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RITUAL MAKING: PHENOMENA AND PROCESS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

BY

Thomas Anthony Kane, B.A., M.A., S.T.L.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1981
In Memory of my Parents,
Thomas and Helen
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For their editorial assistance, I thank Jim and Pat Ennis, Roger and Judy Harvey, Regina Stefanic and Christopher Witt.
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PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Ritual Communication


Studies in Non-Verbal Communication. Professor Charles M. Galloway.

Studies in Movement and Space Harmonics. Professor Vera Maletic.

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INTRODUCTION

Ritual is not to be seen as a content to which people must comply, but as a structure within which they can pulsate and pirouette in unprescribed ways. Ritual should lure people into festive fantasy, put them in touch with the deepest longings of the race, help them to step into the parade of history, and ignite their capacity for creation.

Harvey Cox,
The Feast of Fools

Ritual makers are not confined to a church, religious structure or institution. In fact, everyone performs rituals, whether it is blowing out the candles on a birthday cake, greeting someone on the street, celebrating a graduation or attending a football game.

Once discarded by a technological society, ritual activity is being rediscovered today, as a way of reclaiming our heritage, remembering our history as a people, and celebrating the important events in our life. To examine ritual is to examine the complexity of humanity, its history and growth, its hopes, fears and dreams.

The churches and the arts have always been aware of ritual's powerful contribution to the life of the spirit. Ritual structures celebration and engenders creative insight into the act of living.
To study ritual activity, the researcher selected two different kinds of ritual makers. In the arts, Nina Wiener, a contemporary choreographer, designs movement that can be considered ritualistic; her creative process involves the transformation of everyday reality into art. In religion, Carla DeSola creates religious dance for use in worship. Attuned to the sacredness of movement, she revives an ancient liturgical art form.

This dissertation examines ritual making in both settings, its process and function. The researcher chose participant observation as the primary method to gather data. He also interviewed those involved and videotaped the process.

This is the first study of its kind to use participant observation to study the making of contemporary dance, the process of liturgy planning in a parish and the workings of a liturgical dance group. Entry into the field was a difficult task which involved two years of careful preparation.

The writer has studied visual arts at the University of Notre Dame and liturgical theology at the Catholic University of America. Through these studies he recognized the need to blend the humanities, social sciences and theology for a total understanding of ritual activity. By exploring the cultural, communicative and kinesthetic dimensions of ritual, the writer developed "ritual communication" as an interdisciplinary component of ritual
studies. This approach is used throughout the study.

Because the researcher is an ordained Catholic priest, the ritual-making examples come primarily from a Western tradition. Where possible, he has tried to be ecumenical.

The dissertation has been organized thematically. Chapter One presents an introduction to the field of ritual, noting the concerns that contemporary ritual makers face today.

Chapter Two examines the principles and methods for the study. It delineates the mode of participant observation, the preparation such methods require, and the organizational approach to data gathering and analysis.

Chapter Three explores ritual performance by describing the choreographic process, the rehearsal procedure and the performances of The Condor Material, a contemporary dance by Nina Wiener and Dancers. It also analyzes this work as an example of ritual performance.

Chapter Four describes performance ritual in a religious setting, focusing on the work of Carla DeSola and the Omega Liturgical Dance Company. The study analyzes the entire ritual making situation from liturgical planning to church performance. The study includes a functional analysis of liturgical dance types.

Chapter Five concludes the observation study, suggests alternate approaches to the classification of ritual and recommends future areas of research in ritual studies.
CHAPTER ONE
THE PHENOMENON OF RITUAL

UNDERSTANDING RITUAL

This chapter will explore the different avenues of approaching ritual activity: (1) ritual as human behavior; (2) ritual as a performance event; (3) ritual and symbol-making; (4) ritual and art; (5) ritual's relationship to theatre; (6) ritual and play theory; and (7) ritual as communication. The specifically religious rituals that are examined are drawn from the Roman Catholic tradition.

In recent years, ritual has gone in and out of favor. Sometimes it is studied intently and at other times almost ignored. Erving Goffman describes ritual when he looks at how people present themselves in a variety of social settings. ¹ Susanne Langer sees ritual as part of the symbolization process. ² Jamake Highwater investigates ritual and dance as a celebration of the human spirit. ³ 

Anthropologists have studied and photographed rituals in a variety of cultures. Dance historians have reconstructed and notated tribal dances. At the same time, contemporary choreographers are using ritual gestures in new dance works as directors explore ritual theatre.
The word "ritual" evokes different images. For some it is a negative term, implying rigidity, immutability and something done out of habit, or force, or custom. For others, it is a neutral term, part of how we cope with everyday reality, by getting involved with the "transcendent." Still others see ritual as a positive term, providing structure for a community to celebrate, to remember and keep in touch with the past, and to project a future, a way of ordering reality.

**Ritual as Human Behavior**

While there are many ways of understanding and appreciating the richness of ritual in a given culture, social scientists tend to agree that ritual expresses human behavior, involving self-understanding, a sense of belonging and group interaction.

Margaret Mead sees ritual as part of the pattern of human behavior while Christopher Crocker perceives ritual as the fundamental way men and women attempt to understand and control their life. Richard Scheckner sees ritual as "regulating, expressing, remembering and carrying on relationships among individuals and between groups." Gerhard Pottenbaum relates that "ritual is the dramatic form through which people in community make tangible in symbol, gesture, word and song what they have come to believe is the hidden meaning of their experience in relationship with the world, with others, and with their God."
Ritual as Event

Ritual is a complex human phenomenon:

1. Ritual is a communication event, speaking to the minds, spirits and hearts of people by means of images, words, smells, sounds, gestures, movements and other elements of non-verbal communication.

2. Ritual is a performance event, expressing relationships, individually and communally in a public way. There is a certain commitment to the event by the people involved.

3. Ritual is a living, shifting, changing form of expression that varies from place to place, from time to time, but it is rooted in asking ultimate questions, in searching for meaning and unity, in trying to celebrate existence and its link with "ultimate reality."

4. Ritual is not only expressive, but also transformational; it does things to people (e.g., it changes boys into men), to places (e.g., it makes rain happen), and to events (e.g., it unites an audience in a common quest).

5. Ritual involves a reworking of time and space in special ways. Thus, ritual can be seen as something people do, individually or communally, expressing who they are and their place in the universe and seeking to capture "ultimate reality" by means of words, sights, smells, gestures, movement and other non-verbal and symbolic ways.
Ritual and Symbolization

Susanne Langer goes beyond describing ritual. She places ritual as part of the symbol-making process. She claims that ritual is a universal human phenomenon, developed out of human need, separating human kind from the animals. For her, symbolization (the symbolic transformation of experiential data) is one of man's primary functions. The very material of thought is symbolic and in order to let thinking happen, thinking organisms furnish symbolic versions of experience. Ritualization becomes an important element in transforming this experiential data.

Ritual is a symbolic transformation of experience that no other medium can adequately express. Because it springs from a primary human need, it is spontaneous activity - that is to say, it arises without intention, without adaption to conscious purpose; its growth is undesigned, its pattern purely natural, however intricate it may be. It was never imposed on people, they acted thus quite of themselves, exactly as bees swarmed and birds built nests...

Ritual, then, is expressive in ways that other media are not. The motive of ritual is to symbolize great conceptions and to express these conceptions. As a symbolic transformation, ritual becomes the very language of religion. For Langer, "ritual is the most primitive reflection of serious thought, a slow deposit, as it were, of people's imaginative insights into life."\(^9\)

Langer's thoughts are significant because she relates the natural development of the imagination to the expression of "great conceptions" to the making of ritual.
Langer helps explain why people make ritual and how ritual operates. As a process, it is about making sense of reality (experience), of asking ultimate questions, and of celebrating the search for ultimate reality by asking key questions: Who am I? Where am I going? What is my relationship to the world, to a transcendent? What is life all about? Ritual provides a framework and a celebrational approach to these serious questions.

**Ritual and Art**

Jamake Highwater makes an important distinction in discussing rituals:

There are two kinds of ritual. The first, studied by ethnologists, is familiar to us: it is an unselfconscious act without deliberate aesthetic concerns, arriving from anonymous tribal influences over many generations and epitomizing the group's fundamental value system. The second form of ritual is new: it is the creation of an exceptional individual who transforms his experience into a metaphor known as art. These two ritual forms necessarily overlap. There's no question that idiosyncratic art is highly influenced by tribal rites.  

Highwater's approach is an example of the problems in discussing ritual and art, at trying to get at the meaning of sacred and secular, and understanding ritual in terms of its context. While the division of ritual into two parts is helpful, his classification makes tribal ritual somewhat of a static reality. Possibly the problem lies in his understanding of tribe. From his definition there seems to be only a primitive notion of tribe. He does not consider the contemporary tribes or communities
who perform rituals in various churches, temples, or synagogues every day. He separates tribal art from "real art," unconscious response from deliberate creativity. With such a strong emphasis on contemporary art, he seems to lessen the reciprocal contribution that contemporary art makes to new "tribal" rites.

Highwater's categories can be expanded to include two kinds of tribal rites: (1) the primitive tribal rituals, still studied by ethnologists; and (2) the rituals of community - those contemporary rites performed by a variety of groups - religious, political, and social which flow from different sources. This distinction is important because it does not deprive contemporary community rituals of creativity and influence, and gives proper place to true tribal rituals.

There are three kinds of rituals: (1) tribal rituals, (2) the rituals of community, and (3) rituals as art. The second form of ritual may not be entirely new, but its expression may change depending on the cultural milieu, the community, and the forms of expression available to a particular community.

With these three kinds of ritual, it might be said that ritual is "the rightful ordering of things." In so doing, the following can be included for a fuller understanding of the term:

1. Ritual orders elements such as time, space, gesture, image, movement, words, sounds, and smells.
2. Ritual involves aesthetic communication in how the elements are organized and how the ritual itself is performed.

3. Ritual is directed beyond the immediate experience into "an overplus of meaning, which might be considered the transcendent or the divine."\textsuperscript{12}

4. Ritual involves the elements of repetition and renewal.

**Ritual and Theatre**

A discussion of theatre and ritual can help uncover some issues which are important in considering ritual as a performance event. There are three areas where theatre and ritual overlap:

1. Both theatre and ritual, using elements of symbol and myth, deal with the question of meaning.

2. Theatre and ritual are both concerned with the destiny of people.

3. Both theatre and ritual can express the sacred.

Ritual can be seen as the means by which a society recalls its past, recasts what has been lived, and helps direct society toward the future.

The use of time is an important element in ritual and theatre. (Theatre can be considered in a metaphoric sense as including dance.) Ritual helps to bring the past alive in the present with an orientation to the future. This language is linear and makes time follow a linear and
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These consist of pages:

Plates I through XII

on pages 11, 18, 62,

84, 103, 112, 125, 154,

174, 193, 220 and 225.
predictable path. There is the need to develop a more
dynamic sense of time both in ritual and theatre. With
the implied supposition that in ritual the very repeatable
form provides the structure for the celebration with people
reflecting on the past and integrating the past with a
thrust into the future.

It is often implied in religious situations that
this integration occurs with the Eucharist, the Lord's
Supper. The emphasis is on the repeatable form. The
simple doing of the act provides the dynamism of the time
frame. In sacramental theology this is *ex opere operato* -
by the very doing of an act, it is accomplished.

But what about the possibility that a new performance
piece is ritual? If tradition and community memory are
important elements in ritual and the repetition or re-
doing of forms seen as a crucial element, how are new
forms then accepted as ritual both within the community
and the theatre? Within a religious community frame we
see ritual as:

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PAST TRADITION ← PRESENT → SUMMONING THE FUTURE
reads community challenge
gestures participating insight
ritual structures
and form
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In response to the formation of new rituals, it is
the context, both within theatre and ritual, that is impor-
tant. The interaction of the group around what is done
(what is happening) sets up a dynamism between the ritual
makers and the audience/congregation/community. Together as people play out the event, the searching and the quest for meaning provide the unification of past, present, and future.

It is in this way that we can see that theatre and ritual are both involved with the destiny of a people. Within ritual and theatre there can be a restorative function: to renew the quality of imagination.

Instead of looking at "repeatable" forms and structures to determine the meaning of a ritual, let us consider the context for the event. In a religious setting, a community memory or tradition which is often implied, may or may not be present within a particular community. We posit this memory and presume that ritual works because there is a community memory with the lived experience. We imply in ritual a high context situation, when, in fact, there may be a low context - that people have different histories, that their memories are all different and that what they are doing in community is different, one from another.

While everyone celebrates together, they may be, in fact, celebrating different things, because there is no real interaction, merely the performing of "ritualized" or symbolized gestures within a regulated structure. This question has haunted sacramental theologians. How interactive should the ritual be? What is the relation of
corporate, public worship to private prayer and personal understanding apart from the community context?

For Christian ceremonies to be ritual there needs to be a dynamism involving the past, present, and future. It is possible that the very doing together or experiencing something together creates the tradition. This puts history within the event, not outside it, allowing for new forms or gestures to be used that may not be strictly "traditional" but become "traditional" from the context of doing the gesture.

This also allows for theatre or dance to take on aspects of ritual. In recent years, people have been attending the theatre, concerts, and performance events because they have felt the performances to respond to a vital need, which other situations or communities did not provide.

The context, then, is what supplies the concern for the destiny of the people. The community is built not because of something outside the members, but because together people are doing something together, or experiencing something together.

In the late sixties, as church attendance was declining, the theatre rediscovered what are sometimes called "ritualistic" elements. This rediscovery is not merely digging up ritualized forms. It stems from the fact that people together have been struggling through the themes of human existence. The theatre was speaking to
the needs of the people and the magical fusion of past-present-future was happening again, this time in a theatre. The writer suggests that the popularity of the musical Hair was not solely based on its political or social commentary. Within the theatre context, it did provide a sense of continuity with audience interaction. Raising questions about ultimate meaning (the question of destiny), the production became a celebrational ritual with audience members singing and clapping. The theatre became a community with the hopes of a people re-kindled. Later, the musical Godspell and the concert and stage version of Jesus Christ, Superstar provided similar experiences.

These examples raise the question of the division of the sacred and secular. We often speak about them as if there were two complete separate realities. People might shudder to think of the possibility of Hair as being ritual or involved with the sacred, because there is no overt mention of God or spiritual reality. Laurentin speaks about a renewed understanding of the sacred:

In origin, the sacred is an overplus of meaning expressed with power that it overwhelms anyone who perceives it. The overplus is beyond analysis and often beyond rational understanding. It emerges out of ordinary, day-to-day living, and after a struggle, succeeds in rising above the ordinary to such an extent that it is set apart, in one way or another. The sacred, thus defined, is not reduced to the religious; it is a human phenomenon from which religious significance can be drawn.13

Gerard Pottenbaum indicates this problem in his discussion of ritual:
One cannot discuss ritual in a technological world without also using the words sacred and secular. Sacred refers to that which is set apart from the world, consequently for religious purposes, of the church; and secular refers to everything else in the world. But these distinctions are not very practical when one comes to realize the secular characteristics of the church, and the sacred characteristics of the world. Where does "sacred" leave off and the "secular" begin? One can play with ways of describing the person as worldly, but nonetheless holy. He is "in the world," but not "of the world." That's not too helpful either. But what may be helpful is to keep in mind that sacred and secular are not fixed...the struggle each of us faces is to unfold the holiness of the world that is profane, to reveal the sacred qualities of secular life.14

The sacred, then, can be seen as an aspect of our self-understanding which produces both a synthesis of and an advance beyond the ordinary. Since it is human action, it can become a carrier of the divine, for there is nothing religious which is not at the same time human.

With an understanding of sacred and profane in this way, theatre and performance events can be seen as "sacred," or as a transcendent experience (the divine), which is often discussed as part of the "aesthetic experience." For ritual to be fully ritual, this element of the sacred needs to be expressed and experienced during the ritual.

In addition to the striving to respond to destiny, this sacredness of the performance event (an overplus of meaning expanding, exploding and imploding) may explain the drop-off in church attendance. People find a performance event more meaningful or significant in terms of their own personal experience of the "ritual."
In *The Sacred Canopy*, Peter Berger stresses the need for understanding the transcendent:

I would suggest that theological thought seek out what might be called the signals of transcendence within the empirically given human situation. By signals of transcendence, I mean phenomena that are to be found within the domain of our "natural" reality but that appear to point beyond that reality . . . The phenomena I am discussing are not unconscious and do not have to be excavated from the "depths of the mind," they belong to the ordinary, everyday awareness.

It is this search for the transcendent (the divine) that might propel both the artist and the ritual-maker in his/her quest of creativity. Durkheim speaks to the problem of ritual and ceremonials of the future and their usefulness when he says:

If we find a little difficulty today in imagining what these feasts and ceremonials of the future could consist, it is because we are going through a state of transition and moral mediocrity. The great things of the past that filled our fathers with enthusiasm do not excite the same ardor in us. Rituals have become common, not part of our conscious life, no longer ways of answering our aspirations.

Despite the inherent difficulties, ritual-makers today are grappling with the question of self-expression and struggling to find the forms and celebrational approaches that make life concerns come alive in a people, community, or audience.

**Ritual and Play**

Johan Huisinga discusses the dimensions of play in his now classic book, *Homo Ludens*. Play is a free
activity, not part of ordinary or real life. Instead, it is a stepping out of real life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all its own. Totally does it absorb its players. Play is limited because it happens within time and space, containing its own structure, meaning, and rules. Play also promotes the formation of social groupings and contributes to the well-being of the group.

Hence our ideas of ritual, magic, liturgy, sacrament and mystery would all fall within the play concept. In dealing with abstractions we must always guard against overstraining their significance. We would be merely playing with words were we to stretch the play-concept unduly. But, all things considered, I do not think that we are falling into that error when we characterize ritual as play. The ritual act has all the formal and essential characteristics of play which we enumerated above, particularly insofar as it transports the participants to another world. The identity of ritual and play was unreservedly recognized by Plato as a given fact. He had no difficulty in comprising the sacra in the category of play. "I say that a man must be serious with the serious," he says (Laws vii, 803) "God alone is worthy of supreme seriousness, but man is made God's plaything and that is the best part of him. Therefore every man and woman should live life accordingly and play the noblest games and be of another mind from what they are at present..."18

There are three elements that are common to ritual and play: (1) Both involve a spatial separation. In play or games, there is the delineation of the game board, playing field, or court. In ritual, there is the sacred space, the sanctuary, the temple area. (2) Both ritual and play involve a standstill in ordinary life. Ritual
and play both transcend time and involve the participants in sacred time. (3) Ritual and play both support the well-being of the group.

When we consider the relationship of ritual to play, we are again entering into the realm of Dionysios. Dionysios, the god of the feast, the patron of revelry and ecstasy, represents a free and experimental approach. The counterpart, Apollo, represents rationality, order and structure. Contemporary ritual-makers review and rework play theory and play-enactment or acting as a way of loosening up the imagination in order to make new ritual forms. Within the religious sphere this can present problems, for the Church upholds more or less an Appollonian attitude of pater families while the ritual-makers and communities struggle with the Dionysian elements. This clash often results in canonical arguments about Church Order and the controversy about the spirit and letter of the "law."

Huisinga makes an important distinction in considering play and its function with the divine. Play does not mean frivolity or mindless activity.

All true ritual is sung, danced, and played. We moderns have lost the sense for ritual and sacred play. Our civilization is worn with age and too sophisticated. But nothing helps us regain that sense so much as musical sensibility. In feeling music, we feel ritual. In the enjoyment of music, whether it is meant to express religious ideas or not, the perception of the beautiful and the sensation of
holiness merge, and the distinction between play and seriousness is whelmed in that fusion.

A common thread with ritual-play-dance is the "suspension" of time and space. Ritual, play and dance re-shape and rework these two dimensions to create something new. The renewal within ritual can sometimes happen with repeated forms. The comfort and ease with particular types of repeated forms can transport the people (congregation) into a new place where transformation and renewal is possible. But repeated forms do not guarantee a "fresh eyes" approach. The very repetition can work against renewal and actually create boring, dull, "ritualized" (in the pejorative sense of the word) celebrations.

The connections between playing and dancing are so close that they hardly need illustrating. It is not that dancing has something of play in it or about it, rather it is an integral part of play: the relationship is one of direct participation - almost of essential identity. Dancing is a particularly perfect form of playing. Whether we think of the sacred or magical dances of the savages, or of the Greek ritual dances, or of the dancing of King David before the Ark of the Covenant, or of the dance simply as part of the festival, it is always at all periods and with all peoples pure play, the purest and most perfect form of play that exists.

To achieve renewal is to get beyond the mere repetition of ritual acts. A Dionysian attitude is helpful in this regard. There is a need to be critical of mere repetition, an Apollonian tendency, because repetition does not insure renewal. The Dionysian sense of play and fantasy can help restore renewal and effect transformation.
Play can provide us with fresh eyes for looking at repetition, developing new ritual forms, and creating a new space and time.

**Ritual Communication**

In recent years, ritual has again surfaced in the area of performance arts, especially in what is called "post-modern" performance. With these developments in the arts, directors and choreographers are using highly stylized ritual elements. The work of Robert Wilson, Meredith Monk, Merce Cunningham, Laura Dean, and even Martha Graham, demonstrate (despite the various styles) that the ritual element permeates an inner layer.

In discussing the development of today's performance, Richard Scheckner feels that ritual is replacing narrative as the underlying organizing force. For many years religious rituals, especially Roman Catholic, have reflected a decidedly Apollonian framework, but Dionysian elements are now being included, even to the chagrin of many churchgoers. Recent liturgical books include titles which reflect this change: *New Forms of Worship, Leave It to the Spirit, In Praise of Play, Contemporary Celebration, Learning Through Dance, and Rediscovering Ritual*. The Dionysian elements, the examination of ritual and play, and the perception of ritual as a performance are some indicators that religious rituals are not dead, but struggling for new forms and expression.
If ritual is to be of any use in art, or in religion for that matter, it will be either through the regeneration of rituals, as many religious groups are trying; or the study of the "ritual process" in our own and other cultures, using the work of ethnologists; the microanalysis of behavior such as that done by Ray Birdwhistell; the study of face-to-face interaction as Erving Goffman is doing; the speculations of anthropologists of symbolic behavior like Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz and Mary Douglas; or the ironic transformation of rituals, both domestic and imported, by artists.22

There is need not only in the performing arts but also within the Churches themselves to examine, analyze and study the elements of ritual-making. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, is just beginning to thaw out after four hundred years in the ritual deep-freeze because of its counter-reformation attitude. As experimentation continues trying to develop new rites and symbols for a contemporary people, parallel research needs to reflect on how these rituals are working, how effective they are in communicating their message, and how people interact with them. Both the arts and religious community would profit greatly in examining effective ritual communication.

Two other concepts are helpful in considering ritual as a communication event. The rituals of community involve knowledge which is served by the imagination (the concretization of image) whereas ritual as art involves knowledge serving the imagination (the concretization of the imagination).
A major source of ritual knowledge is the ability to imagine another world.

The ability to envision a second world is a major source of ritual knowledge. That which is so deeply known and felt, so primal in form that it is neither word nor outcry, neither sign nor symbol - but the ineffable thing itself; that which precedes speech and thought, that which is the raw experience itself without evaluation or moralities. It is the ineffable, structured into an event - that which is called ritual.23

Ritual-making structures and celebrates the awe and wonder of all things created and allows us to shout "WOW!" from the very depths of our being.
RITUAL MAKING AND ITS LIMITATIONS

Paul Jones, in *Rediscovering Ritual*, cites four problem areas in the religious realm of ritual making. (1) When ritual ceases to evolve with the culture, it tends to become fixed. (2) Tradition often limits actions and gestures which are considered worshipful or worthy of ritual. (3) Fear of ecstasy, emotion, or the body can limit the creative expressions possible in ritual. (4) When the transcendent becomes abstract, so does the ritual activity.

The same issues concern contemporary artists. The researcher will examine and comment on these four areas, interrelating the comments with his considerations for a definition of ritual, the relationship of ritual to theatre, and the similarities of ritual to play.

