.

Investigating Seuss's Techniques

When discussing the idea of telling a story, the comparison of a two-dimensional story found in a book, with a three-dimensional medium, such as a
dance, is not exactly similar, however, there are many common traits that can be found in both. The five elements used to analyze the dances discussed in Chapter two, will not directly apply in the same manner to analyzing Seuss's stories. However, comparable elements will be used instead. These include using the rhythmic aspect of Seuss's text as compared to the musical element discussed in the choreographic process, set and costume elements from the dance productions will be replaced by the color techniques of the illustrations and the design of the text, and an analysis of the dancers will be replaced with an analysis of the characters on the page. The elements of structure and movement will remain the same.

Structure

Most of Seuss's books have a beginning, a middle, and an end. "Happy endings", were also characteristic of Seuss's stories, as he insisted on them. However, some critics disagree that The Butter Battle Book, a story addressing the dangers of nuclear weapons and war, had a happy ending. In fact, not only did this story not have a happy ending, but it also is one of the few books created by Seuss that did not have an ending at all. The "Yooks", who preferred their butter on the bottom of the bread, were divided against the "Zooks", who preferred their butter on top of the bread. At the end of the book, one Yook and one Zook stand on opposite sides of a wall, each holding a "Big Boy Boomeroo", which was illustrated by a small red ball, no bigger than the size of a cherry, waiting to see who would drop it. The ending line in the story reads: "We will
see..." This left the reader with the impression that the story was not over or resolved. Seuss claimed that he was just representing the truth and that a happy ending would have been dishonest (Crichton 1984).

Seuss’s books ranged in pages from approximately ten to sixty with the majority averaging about fifty. Even with such short stories, Seuss was able to introduce his characters, set up a conflict or climax, and end with a resolution. Generally, Seuss introduces his characters at the beginning of the book, however, in some stories new characters may be introduced throughout three quarters of the story. The conflict usually takes up the majority of the story, while the ending usually happens in a short one or two page resolution. MacDonald states that ending the book in one page is an efficient way to tie up all the loose ends of the story (MacDonald 122). Unlike some story ballets, where the endings linger into long celebrations, Seuss’s stories conclude the happy ending as the last page of the story.

Similar to motif elements found in the dance, Seuss uses repetition to link together ideas within a story. However the repetition in the story is used to advance the story line and to not fill up useless space. The Cat in the Hat is an example of this. At the end of the story, the cat uses a cleanup machine to recall objects already introduced at the beginning of the story. The vocabulary is repeated but in a different way. The rhyme also enables the reader to relate the pronunciation of a new, strange word with the word with which it rhymes (MacDonald 120).
Movement

The rhythm found in Seuss's books give the overall story a sense of momentum and flow. Through his skillfully drawn illustrations, Seuss is able to create a sense of action on a still page. The reader is able to associate the sense of motion through depictions of weight, space, and to a certain degree, dynamics. This representation was due to the specific techniques Seuss used in drawing his illustrations as well as his use of text describing the action. Due to the abundant characters presented in the story, If I Ran the Circus, is used to discuss these elements of weight, space, and dynamics. However, these discussions could also apply to many of Seuss's other works.

The sense of suspended weight can be viewed in some of Seuss's characters, who appear to be leaping in the air, such as the "Through-Horns-Jumping-Deer". These characters are depicted jumping effortlessly through each other's horns. They appear to be very light footed and resilient. Another way to perceive a sense of weight is in how the characters' body position and size are drawn. For example, some animals are drawn heavier and with slouching body parts, such as the head and neck. This gives the character a more grounded appearance, while other characters are drawn small and feathery as if they are delicate and light.

The space is defined clearly in the illustrations. The characters are often drawn going or coming from some place. A technique used by many illustrators to give a sense of motion to their characters is the drawing of excess lines
around the characters that I refer to as "motion lines" (MacDonald 123). For example, the "Drum-Tummied Snnumm" is a character who is holding big batons in each hand, but instead of hitting a drum, he plays on his tummy. The "Drum-Tummied Snnumm" is shown with its right hand in the air and its left hand striking his belly. Starting at the hand, one set of motion lines, about one-quarter inch thick, are drawn in curving arcs. They then trace up and over the top of the head before ending back at the belly. Another set of short thin lines mixed in with slightly longer thin lines are drawn exploding out from the belly. These lines indicate to the viewer that both sound and movement reverberation has happened. Combined, these two different sets of lines help create a visual image to the reader of the most logical path of the arms. This technique also creates the illusion the idea that the motion is continuous even though it is not. This sense of action can be found clearly in all of Seuss's books.

**Music**

Sound is not heard in Seuss's stories, unless the music comes from the voice of the reader. Seuss had another purpose for the rhymes in his book besides the sheer fun of reciting them. Seuss believed that the rhyme forced the recognitions of words. He also felt that once the rhyme was established, then kids would respond and want to continue on with the story. If the rhythm was disrupted, then the child would not be satisfied. Another aspect of the rhyming in his stories is the use of repetition. Seuss felt strongly about using repetition in his text in order to facilitate word usage (Lystad 201). Creating these rhymes
was a tedious task for Seuss. When asked whether rhyming came easily to him, Seuss responded, "The agony is terrific at times, and the attrition is horrible" (Anonymous 69). Many times he said he was forced to throw away some of his best work because he could not find a suitable rhyme that made sense in the last line of the rhyme. Seuss worked hard on the rhythm of his stories and he was never satisfied until he thought they were perfect. He would stay with the line until the meter and rhyme were right, even if it took five hours or two years (Lathem 22). It was important to Seuss to keep the momentum of the work going from beginning to end.