Hereditary Symbols

Religious groups today suffer from hereditary illness. For example, Catholic communities are dealing with a four-hundred year lack of ritual development. Rituals that may have been meaningful to one group of people in a particular age were fixed, prescribed, and became the domain of the professional Churchman. This lack of development also influenced symbols. Symbols lost their connection to lived reality and were taught, rather than experienced.
A good example of this loss of symbolism is in the breaking of bread during the Eucharist. In early times the very words, "breaking of bread," referred to the Eucharist itself. The concept is that from one bread many are fed. At a certain time in the Mass the bread is broken and distributed to the participants. Today, most Eucharistic bread does not look like bread, but like thin, plastic-like wafers. The bread cannot really be broken because of its size and texture. Sometimes, Communion is brought from a tabernacle where the wafers are stored. No longer is the bread broken and given from the table as at a meal, but tiny wafers appear out of a mysterious box, totally unrelated to the service. Most churchgoers today do not understand nor experience the breaking of bread as a part, a significant part, of the Eucharistic ritual.

Ritual is criticized for having lost the "common touch of the people." This criticism is an important consideration in developing new rituals and symbols. The symbols, movements and gestures must speak to the whole person and be recognizable. This does not take away the mystery of ritual, but keep the ritual from becoming a total "head" event. This process attempts to get away from an intellectualization by returning to a celebration of the lived experience.

It is possible to romanticize the power of the ancient rituals, claiming they were reflective of a generation's
self-expression. Today, however, it is imperative that the lived experience take primacy over the abstraction of the lived experience. New forms must speak clearly and communicate the depth of mystery.

This quest for new symbols is taking place throughout the culture. The political parties, for example, keep invoking the past with references to historic figures and events. Each president seeks ways of unifying the country and symbols to reinforce that unification. President Carter did away with expensive inaugurals and enjoyed a "People's Inaugural" while President Reagan took office amidst a week-long celebration of fireworks, galas, and concerts.

The development of new rituals and symbols is not an easy project. Among Catholics, there is the institutional concern that local communities do not go too far in expressing themselves, thereby excluding the symbolic understanding of the universal Church. This is especially a sensitive issue in non-western countries.

Liturgists are no longer using the term "cultural adaptation" -- adapting a universal liturgy or ritual to a particular culture (as the missionaries frequently did for years in Africa and the Far East). Now there is the search for "indigenization" - recognizing that the ritual comes from the culture and is expressed according to the totality of the cultural experience.
Indigenization has been happening in a variety of cultures, and it takes various shapes. In Japan, it might mean oriental statues of the saints, or a simple bow for the "sign of peace"; in Africa, possibly a regional dance as part of the "Offering"; or in Mexico mariachi-style music incorporated into the liturgical music.

The disciplinary arm of the Church gives the impression at times to be desirous of "indigenization," but theory does not always seem to work itself out in practice. The search continues in the Church for new symbols that can be connected to the tradition of the community while speaking a contemporary language to the given culture.

The concern about shaping social and cultural symbols has been an ongoing hallmark of many artists of the twentieth century. Most recently, the world of dance has provided a cultural explosion, not only in attendance, popularity and growth, but also in reflecting the societal anxieties about the body.

With fad and marketing for shoes that walk the earth, yoga, exercise class, massage, natural beauty care, health and diet foods, the culture has re-discovered the body and gone about re-packaging it. Artists, dancers and sculptors, while fearing commercialism, have concerned themselves with these cultural questions and used the "cultural" as the material for art, reflecting in many ways the tendencies, futures, and foibles of the American culture. Sally Banes
describes the work and process of the Grand Union, a now defunct dance group, which concerned itself with these cultural questions:

With its aspirations to collectivity, equality, and spontaneity, the Grand Union was unconventional in comparison to mainstream dance companies, but it certainly was not alone . . . American culture generally expressed themes of concern with cooperation, collective living and working situations, and attention to process over finished product . . .

For the Grand Union, the added dimension of theatre and dance as social forms meant that a social as well as aesthetic world invaded the stage.

...stretching the material and formal limits of their art by incorporating objects (and gestures) from everyday life, using imagery (including sounds) from popular culture, and making long, rambling works in a flexible format with a constantly changing stream of images and meanings.

Today, we need to investigate these social and cultural elements and search their meaning and their relationship to everyday life. Ritual and art search the culture for ways to express "ultimate reality," truth. Ritual-makers need to toss off hereditary symbols that stifle or smother the creative instinct and begin exploring ways to develop "new" symbols based on cultural experience or to rediscover or re-value "lost" symbols and rituals.

Ritual Blinders

The second reason for the decay of ritual is the limited selection of ritual actions which are considered "worshipful." While certain actions or gestures have been considered sacred or appropriate for a variety of Christian
rituals, there seems to be a reluctance in developing new ritual material. Besides the limited selection, there seems to be a groundswell in various religious groups in maintaining or "universalizing" the religious rituals. This move might be interpreted against cultural elements and the entire process of indigenization. Many first world communities look to the mission lands as the place for indigenization, but never at home.

New ritual elements are rarely introduced into a religious celebration. Once introduced they may be ignored in the hope of going away or they may be officially eliminated. Two recent illustrations come to mind. The first deals with an additional gesture which has arisen in many churches in the United States, the holding of hands during the recitation or singing of the Lord's Prayer. Its origin is not really clear, yet it is used in many different churches in different parts of the country.

There are no printed rubrical or legal statements written about this practice, yet people hold hands during the prayer. This ritual action reinforces the prayer text; it expresses the solidarity of God's family, emphasizing the people's own unity as members of a worshipping community.

A second example comes from a congregational recitation of a text. Theologically and liturgically, congregations have been educated that the AMEN after the great prayer of Thanksgiving, spoken by the celebrant, is an important
culminating moment for the entire community. The response "Amen," is often called the Great Amen. In musical settings, this Amen has been augmented and elaborated. Congregations, though, in the United States, Mexico, Europe, and some Asian countries are beginning to recite the lead-in prayer, usually spoken by the priest alone. It is a short doxology called Per Ipsum or Through him.

Recently, the Bishop's Committee on Liturgy which regulates liturgical practice for Roman Catholics in the United States, issued a statement against this practice, reminding people that this prayer is solely the prayer of the priest. Without denying the need for regulating liturgical practice, another interpretation of this issue can be considered.

The people in the pews of the world received a message saying that they are to respond to the entire prayer of Thanksgiving with the AMEN. Saying AMEN, however, is not sufficient response to the prayer. For the Jewish or Hebrew mind, Amen represents more than it does to today's churchgoer.

The word "Amen" is Hebrew and not Greek. It was left untranslated in the liturgy after c. A.D. 100 because its full meaning proved to be in fact untranslatable, though attempts seem to have been made in the first century. . . The Hebrew root "MN," from which "Amen" is derived meant originally "fixed," "settled," "steadfast," and so, "true." The Hebrew mind in its certainty of a transcendental God, fixed upon Him as the standard of truth. . . It is entirely in accord with this that in the Jewish translation of the Old Testament into the Greek, the Hebrew "Amen" is almost always translated by "Would that it might be so!"
In trying to respond with the spoken word, AMEN does not convey the quality of response that is intended. Musical "Amens" are much different because there is repetition of phrase and occasionally an added text to sing. Spoken, AMEN seems bald and lifeless and insufficient to bear the weight of the peoples' symbolic response, saying YES to all parts of the preceding great prayer of Thanksgiving.

Another analysis might be a clash between the Apollonian and Dionysian point of view. The legislators are speaking from an Apollonian perspective while the congregations are in a Dionysian framework of pushing beyond the boundaries of law into a quest for meaningful expression.

The future of effective ritual making will depend on the willingness of the makers to experiment, to make mistakes, and to explore new ritual possibilities. The journey requires keen eyes, free of the limiting blinders of shoulds, can'ts, and won'ts.

Ritual Fear

Jones mentions fear as the third weakness, a weakness of attitude. The fear comes from a change in the status quo. Within our American culture, other factors may impinge on the ritual process like fear of the body in worship or a fear of being too celebrative in church. This fear might be seen as motivated from a sense that any change would destroy the mystery or the meaning of the tradition-bound ritual.
The fear exists among Church leaders and among the people themselves. For Church leaders, the fear may show up in the pastor of a parish who opposes the liturgy committee of the parish and might be heard to say, "The people aren't ready yet!" or "We have to take it slow!"

Some churchgoers in this situation may remain because of the parish school or out of loyalty to the neighborhood. Others may search out a new community where there is more "meaningful" or "contemporary" worship.

This same need - the sense of community, sharing and togetherness - impels many contemporary artists. As Churches struggle with freedom of expression, art communities seem to be exploring new avenues for themselves. Meredith Monk and The House work as a cohesive group not only in their presentations, but in their choice of location, Ms. Monk's loft. Before the performance, the group may offer refreshments in a relaxed homey atmosphere. The very name of the group, The House, suggests this type of intimacy.

Post-performance artists also search through ordinary experience for material. For example, everyday movement may be employed as part of the dance, rather than what might be called "dance material."

This communal sensibility reflected the spirit of the times in the '60s; in the '70s, it has a compensatory function, offering a vision of an integrated, productive, and stable society, one with a unity of purpose and nobility of means, one that is fashioned of materials at hand, and contains wonders and small miracles among the ordeals.
By recasting the experiences of the past into future legends, by putting together small, familiar things in new ways, by embedding folk materials in new structures, and using folk forms to create new meanings, Monk's performances obliquely suggest possibilities, resources, and tools for refashioning our existence together... The patterned attention to the small details of ordinary lives, the celebration of everyday as well as cosmic actions, the harmony of group rituals, the hinting at large meanings and connections glimpsed suddenly in our lives -- all these suffuse Monk's hand-honed tableaux with a sense of solace in community that yet promises change and looks to the future.

Ritual as Impersonal

The fourth weakness Jones raises is the impersonal quality of ritual. Jones defines ritual as "an action (words, gestures, etc.) which is addressed to a transcendent (God, power structure, etc.) that is experienced as meaningful and active in an individual's or community's life and culture." This raises a question about the nature of the transcendent - is this a living, vital, vibrant active life force?

Ritual, grounded in the way men and women embody and symbolize their relationship to the transcendent, is deeply personal. It is communal action which reveals man/woman to him/herself, man/woman to the transcendent, and man/woman to others. In the words, gestures and movements that comprise ritual actions, men and women act on a level that exceeds everydayness. This action, rooted in belief and connectedness to people, is truly sacred, transforming, not imitating life.
Ritual makers can counter this situation and bring healing by overcoming fear, questioning tradition, searching new forms of expression and symbols, and making use of the personal, communal, cultural and artistic resources that are available. Today's ritual maker must have the freedom to bypass existing worship structures until he has gained the knowledge and experience from the more immediate and less complex ritual structures that are part of life. Like the director, who introduced participational theatre as a life force in a dying medium, the ritual maker must have a foundational understanding in the roots and symbols that support meaningful and creative rituals.

The attempts to enhance ritual or to rediscover its power seems connected to the ability of ritual to integrate or heal its participants. This religious action is a touchstone for Church and art ritual. Peter Brook, director and avant-gardist, discusses this mutuality:

The ancient theatre clearly was, and theatre must always be, a religious action; and its action is very clear; it is that by which fragments are made whole. It is too much to expect at any point in history that an entire society can heal itself, or be healed by one person or group of people -- it doesn't happen that way. The great force of artistic events is that they are temporary glimpses of what might be, and there is a healing process attached to these glimpses. In the ancient world, things were true to the same laws as today; you had a community that by its very nature was fragmented and divided.
A ceremony was a temporary, perhaps two-hour, reintegration, in which each person tasted unity. The basis for this reintegration could be one of many. It could be the ceremony -- the religious ceremony expressing itself in certain movements, for instance; or (and this has gradually become more or less the basis of theatre) it could be through a form of story-telling -- maybe a story about the gods, by the end of which everybody in it has actually, for a short time, experienced and tasted unity. And then they go back into a society which re-fragments itself immediately, but the periodic returns to this movement of reintegration save the day: they keep the world from falling asunder.

To aid in this process of renewal and re-structuring worship, Church groups are not only employing their own trained personnel, but are looking to the arts, especially theatre, architecture, and dance to help rejuvenate the ritual life of the community. As Church groups and the performing arts continue to adapt and create new rituals for performance, there are common questions: What are the basic elements that are common to both? How are these elements communicated to an audience or congregation? What is the ritual-making process? What is the relationship of intentionality to performance?

By knowing and understanding the factors that can limit ritual making, contemporary ritual makers can draw positive elements: (1) ritual needs symbols that work and have power. It is not the age or life span of the symbol that is significant, but its communicating power to draw people into mystery; (2) there is a need to explore the avenues of gesture, movement and body language in developing new rituals and
celebrations; (3) new rituals demand the touch and sensitivity of the artist; (4) new rituals need to touch not only the mind, but also the spirit and heart of a living community.
NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE


4. Margaret Mead, "Ritual and Social Crises, "Roots of Ritual" (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973) pps. 87-89: "Ritual is concerned with relationships, either between a single individual and the supernatural, or among a group of individuals who share things together. There is something about the sharing and the expectation that makes it ritual."

5. Christopher Crocker, "Ritual and the Development of Social Structure: Liminality and Inversion, "Roots of Ritual, pps. 47-48: "Ritual expresses those fundamental categories by which men attempt to apprehend and to control their social existence... Ritual is a statement in metaphoric terms about the paradoxes of human existence."


8. There is also the implication that ritual can be a private act. In everyday language we talk of our private rituals - saying prayers before retiring, preparing to shave in the morning, ways of brushing our teeth. The greeting - "Hello, how are you?" - is really more a ritualized form than a real concern for the other person's well being. Ritual can be private, but that is a more general use of the term.


10. Ibid.


CHAPTER TWO
METHODS AND PRINCIPLES FOR THE STUDY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to study the phenomenon and process of ritual-making from two different points of view: (1) performance ritual (the ritual of community) and (2) ritual performance (ritual as art). The focus on the delineation of the ritual making process in both kinds of ritual will make it possible to compare and contrast both points of view, and to determine possible correlations between them.

This study involves field research and the development of several methodologies to gain access to necessary experiences and information. "Field research is more like an umbrella of activity beneath which any technique may be used for gaining the desired information, and for processes of thinking about this information."\(^1\)

**Ritual Performance**

There is a growing awareness in the Arts community that new theatre and dance works have a decidedly "ritual" element. Critics and arts practitioners attempt to break new ground in exploring the relationship of modern dance
to ritual and ritual to modern dance. The work of contemporary choreographers may be considered ritual performance – (ritual as art) – the work of extraordinarily creative individuals who explore the ritual patterns of life, e.g., Martha Graham, Twyla Tharp, Laura Dean, Lucinda Childs, Kenneth King and Robert Wilson.

Theatre has recognized the power of ritual from the times of Euripides, Aristophanes and Sophocles. Contemporary directors like Richard Scheckner and Andrei Serban are developing "ritual theatre." Scheckner, a theatrical director, teaches theatre/drama at New York University where he has explored in seminars the interface of theatre and ritual with Alexander Alland, Erving Goffman and Victor Turner. His production of Dionysios in '69 is one example of environmental-ritual theatre, where the audience is not watching but participating.

For me authentic performing occurs when an audience is neither totally absorbed into the performance nor totally separate from it, but able to slide back and forth from participation to critical distance. When the performers not only are doing something voluntarily but also answering a "call," as shamans do. When there is celebration – enthusiasm in its original meaning of jumping for joy as at Bob Carroll's or the Holiness Church. When the performance leads to a completion either through collective catharsis or the individual's overcoming of obstacles or ordeals. These give to both spectators and performers the experience of adventure.
Performance Ritual

Churches, temples or meditation centers are the obvious loci for religious ritual. The ongoing discussion about the nature of sacred and profane in respect to worship has brought about a re-examination and rediscovery of symbols which are part of ritual language. Some search for a universal religious language while others struggle to uncover indigenous forms of worship for a particular culture.

Since Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church has been re-vitalizing its meal ritual (eucharist) in terms of language, symbols, accoutrements and architecture. As the various communication media are being examined for ritual use, individual communities continue to plan their celebrations by incorporating local, folk or ethnic art.

These changes suggest a theological shift from an emphasis on the transcendance of God to an awareness of the immanence of God. This shift is now becoming evident in the kinds of rituals being celebrated. As the pendulum swings, there is concern that an emphasis on immanence (God here with us now), will lessen the sense of mystery, take away awe and wonder and, ultimately, result in a loss of the sacred. On the other side, with an emphasis on transcendence (God in the beyond - out there), there is little focus on the community activity and the congregation
can be treated as spectators of a secret ceremony that uplifts them but does not speak their language.

The need today is to explore and develop methods for ritual study that will take in the full reality by analyzing the process, the performance and the levels of communication. Mary Collins, a noted liturgical scholar, discusses the need for new ritual studies:

While we all agree that worship is not simply a matter of words, we continue to manifest a bias of the rational, linear culture which has nurtured us. The verbal code continues to be perceived as the clearest expression of the faith horizon of the Church. So studying texts continues to be perceived as the key to finding meanings in liturgical rites...Yet the cultural bias and the greater difficulty of gaining access to and control of non-documentary evidence has maximized the importance of texts and minimized the significance of other data in liturgical studies. The procedural model tended to make the text central and other factors more or less peripheral...It is questionable today to proceed on methodological presuppositions that all serious data are still reflected in texts. It is shortsighted to harbor the corollary of that presupposition - namely, that study of texts is merely supplemented by selecting other available and interesting data. Contemporary historical data will surely be the result of incomplete inquiry into the full reality of worship.3

Since the concern of this study is with ritual that is performance-oriented rather than the rituals of everyday life, the research method that yields information about the phenomenon and process of ritual making is field research, and participant observation, in particular. This method allows access to the entire process of ritual making and not just the product - the actual performance or church service.
Developing a Method

In order to explore the complex process of ritual making, this study will compare and contrast ritual performance and performance ritual – discovering their similarities and differences and identifying the essential components of ritual. With a swing back to ritual beyond the strictly religious, this type of contrasted inquiry and the manner of study (participation observation) is contemporary and without much precedent.

The study of the ritual making process includes:
a) recording and analyzing the developmental process;
b) exploring the relationship of ritual maker (choreographer) to the entire working group; c) examining the ordering of ritual elements – seeing the decision making and the effects the decisions have on the entire event; and
d) looking at the presentation of ritual material in its final context, whether church or theatre.

By its very nature, this study requires the development and testing of new research methods that are qualitative, descriptive and reflective of the full reality of ritual beyond textual or historical analysis. Such a study of ritual involves an interdisciplinary approach – employing the participant observation method of anthropology, the qualitative and philosophical approach of phenomenology, movement analysis from dance education (especially the work of Rudolf Laban), the inquiry method of interviewing and the use of videotape as an analytical tool.
Focus for the Study

In exploring the different approaches to ritual, the researcher selected dance as a common element in both ritual performance and performance ritual. The researcher became aware through his studies and experience that dance, gesture and movement are not just a part of the ritual experience but often the language of the ritual, the symbolic or actual medium of communication.

With dance as a unifying element, the study focuses on two kinds of contemporary ritual making situations: (1) a modern dance company, preparing for a concert, as an example of ritual performance, and (2) a liturgical dance company, working in a church setting, as an example of performance ritual.

What we are able to see if we use our bodies as eyes as a virtual image. It is real, for when we are confronted by it, it really does exist, but it is not actually there. The reflection in a mirror is such a virtual image; so is a rainbow. It seems to stand on earth or in the clouds, but it really "stands" nowhere. It is only visible, not tangible. It is the unspeakable, the ineffable made visible, made audible, made experiential.6

To study ritual making, the mode of participant observation became a way of learning, studying and documenting the actual process. The researcher determined that this qualitative approach would be important in examining the development of new rituals as well as in analyzing rituals already in existence, within the church and the performing arts.
For the study, the researcher planned to locate two different field sites for simultaneous observation and analysis. This decision was based primarily on the expense of such research and the time considerations of living in a city away from the university. There were questions of: (1) suitability - did the planned sites provide the opportunity for observing significant operations?; (2) feasibility - can two simultaneous observations take place effectively?, and (3) developing suitable tactics for entering the field setting.

**The Participant Observer**

The primary method for the study is participant observation since it provides the researcher with first hand experience of the ritual making process.

The participant observer gathers data by being part of the daily life of the group he studies. Watching the people he is studying, he examines the situations they encounter and analyzes their behavior and response. He converses with some or all of the members in the field study and their interpretations of the events he has observed.

There are four basic steps in this method: 1) entering the field setting; 2) observing the day-to-day functioning of the group; 3) interacting with the group; and 4) interpreting the data.
The participant observation method allows first-hand access to the process. Recognizing the "in" and "out" of the researcher's presence, it allows one to be part of the process, but also remain outside it for careful documentation and analysis. The end goal of participant observation is an analytic description of the complex social organization or process rather than an efficient test of theory.5

These interpretative principles are supported by Schatzman and Strauss:

The principal difference between the researcher as member and all others resides in his activity as observer — that is, in his work. The others observe too, but there the similarity ends; his observations are linked to a conceptual framework and to a set of operations that are substantially different from the thought processes and operations of the hosts as observer. His conceptual framework and associated operations function for a very different order of work, and they are shared if at all at his discretion and for his own ends. His distance from the observed is conceptional and operational, not social. Thus as a participant he shares much of the social life and relations, including those which surround and invest any work being done at the site. But his own work is shared only at the very end, when either for ethical reasons or because of an agreement, he shares some of the fruits of his labor, or in some small sense it is shared intermittently during the research in the form of occasional public comments or reports in which he reveals a little of what he sees, knows and thinks about the observed site.6

The task of the participant observer is to describe what people do, how they work and what they say as evidence for how they interpret their social reality.
Data Gathering

In the present study, three techniques were used for gathering information:

1) The taking of field notes - day-by-day recording of how the dance ritual is made with some movement observations.

2) Videotaping phases of the process and the performances.

3) Interviewing those involved.

The participant observation method was employed in conjunction with a phenomenological approach. The general criteria for using a phenomenological method are: a) investigate all phenomena; b) all investigation presupposes a transcendental viewpoint; c) all transcendental or eidetic viewpoints are mediated by social historicity; d) at the level of sense-making, meaning is not experienced in its totality; all hermeneutics have a situational character, and the aim of meaning provides a communicability; e) phenomenology is radically empirical; phenomenology demands that there can be no reductionism; and f) understanding is prior to explanation.

As a way of validating the field notes and observations, the following phenomenological principles were employed:

1) Every part presupposes a whole and each part is a co-present feature of the whole (hermeneutical circle).
2) Each gesture effaces itself in favor of meaning. (Every expression points beyond its meaning).
3) All instruments mediate the ritual making process; e.g., the video tape mediates the theatrical performance and the performance mediates the tape machine.

Preparing for Observation

Because the researcher is a ritual maker and not a professionally trained dancer, it was necessary for him to explore and understand the "sub-culture" of the dance world. The exploration involved attending courses in modern dance technique to learn kinesthetically about movement, experiencing dance training first hand, and studying Laban's theories of movement, especially effort and its motion factors and harmonics in space.

These experiences provided the researcher with daily contact with dance students and teachers helping the researcher feel comfortable in the rehearsal spaces of the two dance groups selected for the study. It also helped develop an understanding of some of the language, customs and lesser "rituals" of dancers in general.

This phase of preparation was essential for getting familiar with the dance world and to use dance as the starting point for the research. These experiences helped the researcher: (1) focus more clearly on the uniqueness of the work in progress; (2) understand how rehearsals and warm-ups were structured; (3) speak a common language—not
only technically, but "sub-culturally;" and (4) look more deeply into the qualities of movement itself.

After gaining some confidence and skill, the researcher observed a variety of technique classes in the university setting and in New York City. The writer also participated in three separate dance concerts at the University, gaining experience of backstage life.