Characteristic of Seuss's work, was his use of anapestic tetrameter, a form of verse consisting of a metrical foot of two unaccented syllables followed by one accented syllable. An example of this would be the ships' rhythm that Seuss couldn't get out of his mind while travelling to Sweden: "Da-da-Da-da-da-Dum-Dum, da-Da-da-da-Dum." This provided the inspiration for Seuss's title of his first book, And to think that I saw it on Mulberry Street. It is the anapest line that embodies movement and swiftness (Morgan 80). Along with the idea that repetition is an important element in Seuss's books is the fact that the rhythm must keep changing as well. Seuss stated that he would get going at a certain meter, and then he would turn the page and introduce one line to break the rhythm. He would then build a new rhythm from there (Cott 112). Another rule Seuss followed is that more verbs should exist in the story than adjectives and whenever possible, the illustration should replace the adjective. An example of
this can be found in the Seuss's story What Was I Scared Of?: "And then they
moved! Those empty pants! They kind of started jumping. And then my heart, I
must admit, It kind of started thumping." The text is partnered with an illustration
of a pair of green empty pants running through the woods.

**Colors and Text**

Seuss's seemingly simple illustrative techniques stemmed from how
Seuss perceived children's likes and dislikes. He talked about his style of
illustrations by saying that, to children, the idea of art is a pen-and-ink drawing
filled in with flat color. He also notes that the one book that used modulation of
tones, *McElligot's Pool*, was not as successful with the children (Cott 114).

It was very important to Seuss that the text and illustrations be on facing
pages. In fact, he was one of the first authors to link drawings as equal partners
to the text. This would help children clearly associate the words with the
illustrations, as well as help children who could not yet read follow the story
(Morgan 84). Seuss had a very demanding sense of color for his illustrations as
well. When he delivered the book, *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*, he
brought with him three crayon remnants as a color guide for the production team.
He insisted that the lemon yellow, carmine red and turquoise be used to
represent his fish (Morgan 165). In another case, sixty shades of green were not
right for the green parrot in *Oh, Say Can You Say*, so Seuss asked the art
director of Random House Publishing to mix a "more parroty" sixty-first (Morgan
240).
When Seuss began working on a book, he always began with tissue or tracing paper. He would then pen in the pictures and the text for one page before moving onto the next (Weidt 34). In the middle nineteen-forties, there were breakthroughs in the cost and quality of lithography, which was beginning to replace letterpress printing. This new development allowed for an entirely new spectrum of colors to exist. Inspired by these possibilities, in 1947, Seuss created the wonderful world of *McElligot's Pool*, a book cherished by artists for its beauty and charm (Morgan 120). This book would also bring Seuss his first Caldecott citation. This would be his only book in watercolor, because he believed children preferred flat, bold colorful illustrations (Morgan 122). His second Caldecott citation would come to him for *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*, another book Seuss dissected for just the right color. The book appeared in black and the single color of green (Morgan 123).

**Characters**

When Seuss started working on a new book, he always began by doodling a character first. He would doodle over and over again until the character was developed. Seuss said most of the drawings he drew would end up in the trash, but occasionally he would keep several characters he liked and situate them together to see what might take place (Hopkins 113). If the characters became entangled in a conflict, a plot was created. Then words would begin to flow. Seuss said that when he became mentally stuck in a story he would draw his way out (Wheeler 23).
Whether or not Seuss's characters closely resembled humans in appearance, all of his characters had human qualities. This can be attributed to the fact that Seuss's characters were very expressive through their facial expressions and body positions. Seuss captured the human emotions of anger, surprise, sadness, and happiness in each character he drew. For example, on the first page of the *Sneetches* there are two Sneetches, one with a star, and one without a star. The Sneetch with the star, is drawn with his head up high, his nose in the air, and his hair standing tall, while the Sneetch without the star, is drawn with his head hung low and his eyes and hair drooped downward. The reader can easily identify the emotions portrayed by each of these characters.

Seuss ascribed his characters' stylization to the fact that though he loved to draw zoo animals, but could not draw things as they were, he could nevertheless get at the soul of the thing. So Seuss developed his peculiar style and used exaggerated features to bring his ideas to the foreground (Hopkins 112).

Another important aspect in Seuss's method was consistency and logic of characters. He used the example that if a character has two heads, then it must have two toothbrushes, and two hats. He seem to believe that children really do analyze fantasy and if it is not logical, then they will not accept it (Morgan 124). Working in such a careful and thoughtful manner, Seuss's characters usually took months to be developed into their final form (Morgan 95).

Investigating Seuss, who often claimed he had no idea from where his works emerged, has revealed an abundant amount of information uncovering
specific inspirations behind his creations and the methods he used and practiced. It is the embodiment of all these above discussed aspects of Seuss that contributed to the symbolization of the choreographed work Seuss Suites.
CHAPTER 5
CREATING SEUSS SUITES

Now that an historical view of how selected choreographers have brought literature to the stage has been presented and an analysis of Seuss's life and works has been conducted, I will examine the process of creating Seuss Suites. I will frame the analysis of producing Seuss Suites by using the same five elements used in analyzing other choreographer's work in Chapter two.

The Structure

While the overall structure of Seuss Suites did not follow any particular story of Seuss, it was still organized with a beginning, a middle, and an end. The opening of Seuss Suites was inspired by the same challenge that launched Seuss's career into the children's book industry as a full time career. The challenge from John Hersey was to create a book that children would not be bored with, hence this inspired Seuss to write the Cat in the Hat, a book for beginning readers. Seuss Suites began with a dark stage and the sound of a school bell. The lights slowly came up revealing four students sitting in red chairs and one figure standing in front of them representing a teacher character. Her posture seemed to place her in mid sentence of a book she was reading. Unlike Lawson's analysis that the characters are introduced in the beginning, I
only revealed the characters relevant to the opening idea of the work. The remaining characters were introduced later, in the middle sections.

The middle, which consisted of six sections, is actually representing several aspects of Seuss's life. Therefore, there is not one main climax to the story but several. Due to the expansive life and career of Seuss, I had to make choices about which aspects of Seuss's life I would portray. My choices were narrowed to three issues that were significant to Seuss. These included social, political, and environmental injustices, addressed in his stories. The six sections are described in order and named below. The first three sections entitled, "Things", "Creatures", and "Hunter", all deal with the social aspects found in some of Seuss's books. These sections are followed by the "Sneetches" section which addresses both the social and political messages found in several of Seuss's stories. The next section "Yertle", continues to explore the political issues. And finally, the "Lorax" section deals with the environmental issues portrayed in some of Seuss's stories.

The ending of Seuss Suites was devised to represent the very core of what I perceived Seuss's life and works to be about. Seuss emphasized the importance of being an individual. Yet, he believed people could exist as individuals and still live peacefully with others, and in deed, support those who may appear to be different from us. The final movement in Seuss Suites was created as an abstraction from these concepts.
Due to selected feedback by some audience members, I am inclined to think about new ways to approaching the overall structure of this work. The fact that the audience was not aware of all these aspects of Seuss's life that I introduced, and the fact that the audience came with certain expectations and ideas about Seuss, that is, his absurd stories like *The Cat in the Hat* and *Green Eggs and Ham*, along with the fact that I chose more than one theme or idea to portray in *Seuss Suites*, had left some audience members feeling confused. One way to address this issue is to include more information either through additional program notes, a pre-concert talk, or through verbal text to narrate the dance. In any case, more information needs to be given to the audience.

**The Movement**

I will discuss the movement choices of each section in great detail because it is the movement language used that narrates the verbal or written language of the story.

The four student characters, introduced in the beginning, perform a series of gestures that could be found in almost any school classroom. The students with sluggish postures, had just slid down into their chairs, when they were suddenly brought to attention by the teacher's voice reciting, "Look! Look! Said Dick." During the next two minutes, the teacher recited from the old Dick and Jane books that were so popular in the 1940's. The students appeared to be bored and not paying much attention to the teacher. Pantomimed gestures were used to convey these bored attitudes. For example, some dancers played with
their hair, while others stared off into space, and still others struggled to stay awake. Eventually, the students become more and more phased out from their reality in the classroom, and they begin to escape into fantasy. This idea of escaping from reality was depicted not only by the dancer's gestures and focus, but by the distortion of the teacher's voice as well. The next scene suggests that the four students have become so bored with their setting that they dream up two characters in their mind. The idea for these two characters was inspired by Thing One and Thing Two from the Seuss's *Cat in the Hat* book. In creating movement for these two characters, I took a different approach from the pantomimed technique used to represent the students. Instead, I studied the images of Thing One and Thing Two on the page to inspire my movement choices.

In order to represent Thing One and Thing Two, their postures, facial expressions, and their role in the context of the story had to be studied. Seuss drew them with their eyes often closed and with a grin stretching from ear to ear. This gives them a sort of angelic yet mischievous look. In the book, they spring from a box to shake the hands of the children who looked surprised to see them. Thing One and Thing Two represent the carefree, non-authoritarian spirits often found in children. From the time they are introduced in the story, they seem to be in a constant acceleration of momentum. These characters end up flying kites throughout the house, destroying everything in their path. In creating the movement for my characters, I examined the leaping postures of the characters.
In *Seuss Suites*, the dancers portraying these characters came leaping out of the book (set piece) and bounced and jumped until the student's imagination was halted temporarily with the interruption of the teacher's voice. In between all the jumping and bouncing of the characters, they made several movement references to the idea of flying a kite. Creating the movement for these characters came quite quickly and logically. The illustrations of the characters on the page really did seem to jump right off the page into the rehearsal studio. Although it took a bit longer, I applied the same process while creating the next main dance section entitled "creature" section.