These smaller observation tasks were helpful to gain some practice in observation and in taking field notes. Because the research also included the possibility of videotape, the writer studied videography and video art to obtain professional training in the mechanical, technical and artistic side of video. This involved training in studio work and location shooting with a porta-pak system to expose the researcher to a variety of situations.

**Movement Observation**

During his studies the researcher identified four aspects for looking at movement. The technique, based on Rudolf Laban's concepts, pertains to the observation, classification and analysis of the movement of the body, its use of energy (Effort), its unfolding in space and the relationship of the dancer(s) to the performing space and to other dancers.

1) In the observation of the body, aspects such as the movement initiation, the kinds of bodily actions and
use of the center of gravity were considered.

2) In the observation of energy (effort), the qualitative components and the combinations of weight, time, space and flow were studied.

3) In the observation of the use of space, aspects such as level, size and direction were noted.

4) In the observation of relationship, several aspects can be considered: a) the choreographer's orientation to the performing space, such as one front (proscenium stage) or several fronts (in the round); and b) the choreographic procedure, such as, in unison, in canon, or in counterpoint.

5) A fifth consideration may be added which concerns the choreographic choice of environmental elements for a performance. The choices include a) sound or music; b) costumes and make-up; c) properties; and d) lighting.

These aspects helped train the eye of the observer to the subtle combinations of movement, the use of space and a variety of performance considerations.

Theoretical Leads

Before attending rehearsals, some basic questions and concerns were developed as a focus for the study. While not all these were equally dealt with, they did provide a start place for observation:

(1) The Ritual Making:
What makes something a ritual? What are ritual elements?
How does one isolate ritual elements? How is the ritual rehearsed, organized and planned? Does one person ultimately direct the ritual? Is there any importance to team effort? How may we identify the various contributions a group makes to the ritual?

(2) Ritual Theory:
What prejudices does the group have in terms of working? Are there any stated preferences for art or religious theory? Is play theory helpful in watching the making process? Is there concern for time and space? Is there mention of repetition?

(3) The Community or Audience:
What are the expectations of the people watching or participating in the ritual? How long does it take to establish a ritual? What is the relationship of community memory to repeatability?

(4) End Result:
Is there any discernible transformation or renewal because of the ritual?

Human Subject Review
In addition to the usual preparations of field research, it was also necessary to present an overview of the research proposal to the Human Subject Review Board of the University. This involved presenting the dissertation prospectus and getting signed permission from each company and from the pastor of the church
where one company would be performing. This procedure was necessary since some of the identities of the people studied would be named in the study. There would be no attempt at an anonymous report, since there was an advantage in knowing the people and the dance traditions involved. Anonymity was also difficult because of the use of videotape.¹⁰
Strategy For Entering

With dance at the center of his study, the writer focused on New York City as the possible field site since it offered the widest range of dance possibilities. On trips to The City, various companies were singled out that might offer the opportunity to study the actual making of a dance.

From the start it was realized that the mode of participant observation might work more easily in a foreign setting than in an American city. With native suspicions more evident, there have not been many field studies in the performing arts. Artists, more than most people, tend to be protective of their work and do not want the intrusion by an outside observer. Some choreographers do not want their process exposed or their work habits analyzed, recognizing that the presence of a new person in the midst of a working group might subtly change the work or effect the performers or dancers in some negative way.

Searching For A Field Site

After talking with many different dancers and getting a sense of the dance scene in New York in general, the researcher noted a few possible dance companies and began a slow six-month process of selection. One dance company seemed to offer all the possibilities for a study of ritual
performance. The dance material included frequent repetition, original musical scoring and various cross-cultural dance elements, including spinning and clogging. After three months of discussion and careful consideration, the choreographer decided that an outsider's presence would be a disturbance to the actual working of the group and to the choreographer's own freedom of expression. The choreographer offered some options of seeing a near-completed dance, but the researcher would not be able to see the actual creative process and progress.

The rejection anecdote is included to underline the fact that performing artists are very protective of their work and of their co-workers, impressing upon the reader that participant observation is a difficult mode of data gathering in the performing arts.

Locating A Field Site

The researcher then proceeded to his next choice and began the process again, finally selecting Nina Wiener and Dancers as representative of ritual performance.

Nina Wiener and Dancers is a Modern Dance company based in New York City. Ms. Wiener, a former member of the Twyla Tharp Dance Foundation, began the company in 1977 with graduates of the Dance Department at Ohio State. In early performances, Wiener's work was compared with Tharp's. Recently, she has come into her own, developing her own special choreography and technique. Ms. Wiener was
a guest artist-in-residence at the Ohio State University 1975-1976.

Ms. Wiener was basing her choreography on movement phrases that develop out of the life history or peculiar movement style of her dancers. In one of her lecture demonstrations connected with *The Condor Material*, (Part One), she speaks not only about the movement of her dancers, but of the movement's origins in the individual life history. In performance, her movement tends to be highly abstract. For example, a simple gesture of driving a tractor is speeded up and stylized to look like a form of body and torso twisting.

This company was selected because: 1) it was small and allowed for observation within the limited time frame of a double observational site; 2) it would be rehearsing from January through April with confirmed concert dates in the spring; 3) it was open to observation and research; and 4) it exhibited what Highwater calls "the second form of ritual . . . the creation of an exceptional individual who transforms his experience into a metaphoric idiom known as art."11

This company seemed suitable for field research because of the way the choreographer spoke of her work as a process, the way the dancers expressed their understanding of the work as involving collaboration, and because the final process would be presented at the Brooklyn Academy of Music as part of its dance series for spring. It was
important to the study that the dance work end in a recital or performance open to the general public.

It was apparent from the start that the research was feasible because of the limited time frame. The researcher would be able to spend four months with the company, with rehearsals about five days a week in the afternoon or late morning. With a small company observation would be less a problem and the observer was welcome to all rehearsals and related events.

There did not seem to be any kind of apprehension, but rather a warm, open receptivity. The researcher was also a known commodity to the dancers and was working through a university that all but one of the dancers attended and where the choreographer taught. Thus, the selection of the site and entrance into the field overlapped.

Entering The Field

The researcher had met Nina Wiener a year earlier through friends at Ohio State who were part of her informal company. At the time, he was permitted to attend a rehearsal to make observation notes on a project for a university class. Later, he was invited to a dress rehearsal of The Condor Material (Part One) at St. Mark's Danspace. At the time Ms. Wiener was just getting her company off the ground and the questions about finance, rehearsal space and performances were being considered.
A year later, the company was a reality with five nonsalaried dancers, performance dates at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and a larger rehearsal space.

The quality of Ms. Wiener's choreography was of interest because the approach was group-oriented with her company members interacting in the movement-making. The dancers were just not performing set steps designed by Ms. Wiener, but participated in the making of the piece in a collaborative way.

Ms. Wiener was quite receptive, and open to the idea of the researcher and manifested immediate interest in videotape equipment, which would be available as a research tool. It seemed that Ms. Wiener could not afford to purchase or rent videotape equipment at the time and she wanted to use videotape to reconstruct parts of the dance. Videotape would help her immensely in the choreographic tasks, and would aid the dancers in relearning their parts.

Ms. Wiener did not appear threatened by a researcher's presence, nor feel that there would be any distraction. She also felt flattered in a way to be part of a doctoral dissertation. She told the researcher that since she was starting out with a fuller company, she felt she had nothing to lose and could benefit in a way from the resulting thesis and more immediately from the offered use of videotape equipment. She seemed sincerely interested in learning from the process and was curious about what the finished study would uncover.
The researcher feels that the combinations of Ohio State friendships, the tangible offer of videotape services and the state of the company's work contributed to the openness.

Research Note

There was a fortuitous element to this entire arrangement. The researcher happened along at the right time with the right offer of video equipment. This first step was the most crucial for the researcher in the participant observation mode because it set the tone for the relationship just beginning to be established.

The researcher really entered the field a year earlier when he attended the dress rehearsal at St. Mark's Danspace. Trust and knowledge of the person of the researcher broke down some barriers that might have been present. When the researcher eventually proposed his plan of research, he was already a known personality. From the very beginning, the researcher felt a sense of trust and relaxation with the company.

Strategy For Watching

Notes were taken at each day's rehearsal. Since Ms. Wiener often sat with pad and pencil during the rehearsals, it was also possible for the writer to take notes openly each time. It did not disturb Ms. Wiener or the company. Since the researcher was there for obser-
vation, it seemed natural to take notes and the company seemed to expect it.

Field Notes

The kind of notes the researcher took fell into three categories: (1) observational notes - describing what was going on each day, how Ms. Wiener organized her rehearsal material, how the company learned the material, the interaction and group activity of the process, and how each dancer collaborated with Ms. Wiener throughout the process; (2) Theoretical notes - attempting to derive meaning and understanding from the observations. The theoretical notes were most apparent when there was a shift in the rehearsal to new material or to a reconstruction phase; (3) methodological notes - instructing the researcher on the process of researching, suggesting frameworks, questions and new leads.

In the beginning, the researcher had to accustom himself to the way the company worked and struggled to phrase meaningful questions to help him understand the process before his very eyes.

Aspects of Observation

Six aspects of the observation process seemed to offer significant data. These aspects are not chronologically arranged. After the first month of observation, it was
possible for them to be happening simultaneously, at one rehearsal. Each aspect was clearly different, with its own qualities for learning, offering insights into the choreographic process.

The Choreographic Process

The first month of observation involved this phase almost exclusively. In the early weeks, the researcher watched the making of new dance material from core sequences, already learned. During rehearsal breaks, he was able to ask questions in order to understand and describe the movement. The process concerned how the sequences were rehearsed and shaped.

It was difficult at first to know what to look for, how to look and describe what was going on. Since the researcher would be with the company for four to five months, he decided to ease his way into understanding the dance making. While the researcher knew what he was seeing, it took time within the daily routine to explain it to himself and to figure out where the rehearsals were going.

There was incredible repetition of practicing and correcting. Each day the rehearsal itself was clear, but its relationship to the whole was cloudy. The process clarified itself once there was a run-through of an entire section and all the learned material could be put together. At the run-throughs, the bits and pieces of movement seemed to come together and gradually formed a coherent whole.
The variables for movement observation did not prove helpful during the rehearsals. The writer spent more time trying to observe what was actually happening (the mode of making) rather than the qualities of individual performance or the qualities of the movement itself. At times, the process seemed almost microscopic and tiny, and at others, large and overwhelming.

A shift in observation came when there was a shift in the nature of the rehearsal. When the company began reconstructing material from the videotape, the company's shift brought a shift in understanding the previous material.

The Reconstruction Phase

This involved the use of videotape playback in 1) reconstructing large sections of material previously made and danced by the company, and 2) learning material previously made by other dancers to be used in the finished work. All this reconstructed material would be incorporated into the new dance, The Condor Material (Parts One and Two).

This process provided ways of seeing how the dancers saw the material and the movement itself. It was important to note what sections were reviewed carefully and what sections were learned quickly. This varied with each dancer. First, the entire tape was watched to provide for the overall context and then smaller sections were looked at and then rehearsed. Ms. Wiener was present for all this, but she wanted her dancers to work on their own.
They were given their assignments to learn certain material. Once they rehearsed, Ms. Wiener would look at their dancing. This approach respected the intelligence of the dancers and the choreographer did not appear to be spoon feeding the company dance material.

The reconstructing of sequences that the company had danced before took less time than learning movement made by others. Since some sequences were made outside the company, these took longer to learn and the process was more demanding. The difficulty was not because of the newness of the movement but because the dynamics and movement style were foreign and not as familiar to the company members. In some ways, it resembled learning a new dialect after having mastered a foreign language.

In watching the tape of The Condor Material (Part One) (which the researcher saw in dress rehearsal a year earlier), he was amazed at being able to watch, understand and know a good deal about how the dance was made, how the steps and sections were related and the origin of the movement. What was first considered a difficult and mysterious dance, suddenly became clear and understandable. Exposure to the language and syntax of a choreographer's style contributed to the understanding.

The more one learns how the fragments are put together, the more easily it is to understand, and appreciate, the process within the finished product. While the researcher was able to see the intelligibility of the entire work, he
was able to see the fragments and the connections within Part Two, which were still in the process of being made. Every part does presuppose the whole, even if the whole is still being made.

The dancers themselves remarked about the easiness of their "translations." In watching the tapes and listening to the dancers reflect on their own performance a year ago, the researcher was finally beginning to understand and articulate not only the language of Ms. Wiener's movement, but also the syntax and some of the aesthetics of styling she employed.

**Individual Rehearsals**

Another phase that was happening alongside the larger reconstruction effort was the work of an individual dancer in learning and polishing solo material. The researcher had the opportunity to work with Ms. Bebe Miller on an individual basis for over a week at the end of each company rehearsal as she was putting together solo material. She would perform the solo, the researcher would tape the performance, and then both would watch the tape. Repetition was certainly helpful in seeing what qualities Ms. Miller was seeking to achieve.

This phase provided ways of seeing how an individual dancer saw the dance material and the movement itself. It is important to note that the researcher was very much a participant in this phase. Since no one else was involved
in watching and playing back the tape, this was a unique opportunity to see a dancer up close and get inside the mind-set of the dancer. As Ms. Miller worked, she would ask for the opinion and advice of the researcher in terms of her progress. In general, she would be able to see her mistakes with rapid speed and know how to correct the mistake. Usually, the mistakes were about placement of the body or the sequence of the movements. This phase also permitted the researcher to have informal conversation and ask questions on the spot without fear of interruption or intrusion.

The Lecture Demonstration

During the reconstruction phase, the company was invited to do two lecture demonstrations. A lecture demonstration provided the company some visibility with a potential audience and instructed people about specific choreographic inventions. Ms. Wiener would prepare notes about the making of the dance and would select phrases and dance sections that would illustrate her material. At both lectures Ms. Wiener used the same script. Before the lecture, the company would rehearse the material within the actual space. This consideration was important, especially in group work. There was concern not only for the movement itself, but for the relationship of the movement to the space itself and the quantity of space that existed between each dancer.
It was helpful to see what sections Ms. Wiener would select as illustrative of her style and to hear her explain the making process. The researcher found consistency throughout the lecture demonstrations. The choreographer would explain and illustrate her movement phrases with pinpoint accuracy, helping the audience understand the relationship of movements one to another. Her manner of presentation in the lecture demonstration reflected the same choreographer in the rehearsal studio. She was honest, direct and sparse.

Rehearsal of the Entire Work

As performance time neared, the company would do run-throughs of an entire section. In the beginning, each part would be rehearsed separately: Part One from the reconstruction of videotape; and Part Two, original and reconstructed sequences. The run-throughs were very helpful because they provided the researcher with seeing the dance connected in its parts and to see and feel the accumulation of dance material.

The rehearsals of the entire program were varied: (a) run-throughs of the entire program at Ms. Wiener's loft studio; (b) photography session and run-through of key sequences to allow the Village Voice and the Soho Weekly News to have photographs of the company for advance articles and for publicity purposes of The Brooklyn Academy of Music; (c) run-throughs in larger spaces, Hunter High
School Auditorium and an elementary school auditorium. These run-throughs were closed rehearsals with the researcher videotaping both parts of the dance. Ms. Wiener used these run-through videotapes. She would take them home, study them, make notes and share the necessary corrections with the company; (d) spacing rehearsal at LePercq Space, Brooklyn Academy. These rehearsals would allow Ms. Wiener a chance to adjust the dance to the new and much larger space, to decide on when and where to do exits and entrances and to discuss the lighting and lighting cues with the management.

The researcher was not allowed to videotape in the LePercq Space because of union rules but he did attend all spacing rehearsals. Because Ms. Wiener was in the performance at various times, she asked the researcher's opinion about the spacing. Ms. Wiener realized that the researcher had a good understanding of what she was about and she trusted his judgment and opinion. While the dance movement was the same in this larger space, the researcher was amazed at how different the danced looked. Part One looked especially different than in St. Mark's, which was smaller and had the audience on all four sides; (e) dress rehearsal - run through of all material with all lighting cues and costumes. There were a few people present to give Ms. Wiener feedback and evaluation.
Performances

There were four performances of The Condor Material, Parts One and Two, at LePercq Space, The Brooklyn Academy of Music. The researcher attended each performance and was able to chat and discuss the dance before and after the performance with various audience members. Each performance was unique with some sections going more smoothly than others.

Before the performance, the dancers would warm up for an hour in the space and have some rehearsal of necessary parts. The performances were the capping of months of work. After the performances were over, the dancers took some time off. After some vacation, the company watched the videotapes of two nights of performance made by Dennis Diamond, a professional dance recorder. The videotapes were seriously studied with the company comparing the performance level of Part One in this set with the videotapes of the original performances of January, 1978.

Using Videotape

In addition to the previously mentioned ways of gathering data, the researcher had the advantage of a porta-pak videotape system for recording and playing for the entire duration of this time in the field setting. This portable system was a significant element in the research in a number of ways:

(1) The use of a videotape system was definite advantage
in gaining entry into Ms. Wiener's dance company. Ms. Wiener was not only familiar with the use of videotape but was also rather sophisticated in its many applications in terms of learning and storing dance information. Ms. Wiener had used videotape many times and hoped one day to have a system available to her company. She was also helpful to the researcher in the kinds of shooting she wanted. The researcher learned quickly that a stationary camera with a wide angle lens made the movement more visible and complete. From the dance point of view, close-ups or medium close-ups were less desirable. It was best to let the dancer work within the given rehearsal space, i.e., prosienum arch. This provided spatial information about the dancer and the dancer's personal use of space. While the researcher had equipment and was somewhat proficient in its mechanical use, he learned from Ms. Wiener more sophisticated and helpful ways to use the medium.

(2) The videotape was used for the dancers to study and reconstruct Part One of The Condor Material and to learn "The Illinois Material." This gave the researcher insight into the reconstruction phase, provided information relevant to movement learning, and a look into how the dance material was presented visually. In most cases, the camera gave as wide a panorama as possible to let the dancers work in the space around them. "The Illinois Material" was also shot from various angles to allow the movement to be seen in different forms of its complexity.
(3) The videotape gave the researcher access to working with a single dancer for a week, providing him with a more personal mode of interaction and a more direct involvement in the dance making.

(4) The videotape provided Ms. Wiener with a way of storing dance material from a workshop she was conducting. With the playback possibility, she would be able to look at this material later in helping her build a solo for herself.

(5) The videotape also provided the company with a look at their dancing in progress. Very often, dancers did not see the entire work or their sections until they watched the videotape tape after the performance. The possibility of viewing rehearsal run-throughs allowed the dancer to see the unity of the material itself and to examine their own personal movements for clarity and intention. The dancers were able to see what they thought they were doing.

(6) The videotape was an advantage for the researcher to look at and analyze sections of the dance long after the performance. The ease of operation and the storing of material made it possible to study and analyze the tapes a year later at the Dance Department at Ohio State University.

(7) In general, the videotape can reduce selectivity, at least in terms of rehearsals, run-throughs and performance. While the researcher may forget certain
sections or key elements the videotape can store significant material that might be forgotten or overlooked because of complexity. 15

Strategy For Listening

Using participant observation as a method, it was difficult to differentiate between watching and listening at this particular field site. Eavesdropping was not important since the group seemed open and talkative most of the time. Situational conversation was used most of the time. The researcher was able to ask brief questions during the break or after the rehearsal itself. During the rehearsal time, there was usually silence as the dancers worked. Occasionally, Ms. Wiener would inject a comment or the dancer might ask a question, but generally, there was a quiet mood throughout.

Sometimes, however, everyone would break into a conversation and the researcher then could ask for a clarification. At times, Ms. Wiener would turn to the researcher and give a comment or explain something on her own.

Interviewing

Four kinds of questions were important to the interview: 1) the devil's advocate question - confronting the informants with arguments of opponents; 2) the hypothetical question - the "what if?" question; 3) the question posing the ideal - having the informant describe the "perfect"
situation for working; and 4) questions offering interpretations or testing propositions on the informants. Interviews with the company were conducted after the performances were over. The researcher felt he had sufficient informal conversations throughout the entire process and wanted a more thoughtful and reflective response after the event.

The writer first interviewed Ms. Alison Pearl and took notes at the meeting. Afterwards, the researcher decided to capture future interviews on tape because his notes seemed sketchy and he would not have to rely on his memory as much. This method of taping proved to be a valuable method in gathering data and in storing significant information. While the transcription process may be arduous, the result of having the entire interview available reduces the possibility of memory error and provides for more careful documentation.

Because of the small number in the company, it was difficult to pinpoint one major informant. Mr. Timothy Buckley, a member of the company, was most helpful in the beginning stages of negotiation and helped ease the researcher into the field setting by accompanying him to the rehearsals and answering questions afterwards.

The researcher was informally interviewed all members of the group. Ms. Wiener was available for questions, reviews and in-depth interviews. Ms. Glenna Hamm, the newest member of the company, was cooperative
but did not have the history with the company. She was most helpful in understanding 'The Illinois Material.' The entire company became the informant, meeting the research needs as they came along.

It was important to determine the suitable questions for each dancer. Methodological notes were helpful, indicating new questions and the most knowledgeable company member for a particular question. The cooperation of the entire group was amazing. The researcher, never felt left out, and gradually became a part of the company. During dress rehearsals at the Brooklyn Academy, a symbol of acceptance was his own identification card as a member of Nina Wiener and Dancers.
Strategy For Entering

The search for a liturgical dance group was much different than the search for a modern company. Although liturgical dance is becoming more widely accepted in the United States as a valid element in worship, there are not many recognizable liturgical dancers. While churches may have an individual parishioner with a background in dance who performs occasionally or a group of willing volunteers, assisted by a liturgically-aware pastor or trained dancer, there are few dance companies devoting themselves to sacred or liturgical dance.

Searching For A Field Site

In recent years, Ms. Carla DeSola emerged in the midst of liturgical reform, focusing her attention on individual liturgical dance workshops and journal publications. Ms. DeSola's *Learning Through Dance*[^18], was well received by religious educators and her monthly column on dance in *Liturgy* magazine contributed, in part, to the spread of liturgical dance in the United States.[^19]

With limited possibilities, Ms. DeSola seemed to be a natural place to start. The researcher had met Ms. DeSola on a number of occasions at liturgical workshops and both were columnists for *Liturgy* magazine.[^20] Because of her

[^18]: Ms. Carla DeSola's Learning Through Dance
[^19]: With limited possibilities, Ms. DeSola seemed to be a natural place to start. The researcher had met Ms. DeSola on a number of occasions at liturgical workshops and both were columnists for *Liturgy* magazine.
professional training, her national reputation, her pioneering in liturgical dance, and her residence in New York City, Ms. DeSola seemed a suitable subject.

Locating A Field Site

The researcher initiated contact with Ms. DeSola by telephone to discuss the research project. Because she had been very much a part of the liturgical dance movement in the United States, she was open to being part of the study. She told the researcher that she started her own company and that he would be able to work with the entire group. The aim of the company was to express the spiritual-social healing dimensions of dance; to explore inner aspects of movement integrated with the world's spiritual resources; and to bring dance into religious observances and in concert for all settings including the liturgical framework.

The study of the Omega Liturgical Dance Company was judged suitable because of the kind of dance commitment the dancers and company had to worship and the new emphasis on a professionally-trained liturgical dance company. The study was feasible because the researcher would be able to attend company rehearsals once or twice a week in the evening. Evening rehearsals were the rule since most of the dancers worked full-time day jobs. In terms of the dual site, it would be possible to be with Ms. Wiener's
company during the day and to spend some evenings a week with the Omega Company.

**Entering The Field**

Since it was felt that a variety of liturgical dance experiences would probably yield more information than an isolated performance here and there, the researcher wanted to observe the company at the same site in different liturgical situations. While Ms. DeSola and her company perform in a variety of places, the company was still looking for more work and ongoing connections with different churches.

The researcher discussed this with Ms. DeSola and suggested that the Church of St. Paul the Apostle in midtown New York might be a good location. The parish was in the midst of renewal itself and the pastor was looking for ways of enriching the liturgical life of the parish.