Studying various creatures from the book *If I Ran the Circus* and *On Beyond Zebra* inspired the movement for this section. Many of Seuss's four legged animals are drawn walking with all legs on one side of the body in the forward or backward position. Often the arms are held next to the body or in some strange held position in front of the body. However, it was the facial expression of these characters that really gave me the idea for how they might travel. These characters were also drawn with their eyes closed and with pleasant grins. This expression gives the sense that these animals have confidence and are very relaxed as shown by their lazy struts. Many of the illustrations reminded me of elk or deer. After studying these animals, I began to experiment with different postures, and finally arrived at a posture described as having the upper torso slightly hunched forward, with arms dangling in front. This posture was introduced at the beginning of this section and remained as a
motif throughout the section. This posture also indicated to me a certain way to travel. It forced the body to be out in front of the legs and therefore, made it awkward to travel. In order to capture that sort of lazy strut of the characters, the movement required much strength from the legs. When the creatures stopped in one place, their movement gestures were derived from the idea that the limbs on the same side of the body would work simultaneously. For example, the right arm and the right leg stretch out similarly to limbs of a bird. The movement consisted of brushing the limbs out into space and then retracting them back toward their bodies. This action alternated between the right and left side of the body giving it a slightly awkward appearance.

Another trait found in Seuss’s depictions of animals, was their round, soft appearance, as if they would be fuzzy to the touch. Only occasionally can one find stick-like prongs protruding out of some characters; otherwise, most characters seem to have a feathery, continuous, spineless sort of look. Therefore the flow of the movement designed for the dancers would match the curvy, boneless aspects of Seuss’s characters. The movement was continuous with many different body parts moving in polyrhythms. The movement choices were designed to give the dancers a less than human appearance.

When traveling in space, the dancers moved in groups and they always remained spatially very close to each other, just as one might find in a herd of animals. This created a community among the performers which is reflective of drawings from Seuss’s book *The Sneetches* and *If I Ran the Circus*. An example
in the choreography illustrating this communal grouping occurs is when the dancers are huddled together in a resting position. One at a time a dancer pops her head up as if to check to make sure all is well. After observing many of Seuss’s illustrations, the animals in the stories always appear to be travelling long distances. This was partly due to objects, such as buildings, trees, archways, and stairs, found in the background of the illustrations. This device provided an interesting three-dimensional perspective on a two-dimensional page. Seuss’s characters were either going toward the distant objects or coming from them. I was faced with a similar spatial problem with the choreography. How could I give the impression that my creatures were travelling a long way on a stage that was fifteen feet deep by twenty-five feet wide. I attempted to solve this problem by having the dancers repeat a cantering run throughout the section. I had them travel several times across the stage to implant in the audience’s mind the idea that these creatures have travelled long journeys.

Next, came the hunter section. I initially, started working on this section to represent the idea that the hunter is always hunted by somebody else who is usually bigger and stronger. This idea was inspired by several political cartoons of Seuss’s. I was confronted with a problem in developing this section due to the loss of the original dancer in the role. Two weeks before the show, the dancer originally cast in the role broke his clavicle bone, so I had to quickly find a replacement dancer. This new dancer was stylistically different from the original dancer so I was forced to throw away the original movement ideas and start from
scratch. Since there was not enough time to develop this role with a new dancer and make it successful, much of the movement came from the dancer so that he would feel comfortable with the movement. As the choreographer, I ended up in the role of director.

The most successful aspect of this section was the interactions of the hunter with the video image that was projected on one side of scenic screen representing a book. For example, at one point in this section, the hunter was thrashing around a large purple object, that looks like a long tube. He approached the video screen, which was projecting an animation of a jungle. The motion was panning through the jungle so it gave the illusion that the hunter was travelling through the jungle. After he came to a clearing, to his surprise, he was confronted by a fish. At another point, the hunter was on the ground rocking on his tailbone with his feet in the air as if he was riding some sort of apparatus. On the screen adjacent to him was an image of outer space. These interactions of dancer and video were brief, perhaps too brief.

The next section was radically different from the others mentioned above and this is mainly due to the fact that it was inspired by another side of Seuss with which many people are unfamiliar. Seuss had a passion for fighting social and racial injustices that he observed in the world everyday. He fought some of these conditions as a film maker for the United States army, and during his seventeen year career writing political and advertising cartoons. This section was inspired by the story *The Sneetches* and by *Hitler Lives*, a short film.
documentary produced by Seuss. Developing this section was an interesting process.

I am reminded of the Incubation stage that Wallas describes. I was struggling with the idea of this section for several months and was not sure how to develop it. Having read this book at least twenty times, I decided to read The Sneetches story once again. During this reading however, when I opened the first page of this story inspiration suddenly struck. The image is of a Star-Belly Sneetch with its nose in the air snubbing the Plain-Belly Sneetch as he stands there frowning. From this, stemmed the idea to have representations of six high society women dancing while clips from WWII were played in the background. Due to copyright issues, I did not use the film Hitler lives, but instead, I used government films to show similar footage addressing issues that Seuss tackled in his film.

The movement vocabulary for this section was very gesture oriented. In fact, I decided that every movement for this section must either be a common gesture or be derived from and still resembling closely a real gesture. The scene was based on Hollywood images of high society parties and gestures were created evocative of these settings. Some of these gestures included the miming of holding a cigarette with a relaxed wrist while the other arm supports the elbow underneath; waving gestures; bowing; glances across the room; showing off jewelry; and shaking hands. The women's expressions and actions gave the impression that they were unaware of the devastation and destruction
that was playing in the background. This set up an interesting scene filled with contrasts and brought forth much emotion from the audience.

Seuss was very upset with what he called the procrastination of the United States’ involvement in the war and I chose to make a statement about his feelings. Even though Seuss was German, he hated Hitler and other Germans who were engaged in horrific acts, and his anger prompted him to write the script for several anti-German films, which won him several academy awards. So while this section was not directly reflective of a particular story by Seuss, it was definitely derived from his strongly held conviction that nobody was better than anybody else. This section was unsettling for audience members for various reasons. One reason concerned the audiences’ expectation based on what they already knew of Seuss’s work, which was mainly his work in children’s literature. The second reason was that it represented an emotional time during the history of the world at war. Based on feedback I received concerning this section, I gathered that the audience was moved emotionally but they didn’t understand the correlation with Seuss. Again, as stated earlier, additional information may have helped clarify this section.

In the Yertle section I used the exaggerated drawing style of Seuss to create the movement. Seuss would often take a characteristic of an animal and exaggerate it. So I used this same idea as a tool for creating movement for this section. I started with a very straightforward gesture of walking and then took one small aspect of that gesture and exaggerated it. For example, I focused on
the slight rise of the body in between taking steps. This movement became idiosyncratic for this section. The body in mid-stride was taken into a jump, straight into the air. The legs were straight and the dancers switched legs while in mid air. This was peculiar movement to be used to travel across the space. It was in this section that I really focused on another important element found in Seuss's work...repetition. This exaggerated jumping motif was used throughout this section for the dancers' entrances and exits. Even as the section gradually developed, there was always a return to this jumping motif.

Another motif used in this section was a distorted image of a man's lips projected on one side of the video screen. He began the section by stating the following, "Welcome. I am your leader. I have been selected as leader because I have no experience, no valuable knowledge, I get in the way of production, and I am tall." This section's theme was about greed and politics in the corporate world, so I began with gestures that might evoke these types of environments and then extracted some small element of the gesture, and then exaggerated it. Some examples of gestures taken from an office setting included typing, talking on the telephone, and dictating. I made various choices to accentuate the different gestures. For example, with the typing gesture, every stroke of the key by one finger had to include the action and response from the wrist of the same hand. Whereas in typing, the goal is just to move the fingers and keep the wrist rested on the keyboard, I chose to create the movement opposite of this rule and exaggerate the action of the wrist. Also, in the treatment of all three of these
gestures, I increased the speed of the action to be unrealistically fast. The movement was very sharp and quick as if a videotape was rolling at fast forward, creating humorous but odd movements.

The development of the movement used in this section reflected the competitive overtones of the theme. As the competitiveness became greater so did the action of the movement. This is seen as the dancers were travelling across the stage, they passed one another by yanking on the shoulder of the person in front of them. This gradually progressed to the point that the dancers were tossing one another to the ground and then later actually tackling each other. By the end of the section the only thing visible was a pile of dancers on the floor with limbs sticking out everywhere. Eventually they progressed off the stage in this way. A coda ended this section. The dancers had just learned of their fate of being replaced by technology employees so they try to make one last attempt at saving their jobs.

This section epitomized the mechanizing trend that this country has followed over the last hundred years. Seuss's political statements on corporations taking over the world and destroying the environment with their big polluting machinery were strongly felt by Seuss and in turn inspired this coda. I used Lifeforms, a computer software program designed to use animated figures to create choreography, in order to bring technology employees to life. The Lifeforms program has one advantage over using humans in that one can create movement that is impossible for humans to do, such as defying gravity. I
introduced the *Lifeform* characters with the same jumping motif as created for the dancers. I set up a small competitive event with the idea of a boxing match in mind. First, the *Lifeform* characters performed a simple movement of kicking their left leg into the air. The dancers mimicked the same action. Next, the *Lifeform* figures performed another simple movement, but this time each *Lifeforms* character performed something different. Each dancer took on one of the *Lifeforms* figures and imitated their action. The *Lifeform* characters proceeded to climb onto each other until they were piled high in a mound. This came directly from the story of *Yertle the Turtle*, in which the turtles are piled high on top of each other in order for the king to see great sights. The dancers scrambled to positions in order to achieve the same task which they ultimately did. The *Lifeforms* characters give them a hand while still remaining in their mound as if they didn't miss a beat. Suddenly, one *Lifeforms* character started to float away, another one swam through the air while pushing another one along. One character bounced on the top of another one's head as he walked away and one suddenly fell to the ground only to get up and walk off in a humanly anatomically impossible way. The dancers were caught off guard and remained frozen in their position. A buzzer went off indicating that the competition was over and that the humans had lost. The dancers walked off the stage consoling each other in a straightforward pantomimic way. The peculiar movement from the beginning of this section, along with the talking lips, as discussed earlier, created a humorous mood for this section. This was key to
capturing the essences of Seuss's work. Many of his books were humorous, exaggerated, and absurd, yet, there was still a serious message to be found in the story. Audience feedback was quite strong for this section and the response was that they not only found this section humorous, but that they really understood the message being communicated.