The researcher suggested this church since he knew the pastor quite well, thought it might be a good space for dance and felt that the company might contribute to the worship program. The researcher checked with the Omega company first before seeing the pastor, to determine if the church space might be workable for dance.

Once the setting was approved, the researcher met with the pastor to suggest the Omega Liturgical Dance Company and to explain his research operation. The pastor was cooperative to the researcher and approving of the dance
company's role in the liturgical renewal of the parish.
The researcher was aware of his role as catalyst, and after
the initial contact was made, all negotiations, including
scheduling and finances, were made directly through the
pastor with Ms. DeSola.

As the researcher thought through the observation
process, it became clear that the parish staff would be an
important factor in the liturgical planning. The study
of the ritual process in this setting would involve a
larger and more complex organization of people and places.

The researcher asked the pastor if he might be able to
be present at some of the staff or planning sessions
that involved the ritual dimensions of parish life, and
"the dance mass," in particular. After discussion with
the staff, the pastor agreed to allow the researcher to
be present for those meetings that involved liturgical
dance and worship.

Ms. DeSola indicated that videotape would be appropriate
for some rehearsals and the church performances because the
dancers were accustomed to it. The pastor was also recep-
tive to the videotape as long as the equipment was not a
nuisance or bother to the worshippers.

This entry into the field involved not only admission
to the dance rehearsals, but also to the church scene.
This complex site would provide the researcher with access
to (1) the dance rehearsals, and (2) the entire church
process documenting the levels of planning and interaction
of pastoral staff with dancers resulting in videotaping sections of the actual church worship and dance.

**Research Note**

Before beginning the actual observation process, the researcher wanted to visit with and meet the Omega Company. During the first visit, the researcher felt some tension within the group and realized very quickly that Ms. DeSola had not adequately explained the nature of the research or his concern as a ritual maker.

Since there was this confusion, the researcher began to see that he had relied too heavily on Ms. DeSola as a primary informant and that all communication with the group should be with the group and not filtered through the director-choreographer. Ms. DeSola immediately picked up on the problem and later apologized for the missed communication.

After the initial chill, the group expressed some interest and was more accepting of the researcher and his research concerns. The researcher began to surmise that some of the issues were really about the company's direction. The researcher's work became an indirect focus and target for the company's unresolved feelings and attitudes toward management and Ms. DeSola, in particular.

The researcher was a bit startled by this reaction since he was a supporter of liturgical dance and had taken such care in arranging the series of church performances.
At the very start, he was reminded of the need for clear and effective communication.

With these considerations in mind, the writer decided to take a slow and easy entry into the rehearsal and interviews. What at first seemed like a sure thing turned out to require a delicate balance.

**Strategy For Watching**

In the beginning, the researcher spent time getting acquainted with the members of the company and letting the individuals get to know him and ask whatever questions might be appropriate. The researcher tried to keep as low a profile as possible, keeping his notebook out of sight.

Because of the uneasy opening, the observer noted the considerable differences in the double site. Each dance group would have to be taken on its own terms. With Omega, the work would progress more slowly and with deliberate care.

**Field Notes**

After three weeks, the researcher was able to make observation notes at the rehearsals. Trust was beginning to be felt. In time, what became significant was not the rehearsals themselves, which were the cause of such concern but the information flow and overall structure of how the ritual took shape. This structure involved the dance company and the church staff.
Thus the process of ritual making was extended and expanded beyond the dance rehearsals into a study of the context, including staff interaction, the ritual planning flow and the actual worship performance.

As the research continued, a scheme for watching the shaping of the ritual was developed through the theoretical notes. While dance remained a significant element in the study, data gathering included observing the entire interactive process of choreographer, dancers, church staff, musicians and readers.

Data Gathering

The following scheme may help illustrate the complexity of the data gathering process:

![Diagram of liturgical planning process](image-url)

**FIGURE 1: LITURGICAL PLANNING PROCESS**
The Staff Meeting

The Church staff would meet each week to discuss the ministerial concerns of running a parish. Included in this meeting was a discussion of the Sunday Masses and a preview of weeks to come in terms of scriptural themes and readings, etc. To accommodate the researcher, the staff would devote the first part of their meeting (usually thirty minutes) to discussing liturgical concerns. What developed at this meeting influenced the worship themes and ultimately, on the kinds of dances the company might do. The group would also analyze related church events in terms of attendance and participation.

This meeting helped to trace the flow and shape of information and formation of the worship from liturgical concept to actualization. The researcher observed the way decisions were made, how different members would talk about the liturgy and the group's response to dance in the liturgy.

The Planning Session

The next phase of observation involved Ms. DeSola and interested Church staff. Discussing the theme established by the staff at their meeting and trying to work out a coherent worship program. This involved the musicians, readers, celebrant and choreographer. Observational notes were helpful in this phase because they provided a statement of theme for the ritual and a way of looking at the process
of selection. The readings determined the theme and were focused by the staff. The related arts were selected to highlight or reinforce that theme.

Dance Rehearsals

The rehearsals took on a different flavor than those of the modern company. The Omega rehearsals involved learning choreography that had already been "set." The main work was adapting the choreography to the dancers who were available for that particular Sunday. The dances tended to be rather short in time duration with as many as four dances in one service. There were times when a dance piece would be re-worked or there might be the working out of a mime-drama to fit the scripture reading.

Preparing for the performances at St. Paul's was only one of the many activities the company did. They also worked on new assignments for other performances and workshops and rehearsed with two guest choreographers in preparation for a spring concert in the undercroft of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine.

The observation notes for this phase tended to be spotty and repeat themselves after a short while. The rehearsals seemed to be more about who was doing what and how they would do it than about the nature of ritual or dance. Most of the time there was little self-consciousness about dancing.
There was also some turnover in the dancers themselves and this provided another difficulty for the researcher in developing a rapport with the dancers, except for Ms. DeSola and two of the women dancers, who seemed to be a constant. In the main, Ms. DeSola remained the primary informant.

Spacing Rehearsals

Once the dancers were selected and rehearsed their material, those involved would come to the Church on the Thursday before the Sunday service to review the dances in terms of spacing, to check on the lighting and the sound system, and to talk over any last minute details with a staff person.

The rehearsals provided the researcher with a way of seeing subtle changes in the placement of bodies vis a vis the sanctuary, the steps and the high altar. Again the dance was not danced of itself, but in the context of a larger ritual and the boundaries of this ritual determined certain entrances, exits, body and spatial orientations. The spacing rehearsals gave some clues to these boundaries.

Church Performance

The researcher was able to videotape sections of the Sunday liturgy and all the dances from a side front pew. The porta-pak system minimized the bulk and noise of the equipment. The only thing visible in the Church was the camera.
The researcher was interested in capturing the various kinds of liturgical dance that the company was doing in order to compare and contrast both kinds of dance movement. The company also expressed interest in seeing the tapes of their performance.

Evaluations

Two types of evaluations were going on: one established by the staff at their Monday meeting as part of the Sunday review and another by the company of their work at the next rehearsal. The staff evaluation was important because it might suggest a tone, theme or shape for the next dance.

In the beginning, the entire staff attended the liturgical dance liturgy, but their attendance and interest dropped off at the second performance. The staff indicated their continuing support, but delegated responsibility to Fr. Mark Hettel, the priest-celebrant for the Mass. Fr. Hettel worked with Ms. DeSola in planning and organizing the liturgy.

The two concerns that surfaced very early at staff meetings regarding dance in the liturgy were (1) the suitability of dance to specific parts of the Mass and (2) the appropriateness of costume and decorum in the church setting.23

The staff was sensitive to the worship needs and expectations of the community present for the liturgy,
while advancing newer artistic elements in the worship.

In general, the response to the dances was favorable. In time, the staff developed trust in Ms. DeSola's judgment that she would not shock the congregation and understood her to be a liturgically-aware artist-dancer.

The Omega Company evaluation was usually very brief and rarely involved watching the videotapes. The overall concern of the dancers regarded (1) the integration of the dance into the liturgy, (2) the level of performance, and (3) the quality of prayerfulness.

There was little interaction between the church staff and the dance company except through the reflections, comments and interest of Fr. Hettel.

**Using Videotape**

The videotape was used at rehearsals and during the church performances. After some initial questions about the benefit of videotape, the company taped some of their rehearsals of the dances used at St. Paul's. It is the opinion of the researcher that the company was more familiar with the use of videotape in storing information than as an interactive tool for correcting body placements or movement sequences. Because video playback took time, the company usually worked without it.
The observer is not implying that videotape should be used for every rehearsal or situation or that it is adviseable that the dancers see themselves. Another possible interpretation is that liturgical dance involves the internalization of prayer movement and videotape would interfere in this meditative process. In any case, the researcher had hoped there would be more videotape possibilities for documenting the dances.

Through this experience, the researcher was reminded to treat each company individually and on its own terms. Even though Ms. Wiener's use of videotape was limited to certain sections, it was obvious that her dancers were more familiar with its use, benefits and limitations. The researcher got the impression that the Omega dancers were not as comfortable with the equipment. The Omega dancers reminded the researcher of people who hear their voice on audio tape for the first time and do not like hearing themselves and avoid being taped.

While the researcher was aware of the usefulness of videotape in learning movement and ultimately, in reducing rehearsal time, he did not feel in a position to teach the company its practical application or to interfere in the established rehearsal style.

It was easy to videotape entire sections of the church ritual. With the equipment out of the way of most church-goers, it was not obtrusive. The tapes of the performances were important for the researcher in
studying the movement qualities of Ms. DeSola's choreography and in storing the dances for future analysis.

Because of the wide space of the sanctuary, the camera was stationary through most of the taping. At times, it was necessary to pan slightly to left or right, but rarely was the lens re-adjusted. The researcher learned that a wide camera angle and minimal camera movement made it easier to see the dance and its relationship to space.

Strategy For Listening

Because there were so many different factors in gathering information, the two significant modes of listening in this study were situational conversation and the use of interviews.

Situational conversation was most helpful in learning how the various groups understood and carried out their tasks and why things were done in a certain way.

Interviewing

As a follow-up, the researcher was able to interview the pastor, members of the parish staff, Ms. DeSola, and two of the women dancers in the Omega Company.

Many of the questions were developed out of the observational and theoretical notes. The researcher kept the questions open to see where the interviewee would take it. In the beginning, the researcher tried to recall the
interview afterwards to reconstruct it. When this proved too difficult, a cassette tape recorder was used.

The following questions were asked: What is the function of ritual in the Church setting? How important is ritual to you personally? What elements seem most significant in ritual making? What do you see as the end result of the ritual process? of liturgy? of celebration? of eucharist? Are these different terms to you? How does dance fit into ritual? What do you see as the future of ritual? What contribution did the Omega Company make to the worship life of St. Paul's? Why do you think dance is so feared in Church circles? What are other non-verbal elements that you experience as part of the ritual experience.
ANALYZING THE DATA

With qualitative data, the researcher as analyst sought to provide an explicit rendering of the structure, order and patterns found among a set of participants. This involved a description of the characteristics and the consequences of ritual making, describing the activities, meanings, relationships and setting with economy and clarity of thought.

Comparing and contrasting the two kinds of ritual making was a complex and intricate task. Part of the analytic method was based on the work of Victor Turner and adapted to the study of the ritual process. Throughout the observational study, the researcher noted:

1. the implicit and explicit elements of the ritual making process and the reasons why the ritual was performed.
2. the form and content of the ritual.
3. how the elements were used in relationship to one another.
4. what was submerged or presented only in veiled form and the effect of the concealment.
5. the identity of the ritual makers, the ritual performers and those observing or participating.
6. emotions portrayed by the ritual makers and evoked in the audience/congregation.
7. the details of the environmental aspects of the performance site.
NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO


8. Dance observations are included in Appendix B to illustrate the type of training the dancers in the study received.

9. See Appendix C for the complete set of Variables for Movement Observation in the Study of Ritual.

10. See Appendix A for the correspondence and release form sample.


12. See Appendix C for the complete set of Variables for Movement Observation.

13. Some of the dance material that would eventually be part of *The Condor Material* (Part Two) was made during Ms. Wiener's residency at the University of Illinois. Ms. Glenna Hamm, a student at Illinois, joined the company to perform in the full version of *The Condor Material* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Ms. Hamm was more familiar with these sequences because she was present when they were made.


See Appendix G for complete interview with Mr. Buckley and Appendix E for complete interview with Ms. Wiener.


Liturgy magazine was a publication of the Liturgical Conference until May, 1980, Washington, D.C.

The researcher was the Arts and Media columnist.

Another significant teacher/dancer in the liturgical dance movement is Gloria Weyman, who does workshops intermittently with Lucien Deiss. They co-authored a book about liturgical dance: *Dance For The Lord*, (Cincinnati: World Library of Sacred Music, 1975).


The sensual quality of dance is a concern for church people when reviewing liturgical dance. Two issues that were discussed in somewhat oblique terms were (1) the concern for modesty in costume and (2) the fear of two men dancing together.

Since the dance liturgy happened once a month, some of the assembled congregation were caught off guard at the announcement of dance before the liturgy began. Some left the church immediately, the majority stayed. From the comments afterwards and the letters received, the pastoral staff felt there was general acceptance and approval of the new art form.


CHAPTER THREE

OBSERVATION STUDY OF NINA WIENER AND DANCERS

INTRODUCTION

There is a rebirth of ritual taking place in today's art world. Richard Scheckner considers ritual a significant factor in the development of post-modern performance. His analysis of this new "art category" identifies ritual as the underlying organizing of post-modern, replacing the use of narrative in modernism. Scheckner uses ritual in the ethological sense of the word to include the use of repetition, exaggeration and masks.

At the same time, Jamake Highwater has begun exploring the realm of dance and ritual. Tracing the origins of dance in a variety of cultures, Highwater examines the influence of ritual in the development of modern dance and reviews selected contemporary dance companies from a ritual perspective.

R ritual Performance

Ritual performance is just now beginning to be studied and analyzed. The work of Victor Turner in ritual process, the micro-analysis of Ray Birdwhistle, the face-to-face interaction studies of Erving Goffman certainly contribute to the field.
The purpose of this chapter is to examine, record and analyze the ritual making process in the performing arts, to explore the relationship of the artist to the working group and to the audience; to explore the aesthetics of the work in progress; and to study the completed ritual in its performance context. The mode of participant observation makes possible such study providing new information about the making of art and an analysis of possible ritual connections.

This analysis is an observation study of the choreographic process and work of Nina Wiener and her company. This contemporary choreographer is identified as a "ritual maker" based on Highwater's description of ritual as "the creation of an exceptional individual as art." Because Ms. Wiener was creating core movement material from a combination of the life history of her dancers and her own personal view of them, her approach fulfilled Highwater's description.

The study, in particular, focuses on the making of The Condor Material (Parts One and Two) by Ms. Wiener and her dancers. The researcher selected this work as an example of ritual performance (ritual as art) both because the work was termed a "ritual" in an early performance and because the work matched Highwater's typology for ritual.
Focus of the Study

Since the author is interested in a descriptive analysis of modern contemporary dance as an example of ritual making in the performing arts, the study has a double focus: (A) a description of the performance aspects of dancing, rehearsing and presenting movement material, and (B) an analysis of the ritual aspects of the same material.

Performance Aspects

With the built-in orientation of modern dance to performance, the following elements were noted during the making of the dance:

(1) the process of developing choreographic ideas;
(2) the collaborative relationship between the choreographer and the dancers;
(3) the variety of movement qualities within the dance;
(4) the structure of the dance;
(5) the procedures for rehearsing and reconstructing movement material;
(6) the preparations for performance; and
(7) the performances themselves.

Ritual Aspects

It is difficult to outline the ritual qualities within a work of art. In studying ritual, dance and theatre over a number of years and attending religious rituals in a
variety of cultures, the researcher developed indicators that point to ritual qualities within a performance.

Ritual making is a complex, human phenomenon:
(1) Ritual making aims at communicating; to speaking to the minds and hearts of people by a full array of verbal and non-verbal forms of communications.
(2) Ritual making involves aesthetic communication in its selection and ordering of elements.
(3) Ritual making involves a reworking of time and space in special ways.
(4) Ritual is a performance event, expressing relationships, individually and communally in a public way. There is a certain commitment to the event by the people involved.
(5) Ritual is a shifting and changing form of expression which is rooted in asking ultimate questions and celebrating existence and its link with "ultimate reality."
(6) Ritual is directed beyond the immediate experience into "an overplus of meaning," which may be considered the transcendent or the divine.
(7) Ritual involves repetition and renewal.
(8) Ritual is transformational.

For purposes of the present study, these indicators have been reworked into specific questions which focused the writer's attention to the potential ritual qualities
of the work during its making, rehearsing and performing.

(1) What was the intention of the choreographer and company in the making of the movement?

(2) Did the choreographic process provide a symbolic transformation of experience?

(3) Were certain kinds of movements, attitudes or gestures predominant in the finished work?

(4) What was the overall feeling of the movement? Was it spiritual? calming? other worldly?

(5) What aesthetic elements were considered important? How did the aesthetics relate to the entire work? How important was detail?

(6) What was the importance of time and space to the entire dance?

(7) What was the quality of the dancer's presence?

(8) Where was the focus of the dancers during the performance? Did the focus influence the mood of the performance?

(9) Was structure an important part of the overall dance?

(10) Was a communal sharing of the experience during the performance a goal? Was the audience united in a common quest?

The Observations

While it was not possible for the researcher to be present for the entire choreographic process, which spanned a year and a half, he was able to gain access to the field
at a significant period which included the last four months of choreographing and reconstructing prior to the premiere performance.

The observations in this case study were recorded (1) in the loft studio of the company in New York City, (2) at photography sessions for the *Village Voice* and *Soho Weekly News*, (3) during lecture demonstrations, (4) at spacing and dress rehearsals, and (5) at the performances at LePercq Space, Brooklyn Academy of Music.

There were informal interviews throughout the rehearsal period and formal interviews with Ms. Wiener and Mr. Buckley, a member of the company, were conducted a year later. This interval allowed the researcher time to organize his notes and observations and carefully plan the interview. It also allowed those interviewed time for reflection and integration of the choreographic experience.
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The following is background information on the dance being made, the training and life stories of the dancers and a description of the loft studio where the observations were made.

The Dance

The completed work, The Condor Material (Parts One and Two) is an evening-length dance for five, concerned with the relationship between arm gestures and leg movement. The dance originated in three sequences created with the upper body. These sections were translated into leg phrases and combined in a stream of vernacular gesture and rhythmic variation.\(^6\)

Many of the movement sections in the dance were given nicknames as a mnemonic device or after the person who worked on a particular section or translation. This is especially true of parts of "The Illinois Material," where most sections bear the name of an Illinois University student.

The use of nicknames highlights the personal quality of the dance, the relationship of the choreographer to the dancers, and the "community" sense of the dance. The very names suggest the transforming of Ms. Wiener's experience into symbolic form.

The name "condor" refers to the large bird of South America. This was Ms. Pearl's nickname for the swooping
feeling of her sequence, which emphasized the arms. It was later attached to the entire dance.

The following is an outline of the dance:

A. Part One

(1) "Bugsy"
    opening duet
    adagio

(2) "Christopher's Song"
    conducting
    clapping
    solo

(3) "Down on the Floor (Farm)"
    on the floor
    standing up
    "The Tortoise and the Hare"

B. Part Two

(4) "The Illinois Material"
    Glenna's Solo
    "The Arms' Race"
    "Candace"
    "Mary Novak"
    "Angelea"

(5) "Cooper-Hewitt"

(6) "The Miniatures"

(7) "The Big Box"

(8) Finale Solos
The Choreographer

Nina Wiener, the daughter of a physicist and mathematician, grew up in Arizona. She received a B.A. from Reed College in Portland, Oregon in 1969. She then worked with The Merry Go Rounder Musical Theater, Meredith Monk, Twyla Tharp, and performed in several dance works for television. She formed her own company in 1976.

Dancing has been an integral part of her life since the age of three when she began her training in Dalcroze Eurythmics. Her major training began at the age of eight with Lester Horton. Among Ms. Wiener's subsequent teachers were all the greats of her time plus a sprinkling of ballet notables. She has studied with Bella Lewitsky, Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor, Alvin Ailey, The Graham Company, Leon Danielian, and George Balanchine among others.

She has also trained in jazz, Hindu, Flamenco, character, and pointe. Ms. Wiener's interest in dance has led her to explore the Alexander Technique and Corrective Dance Physiology. As a member of Twyla Tharp's company from 1972-1974 she toured the U.S. and abroad and created an original role in Deuce Coupe.

For several years Ms. Wiener has choreographed, taught, and performed her own work. Her guest artist residencies have taken her to the University of Michigan, The Ohio State University, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and Harvard-Radcliffe.
As part of the Cultural Council Foundation’s Artist’s Project from 1979-1980 Ms. Wiener and her company have been involved in a wide range of community activities, including a two month residency at the Henry Street Arts for Living Center and a two month residency at the NY Chinese Youth Cultural Association. Ms. Wiener has received Choreographer’s Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts for 1979 and 1980, and is a recipient of a 1980 Creative Artist’s Public Service Grant (CAPS). 7

The Company

Alison Pearl is a native New Yorker. She is a graduate of the Bronx High School of Science, and Bennington College where she studied under Judith Dunn and Steve Paxton, and received an M.A. in Performance and Choreography. She met Ms. Wiener in 1975 and has since created roles in all her dances and aided in their reconstruction in both New York and Canada. Ms. Pearl has choreographed and performed her own work throughout the U.S. and has taught Correctives privately and at the Y.W.C.A. as well as ballet at Douglass-Cook College of Rutgers University and N.Y.U. School of the Arts. Her dance training has included ballet, pointe, various modern techniques, Correctives, Alexander Technique, and folk. She currently studies ballet with David Howard and Nancy Bielski.
Timothy R. Buckley was born in Richmond, Indiana and received a B.F.A. in dance from The Ohio State University in 1977. Mr. Buckley first performed with Nina Wiener and Dancers in the premiere of The Condor Material in January of 1978. He has also appeared with Laura Dean Dancers & Musicians as both dancer and musician. Since coming to New York, Mr. Buckley has studied with Douglas Dunn and at the Cunningham Studio on scholarship. In addition to dance performance, Mr. Buckley's choreography was performed at the Regional College Dance Festival in the Spring of 1973, and he designs and constructs dance costumes.

Bebe Miller from Brooklyn, New York, studied at the Henry Street Settlement Playhouse as a child. She received a B.A. in Fine Arts from Earlham College and has trained in piano, violin, tap, African dance, ballet, improvisation, and modern techniques. She received an M.A. in 1975 and the following year came to New York. Ms. Wiener has created several original roles for her since that time. She has also performed with Phyllis Lamhut and the Lynn Dally Dance Company and her own choreography has been seen in New York.

Glenna Hamm was a student of Ms. Wiener's at the University of Illinois during the summer of 1978. She was invited to come to New York and join the company later that year. Her dance training includes study with Beverly Blossom, Mary Beday, and Chester Wlenski in modern dance, jazz, with Gus Giordano, and ballet with John Landovsky.
Glenna competed as an all around in gymnastics for several years and studied with Leonard Isaacs at the American Academy of Gymnastics. She has also studied figure skating with Michael Kirby. Her love of sports lead her to three years as the offensive end on the University of Illinois Women's Football Team, for several seasons the division champions.

The Rehearsal Space

When the researcher first arrived for observation, the rehearsal was an hour and a half with a half hour warm-up preceding it. In later weeks, the rehearsal time expanded to three or four hours a day.

For the first month of observation, the trio (Pearl, Miller and Buckley) worked together while Ms. Hamm, a new company member, practiced to the side. There was little talking or bantering.

Generally, Ms. Wiener sat lengthwise against a wall, next to the researcher. Ms. Wiener occasionally changed her location depending on the kind of material being rehearsed.