The Environmental section which followed, did not use much movement to portray the message. The section began with various video images portraying nature, animals, and insects being projected on the two back screens. These images were distorted and exaggerated using a computer program called Media 100. I altered the colors, distorted the images, and changed the speeds of these images to display exaggerated features of the images. About two minutes into the video, the teacher character introduced in the beginning of the piece reappeared holding a book. She walked one path from upstage to downstage, in about thirty seconds and just before she exited the stage, she pulled out a cigar, took a puff from it, and tossed it to the ground. At that same moment, a loud explosion happened, and the video images on the screen instantly went from beautiful nature scenes to scenes of an atomic bomb's mushroom clouds.

The final section of the piece contained the most abstract movement. Partially, the inspiration came from images found in Seuss works such as Oh! The Places You'll Go and The 5,000 Hats of Bartholomew, but the majority of the inspiration came from my reflection on the summation of Seuss's life and what I believe he stood for. Some of these thoughts were summed up in the following
phrases that were projected onto the screens during this section. These included "Walk your own path", "Support others as you go", and "We can do better than this". I created and used these phrases to capture the essence of Seuss. The movement in this last section began with the group of seven dancers in the upstage left corner of the stage. They began to walk slowly toward the downstage right corner of the stage. Again, for this section, I decided to exaggerate an element. In this case, it was the time element. The entire ending section was completed in a slow continuous motion. As the dancers progressed down stage on the diagonal, they began to climb gently onto one another for support. For example, one dancer walked up the back of another dancer in order to travel through space, while another dancer caught a ride on the shoulders of somebody else. There was a hypnotic flow to the bodies shifting positions across one another as they made their way across the stage. As they crossed the stage, hats began to fall from the ceiling.

This decision was inspired by Seuss’s hat collection of which he had several hundred. These flowing bodies and raining hats continued until the dancers approached the furthest point downstage right. When they reached the end they began to melt down to the floor. They then began retreating back on the same path they just traversed, but now they were swimming through a sea of hats on the ground. As the dancers made their way through the hats, sporadically one dancer or another would find a hat and place it on her head. They were then to become that character. This section was purposely left to
improvisation, that is, I let the dancers spontaneously create the movement on stage. I wanted the individual dancers to go through the same inspiring process Seuss experienced when he put on one of his hats from his collection. This section was created as a metaphor for the idea of walking your own path, but supporting each other on the way. The success of this section was dependent upon the degree of commitment the dancers had to their characters. Some of the more experienced dancers felt more comfortable with this approach than the younger ones. This point is elaborated later in this chapter.

Music

All of the music for Seuss Suites was originally composed in collaboration between the musicians and myself, the choreographer. There were four composers involved in the project, two working independently from the other composers, and two working in collaboration with each other. Each process and how the music came to be with each composer was quite different for me. The only piece of music that had been selected before choreographing was for the Sneetches section. However, I initially had not intended to use the final music selection composed by Susan Chess for this section. Instead, I began with another piece of music by the group Dead Can Dance. The music ultimately used for the section was heard originally in my ballet class. After hearing this beautiful music, I immediately approached the accompanist and asked her what she was playing. I was amazed when she responded that she had just made it up on the spot. I asked her if she would compose three minutes of it for me and
to my delight she agreed. I had this music for nearly eight months before I realized how perfectly it fit with the Sneetches section. I had already been working with some pre-recorded music but soon realized it would not be suitable. One of the reasons why the new music seemed so perfect was because of the Baroque style it imposed. It reminded me of a scene out of a court masquerade. As soon as I started rehearsing with this new music the entire section fell right into place. The movement and gestures began to find their place in the atmosphere created by the music.

The Set/Costumes

The opening of *Seuss Suites* began with the lights slowly coming up on the stage, to reveal a structure sixteen feet wide and eight feet tall. It was rectangular in shape and separated into two halves. On one half of the object two shadows appeared. The audience might not have identified the object as a book right away. However, shortly after the opening section began, the characters Thing One and Thing Two revealed themselves as the shadows by jumping off the page before beginning to dance. The set served several purposes. First, it was created so that the use of the video technology and animation could have a more natural setting and second, it would give the illusion that the audience was seated in front of a gigantic book. However, this book was no ordinary book. After the first section was finished, an image appeared on one side of the screen. The image reflected pages of a book flipping seemingly on its own. Text gradually appeared on the screen to reveal
the first lesson plan for the day and an animated fish swam by to take us into the
next journey. As always when working with technology, problems began to
arise. While the video images on the computer could be read quite easily, this
was not the case when the images were placed on stage with the lights. The
light reflecting off the screen made the text hard to read.

Also appearing on the stage were two large twisted trees. These
abstracted trees stood approximately thirty feet tall with several blue balls
hanging off the green and white stripped trunks. These unique trees were
definitely inspired by Seuss drawings. His trees often consisted of long trunks
with cotton ball fluff on top as in the story of *The Lorax*. Lack of financial
resources for the project prevented me from having even more structures on the
stage.

The inspiration for the costumes came from a variety of sources. The
sections which were directly based on characters from Seuss’s stories had the
most original costumes. For Thing One and Thing Two, I decided to capture the
seemingly caught smile of the characters, by costuming the dancers in masks
which covered their entire heads. The facial area of the masks were silver in
color, and each mask had a different hair color attached to them. The use of the
masks helped change the dancers into fantastical characters. The masks also
ensured that the expression would always be the same no matter what the
movement. The characters in the book were identical in every way except for
the tags they wore on their stomachs which identified them as Thing One and
Thing Two. Since I did not have identical dancers, I chose to costume them in a similar fashion but with different colors.

The other section dealing directly with animals from Seuss's work was the creature section. Although, these were not specific characters from a single book, they were a conglomeration of many Seuss characters. There were five dancers all in different colored unitards with long furry spines that extended down into tails. All the dancers sported different colored neck feathers as well as a few feathers protruding from the top of their heads. In addition, they wore various colored hoods. The only common element among them was the black screen which stretched across and covered their faces serving as a mask. The choice to cover their faces was intentional. I was interested in discovering how these characters might move once they were off the page and I wanted these characters to become real through the movement vocabulary, and not their facial expressions. Costumes that were not so specific to characters found inside Seuss's books were a bit more traditional, yet still not totally conventional. The only literal interpretation of clothing occurred in the opening section of the dance. The students, who were all women, were dressed in traditional private school uniforms for boys: dark blue pants, light blue long sleeved shirts, and bowties.

In the Sneetches section, the six women wore oversized, in some cases, ripped, pink formal dresses. And, in the Yertle section, the six dancers were dressed in business outfits, including suit jackets, long skirts, and dresses. Yet, there was something odd about these articles of clothing. They were all
extremely bright in colors, mismatched in patterns, and slightly too big for the
dancers. They are hardly the type of outfits you would find in a business office in
today's society. In each section the costumes were slightly exaggerated, enough
to get the essence of the idea being portrayed but with something that just didn't
make sense. Throughout my costume choices, I adhered to Seuss's sense of
color scheme. For example, in the Sneetches section, I chose pink dresses as a
contrast to the black and white film that was playing in the background. While
keeping the costumes as original designs, the spirit of Seuss was still captured.

Dancers

The dancers for Seuss Suites were selected for various reasons. Three
of the eight dancers were chosen because of previous experience I had in
working with them in other works. Although, I had not worked directly with the
remaining five dancers chosen, I had at least seen them perform on stage
before or was able to determine their work ethics from shared technique classes.
The ninth cast member, who was actually one of the composers for the work, is
not a dancer, and I had never seen her live on stage, but I felt she was perfect
for the role of the teacher based solely on her personality. So, I was comfortable
with all of the dancers to some degree.

As it turned out, true to Lawson's statement discussed earlier, I was more
satisfied with the dancers I had worked with prior to this project, than I was with
those I did not. The maturity and experience of some of the dancers also
contributed to a satisfying process while creating the work. For example, the
dancers I had worked with previously, understood my expectations fully even though I communicated my ethics to the group before we began the rehearsal process. Some dancers were more comfortable bringing their own personal voice into the rehearsal process than others. For example, the opening scene in which the four students are seated in the chairs was based on gestures that the dancers invented from my direction. The direction was that each dancer was to think back to a situation where they were in a classroom in which they were bored with the teachers' lecture. Initially, the dancers felt compelled to make up many gestures and moved through them quickly. I guided them to narrow their choices to one or two gestures of boredom so that they were really committed to those gestures. This was a section of the dance where the individual personality of the dancers was very evident. On the other hand, some dancers just came to rehearsal with the attitude that they wanted to be told what to do and that was the extent of their commitment.

The movement created for *Seuss Suites* was technical demanding and most of the dancers were capable of executing the steps. However, the dancers seemed to be able to bring life to a role only when they had a complete physical and emotional understanding of the movement. If they were not comfortable with the movement or character, then it was reflected in their performance. Those dancers with more experience could take an uncomfortable role or movement phrase and transform it to their own body and experience. One example of this experience was in the creature section. The movement was very
awkward for many of the dancers. One example could be found in the way the creatures travelled across the space in the motif runs. It was not just the physical strength of having the body hunched over with arms dangling in front while running with stretched legs behind that had to carry the role to believability. It was the quality or expressiveness of the body as well. Often some dancers made the awkward movement look uncomfortable because their bodies were too stiff or they were travelling in a rigid way. Other dancers were able to figure out how to make this movement look comfortable and travelled with ease as if the creature they were portraying would naturally exist.

The ending of Seuss Suites also demanded a strong commitment from the dancers since it relied on a structured improvisation. The dancers had to swim through a sea of hats that had fallen to the ground, and as they came across a hat that inspired them they were to gradually stand up and make this character come to life. Although, the action was very spontaneous and the dancers never knew ahead of time which hat they would choose, those dancers who were able to immediately become the character behind the hat were the most successful in making the character believable. Those dancers who did not commit to their characters seem to go unnoticed by the audience.

It is difficult to categorize the dancers according to Weaver’s classification of the danseurs nobles, classiques, demi-caractère or character dancers because of the blending of all these characteristics in the very complex nature of dancers today. However, I do find a noticeable difference in the two types of
classification used today for dancers as either being technical or expressive. I would have to say that all the dancers could technically perform the movement but it was the level at which they could really express the movement through their own bodies that made some dancers' performance stand out from the others. In fact, comments from audience members were able to point out those dancers who really stood out by identifying them by the color of their costumes. Even to an untrained eye those dancers who embodied the characters stood out as exceptional performers.