The rehearsal space was on the fourth floor of a loft building in lower Manhattan. It was a large space without columns or supports, with much natural lighting and an uneven, splintered floor. The space was new to the company and it took them a month to become accustomed to the unevenness of the surface.
THE CHOREOGRAPHIC PROCESS

This section describes Ms. Wiener's collaborative approach to choreography, her emphasis on arm gesture as base material for the entire dance and the contribution the individual dancers made to the entire process.

Understanding the process of making dance material is crucial, in this case, to appreciating the finished work. The choreographic task is about process, the process of involving the dancers directly in the making of movement material and creating core sequences that begin with the upper body, especially the arms.

Once there is set movement for the arms, the dancers explore the relationship and blending of arm sequences with the rest of the body, especially the legs.

The Condor Material is about port de bras, it is of interest to choreographers to find another way of making choices about steps rather than having a vocabulary laid out on a piece of paper and saying I am only going with this number of steps, and all I am going to do is re-arrange them and make a dance of them. With this work, one tries to find a new approach to the choices about making steps.8

The choreographic process involves three steps:

(1) Ms. Wiener designs the core material for the upper body of each dancer.

(2) The company translates, re-arranges and manipulates this core sequence in a variety of ways.

(3) Ms. Wiener edits and shapes the dynamics of the dance.
I feel a particular fondness to The Condor Material because I felt like I had a really, truly innovative and creative idea. I used arm material and we translated it into leg material and made all the material before the dance was put together. I constructed the dance out of the had been core material instead of doing both things as we went along. I had been stuck with that idea of making the material first and then molding it into a dance or changing it or transforming into what I need. I develop a certain type of movement material before I start making a dance so the material has a certain nature of its own and then I deal with it. The Condor Material is special for a number of reasons: 1) It was a very spiritual dance. I am not quite sure why that was, but there was a certain kind of calmness and introspection about the dance. 2) It represented a real change in the kind of work that I was doing. almost a maturity. I felt like all of a sudden I was an adult or I was an artist. 3) I was on my own. I felt like the dance was mine and did not really owe allegiances to anything else.

This approach is new to the choreographer, yet the spiritual quality felt in the work is coupled with calmness and introspection. These qualities together with an emphasis on arm gesture bring to light some ritualized elements.

Developing Core Material

Ms. Wiener began her task with the making of three separate movement sequences, used as a basis for the rest of the work.

I wanted to make a bridge between dance movement, gesture and non-dance movement. I started with the arms because the audience is not used to looking at arms as a primary movement focus. The over-riding idea for Condor, used as structural connection, is the relationship between the arms and the legs. I wanted to create a new vocabulary
and thereby a new way of looking which had no previous associations. So, I related the arms and the legs in different ways to create a kinesthetic blend.10

The concept of starting with the arms as the base material Ms. Wiener considered to be a new approach. Ms. Wiener, like most choreographers, was accustomed to begin with the legs and its movement and to have the arms follow-through and form certain shapes. In this dance, Ms. Wiener developed the leg movement from the arms.

I've studied dancing for a long time, a lot of different kinds of dancing, and it's always been bottoms. You go to ballet class and you have bottoms. In Limon technique, the top is always a result of what the bottoms are doing. Also, I want people to associate my work with some other technique, to have them think things like 'she's holding a bad arabesque.' And I didn't want narrative associations. The emotions I'm dealing with -- if I'm dealing with emotions -- are subtle.11

This kinesthetic blend or bridging of movement gave an evenness to the choreography. The blend contributed to the sense of peacefulness and unity within the dance.

"Bugsy"

"Bugsy", the first core sequence, was made for Ms. Pearl.

Allison always had a lot of energy and was very, very physical with everything. It always seemed like she wanted to do bigger, rougher, more giant jumps. I made her material which was very physically sweeping and moved around the body so there were a lot of pliés in her material. Well, she did
not actually move in space but she moved up and down, so she had more lateral mobility than the other material. She used her upper body actually bending from the waist much more than the other material.\(^{12}\)

This sequence employed open, sweeping motions of the arms and a twisting of the torso. It included personalized movement in abstract terms about Ms. Wiener's relationship/friendship with Ms. Pearl.

"Bugsy" was new for Nina. She started out usually with what she knew, but this time Nina wanted to speak with her arms. Her previous pieces were all legs. The question now was: what could she say with arms? The movement for "Bugsy" began as personal, expressive movement. It was taken right from Nina's personal life and it was very direct. Nina wanted me to learn how she moved. My personal movement is peripheral, learning the internals and doing pliés. I learned through "Bugsy" how Nina moved.\(^{13}\)

The use of personalized elements, of expressing personality through movement, though abstract, followed Suzanne Langer's understanding of ritual as "a symbolic transformation of experience."\(^{14}\) These personalized elements permeated all three core sequences.

"Christopher's Song"

"Christopher's Song," the second sequence, was made for Ms. Miller. It was predominantly gestural, fluid and meditative, allowing the dancer's character to express itself. "It was about Nina's feeling for Bebe's essence: womanly, soft and home-minded."\(^{15}\)
When I was making Bebe's material, I realized that whatever I gave her, she was going to make into some kind of a sentence or story, because that is the way she dances. To hold the things together, in her mind, she makes up little stories about what she is doing. When she does it, even when she is walking across the floor and doing nothing else, you get these little possibilities, you start having a narrative in your mind. I gave her a little more gesture than the others because I was interested to see how she was going to put this together. Even though I did not give it to her in any kind of sentence form, I knew that once I gave it to her, if I gave her any possibilities, she would make it into a whole number.16

"Down on the Floor"

The last sequence was made for Mr. Buckley. As the title suggests, it was designed as floor material, yet involved the entire body. Squiggly and athletic, it can also be performed standing up, giving the movement a flat look.

It was in Condor that I realized that Tim was incredibly athletic and had a certain kind of potential in dealing with the floor and with space. That made him feel like he was catapulted into space. That is where I got this idea of making his material so that it was oriented towards the body moving in the space. You had to look and see what the mechanics were. The object was to figure out the mechanics of the material. Because at that time I could never quite figure out how he got around, and the way that he did material was not evident. He would sort of magically appear in a jump and you could never quite figure out how exactly he did the jump because it was in some way different from the way a normal dancer would do the jump.17
The three sequences were the foundation for the rest of the dance and provided a unified framework for the piece as a whole.

These three original phrases are carried throughout the whole piece. You cannot say it shows up here, or it shows up there — it shows up everywhere in one form or another. Whether the arm material is done with simultaneous legs from another section, there is a continual visual thread that is always related to the three original phrases. Whether you have a sense of seeing them or not, it is there. This gives an incredible unity to the piece.

The visual thread of correlating movement sequences had the same effect on the viewer as repetition. While the movement may not be completely reproduced, there was a feeling that the sequence had been experienced before. This continuity is a hallmark of ritual, providing the participant a sense of familiarity. Once the core sequence had been experienced, subsequent translations or variations had the same soothing and comforting effect.

Movement Sources

Ms. Wiener drew upon a variety of sources for her work, incorporating non-dance movement, pedestrian movement and gesture with specifically dance material. In an abstract way, she made the core sequences to include her personal feelings and insights into her dancers. Mr. Buckley, for example, had a moment in his sequence where he appeared to be sitting on the floor, driving a tractor. This quick flash reflected his boyhood, growing up on a farm in Southern Indiana.
When she was making the floor material she tried to incorporate some of my character or history into the movement. Often it is something she saw me do or a story I told her. She may have pulled something from these and used them in the phrase. For example, in the floor material there is a little hand gesture trick that I once knew. I showed it to her and she stuck it in. The movement does have personal elements.¹⁹

This process was challenging to the group as a whole. The uniqueness of the method brought the company together, solidifying the group effort.

I deal with where they need to grow physically as dancers. But it has a lot to do with my personal feelings for them as personalities and people. The three started working with me when it was really a very strong relationship that developed between me and my dancers, partially because there were not very many of them, partially because we all were working for nothing, and we were working long hours. There was a real common belief in what was happening and I think that they were interested in staying with me because of that. They were also being integrated into the work. The Condor Material was one of the places where I learned how to really do that in a dancerly way - in terms of the structure of the dance and the material itself.²⁰

Through the making of The Condor Material, the company became a community, sharing a common vision of art and risking to develop that vision. This community sense reflected Mead's understanding that "ritual is concerned with relationships . . . among groups of individuals who share things together. There is something about the sharing and the expectation that makes it ritual."²¹
Translating the Core Material

After the core material had been made, the three dancers collaborated with Ms. Wiener on "translations" of the arm sequences. This meant finding for the legs or lower body movement equivalents for the activity of the arms.

Ms. Wiener had three basic physical characteristics the legs were built on: (1) that the movement of the legs look like that of the arms; (2) that the legs have the same action as the arms; (3) that the legs take the directional force from the arms.22

We were making the vocabulary and, in a way, we were all doing it together. I think the dancers felt more of an involvement because I would have the opportunity to make up material based on problems from that core material. That was the very beginning of a whole new way of working, involving discovery and trust (my trust in them to do that) and teaching them about it, almost as if they are another Nina brain. In some way, the two brains must connect. They have to understand just what I want, but their brain also has input. And you cannot get more communal than that. It is both a physical and intellectual communal process which is about as close as you can get without being lovers, I mean in a working situation.23

To make a translation, the dancer (1) studied the core material, (2) learned the dimensions of the movement, (3) considered the spatial relationship, (4) the flow, (5) the timing and rhythm and (6) the body parts moving. In this process, the dancer discovered new freedom in making choices.

The material was made to show the relationships that were possible between the arms and the legs so that it was entirely based on compositional relationships.
Because the legs were doing the same thing as the arms there were more solutions to a problem than one.

In the beginning, the translation process was new to the dancers. The process began simply with the legs mimicking the arms. (This type of translation can be seen in Ms. Hamm's translation of the leg material in her solo in "The Illinois Material.")

As the dancers became more familiar with the process, the generalized material became more complex and dense. This happened because Ms. Wiener gave the dancers more than one association or characteristic to work with, layering one problem on top of another.

Dance is relative only because the density happens over a period of time. As a dancer develops, he is able to handle more and more complex movement sequences. Because our company is working with arms on top of legs in two complex sequences going simultaneously, one on top of another, it sets up a range of material with a lot going on and a lot to look at. The dancer doesn't have a sense of that, isn't aware of it, because the choreographic process has happened over a period of time and has developed to such a point. Density is only relative to the person who is watching or the person who is dancing. Because I can dance something that I feel very comfortable with (it could be complex), I don't consider its complexity until I actually sit back and look and reflect on it.

The density of material may be linked to a sense of mystery. Because of the unity of the core sequences, the complexity of layering set up a bemusing attitude in the viewer. Combining familiarity with newness, the approach admitted the qualities of awe and wonder.
The translation process revealed a fact of modern dance. Today, modern dancers are not simply performing the movements of a choreographer; they themselves become the movements through bodily and mental expression.

To me the mystery happens because people are not used to seeing such complex, dense material appear all at once from one person. It does have mystery because we are not used to a dancer moving mentally. We are caught off guard by that. Suddenly the audience is confronted with a thinking person and not just a body trying to be the vehicle of a choreographer.26

Developing Translations

In developing translations, the dancer avoided the most obvious or direct choices. The key for innovation was to find something in the process that gave new insight into a step or way of moving. This required an intelligent dancer who could not only develop the dance, but who was not stuck in a particular way of moving. Ms. Wiener's personal aesthetic kept the movement alive and fresh.

The object of the piece was to explore the relationships within the dance material. What interested me was to create a new and different dance style; the problem was to stay within the demands of that style and not stray back to familiar ways of moving and choreographing. I tried in this work not to base my decision on a value system of good and bad. I realized there were different goods and bads and the important thing was consistency within a set of choices. A style is internal integrity, which has everything to do with consistency. Styles are reflective of different ways to communicate things.27
Variety was achieved in the translations by breaking up the arm movement into different places so that differing movements took on importance. As some elements got larger, others became smaller, slower or faster.

The whole purpose of The Condor was to deal with different levels of abstraction. In a way it was like looking at an abstract painting, where you sit and your mind sort of makes associations for itself. The painting keeps everyone within the same kind of boundary yet allowing their minds to go free within those boundaries. I think The Condor did the same thing, even though some of the port de bras were quite specific.

This abstract approach to free association highlighted the meditative properties built into the dance. While the overall structure kept the viewer within bounds, there was still room for reflection. This contemplative attitude is often achieved when viewing abstract paintings, especially the color-field painters, like Mark Rothko.

Combining Translations

It was also possible to combine translations. For example, in the "Bugsy" section of Part One, Ms. Pearl performed her translation of "Bugsy" and then slowed down into an adagio section. At the same time, Mr. Buckley performed "Bugsy" with a fast mix of two translations, his arm variation on top with Ms. Pearl's translation on bottom. Translations of the upper or lower sections were interchanged to provide new patterns.

Putting the arms and legs together not only relates the movement to itself but makes the visual picture very complex. The choice is left to the audience about whether to focus on individual gesture or not.
The essential thing we are dealing with is paths in space, not places in space. The emphasis on paths highlighted the field dimension of the dancing and the spatial relationships that were established.

"Cooper-Hewitt" is a good example of translations happening simultaneously. In this section, the arm gestures of each dancer were the same throughout. Mr. Buckley, Ms. Pearl and Ms. Miller all made different choices about how the legs would move.

Ms. Pearl allowed a kinesthetic feeling take over her decision-making process.

When I made my section of "Cooper-Hewitt," I was thinking, 'Let it feel like my body, just see where the arms will take my body and not attempt to make it look interesting.'

Mr. Buckley's translation was more physical, connecting the motion of the arms into the legs. The legs either imitated the arm action or had the same spatial relationship that the arms had to each other.

Things that are off balance and have an element of risk in it gives me a thrill. It seems to be alive and doesn't come from any preconceived notions about movement or steps. I think it has to do with being mostly off balance as much as possible and constantly moving around one's center. You oftentimes look teetering.

This teetering effect was seen throughout Mr. Buckley's work, especially in "The Big Box" and the Finale Solos. Being off balance was usually highlighted with a gesturing of arms, or a flailing of arms in the air to
regain balance or to take off in flight. Both interpretations were possible from the gesture.

**Arranging the Translations**

The completed work, *The Condor Material* (Parts One and Two), was two years in the making:

(A) *The Condor Material* (Part One) premiered January 3, 1978 at St. Mark's Danspace. The dance was made and rehearsed six months previous. It was performed twice in the round with different spatial orientations in relation to the audience and to the dancers.

(B) *The Condor Material* (Part Two) involved different sections, based on the translations of the three core sequences:

1. Finale solos, made after Part One, 1977-1978, were based on "Bugsy," and were refined during March, 1979.
2. "The Big Box" used the finale solos in a special way to solve a spatial problem.
3. "Cooper-Hewitt" premiered as a separate dance on September 26, 1978, having been choreographed two months before. Based on "Christopher's Song," it was used in lecture demonstrations.
4. "The Illinois Material" was made during a residency at the University of Illinois from June to July, 1978. All sections were based on translations of "Down on the Floor." The material was videotaped and reconstructed by the regular company in March, 1979.
(5) "The Miniatures" were made from December, 1978 to March, 1979, based on selected sections of solo material from "The Big Box."

In summary, the choreographic process revealed:

(1) a collaborative approach to the making of the dance;

(2) a variety of movement sources; and

(3) the use of arm gesture as the starting place for the process.

Within this process, the following ritual indicators were noted:

(1) The transforming of experience into movement.

(2) A communal setting within the company.

(3) A unified sense within the movement achieved through the core sequence.

(4) A feeling of calmness, repetition, and peace within the movement material.

(5) A sense of mystery hinted at by the density of the movement.

(6) The contemplative aspects of the dance brought about by attention to the paths in space and to the field, in general.
ORGANIZING THE DANCE SEQUENCES

The writer joined the company as it was making the last section of new movement material before the entire dance was put together and rehearsed as a whole. The following order describes how the sections were made, rehearsed and organized prior to performance.

(1) The company collaborated with Ms. Wiener in developing new sections out of the core material. The newest section made was "The Miniatures."

(2) Ms. Wiener rehearsed sections of Part Two that had been previously choreographed.

(3) The company learned sections that had been made in Illinois from videotape and reconstructed it.

(4) Ms. Wiener organized the flow of Part Two and did run-throughs when all the material was learned.

(5) The company reconstructed Part One from the videotape of the original performance.

(6) There were spacing rehearsals outside the studio loft to let the dancers work "full-out" and to give the choreographer the opportunity to see the dance in a less cramped and more open space.

(7) There were spacing and dress rehearsals at LePercq Space, Brooklyn Academy of Music, prior to the actual performances.
The Making of "The Miniatures"

The making of "The Miniatures," like the rest of The Condor Material, revealed an intelligence about making choices and uncovered the structure which integrated the dance. Because the researcher was present for the making of this section, it provided an overview of the choreographic process and a look at rehearsal procedures.

"The Miniatures" (sometimes called "The Little Box" in lecture demonstrations) was the crystallized energy from "The Big Box." "The Miniatures" involved nine sets, structured identically, which contained (1) a section of solo material from "The Big Box," often called 'the big one' or 'biggie' and (2) three individual miniatures made by members of the company. At the start, Ms. Pearl, Ms. Miller and Mr. Buckley were involved. Halfway through the making, Ms. Hamm replaced Mr. Buckley.

In order to make a complete set, each dancer, in turn, taught the company his/her large phrase. After learning the phrase correctly, each dancer then made a miniaturized version.

Mr. Buckley talked about the origin of the concept. It is a combination of things. One, I think it was a result of being a very crammed studio and one day there were no lights. It became very dark and we could not see, so we started dancing very tiny and small and it gave us an idea, this miniature version contained all the information that the larger version had. So it was more. It was not an indication of a larger version, but it was a miniaturized version of it.
After the dancers learned the large phrase, they separated and worked individually.

It has to do with not thinking directly about what it is that you are miniaturizing, but allowing the body to have a sensation that you're experiencing the same larger movement, only it's smaller and condensed.33

Miniatures were kinetic memories or markings in the mind of what the larger movement felt like or was about.

The miniatures are made according to the way each dancer remembers and picks up movement. Doing this enabled me to understand each of my dancers better; allowing me to explain what I want faster and more fully. The material in this section reflects the dancers' personal memory patterns.34

Each dancer had a different approach to making a miniature. Ms. Miller was concerned with phrasing while Ms. Pearl dealt with weight changes. Mr. Buckley tended to make the tiniest. The process of miniaturization helped code the movement information to aid the memory in recalling the subtle differences.

I think I emphasize the direction and the space. And, I pick out the most interesting elements that remind me of the phrase and I sometimes exaggerate them. If it's a funny twist in the arm or the knee, I'll exaggerate them; it codes that large phrase for me...I wanted to see how small and condensed I could get. I made an attempt to see how far I could push that original assignment in condensing the material more and more. So that they'd become faster, smaller, more indicative. The others went off in the other direction and found specific things in the larger phrases that they preferred. They almost begin to translate
it into another phrase which was equally as large. 35

This section revealed (1) the group process, (2) the continued search for mystery through movement, (3) the kinds of choices the choreographer made in terms of the movement possibilities, (4) the use of community memory in learning the material and (5) the use of exaggerated movement.

Editing the Movement

Ms. Wiener commented on each miniature, especially on a particular movement that she found interesting or different. Sometimes she asked to have the sequence danced again. At times, she went directly into editing. Ms. Wiener had the dancer simplify the phrase, change the accent or have the dancer clarify or sharpen the movement quality.

I am looking for something that is a little unusual, and things that go together in ways that I am not used to seeing, that are physically mysterious, so that you watch them and you cannot quite believe they got from beginning to end in that way. When you get to the end, you have had some kind of experience with the movement. You are not just looking at the shape of the movement, but actually it is very subtly emotional without being specific. It is not associative, but I try to put things together in a way that someone could read it if they had to, but three people could read it differently. So that it is not beating your breast, it doesn’t deal with basic emotions, but deals with putting together all kinds of subtle emotions to form a fabric of a feeling. 36
The process was very much like text editing. As the dancers made a paragraph, she edited or re-arranged the sentences. When finished, the meaning of the phrase was usually clearer or more dynamic. The dancers responded well to her suggestions and changes.

I do not consider any one step terribly important. I really consider the nature of the series of material important. Condor I made in a meditative vein. It was made to make the company a unit.37

Ms. Wiener possessed the ability to interpret what the dancer was doing before the dancer was aware of it. Through editing, the dancer came to understand the original intent of the movement. This phrase was very precise. Ms. Wiener grasped each individual "miniature," in relation to the whole, making significant changes and improvements.

Every one of my dancers has to have a really unique personal style and be able to create from these problems, to work on their own and to give me input for establishing new kinds of problems. Ultimately, I am the artistic director - I make all the decisions and I am responsible for the work, but it is not really a dictatorship. If we are going along and Tim gets an idea about something, he does not feel he cannot say it. He says it, when he has an idea, he will play with it, and show me what he has been playing with. I really mold the material on the dancers. They give me a little something and then I mold it on them. There is really an incredible interaction.38

This shaping or molding of movement revealed the innate artistic quality of the choreographer.
Rehearsing "The Miniatures"

As the company rehearsed "The Miniatures," Ms. Wiener was concerned with how they were being "cleaned." Cleaning meant precise rehearsing to assure the sequences looked clean, clear and crisp. Cleaning involved minute attention to facing, the positioning of limbs and spacing. Cleaning rehearsals required endless repetition of the sets with clarity the most important element. This clarity was important because the dance was in unison. "Where are you facing? Where are you looking? Where are you pointing?" were typical questions Ms. Wiener would ask.

Since Ms. Wiener did not dance in this section, she paid attention to every detail, insuring a diversity of movement style with each set.

Each day the rehearsal began with a run-through of the last day's work, usually in silence. Ms. Wiener knew the full sweep of the movement with attention to dynamics and phrasing.

The transitions between each set offered some problems for flow and smoothness. To achieve fluid transitions, Ms. Wiener simplified the body action, reshaped the dynamics, suggested a different attitude, or searched within the dance vocabulary for a different movement quality.

As "The Miniatures" were made, each set contained changes in rhythm, facing, timing and the kinds of body movement - jumping, lunging, flailing, and fluttering.
While this process was certainly a collaborative enterprise, Mr. Buckley surfaced as a key figure in remembering the movement qualities of the sets, even though they also required the memory of the dancers (community memory) because of the work in unison.

I think part of the brain is delegated to the body and that we are not aware of it. The body also has its own memory bank. And then, there is also the conscious memory that one has. I think probably I have a combination which complements each other. I can retain large quantities of sequences of movement because of body memory and conscious memory.39

"The Miniatures" contained many sets and variations of arm gesture. These gestures combined with the effect of unison dancing highlighted the ritual sense. Unison, like repetition, gave the work an intense spellbinding quality. This quality united the audience into a single frame of mind.

The Original Structure

In the beginning of the process, before Ms. Hamm was involved, "The Miniatures" followed a strict, logical structure as a choreographic device. The miniaturized versions of each set implied a reduction in size while the set maintained as much detail as possible. In the making, sequence (3) is used as the starting place for each set. In performance, however, the arrangement followed this outline:

A. Sets 1, 4 and 7 were based on Ms. Pearl's solo from "The Big Box."
(1) Ms. Pearl's miniature of Ms. Pearl's large phrase;
(2) Ms. Miller's miniature of Ms. Pearl's large phrase;
(3) Ms. Pearl's large phrase (solo from "The Big Box");
(4) Mr. Buckley's miniature of Ms. Pearl's large phrase.

B. Sets 2, 5 and 8 were based on Mr. Buckley's solo from "The Big Box."
(1) Ms. Miller's miniature of Mr. Buckley's large phrase;
(2) Mr. Buckley's miniature of Mr. Buckley's large phrase;
(3) Mr. Buckley's large phrase (solo from "The Big Box");
(4) Ms. Pearl's miniature of Mr. Buckley's large phrase.

C. Sets 3, 6 and 9 were based on Ms. Miller's solo from "The Big Box."
(1) Mr. Buckley's miniature of Ms. Miller's large phrase;
(2) Ms. Pearl's miniature of Ms. Miller's large phrase;
(3) Ms. Miller's large phrase (solo from "The Big Box");
(4) Ms. Miller's miniature of Ms. Miller's large phrase.

Structure, although a choreographic device, is also a ritual device. It provides an approach to something to be experienced, a perspective on something already known. The structure of this section was precise yet allowed the dancers to play within the boundaries.

Inserting the Solo Material

After the nine sets of "Miniatures" were made, Ms. Wiener experimented with the solo material from
starts out with this thing, but it goes off then...and you can't really follow and say this is exactly what it is. I suppose it is possible to sit down and outline or reconstruct it, but you'll find that it does break its logic, break the system. I think it's of no interest other than as a choreographic device. 40

Despite these changes, this complex, almost fastidious structure, though invisible to the eye, gave the section a coherence and a soundness.

The "cleaning" aspects pointed to the minute attention to detail and an overall concern for precision in the dancing. Throughout, the choreographer was concerned with these qualities.

After "The Miniatures" were made, Ms. Wiener worked on a number of sections simultaneously. In one day, the dancers worked on a section of "The Miniatures" and other sections. Ms. Wiener rehearsed the Finale Solos and "The Big Box" together because the movement was similar.

**Rehearsing Sections of Part Two**

The choreographer worked individually with each dancer on the finale solos. She critiqued each in turn, taking small sections of the material, she reviewed them with each dancer.

The dancer must not think of a picture, but of the linear sensations his body is experiencing. I never use mirrors when rehearsing so the dancer never knows what he feels like; only what the dance feels like. Neither the dancer nor the audience can speed-read the statement because
it doesn't develop in expected ways. There are no familiar ways to approach these steps and especially when they are this technically demanding. These steps develop their own tempos within the dancer's body.41

The choreographer discovered what looked best and what was best for the body. Her method was sheer precision. She had a definite sense of how the movement should look and feel.

"The Big Box"

The name, "The Big Box" refers to either a marked or an imaginary box on the floor of the dance space, which limits the movement within the space. The dancers entered the box in canon42 from a specific point. They performed their Finale Solos while trying to avoid touching the other dancers in the same confined space. The relationship of the dancers to each other required them to make unexpected or sudden turns, changes in level and timing. "They are like pin balls careening around the space and the other dancers, bumping and avoiding each other randomly."43

We were making special choices and decisions on the spot in this frame on the floor. Trying to stay out of each other's way, we tried to experience each other at the same time, even if it is just a recognition of passing or sharing of proximity, or sharing a distance. It is the most connective in that we are recognizing each other, especially the proximity; I think the distance is just as important.44
This dance was never the same. Each time it was performed there was a different kind of energy, augmented by a sense of chaos and danger.

The problem we worked on was coordinating force and stretch. By concentrating on the range of different qualities possible and allowing them to change and develop, the solo became very fluid.

The choreographic device of "The Big Box" indicated the use of game structure, which is not only a stylistic device of post-modern dance choreographers, but often a component of ritual performance. Gaming is an element Scheckner considers significant in organizing post-modern performance around ritualized themes, motifs or events.

The structure afforded a sense of vitality which kept the dance alive and exciting.

I have always used little game structures. Sometimes I use game structures to make the material and sometimes I use it within the material. One of the things that I try to do is to take some of those post-modern ideas, game structures and open-ended compositional elements, and use them in a way that is modern so that they are being used within a dance, not as the end of the dance.

There were limitations, nevertheless, to the approach. Despite the effort and the accents, the intended freshness and vitality was not guaranteed and the structure did have a long life according to one of the dancers.

I think it is a nice relief from the other things as a performer, but it gets worn out very quickly. You find that you have a range of choices. What you do, each time you perform, is to pick out three out of ten that you know of, rather than making ten more. So, after a certain point it gets to be sort of a hassle, or not as enjoyable. It doesn't have that excitement anymore. It becomes very safe after a certain point.
Because of this awareness, the choreographer did not rehearse this section very long. She wanted the material to look fresh and spent more time sharpening the Finale Solos.

"Cooper-Hewitt"

"Cooper-Hewitt" was based on "Christopher's Song," the sequence made for Ms. Miller. The most gestural section involved much in-place, unison upper-body movement with a lyric, hypnotic and repetitively soothing quality.

I think that when you use your hands, people define it as gesture because hands are very expressive. People are used to watching hands make gestures. People always tend to see some kind of gestural possibility because everybody makes gestures with their hands, but not everybody dances.48

There were five sections to the dance and each part accelerated in speed with one dancer less until there was only one dancer left.

Each dancer designed his/her leg patterns along with Ms. Wiener. The concern in the rehearsing was with timing and the discipline of unison work.

Assisted by Dr. Vera Maletic,49 the researcher analyzed a small section of "Cooper-Hewitt" from a performance videotape. The analysis indicated the following: (1) Regarding the movement actions, there was a predominance of gestural movement, which included hands touching the body. Locomotion was minimal.
(2) With regard to the direction of the movement, there was a predominance of dimensional orientation (up and down, forward, backward and side to side) and some planal orientation (vertical, horizontal and sagittal) and almost no diagonal orientation.

(3) There was symmetry to the movement (right and left).

(4) Regarding the path of the gestures, the movement was both central (from and toward the torso) and peripheral (around the outside of the torso).

(5) Regarding the quality of the movement energy (Effort) there were some variations in the flow of the movement (free and bound), the attitude to space was mostly direct, and there were minimal variations in weight and time. The even quality of time produced an almost hypnotic effect.

Learning "The Illinois Material"

"The Illinois Material" was choreographed during Ms. Wiener's residency at the University of Illinois, June-July, 1978. The dance students at Illinois translated the third sequence, "Down on the Floor," using the same process as the regular company members in generating the dance movement. Some sections were named for the individuals "translators." The naming or titling became a convenient way to remember and relate the different sections to the whole.
Using Videotape

Because the material was composed of small sections, it was easily learned in shortened sequences. This work seemed to be a change in pace for the dancers after the long and complicated miniaturizing process.

To learn the movement from the videotape, the dancers (1) watched the tape many times; (2) worked in small groups or by themselves, performing a sequence and repeating it; (3) and then checked with the videotape again. When the section seemed ready, (4) the dancer(s) would show the material to Ms. Wiener for shaping and editing.

Glenna’s Solo

Since Ms. Hamm was present for the making of "The Illinois Material," she helped the other dancers on fine-tuning and describing the movement intent.

She reconstructed her solo rather easily. Ms. Wiener and Pearl, however, spent more time on their in-place arm material which they performed as a background to Ms. Hamm’s solo.

Ms. Hamm’s translation was rather literal. The feet almost perfectly mimicked the arm gestures of the duo. With the legs following so closely with the arms, there was an ironic, comedic element. The humor stemmed from the visual congruity and incongruity of matched arms and legs.
Despite the literalness, the solo was a visual referent point for the viewer. It showed and spoofed the choreographic idea of arms' relationship to the feet. Ms. Hamm's gymnastic skills added to performing of this athletic and robust sequence.

The remaining sections of "The Illinois Material" were all different, highlighting the use of structure, freeze, and play.

"The Arms' Race"

Arm gesture was the core of "The Arms' Race." Standing on a line in a competitive stance, each dancer rushed through a series of complex arm maneuvers at the should of "On your mark, get set, go!" The movements were quirky, excitable and fidgety.

"Sylvianne"

The rehearsals of this section did not go well. The movement was difficult to put into sequence, involving rather strange weight shifts and peculiar timing. The group worked on the material until Ms. Wiener decided that the choreography did not fit the rest of the dance.

"Candace"

"Candace" was rehearsed individually. It began at the back of the space and each dancer made his/her way forward as if dancing on a straight line. The sequence,
designed primarily for the floor, involved falling, crawling, and body slapping.

"Candace" was performed immediately after each dancer finished the race. It ended with each dancer standing up with back turned to the audience and right foot extended, toeing the line. Each froze in this position until all had completed the floor material and were toeing the line.

"Mary Novak"

"Mary Novak" was Ms. Miller's solo section in Part Two. The researcher worked very closely with the dancer in reconstructing the section every day for a week. Ms. Miller worked on the section after the company rehearsal because she needed the entire space. Reconstructing meant learning the positions and movements of the full body. When Ms. Miller felt she had learned it sufficiently, the researcher taped her solo. At first she videotaped only section of the dance and later the entire solo. The researcher was invited to comment on her technique, accuracy and presentation. The work was tiring, very repetitious, yet determined.

"Angelea"

Ms. Hamm worked with Ms. Pearl on this section. They worked together, trying to match their unison steps and body placement. Because the work was in unison, there
was a need to check regularly on the spatial orientation. Ms. Wiener was very insistent about proper facings and body alignment.

The playing with images in Glenna's solo, the predominance of unison movement and the game structure gave "The Illinois Material" a ritual flavor.

**Reconstructing Part One**

After learning "The Illinois Material," the dancers put together Part One from the videotape.

The task of reconstructing involved relearning the three original movement sequences. During this period the researcher observed Ms. Wiener joining her company as a dancer. Up to this point, Ms. Wiener worked alone either after ballet class in the morning or later in the evening after company rehearsal.

Ms. Wiener was not secretive about her process. She did not keep anyone around so that she would have full concentration in reviewing the day's rehearsal and planning the next.

The choreographer elicited the dancers' comments about her own sequences. Often, during this period she watched sections of Part One on videotape to prepare the next day's rehearsal. Ms. Wiener had a clear idea of what the section should look like from having studied the section the night before.
When the rehearsal itself was videotaped, she analyzed the tape for common mistakes and reviewed significant sections the next day. In this way, she made certain that the movement had the same dynamic quality and approach as the original. Ms. Wiener split her viewpoint in watching. She looked at the tape for the arms and then looked again for the legs.

As the dancers watched the videotape of their performance in January 1978, they described their translations as "kindergarten." The dancers all noted how easy the material looked. Since that time they had developed a certain sophistication and maturity in making the translations.

The dancers used the videotape to learn their parts, aware of the videotape's limitations.

The movement on the screen is not the movement in the theatre because of the size of the screen, the size of the body that you're looking at, and the fact that there are other things around you. You are looking at the lights. The lighting is different. It lacks the audience. It lacks the real sound of the dancers being there. It is not the same, so you don't have the same response to it. Because the tape tends to wash out the weight of the movement, it lacks the floor connection. There are detailed elements about dance that one can't pick up on the video.

One member danced while another watched the screen to compare the movement's exactness with the image. Since these dancers were part of making the section, they found it easier to re-learn "The Illinois Material."
Shaping the Movement

Once the material was learned, Ms. Wiener reshaped the dynamics. This process was significant. As the dancers performed their movement material, they asked questions about the quality of the movement - not if there is a turn, but what kind of turn. The process concerned the movement feeling within the dancer and the visual aspects of the dance. During these sessions, Ms. Wiener re-arranged movement sequences by physically adjusting or manipulating a body part.

As the dancers recaptured the original feel of the dance, they verbalized how they and the work had changed. They also noted the differences in the work and their own growth in the process.
Because there was not much unison work in Part One, each dancer became personally responsible to learn and practice the movement material.

The company reconstructed from memory, using the videotape as refinement.

Videotape did allow for change. It did inspire me to change the material, not to drop something or eliminate it, but to reduce it or clarify it. Most the changes had to do with clarity. So you have to go back and find how you're going to reemphasize it.51

In dealing with Ms. Miller's solo, Ms. Wiener recognized the limitations of using videotape to reconstruct. The videotape did not pick up all the nuances of the solo. If the piece had been taped from different angles, all the subtleties might be captured and then available through multiple viewings. Both agreed that professional notation would augment this phase.

Re-learning Part One involved a basic pattern: (1) the dancers first worked on their own; (2) if they needed clarification, they checked with the videotape or with another dancer; (3) the dancer showed Ms. Wiener the completed dance material.

At times, Ms. Wiener changed a movement slightly from what was shown on the tape because she saw a way to make the movement look more appealing. In short, the choreographer re-edited and shaped Part One based on her experience and the company's growth through Part Two.
1) "Bugsy"
   a) opening duet
   b) adagio

2) "Christopher's Song"
   a) conducting

FIGURE 2: THE SPATIAL ORIENTATION OF PART ONE
b) clapping

Wiener continues conducting
Miller moves and claps
Pearl and Buckley in unison

3) "Down on the Floor"

a) on the floor

Miller begins on the floor
and is joined in canon by
Pearl, Wiener and Buckley

b) standing up

When each finishes the
floor material, the dancer
stands up in place and
performs the arm material

3) "The Tortoise and
the Hare"

Both move across and back

FIGURE 2 (Continued)
Name of Material | Opening Situation in Space
--- | ---
4) "The Illinois Material"

a) Clenna's solo

b) "The Arms' Race"

c) "Candace"

The floor material is done on a straight line forward when finished, each dancer turns around and places right foot on front line and freezes until all join.

FIGURE 3: THE SPATIAL ORIENTATION OF PART TWO
d) "Mary Novak"

e) "Angelea"

5) Cooper-Hewitt"

a) quartet 1

b) quartet 2

c) trio

FIGURE 3 (Continued)
d) duet

6) "Miniatures"

a) set one
b) set two
c) set three
d) set four/Bebe solo
e) set five/Alison solo

f) set six/Glenna solo
g) set seven/Bebe solo
h) set eight/Alison solo
i) set nine/Glenna solo

All in unison with changing fronts

Buckley joins group
The spacings change because of the solo inserts
With the end of Hamm's solo (i), each dancer freezes when material is finished.

FIGURE 3 (Continued)
7) "The Big Box"

Each enters a confined and marked area in canon.
Upon completion, each dancer freezes.
When Hamm finishes her material, she begins her solo and the others leave.

8) Finale Solos

Order: Hamm, Miller, Pearl and Buckley

FIGURE 3 (Continued)
In preparing for performance, the company worked on the dance as a whole. Because their work extended over a long period of time, the preparations for performance seemed short. The dance was constructed to build gradually with parts developing their own interconnectedness.

In general, the dancing of sequences required stamina, physical and mental discipline, and overall awareness of transitions. It was at this phase that the observer understood how all the dance elements melted and blended together. No longer was the dance in pieces; there was a wholeness and integrity to the form.

The researcher also grasped the developing relationships between sections. With little mention of Part Two's arrangement, the structure emerged in a logical unfolding. It was difficult to determine if the choreographer had planned this happening. It almost seemed that the parts adjusted themselves, resulting in a dynamic whole.

Run-Throughs

After all the material for Part Two was rehearsed in separate units, Ms. Wiener organized the material in proper sequence, conducting run-throughs of the entire sequence.
The purpose of the run-throughs was (1) to help the dancers understand the dynamics of the entire dance, (2) to allow them to make connections/transitions within the sequence, and (3) to gauge their fatigue level.

One result of the run-throughs was that Mr. Buckley found it too exhausting to do the entire "miniature" section before performing his "The Big Box" solo. To give him a rest, Ms. Hamm, the understudy, took Buckley's part. The switch involved more rehearsals for Ms. Hamm and the trio together. Eventually, Mr. Buckley was re-inserted into the sequence at the half-way point.

The run-throughs became an important feature of every rehearsal. Once a week the company rehearsed in a larger space Ms. Wiener rented to let the company work out the spatial arrangements and to have a better floor surface to dance one.

The new space provided the researcher with better angles and more latitude in videotaping than the smaller loft studio. Ms. Wiener requested that the videotape be used as much as possible during the run-throughs. After a rehearsal, Ms. Wiener watched the videotapes of the run-throughs, took notes, and planned the next rehearsal to work on specific sections that presented problems in the videotape that she did not see at rehearsal. The new environment and the better floor space had a positive effect on the dancers. They all remarked on how much
better the dance felt in the more open space and how much better the floor felt to their feet.

**Lecture Demonstration**

Another way of preparing for performance was the use of the lecture demonstration. This involved the whole company with Ms. Wiener describing the choreographic process and the dancers performing excerpts.

The lecture demonstration (1) gave exposure to Ms. Wiener's approach to choreography, (2) and to the individual personalities of the dancers; (3) provided Ms. Wiener with an opportunity to share her process with the public, and (4) publicized the upcoming concert. 53

Ms. Wiener enjoyed doing the lecture demonstrations. Unlike some choreographers who lecture only in an academic environment, she found the experience personally stimulating. It provided an open forum for discussion about her work-in-progress.

There were two lecture demonstrations before the Brooklyn Academy performances. The first was presented to the students at the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, at the request of Sharon Kinney, a modern dancer/choreographer and dance instructor. The second was sponsored by the Religious Communities for the Arts at a Park Avenue church. The audience there was primarily church members and the general public who saw the notice in the newspaper.
In doing a lecture demonstration, Ms. Wiener would often reveal her private self and the mystery of the dance. Because this dance was so process-oriented, the lecture demonstration style fit the dance material.

Sometimes when I am doing a lecture demonstration I might let somebody know about it, because it gives them a really personal view, something they cannot really get from just looking at the dance. In some way it justifies the reason for doing a lecture demonstration. But it is true, The Condor Material was entirely about my discovering that I wanted to work in a certain way and that it was personally related to the individuals involved in my work.54

Spacing Rehearsals

Ms. Wiener held the last rehearsal in a large auditorium before the company rehearsed on the stage of LePercq Space at the Brooklyn Academy. These rehearsals finalized the spacing. The researcher was asked to videotape these rehearsals for Ms. Wiener’s scrutiny. After the rehearsal, Ms. Wiener studied the tapes, planned the next rehearsal accordingly, and shared her insights with the company.

BAM Rehearsals

The Brooklyn Academy of Music provided the company with twenty hours of rehearsal time in a three-day period immediately prior to the performances. The first two days were spent in run-throughs and in "cleaning" and refining the movement of "The Miniatures."
Dress rehearsal was the night before the actual premiere. The researcher was asked to take notes regarding the spacing and his general impressions about the dance. Throughout the rehearsal, Ms. Wiener was backstage or onstage, not seeing the dance from the audience point of view.

The researcher was not allowed to videotape in the theatre because of union rules.

The Performances

There were four performances of The Condor Material at the Brooklyn Academy, three evenings and one matinee. Unlike Danspace where Part One had been premiered, the audience was only on one side, rather than all around. The company arrived at the theatre two hours early for a warm-up and short rehearsal on stage before the doors were opened. Every night the trio worked on "The Miniatures." Each night Ms. Wiener suggested that the dancers not try to recapture the feeling of the night before, but to grow and expand.

If one is thinking through the movement, allowing it to become integrated into the body, one is not thinking about specific shapes, but about the body in space and the range of motion. That is why from one performance to another the dance is never the same. There are so many variations in performances. It may not be obvious to an audience because the material is so dense and complex. But, within that density and complexity the person, the dancer, is making an incredible amount of choices and decisions on the spot. This keeps it very fresh and alive. It is not dead, it is not like pulling out a painting.
The dance was performed in silence. The only sounds heard were the actual sounds the dancers made while dancing.

One of the things is that movement has a possibility to develop its own range and speed. If you use a score of music, then you are defining that for the movement. You are making a grid. You are locating it in time. Whereas, if you do not use any music, it has to locate itself in time. Each thing has some place in time where it is a perfect speed for the movement. It is right and you feel that. I think it also adds to the sense of meditation or ritual. In meditation, you are trying to reach a certain speed in a way; the same speed as the world is going. And one of the things that we were trying to do in The Condor Material was to reach that speed, the same speed as the world, so everything was humming at the same time. I know that sounds exceedingly abstract, but that was one of the things that I was trying to do.56

At two separate performances, Dennis Diamond, a professional video-dance transcriber, taped the performance from behind the last row of seats. Ms. Wiener wanted a videotape of two different performances for study and grant applications.

**Reviewing the Performances**

About a month after the performances, the company gathered after some vacation, to review the performance tapes and celebrate. At this session, the company compared the tapes of the new version with Part One taped a year and a half ago.

The dancers felt there was more technique visible in the new version, but detected a lack of a continuity, especially in the floor material.57
Photographs of the Dance

The photographs selected for this dissertation reveal different aspects of the dance. 58

(1) Plate One shows Nina Wiener in "Bugsy." The torso tilted diagonally with the arms gesturing laterally. This is a stance with feet parallel. This photograph is from the premiere performance of Part One at Danspace, where the audience was in the round.

(2) Plate Three shows Glenna Hamm and Timothy Buckley in "The Miniatures." The two dancers are plane-like spread, dividing the space with torso and limb movements.

(3) Plate Five shows Nina Wiener, Alison Pearl, Bebe Miller and Timothy Buckley in "Cooper-Hewitt." This penetrating gesture, accompanied by direct focus, creates a line, linking the four dancers in a row. The dancers are wearing rehearsal clothes.

(4) Plate Six shows Bebe Miller in "Christopher's Song." Ms. Miller resembles a flying creature, ready to take to flight. Her upper body is spread in the vertical plane and her lower body is moving sagittally, creating a kind of tetrahedral tension. 59 This photograph is also from the Danspace Performance.

(5) Plate Seven is of Bebe Miller, Alison Pearl and Glenna Hamm in "The Miniatures." The trio is caught in mid-air as the arms are coming together, which will be followed by a similar movement in the legs. The group wore rehearsal clothes.
Plate Eleven shows Nina Wiener in "Cooper-Hewitt."

The torso is twisted and the tilt of the head creates a counter-tension. With the arms contracted, there is an internal focus with an overall feeling of being scrunched up, somewhat protective. This photograph shows the costume of the dancer, which was plain, resembling the rehearsal clothes.

Ritual Dimensions

In discussing the ritual aspects with Ms. Wiener after the performances, she was skeptical about calling The Condor Material a ritual performance.

When I made The Condor Material, none of this ritual idea was in my mind. It was not surface. You make a dance and a lot of your ideas about the dance are not surface. Part of the interest is to see how people respond to it, and then you can look back and say, "that was in it, but it never occurred to me." Part of what never occurred to me was that this dance was very spiritual and ritual-oriented. In fact, when Jennifer Dunning wrote her review and called it "Nina Wiener's New Ritual," I was stunned. But, my feeling is that when people look at your work and have perceptions, that it must be there. If someone sees it, it is there, even if it is just there for them. In this particular work, I would have to say that the majority of people who saw it felt it was a very spiritual work. Part of that was due to the ritual nature. You cannot really separate the spiritual and the ritual, because they have that connection of bringing something intimate to a communal activity. Ritual tends to put you in a space which is pleasant and calming for the most part.

While it was not a matter of convincing Ms. Wiener of the ritual elements in her work, she began to see, as if time and reflection brought deeper insight, that there was something especially ritualized in her work.
I think that when people are talking about ritual, they are also discussing attention to detail. When you are involved in a ritualistic activity, you pay attention, and each act is special. Some are private and others are communal. The reason that people thought the dance was ritualistic was because we paid a lot of attention to each thing we did, and it was meticulously rehearsed. It was almost like one person breathing. When one person moved, you could feel someone on the other side of the room start to move with your back to them. You were so familiar with the quality and the choices that they make, you could join in or not, as you chose to do it. That was one of the things that was built into the dance. When you are discussing church ritual, everyone is familiar with it. All the dancers were very familiar with this, that is why we rehearsed part of it so well, but not to death. It still had life and still had potential.

Performance and ritual share common elements, especially in the effect on an audience. This effect is achieved by creating a sense of "sacred time," where there is a feeling of unity between the audience and the dancers.

In ritual, time and attention are the really important things. What you are trying to do in ritual is bring a multitude of people into a single frame of mind. In some ways that is what you do when you are making a performance. The object is to bring the audience to a single frame of mind or to a multiple frame, cutting down on the possibilities of what is going on.

In summary, the researcher has demonstrated that ritual elements were present at the very start of the choreographic process and influenced the entire dance from inception to performance:

(1) Within the dance company itself, there was a community building through sharing in the choreographic process, working and striving to present a new dance work.
(2) Within the choreographic process, the use of personalized movement material and the emphasis on the individual "translations" transformed human experience into dance, art.

(3) Within the movement itself, the emphasis on the use of arm gesture, in unison dancing, and subtle forms of repetition connected the dance ritualistically.