While, it is important that the dancer be able to perform the tasks that the choreographer is requiring, it is also the dancers' own individual personality that brings representation to a character or idea. Again, it is the success of the collaboration between the choreographer and the dancers that determines the success of the process and ultimately of the final work.
Symbols are used to communicate and all art uses symbols. For the writer, the form is language, and for the choreographer the form is movement. After investigating the various symbolic choices selected choreographers made in translating literature into movement, I found that the possibilities of the manner of interpreting a story through dance are vast. While pursuing various methods of translating a story through dance, each choreographer has communicated a message to an audience using some combination of the elements of structure, movement, music, sets, costumes and dancers.

It is important to note that the translations made by the choreographers are based on their individual subjective points of view. As time passes, new perspectives transpire and the translated story evolves into a new vision for each generation of choreographers. This metamorphosis is part of the tradition of storytelling. However, a choreographer considering the creation of a dance based on a piece of literature, should try to retain a consistent sense of unity within the piece. Lawson elaborates on this idea when she states that it is important for the choreographer to observe the characteristics and idiosyncrasies
of all types of persons that make up the story so that they make them recognizable in order that they convey meaning (Lawson 130).

Because of the subjective nature surrounding the appreciation of dance, it is difficult to assess the true value of *Seuss Suites* or any dance work. The primary goal of this investigation was not to judge the quality of the final performance, but to determine what needed to be implemented in order to express the life and writings of somebody such as Seuss through a dance medium. In order to create a unified vision of *Seuss Suites*, an understanding of Seuss on many levels had to be achieved.

My previous choreographic works have often been based on my personal experiences and not in translating the personal experiences of others. It was a challenge to capture the creative spirit of another human being because of my own unique internal way of creating. For example, some differences between Seuss's creative process and my own, included the way in which we worked out ideas. For eight hours a day in his studio, Seuss worked out his ideas on paper by doodling and sketching. On the other hand, I had to schedule the majority of my work hours around the schedule of nine other performers. This meant that much of my process came from my reflections of the feedback that I received from the dancers, whereas Seuss would mainly respond to his own internal evaluation.

Another obvious difference between our work methods was described as Wallas's fourth stage of verification. While both Seuss and I could be classified
as perfectionist, Seuss seemed obsessed with the perfection of his stories. Often, he would get to the last line of his story and decide that it wasn't working, and he would throw the entire script away and start over. For me, time was limited, and the majority of my re-evaluation took place after the final performance. It is only now, after the performance, that I feel I can reflect back on changes that I might make for future performances. Audience reactions have also affected the reflections I have made on my work. Once a story is printed it is rare that the pages would be altered by the original author. In dance, however, the choreographer has the liberty to make changes to the original work for the next performance. This re-evaluation can occur over and over again throughout the life of a dance work.

There were aspects of Seuss's process that I did try to adopt in my choreographic process. Although unfamiliar, these explorations have enabled me to discover new ways to produce works. For example, Seuss worked and produced a certain amount of material daily, and even though the majority of the work ended up in the trash, he continued this routine for eight hours a day. I also attempted to produce choreography on a daily basis for about a month, even if it was only to produce one eight count phrase a day. As a result, I abandoned much of the material that I initially created. This way of working was new for me and quite challenging. My previous methods of working consisted of only allowing myself to work when ideas flowed, and if I had no ideas in my head I simply left the studio. Therefore, once phrases were created, I rarely through
away any material. I would create phrases prior to rehearsing with the dancers and then instruct the dancers in the studio. However, while creating Seuss Suites, I tried to be more receptive in my thoughts in order to incorporate the dancers ideas into my process. Additionally, toying with various elements as described by Rogers, and so masterfully achieved by Seuss, was quite difficult for me.

Observing the environment and manipulating information in unconventional ways seems to be determined by the complex nature of each individual. For example, my previous choreographic works have been based on what seemed logical and straightforward to me at the time of creating the work. In creating Seuss Suites, I tried to be conscious of not allowing my thoughts to inform me of only the obvious events and items in my surroundings, but rather I tried to look at material in a way that did not necessarily make sense on the surface but that somehow underneath had its own kind of logic. An example of this would be the choice I made to use video footage of Hitler in the background, while six women in pink gowns danced in the foreground.

While creating Seuss Suites, I also attempted to apply technical aspects of Seuss's work. For example, trying to use the elaborate set in an integrated way was quite a task. I had never used a set in previous works, so it was a challenge not only having a set but being faced with the problem of how to use it. Costumes were equally difficult to conceptualize since I had never created
costumes for my earlier works. My choices for color and design were based on observations I made from Seuss’s books.

The experience of creating *Seuss Suites* has revealed to me the realization that the translation of any story is partly a translation of oneself. While certain tools and ideas can be adopted from one medium to another, such as my implementation of some of Seuss's creative methods to create choreography, the creative process of any artist is derived from many complex components and thus manifests a deep personal passage to creating work.
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