(4) Within the dance itself, the infra-structure of game and play supported a ritual structure.

(5) In performance, the use of silence intensified the movements' qualities and the sense of contemplation. The spatial arrangement (pattern) of the dancers, the relationship of the dancers to the audience, the introspective focus of the dancers, and the minute attention to detail contributed to the overall feeling of ritual in performance.
NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE


7 Biographical information about the choreographer and company members was excerpted from Program Notes, LePercq Space and from the publicity packet of the company. For additional information, see Appendix D.

8 Interview with Timothy Buckley, November 12, 1980. For full text, see Appendix G.

9 Interview with Nina Wiener, January 11, 1981. For full text, see Appendix E.


12 Wiener Interview.

13 Interview with Alison Pearl, May, 1979.


15 Pearl Interview.

16 Wiener Interview.

17 Ibid.

18 Buckley Interview.
Confer Appendix C for the Variables for Movement Observation. These variables were developed with Dr. Vera Maletic at The Ohio State University.

50 Buckley Interview.

51 Ibid.

52 The researcher observed the spatial orientation of the dancers during the run-throughs of the dance and refined his notes during the spatial rehearsals. The diagrams use labanotation symbols for the male and female dancers. The pin shows the facing of the dancer in relation to the front, indicated by the open side of the rectangle.

53 Wiener, Lecture Demonstration.

54 Ibid.

55 Buckley Interview.

56 Wiener Interview.

57 See Appendix H for the reviews of the work.

58 Publicity pictures were also required for the concert. The Village Voice arranged for Ms. Lois Greenfield, a professional dance photographer, to photograph the company. These pictures were used to accompany an article in the Voice about Ms. Wiener's approach to choreography. The photo session was held in a loft studio rented for the session. Ms. Wiener and company wore everyday rehearsal clothes since the costumes were not yet ready. The photo session was similar to a rehearsal with Ms. Wiener having the company perform sequences from Part Two. Ms. Greenfield photographed as the company rehearsed. All shots were taken in action. There were no poses or set-up situations. The Brooklyn Academy of Music also required photographs for publicity and for program notes. Mr. Nathaniel Tileston conducted a photo session in Le Percq Space itself, where the dance would be presented. The procedure for both photographers was similar. Some of the
photographs used in this dissertation are photographs taken at these two sessions and are used with permission of the photographers.


60 Wiener Interview.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.
CHAPTER FOUR

OBSERVATION STUDY OF THE OMEGA LITURGICAL DANCE COMPANY

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary dance is capturing the imagination of the American people. The interest in dance can be seen in the various ways dance is performed. Regional dance companies are sprouting up in areas where previously there was no dance and little theatre. Modern and postmodern dance is gaining acceptance beyond the avant garde sector of the arts community. Public television broadcasts ballet and dance companies tour the country.

The dance explosion has also touched religion. With the renewed interest in movement and bodily expression, church groups have begun researching ancient religious practice to Rediscover the spiritual power of dance.

Performance Ritual

Most religious rituals are public events, performed within a community context, expressing the faith tradition of those gathered. The purpose of this chapter is to: (1) examine, record and analyze the religious ritual making process of liturgical dance; (2) delineate the various relationships within the worship planning.
situation; (3) explore the aesthetic and religious aspects of works in progress; and (4) study sacred dance in its liturgical/worship context.

The mode of participant observation allows this type of study to be done, providing information about religious dance and its planning and performance, and suggesting its future development.

The study focuses, in particular, on the work of Ms. Carla DeSola and the Omega Liturgical Dance Company as they prepare religious dance for the Church of Saint Paul the Apostle, New York City. The Church, an active downtown parish, was interested in liturgical reform and spiritual renewal.

The analysis is accomplished through an observation study of the church staff, the planning group and the Omega Company as they rehearse for the Sunday worship.

Focus of the Study

Since the writer is interested in a descriptive analysis of liturgical dance as an example of performance ritual, the study is multi-focused to include: (1) a description of the ritual (liturgical) process; (2) a study of the function of dance in worship; and (3) an analysis of the performance aspects of the dance.
Ritual Aspects

Through studying ritual, observing liturgical and theatrical dance, and attending religious rituals in a variety of cultures, the researcher has developed indicators that highlight ritualized elements within a dance. These indicators also reflect the general understanding of ritual as presented in Chapter One of this dissertation.

Ritual Making is a complex, human phenomenon:

(1) Ritual making aims at communicating. It addresses the minds and hearts of people with a full array of verbal and non-verbal forms of communication.

(2) Ritual making involves aesthetic principles and liturgical sensitivity in the selection and ordering of celebrational elements.

(3) Ritual making involves the reworking of space and time in special ways. (There is the concern for sacred space)

(4) Ritual is a performance event, expressing relationships, individually and communally, in a public way. There is a certain commitment to the event by those involved.

(5) Ritual is a shifting and changing form of expression rooted in asking ultimate questions. It celebrates existence and its link with "ultimate reality."
(6) Ritual is directed beyond the immediate experience into an "overplus of meaning." This overplus is the transcendent or the divine.

(7) Ritual is repetitive and renewing.

(8) Ritual transforms.

For the present study, these indicators have been reworked into specific questions which focused the writer's attention to the ritual qualities within the dance, especially during its making.

(1) What was the intention of the choreographer and company in the making of the movement? What influence did the liturgical structure of the Mass have on this selection?

(2) Were certain kinds of movements, attitudes or gestures predominant in the finished work?

(3) What was the overall feeling of the movement? Was it spiritual? calming? other worldly? transcendent?

(4) Was there any relationship between the aesthetics of the work and the established liturgical order?

(5) How were the liturgical ideas developed throughout the dance?

(6) What was the relationship between the choreographer and company to church staff during and after the ritual?

(7) Did the liturgical dance contribute to the overall renewal of the parish worship life?
Developing A Typology

By studying the structure and flow of the Eucharistic liturgy, the researcher was able to develop a typology of liturgical dance. This approach yielded a functional framework to understand the different kinds of dance for worship, the creative uses of dance in liturgy and different approaches to the making and rehearsing of liturgical dance.

Performance Aspects

Since ritual is performance oriented, the following elements were noted during the making and presenting of liturgical dance:
(1) the process of developing choreographic ideas;
(2) the variety of movement qualities within the dances;
(3) the rehearsal and spacing procedures;
(4) the quality of the dancer's presence during the performance;
(5) the focus of the dancer during the performance;
(6) the performances and evaluations;
(7) the response of the congregation.

The Observations

Since the observation study concerns religious dance, its making and placement within the liturgical structure, the writer observed the company, the church staff, and the
overall church context over a five month period: (1) at company rehearsals; (2) at planning sessions with Ms. DeSola and the church staff; (3) during the actual worship services at the church site; and (4) at evaluation sessions.

Informal interviews were conducted throughout the rehearsal period and formal interviews with Ms. DeSola and Ms. Judith Graves, a company member, were held a year later. (This interval allowed the researcher time to organize his notes and carefully plan the interview. It also allowed those interviewed time for reflection and integration of this entire experience.)
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Dance, the most universal of all the arts, is movement ordered by rhythm, time and space, expressing life and its deep mysteries. Before speech, dance was the medium of communication of the human to the divine. History has shown that dance has been significant to all aspects of life.

Existing in different forms, various societies have dances for planting and harvesting, for rain and productivity, for rites of passage, for celebrating new life and commemorating the dead. The Jewish Scriptures record the frenzied dance of King David accompanying the ark into the city. In the Middle Ages, there was even a dance for the conferring of doctoral degrees.1

In the United States, the Shakers, the Quakers and some Pentecostal-Evangelical church groups claim sacred dance or "the holy dance" as part of worship. The mainline Christian Churches are just now beginning to reclaim its use and instruct congregations on the art-form. As liturgical dance struggles to find its new-old identity, the recent work in liturgical and dance research should aid its progress.

Reform of the Liturgy

The renewed interest in liturgical or religious dance is taking place within the larger context of litur-
gical reform brought about by the Second Vatican Council. The new enthusiasm is not confined to the Roman Catholic sector, but branches out to many diverse Christian traditions. In dialoguing with the modern world, the Church has revised its worship life, respecting the traditions of the past yet recognizing the need for radical change.

The renewal in the Church has brought about a keen awareness for liturgical research and scholarship as well as changes in content and form. Reform has largely meant a renewal of ritual texts with a new emphasis on the communication aspects of the liturgy. These changes have recognized the value of the arts and have given artists a place in the renewal effort.

The Vatican Council's Constitution of the Church in the Modern World stresses the relationship of art to human development:

Let the church also acknowledge new forms of art which are adapted to our age and in keeping with the characteristics of various nations and regions. Adjusted in their mode of expression and conformed to liturgical requirements, they may be introduced into the sanctuary when they raise the mind to God.2

The new liturgy requires sensitive shaping by artists, architects, musicians, poets and dancers. In this renewal, the use of bodily expression both for the priest-celebrant and congregation, is a consideration. Liturgical dancers, trained technically, can help in this renewal effort.
Response to Renewal

Dance integrates the body, mind and spirit. It can be the physical manifestation of belief, the expression of the religious journey. This quest captured the imagination of Carla DeSola. Inspired by the reform of Vatican Council II, Ms. DeSola saw dancing as connected to a primal life source.

All of life involves movement, and movement becomes dance when there is an inner life, a living spirit directing it. A tree gets its energy from the earth and sunlight all around it; the energy isn't just in the sap flowing up and down inside it. In the same way, dance isn't just mechanized intellectuality or rootless flutterings. True dance draws its strength from the living flow of the universe. With this power, dance can lead us to the heart of reality.  

From this awareness, Ms. DeSola gathered together a group of dancers to express the Spirit, to explore religious themes in experimental ways, and to dance the scriptures as prayer. The resulting choreography was highly developmental and process oriented. This is how the Omega Liturgical Dance Company started.

The original purpose of Omega Liturgical Dance Company, in its earliest days, was simply to be together (dancers, painters, people interested in arts) and explore levels of meaning in the scripture by improvising with movement...The main purpose was exploration and experimentation rather than choreographing a work and polishing it. Later on, as the company developed into a more professional company, (and it is developing more and more) we continued to work with the process of improvisation and common prayer.
together, but from these we developed dances based on our reflections of scriptural themes and other inspirational songs. For instance, Psalm 42 - no one came in and learned the piece from a repertory (as they do now). We took the different lines, we sounded them out, we did a million kinds of things, improvised and eventually set the dance.4

Many professionally trained dancers felt a similar call, and the dance group grew.

When I first came to OMEGA, my purpose was to find a way to work actively for God and for the spirit. Because most of my life seemed everyday, I wanted actively to express my spirituality. Dance was what I was interested in and what I was about. When I heard about Carla, it seemed an ideal way to integrate those aspects of my life.5

From these beginnings, a company emerged that is ecumenical in spirit, but committed to blending dance and spirituality. They perform in churches and hospitals, and they also present dance in performance or concert situations.

We strive to be a finely-trained dance company that still maintains a diversified spiritual quest on each person's part. Everyone does not have to believe exactly the same things. It has never been that way. All over the country there are many beautiful, small religious dance groups that work on a prayer level, but rarely on a technical level. I felt the need to have a company that is able to combine both, and to push the boundaries of what is spiritual and religious. The problems I have faces in the company over the years suggest the complexity of the human being. This complexity takes in a variety of spiritualities and beliefs. I see Omega in a very deep ecumenical sense of not being divisive in spirituality or purpose. Omega represents the combination of being able to serve liturgical needs in the church, and to delve more deeply into dance and spirituality. In performance we might show pieces that would not be particularly suitable for church, but would be
pieces that are spiritual (which is not to say that other pieces in any dance company might not be). Thus, we say explicitly that even though some dances may be very abstract, or whatever, they do show through the spirituality of dance.

The Choreographer

Carla DeSola is the founder and director of the Omega Liturgical Dance Company, in residence at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Divine, New York City. Ms. DeSola has taught modern dance to adults and children after receiving a diploma from the Department of Dance at Julliard School of Music in 1960. She has studied with José Limon and Vallerie Bettis, among others.

While teaching, she became interested in the spiritual aspects of dance and began exploring the liturgical dimensions of dance in the late sixties. A recognized leader in the developing field of liturgical dance, Ms. DeSola has conducted liturgical dance workshops and retreats around the country in a variety of religious and university settings. She has danced as a soloist and with her company at B'Nai Israel, the United Nations, St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Nashotah House, The Kennedy Center for Retarded Children, the Quaker Conference on Spirituality and the 41st Euchanistic Congress.

Ms. DeSola has published many articles and books in the field, advocating the use of dance as a prayer and worship form.
The Company

The Omega Liturgical Dance Company was founded in 1974 to express the spiritual-social-healing dimensions of dance; to explore inner aspects of movement integrated with the world's spiritual resources; to bring dance into religious observances and in concern for all settings including the liturgical framework.

The Company is named Omega after the eschatological theology of Teilhard de Chardin. The Omega Point is the ultimate convergence of all matter into Jesus Christ.

The members of the company come from various disciplines in the dance world, including performing, teaching and dance-movement therapy in which they work. Each member is a unique artist dedicated to personal and spiritual growth and service to others. Drawing on their technical backgrounds and through a collective form of meditation, improvisation and choreography, they have combined dance, prayer and scriptures so that audiences can experience in a heightened, kinesthetic way the workings of the Spirit in human life. The company members conduct workshops, perform concerts, choreograph for and perform in liturgies and religious services for churches, schools, colleges, and retreat centers throughout the country. The present repertory includes dances designed for both lay and religious groups.
The Omega Company provides a means for sharing of transcultural and spiritual dances so as to achieve greater understanding among diverse cultural and religious groups. Functioning as a lay professional dance group, workshops, dance programs, retreats and liturgies have been offered in diverse settings which include: Catholic, Episcopal, Congregational, Methodist, Lutheran, Mennonite, Quaker, Unitarian, Jewish, The United Church of Christ, interfaith and inter-denominational gatherings. It has also given programs for Earth Day and Sun Day and has gathered in spaces as small as home religious gatherings to Yankee Stadium.

To expand the boundaries of liturgical dance, the company is developing programs for the handicapped, the elderly, mentally ill and people with special needs.

LITURGICAL DANCE

Liturgical dance is a type of religious or sacred dance, which conjures up multiple images or styles of dancing. Generally speaking, religious dance involves some form of faith-commitment or a relationship to a spiritual force. While some of the dances of Martha Graham have a religious theme or relate a scriptural story, these dances are not religious or sacred dance in the strict sense of the term.
(1) A dancer may pray singly or in a group, using the body to commune with the divine or to acquire spiritual insight or special healing power. The Zar dances of Egypt and Shinto Temple dances are examples of this type.8

(2) Sacred Dance may be ecstatic movement, bringing the dancer into an altered state of consciousness. The revelers of Dionysios and the whirling dervishes involve the ecstatic.9

(3) Sacred dance may be a ritual, where the entire ceremony is danced. Cultural examples of the type abound from the Kachina dances of the Puebloan tribes to the Rejang Dance of Bali.10

(4) Liturgical dance is a form of sacred dance. Worked into the overall structure of a larger ritual, liturgical dance inspires and draws the community together into a common experience of God.11

Function of Liturgical Dance
The primary choreographic work of Ms. DeSola and the Omega Company is sacred dance designed for the needs and structure of the liturgy.12 Liturgical dance expresses religious or sacred sentiment within a liturgical framework. This type of sacred dance is not merely ornamental or decorative, but functions to deepen and focus the worship event.
Liturgical Dance serves the worship of the church by:

(1) drawing the community into the mysteries of worship (communal);
(2) revealing new dimensions of the scripture (prophetic);
(3) witnessing to the beauty of God (evangelical); and
(4) eliciting a faith response from the community (inspirational). 13

Thus, Liturgical dance is a bridge between the visible and the invisible world of the spirit.

Dance's gift in revelation is that by its unique, nonverbal interactions of spirit and body it can capture the nonverbal movements of the Holy Spirit in its interaction with people, as it groans within them, moves through scripture and manifests itself in the mysteries of the liturgy. Dance can externalize these movements. It makes them visible through the vehicle of the human body, drawing people into the mysteries through the use of basic, nonliteral materials. These include rhythms, dynamics, shapes, subtle and heightened creations of moods and feelings. 14

Liturgical Dance is not confined to a limited vocabulary of movement deemed "worshipful," but is open to a variety of movement styles and expressions, drawn from different dance traditions, like modern dance, ballet and yoga.

This reemergence of sacred dance will take forms that use aspects of folk dancing, square and popular dancing, ballet and modern dance, and it will draw on the advances in psychological understanding for its depth and freedom and individuality. It will not doubt be affected by disciplines from other cultures, with which for the first time, the average person has a chance to become acquainted - disciplines such as the movement - meditations of Yoga, of T'ai Chi, of Sufism, and of Zen. 15
Because there has not been the interest and the ongoing tradition of liturgical dance, movement styles have not been set or defined. It is the task of the present-day artists, dancers and choreographers to develop new and appropriate movements to express the sacred.

We must turn to the artists - the dancers in this case - and ask them to plunge into their own depths and draw, from the living spirit that dwells within them, movements that are meaningful for the church. The dance has to be in relation to all the people of God, learning from them what is soul-satisfying and what is really wanted.16

These forms come from the depths of the dancer's being, yet express the "truth" of the entire community.

Types of Liturgical Dance

With liturgical dance operating within a set structure, the types of dance can be determined according to its placement and function within the liturgy and according to the source material (text/music) for the dance. This decidedly functional approach reveals five types of liturgical dance: (1) procession dance; (2) proclamation dance; (3) prayer dance; (4) meditation dance; and (5) celebration dance.

To appreciate these types of dance, it is helpful to examine the basic liturgical outline which supports these dances. The structure of the Catholic liturgy shares many common elements with worship forms of other communi-
ties. Correlations to other traditions or liturgical families can be easily made.

The Liturgical outline is as follows:

(1) Opening Rites: these initial rites foster unity among those assembled and focus on the theme of the celebration. The opening rites also dispose the congregation to hear the Word of God.

(2) The Liturgy of the Word: this section consists primarily of readings picked according to a yearly cycle of theme. Through the readings God speaks to his people, making known the mystery of redemption.

(3) The Liturgy of Eucharist: this section involves the preparing of the bread and wine, the prayer of thanks and praise, and the breaking of bread and communion.

(4) The Rite of Conclusion: the people are blessed and sent forth to share and live God's good news proclaimed in the celebration.

The researcher will examine each of these types, explore its use, function and placement within the liturgical structure and provide an example of each type from the choreography of the Omega Company.

Procession Dance

The procession dance may be the purest form of religious dance. A latent awareness of the rhythms of life and the movement of the group attains a fixed form in processions. Within the liturgical structure, there are
four places which involve procession-like movement:

1. The Entrance Procession gathers all those assembled into a community, setting the seasonal theme of the celebration, and accompanying the ministers to the sanctuary space.

2. The Gospel Procession highlights the proclamation of the good news of salvation from the Gospel book. The usual text to accompany this procession is the Alleluia. Generally, the procession moves the Gospel reader, candle-bearers and thurifer to the lectern or place where the Gospel is read.

3. Gifts Procession brings the gifts of bread and wine and other symbolic or financial offerings from those assembled to the main altar.

4. The Closing Procession signals the close of the liturgy and accompanies the ministers from the sanctuary space.

Procession dance is primarily determined by function rather than source material. All processions, whether danced or not, possess a dance-like quality.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>SOURCE MATERIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Entrance</td>
<td>opens the celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>gathers the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sets the theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accompanies ministers to the altar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appropriate hymn, song or music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Gospel</td>
<td>accompanies movement to the lectern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solemnizes the Gospel proclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alleluia/verse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Gifts</td>
<td>accompanies the presentation of gifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of bread and wine by the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appropriate hymn, song or music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Closing</td>
<td>closes the celebration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>accompanies the ministers from the sanctuary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appropriate hymn, song or music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 4: PROCESSION DANCE
O Come O Come, Emmanuel

This is an entrance procession dance for the Advent season, incorporating the Advent wreath.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel. On the words, "O Come, O Come..." the procession moves down the aisle, arms stretched in front, palms face upward. (Practice holding the arms out in such a way as to really feel them as an extension of the self seeking God.)

that mourns in lowly exile here. Leader with the wreath stops, and all the rest bow from the waist, lowering arms. (At this point in the third verse the sequence is changed. See later directions.)

until the son of God appear. All raise their bodies and lift up arms as before.

(Chorus) Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel. The double line separates by everyone turning to face his partner and at the same time taking a big step backward, opening arms wide to the sides in a joyful manner. A pathway is thus formed down which the leader dances with the wreath. (It is easy to improvise with a wreath in one's hands. Show it off, turning from side to side in a spirit of delight.) The leader must be at the head of the line again in time for the next words.

shall come to thee, O Israel. The leader continues in front dancing, as the rest link right elbows with their partners, holding their free arms raised, and swing around one time in the center of the aisle. They end with their arms down by their sides, in original lines.

Repeat the entire sequence described so far, progressing toward the altar, while all in the pews sing the second verse and chorus. By the third verse the leader places the wreath on the altar and the double line separates to the left and right and encircles the altar (leaving out the bowing). By the time of the third chorus, all are standing still facing the altar.

(Chorus - third time) Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel. On "Rejoice, rejoice," all take a step in toward the altar, hands held, arms lifting up. On "Emmanuel"
all back away, lowering arms, dropping hands, and then lifting arms back out to the side.

shall come to thee, O Israel. All turn in place, arms lifted. Pause. The priest lights the first candle (on second week he lights the second candle, etc.) and says a prayer for Advent. He then joins the group and they all circle around the altar, hands joined, as the next verse is sung, or simply hummed. The chorus movements are repeated as before (stepping toward the altar, arms raised, etc.) and all then slowly file off to their placed in the church, as a final verse and chorus is sung. The wreath is left on the altar, or places in a special spot.

Proclamation Dance

Proclamation Dance forms the core of the Liturgy of the Word. It involves the proclamation of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. It instructs the faithful and nourishes them in the continuing work of salvation.

The dance or mime-dance/drama (as it is sometimes called) may be the actual proclamation of the scriptures. At other times, the dancer may work with a reader and jointly through word and movement proclaim the message.

 Scriptures can be presented in such a way that our whole selves become engrossed in this learning about the kingdom. (How often is only our mind dimly engaged!) It is possible to see and feel and understand more of the depth and beauty of the scriptures when they are visualized for us in their presentations, "incarnated," as it were, through bodily participation. When our body and our senses are involved, our spirit becomes more involved, for we are a totality. In ordinary life we are always watching "bodies" move about their daily business. Our search is for the spiritual dimensions of normal activity and perceptions.

On Sundays and Feast days, there are generally three readings, one each from the prophets, apostles and
gospels. Proclamation dance may be (1) inspirational, heightening the proclamation in a dramatic way, (2) evangelical, witnessing to the good news, and (3) prophetic, revealing new dimensions of the Word or connecting its message to current events. (The psalms may be proclamation when used in the Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office), but generally fall under the fourth category, meditative dance, when used as a response in the Eucharistic Liturgy.)

In addition to Scriptural texts, it is possible on special occasions to include readings of a spiritual author, not included in the main body of Scriptures. A dance accompanying this reading would also be proclamation. For example, a dance to the writings of Teilhard de Chardin might be included in a Pentecost celebration.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>SOURCE MATERIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Scriptural</td>
<td><strong>to announce</strong> Jewish Scriptures, especially the Law of Moses and the Prophets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>to inspire/instruct</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>to reveal</strong> Christian Scriptures, including the Gospels and Epistles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>to witness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>to challenge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Spiritual/</td>
<td><strong>to inspire</strong> thematic spiritual writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>historical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>to witness</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>to challenge</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 5: PROCLAMATION DANCE**

Quem Quaeritis?

This ancient play, Quem Quaeritis? (Whom do you seek?) was traditionally performed on Easter morning. It was the first piece of scripture to be dramatized for the liturgical service. This version was designed by Nick Hodsdon.

1. The three women, with bowed heads and gestures of mourning, weave their way down the aisle to the altar, saying to one another, "Who will roll the stone for us?" "Who will roll away the stone?"
2. At the altar, the angel suddenly appears. The women cry out and fall back, covering their faces. The angel says, "Don't be afraid. Whom are you looking for?"

3. The women rise and call, "Where is Jesus, The man who was crucified?"

4. The angel indicates the empty tomb: "He isn't here!" He raises his arms slowly and majestically: "As he said, He has risen!" He gestures toward the congregation: "Now go and tell everybody!"

5. The women turn and call, "Peter! Andrew! James! John! Everyone! Hurry up! Come to the tomb!" They repeat this, flying down the steps to the aisle. Then, dancing and spinning in joy, they cry out to people in each pew such phrases as "Jesus is risen!" "The tomb! It's empty!" "Jesus is alive!" "Hurry, come and see!" "Run and tell everyone!"

6. When they reach the back of the church, the disciples, and anyone else who wants to join in, run and skip and cartwheel forward, with ringing and jingling bells. Some call out: "Oh, Hallelujah! Jesus is risen!" Simultaneously, others cry: "Jesus is risen? I can't believe it!" Others, "Christ is alive! How can it be?" All converge at the altar, point out "the empty tomb" to each other, then are joined by the choir in leading the congregation in a favorite hymn of resurrection.20

Prayer Dance

Even though most liturgical dance is prayer, there remains liturgical dance which expresses the prayer of the assembled community. Various prayers or sections of the liturgy, which rarely change, can be used as appropriate dance material. These prayers are usually addressed to God the Father and occasionally to the Son, Jesus Christ.
The most obvious places for liturgical prayer dance are within the "Common of the Mass." These sections lend themselves to dance because they are familiar to the worshippers and liturgical music is readily available.

If prayer is the central core of life, then dance becomes prayer when we are expressing our relationship to God, to others, and to all the world of matter and spirit, through movement originating from our deepest selves - this same central point of worship. The movements of dance-prayer start from our deep center, flow outward like rivulets into the stream of life, and impart life everywhere. So dance can be a part of prayer, just as stillness can be a part of movement and silence can be a part of music. There is one root; all the rest, movement or stillness, silence or sound, is its expression. The closer to the source, the purer the song.21

The nature of these prayers include: intercessions, praise, thanksgiving, adoration and mercy. The Opening Prayer, the Prayer over the Gifts and the Prayer after Communion are not usually danced because they form part of the presider's prayers, offered by the celebrant alone on behalf of the assembled community.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>SOURCE MATERIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common of the Mass:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recall God's mercy</td>
<td>Kyrie Eleison (Lord, Have Mercy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glorify God</td>
<td>Gloria (Glory to God)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statement of belief</td>
<td>Credo (I believe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acclamation</td>
<td>Sanctus (Holy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lifting self to God</td>
<td>Our Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to accompany breaking of bread in preparation for communion</td>
<td>Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Prayers:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intercessory prayers</td>
<td>prayer of the faithful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assembly's response to priest's prayer</td>
<td>Eucharistic acclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affirmation</td>
<td>Amen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that eucharist may achieve unity</td>
<td>peace prayer/sign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to ask God's favor</td>
<td>blessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to close the service</td>
<td>dismissal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 6: PRAYER DANCE
The Lord's Prayer

It is possible for a dance to the Lord's Prayer to be simple enough for a whole congregation to learn. The text used here is the one prepared in 1975 by the International Consultation on English Texts.

Opening position: Cross your arms in front of your body and take the hands of the person on either side of you. Still holding hands, bend over and remain in this position for a moment, with a sense of stillness and prayer.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name; your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven: Slowly raise your torso and at the same time lift your arms up in a smooth, continuous way, holding your neighbors' hands until you naturally let them go as your arms lift higher. (Avoid any pulling.) Uncross your arms (there will be a lovely moment of expansion when everyone does this at the same time) and hold them in an open, praising position, head and chest upraised.

Give us today our daily bread: Lower your arms, bringing your hands together in a gesture of petition (palms face upward, arms stretched out in front of you about chest height).

Forgive us our sins: Bow forward folding your arms to your chest with a sense of contrition.

as we forgive those who sin against us: Come out of the bow and take the hands of the person on either side of you as a gesture of reconciliation. (Do not cross your arms this time.)

Save us from the time of trial: Holding hands, all bow deeply.

And deliver us from evil: Hold bow.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen: All raise arms and torsos, hands still joined. Rise to toes, and letting go of neighbors' hands, raise hands even higher in an exuberant amen!22
Meditation Dance

Meditation Dance is more reflective by nature, a response to a reading (psalm-meditation), a commentary on a group of thematic readings (homiletic), or a thanksgiving for a particular deed or event (after communion thanksgiving).

Religious dance can be assumed to be the result of a personal, meditative experience of God; the movement's source comes from the heart's response, in an overflowing of gratitude or speech to God. In Christian terms, one could speak of Christ as the partner in an ever-new dance which is inspired by the Holy Spirit and offered to the Father.23

The principal use of the psalm-dance is as a meditative response to the first reading of the liturgy. The text of the psalm is usually poetic. Providing insight into the reading, the psalm is thematically related to the reading. A psalm-dance may also be used in other parts of the liturgy, e.g., as a contemplative element after communion. In either case, the psalm-dance may incorporate congregation gesture along with solo or group movement.

The use of a meditation dance may also take the form of a homily or sermon. This dance may inspire, challenge, or proclaim the message of salvation in a special way. It is possible to have a solo dance or a dance used in conjunction with a spoken sermon. In both cases, the dance draws the community into reflecting on the impact of the message on their daily lives.
Meditation dance is probably most popularly associated with the quiet time after communion. As the ritual draws to a close, this contemplative time can reinforce the theme of the celebration, draw the community together in a spirit of thanksgiving or help provide insight into the meaning of life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>SOURCE MATERIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (1) psalm-dance | to respond meditatively to the first reading of the liturgy  
                  | to draw the community into a reflective spirit |
|               | psalm           |
| (2) homiletic | to share with the community the implications and impact of the good news (prophetic)  
                  | to witness to the truth of the good news (evangelical) |
|               | scripture texts |
| (3) after communion | to reinforce the theme of the celebration  
                      | to inspire  
                      | to give thanks (communal) |
|               | appropriate hymn, hymn, music or song |

FIGURE 7: MEDITATION DANCE
Psalm 115(116)

This dance is for congregation use at a liturgy emphasizing trust and hope. It is based on the arrangement for singing according the psalmody of Joseph Gelineau found in Twenty-four Psalms and a Canticle, published by the Gregorian Institute of America.

I trusted even when I said: "I am sorely afflicted." : All in congregation, while sitting in pews, raise arms and eyes slowly, timing the gesture with the phrasing of the music. (Chant in a calm, meditative way.) Think of the upward movement of the arms as a call to God, reaching through time and space.

and when I said in my alarm: "No man can be trusted." : All slowly lower arms and grasp neighbors' hands.

How can I repay the Lord for his goodness to me?: A few people will have gathered in the back of the church beforehand. They now process slowly down the aisle, each carrying one gift to be placed later on the altar. The person in front carries the chalice.

The cup of salvation I will raise; I will call on the Lord's name. : All pause. (They should be midway down the aisle.) The leader slowly lifts up the chalice (holding it in both hands, eyes raised) and then the others raise their gifts.

Your servant, Lord, your servant am I; you have loosened my bonds. : All turn in place very slowly, keeping gifts still lifted high for all to see.

A thanksgiving sacrifice I make, I will call on the Lord's name. : Resume walking to the altar (a little more joyfully) and place the gifts on the altar (or hand to the priest) and stand in a semicircle in front of the altar.

My vows to the Lord I will fulfill before all his people. : All bow slowly, facing altar, and then rise, lifting up arms. The priest lifts up his arms and head in a movement of
dedication to the Lord while the others are bowing, holding his arms up till they join him in the same movement.

in the courts of the house of the Lord.: All in front of the altar make one complete turn in place, keeping body and arms still lifted.

in your midst, O Jerusalem.: Those by the altar join hands, with arms raised. At the same time all those in the pews, still holding their neighbors' hands, raise their arms too. Pause in unity.24

Celebration Dance

Celebration dance may be considered liturgical dance, although it is not formally connected to the ritual structure. More akin to the prelude and postlude of a liturgical service, celebration dance sets the tone for a festive gathering or brings it to a festive close. These dances tend to involve the entire worshipping community either in a simple gesture or actual movement. Circle dances that snake around the entire Church at the end of a liturgy exemplify this type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FUNCTION</th>
<th>SOURCE MATERIAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to prepare the</td>
<td>appropriate hymn,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>congregation for</td>
<td>music or song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>festivity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to conclude the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>celebration in a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>special way</td>
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</table>

FIGURE 8: CELEBRATION DANCE
A Gift to be Simple

If one thinks of religious dance in American the Shakers always come to mind, for they were a religious sect for whom dance was an integral aspect of their worship. Founded in England, they came to the East and Midwest in the late eighteenth century and created many songs and dances to express their delight in God.

A Gift To Be Simple is one of the best known examples of their dances and songs. This dance was taught to Carla DeSola by a Quaker living in the vicinity of a Shaker village.

Opening formation: a circle, all facing center.

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free.: All take four steps toward the center, beginning with the right foot (r,l,r,l). Hands are held in front of the body; about waist height, palms facing upward. Initiated by a gentle wrist movement, the hands pulse upward and downward. (This up-and-down movement with upturned hands was thought of as a gesture to receive grace.)

'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be.: All take four steps back to place (r,l,r,l). The palms face downward as you walk backward, and shake in a small down-and-up direction. (This movement, with turned down palms, was used to signify shaking out bad influences, or "all that is carnal." There is a Shaker song with the words, "Come life, Shaker life, come life eternal, shake, shake out of me all that is carnal.")

And when we find ourselves in the place just right, we will be in the valley of love and delight.: Repeat the above pattern; four steps into the center and four steps back to place.

When true simplicity is gained.: Bring hands to prayer position (palms together, fingertips pointing upward). Step to the right with the
right foot and bring the left foot to meet the right, bending both knees. Reverse to the left on the words, "simplicity is gained."

To bow and to bend we shall not be ashamed.: Repeat the above pattern (stepping and bending to the right and then to the left).

To turn, turn will be our delight.: Keeping hands in the same prayer position, turn in place by making a small circle to the right (step r,l,r,l). End facing the center.

Till by turning, turning we come round right.: Reverse. (Make a small circle to the left, stepping l,r,l,r).26

The following outlines shows the diversity of liturgical dance types in relation to the order of the Eucharistic service:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY</th>
<th>LITURGICAL DANCE TYPES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prelude</td>
<td>(5) Celebrational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INITIAL RITES:

| Opening Song/Music | (1) Processional       |
| Penitential Rite (Kyrie) | (3) Prayer              |
| Glory to God (Gloria) | (3) Prayer              |

FIGURE 9: RELATIONSHIP OF DANCE TYPES TO LITURGICAL PLACEMENT
LITURGY OF THE WORD:

First Reading
Psalm Response
Second Reading
Alleluia
Gospel
Homily
Prayer of the Faithful
The Creed (Credo)

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST:

Preparation of Bread and Wine
Holy (Sanctus)
Acclamation
Amen
The Lord's Prayer
Peace Prayer/Sign
Breaking of Bread (Agnus Dei)
Communion

CLOSING RITE:

Blessing/Dismissal
Closing Song
Postlude

FIGURE 9 (Continued)
SUMMARY

(1) Liturgical dance is largely determined by the ritual structure in which it operates.
(2) Liturgical dance includes solo and group dances and may include congregational dance or gesture.
(3) Liturgical dance must clearly be prayer and not performance. It is intended to involve all the participants in the ritual action. In ritual, there are no spectators, all participate.
(4) Liturgical dance is communal, drawing the community together.
(5) Liturgical dance is inspirational, uplifting the spirit to God.
(6) Liturgical dance is evangelical, witnessing to the message of salvation.
(7) Liturgical dance is prophetic, challenging the participants to live the message.
THE RITUAL MAKING PROCESS

The ritual making process for preparing a Sunday Eucharist is complex, involving the services of many different Church groups. A knowledge of the process requires appreciation of the structure and a theological-liturgical understanding of the content. In studying performance ritual, the researcher selected the ritual making process of liturgical dance. Thus, the writer would be able to compare and contrast both types of ritual making, the making of contemporary dance and the making of liturgical dance.

Unlike performance art, which is self-contained, liturgical dance is part of a much larger ritual. The dancers are but one group among many involved in planning and carrying out the full ritual. There are also readers, singers, musicians, artists and priest celebrant. The dance, however, must be worked into the fabric of the worship if it is to be an effective element of ritual communication.

Liturgical dance is substantial in form, containing religious content. In addition to the religious subject matter, it has to have flow and be suited for a liturgical situation. It must be right for the timing of the whole liturgy. There is usually no problem if it is connected with a set part of the Mass. A Kyrie is a Kyrie, whether it is dance or not. There is more concern that the meditation after Communion, or a psalm response, fit the whole flow.
To plot the development and making of liturgical dance, it was necessary to examine the general shape of the liturgy planning, emphasizing the liturgical dance element. The following steps were crucial to the process:

1. The work of the pastoral staff in establishing liturgical dance as a medium of religious expression and the overall planning for the five month cycle.
2. The worship planning session with the staff liaison, the choreographer, music director and parish intern (commentator).
3. The company rehearsals in working out the dances and spacing rehearsals in the church prior to the services.
4. The liturgical performances themselves.
5. The evaluation by the staff and the dance company.

The researcher will examine each of the steps, explore the nature of the ritual making process, study the planning and making of liturgical dance and analyze the church performance in terms of theme, movement and effectiveness.

Staff Meeting

Each week, the staff at Saint Paul's (priests, sister, parish interns and music director) met to discuss the pastoral concerns of the parish, to review the week's activities and to plan for future events. The first part
of these meetings was devoted to a review of the Sunday liturgies and open discussion about the worship life of the parish.

In having liturgical dance, the staff hoped that the Omega Company would enrich "the last Mass on Sunday" mentality.

The acceptance of dance in worship can help Christians rediscover that bodily movement is not so much an instrument of enticement as an aid to profound human awareness and self-expression and a point of contact between man and the Spirit of God.

The staff decided to accept the Omega Company's offer to dance, and designated the second Sunday of the month for the "dance liturgy," as it was called.

Omega's participation was part of a larger plan. The staff hoped eventually to use the Sunday afternoon liturgy to offer a variety of worship experiences on a rotating basis.

The staff viewed liturgical dance as a way:

1. to build community spirit among those participating at the 5:15 PM Sunday Mass;
2. to attract new people once a month;
3. to begin looking at the interplay of religion and the arts; and
4. to experiment with deeper liturgical renewal.

In the following weeks, the staff discussed the liturgical themes and the flow of the Sunday Masses. They hoped that liturgical dance would provide a renewal-revival element for the parish worship. The staff
wanted to provide new and refreshing liturgical experi-
ences for the parishioners, hoping to attract new members
interested in contemporary worship or religion and the
arts.

To accomplish these goals, the staff was aware of
the following needs:

(1) to educate the 5:15 Sunday congregation about
liturgical renewal and the place of dance in church;
(2) to foster a spirit of liturgical planning;
(3) to advertise liturgical dance as a monthly
feature; and
(4) to evaluate the progress and impact of litur-

gical dance within the parish.

The following announcement in the parish bulletin
indicates the kind of publicity liturgical dance was given.

LITURGICAL DANCE STARTS TODAY! Carla DeSola has
an innovative group of people who praise God
through movement and form. When we hear of
liturgical dance, we might get strange ideas
in our heads. It's not disco, it's not
an attempt to be outrageous. Rather, it is
a reverent and beautiful addition to our
prayer which is designed to help us pray, to
move us to the beauty of God and the beauty
we have to offer him. The dance group will
praise God with the ancient Gregorian Chants
at the 5:15 Mass. Carla DeSola is the fore-
most leader of liturgical dance. Having her
at our Church is indeed a privilege and
indicates our support of using all human art
to praise God.29

The attitude the announcement projected to the
parish was defensive and almost apologetic. From the
start, the staff seemed to do better on the planning or
verbalizing renewal concepts than on the overall communicating. The task of education, often mentioned as a value by the staff, was left to the dance company.

**Staff Liaison**

The overall concern of the staff was to involve more people in active participation. To assure communication with the dancers, Fr. Mark Hettel, an associate pastor, was assigned as staff liaison for all dance liturgies. Fr. Hettel was to report back to staff meetings regarding his impressions of the renewal effort and to present feedback from the congregation. Fr. Hettel was expected to take an active part in the ritual-making sessions.

Fr. Hettel would be the priest-celebrant for the dance liturgies. The researcher was also able to assist Fr. Hettel and to experience liturgical dance from various viewpoints within the church.

In one of Robert Frost's shortest poems, he wrote: 'We dance around in a ring and sing, and the secret sits in the middle and knows.' That poem powerfully summarizes the definition and dynamic of ritual, especially in a church setting. How else is one to approach this mystical 'secret' which sits 'knowing in the middle' except by ritual? Ritual is the manner in which a community becomes its truest self by encountering this 'secret' again and again.

Ritual-making is the ongoing effort to develop a variety of multi-human and multi-level ways to 'encircle' more closely the mystery of who we are. Without ritual men and women would
still be in caves and no human advancement would have been possible. With no 'dance' in the darkness we might have never taken the leap to walk out of the darkness. Ritual multiplies both the quality and the 'quantity' of faith, hope, courage and vision which a community brings to each successive dance around the 'secret.'

Interested in the renewal of parish life, Fr. Hettel saw ritual as a vital element for religious growth.

**Liturgy Planning**

Liturgy planning for the dance liturgy usually took place two or three weeks before the actual performance. Fr. Hettel and Ms. DeSola were both aware of the dance dimension already existing in the liturgy, at least in terms of movement. Ms. DeSola states:

> Actually, the whole liturgy is dance even if there are no actual dancers dancing it. It takes the awareness of a dancer to see the ebbs and flows.

Fr. Hettel reflects:

> Speaking of the Roman liturgy, dance is already a part of the ritual. I would start by placing importance on the vestiges of gesture and movement that are unreflectively still retained in the liturgy, e.g., the celebrant's gestures are non-verbal communication, signing with crosses, raising up bread and wine, bowing, genuflecting and dismissing with a blessing. The task of dance in the liturgy is to develop a knowledgeable transition from unreflective dance (or vestiges of it) already present to a more reflective, accepting attitude and action within a liturgical community. I see no opposition between 'dance liturgies' and 'regular (?) liturgies', except that dance can deepen our everyday understanding of worship.

This mutual base of understanding and approach to liturgical dance provided an ease of discussion and planning.
After the first liturgy, Ms. DeSola and Fr. Hettel decided to expand the planning session to include the music director and to employ one of the parish interns as a commentator. The planning sessions were to include all aspects of the ritual, not just the movement.

At the liturgy planning session, the participants examined the Scriptures of a particular Sunday, exploring various ways to communicate the theme. After establishing the main theme, they would brainstorm ways to develop the theme within the context of the liturgical season.

The various elements of celebration included the use of music and singing, liturgical arts, other thematic readings, approaches to the homily (sermon) and the use of liturgical dance. During the five planning session, various church seasons were celebrated, e.g., Lent, Holy Week and Easter. Fr. Hettel explains:

Normally, we met two to three weeks in advance of the monthly liturgy. Our process was to study the Scriptures of that liturgy together, reflect on them, then discuss forms to communicate themes derived from them. We would also discuss potential ways to further ritualize specific prayers of the liturgy or themes of the season (i.e., choreographing the use of candlelight and dance in various parts of the liturgy). I found these planning sessions very, very helpful to establish a unity of goal, theme, dance and mood for the specific liturgy.

The use of liturgical dance focused the planning meeting, but did not dominate. Often Ms. DeSola made suggestions that went beyond the dance dimension. There was real awareness on the planners' part of the useful-
ness of ritual structure to enhance prayer, mystery and participation. The existing ritual structures aided in coordinating and arranging the different elements.

Ms. DeSola states:

Timing, the sense of space, the awareness of the mystery are important. The leaders need to be aware of the depth of the mystery, because the ritual is providing a form for people to see with 'second sight' and to enter into a mind set, a soul set, or a spiritual set. By praying, they enter into, evolve and work out their ecoselves. The people want to participate in order to affirm their change...at the same time, the ritual has a function of providing a structure to allow these new perceptions to come through. Some structure is supportive of this function.

Repetition, a common element in ritual structure, was given special attention.

In a sense, it is an artistic problem - how to use an element of repetition which is important in a ritual as well as in art. It can be deadly if it is not used by an artist with a religious perception of ritual. It can be absolutely necessary to the ritual or absolutely deadening to it, depending on the awareness of the artistic use of repetition. But, it is not just repetition.

The dance and other art forms were not inserted into the structure, but were used with sensitive selection and according to sound liturgical principles. The artistic sense, joined with the ritual sense, aided the flow and texture.

Hopefully, what might look like an insertion is really a 'voice,' sounding a little different, but speaking in context.

In the process, Ms. DeSola mentioned dances in the company's repertoire that might augment the theme. She
described the dance according to its theme, movement qualities and the number of dancers required. She then indicated how she saw the dance fitting into the liturgical situation or how the dance had been used in a previous worship situation.

In general, a pattern emerged after a few sessions:

1. There was usually a procession dance for the opening of the liturgy. This would be festive, indicating to the congregation that this liturgy would be different.

2. One of the proclamations was danced.

3. There was some form of congregational involvement in gesture or movement.

4. There was always a meditation dance after Communion.

After Communion is a good time because there is no interruption. One can do a whole meditation dance (5 to 7 minutes). I have danced at almost every section of the liturgy. Recently I found dancing the common parts of the Mass (which are usually shorter and not that satisfying as a dancer) very satisfying when all put together. By the end of the liturgy the parts were nicely spaced out; giving a feeling of integration. One can dance almost any psalm because they are so full of imagery, sound and emotional impact.37

Liturgical dance does not have to be predictable. There can be enormous variety in the style and placement and the qualities expressed.

Concern for the Community

From the very beginning of the planning sessions, Ms. DeSola expressed concern for instructing the congre-
gation about sacred dance. After some discussion, she
decided to introduce the liturgical dances at each Mass
before the Opening Song. She wanted to help the congre-
gation prepare for the experience. Each time, she
indicated how movement was already a part of the ritual
structure.

One way of preparing the congregation for dance
is to clarify how greatly the church is already
involved in the dance through our very rituals.
Think of all the various movements of the priest
as he presides in a Mass, and all the movements
prescribed by the church during the year. The
priest bows, raises his hands in so many ways
to bless, lifts the bread plate and cup, prostrates
himself on Good Friday and at ordination. The
people respond by kneeling and bowing and standing.
There are processions, as on Palm Sunday.38

The church is massive and the distance of the congre-
gation from the altar raises the risk of making worship a
spectator activity. The planning group, therefore,
decided to include the congregation as much as possible.

I believe that there is in all congregations, no
matter how seemingly passive, an unexpressed, often
unperceived but real expectation and yearning to
be led into the Kingdom of Heaven — a desire to have
some of God's love and beauty seep through, and
crash through, our heaviness and dullness and wake
us to a deep and wonderful reality. I know I go
to liturgy to learn about and, hopefully, to dwell
in this special life, and I learn through my head,
my heart and my senses.39

In addition to the actual dances by the company,
Ms. DeSola wanted to introduce congregational movement
to help people feel a part of the celebration.

When a prayer during liturgy is offered with move-
ments of arms, hands and torsos, a new energy
seems to enter the sanctuary. The movements may
include simple hand gestures, lifting the arms
in praise, or lowering the torsos in deep bows. These movements are done reverently and as the spirit suggests. 40

The planning session came up with ideas to have those assembled hold hands during the Our Father as a sign of solidarity, to make simple bows at the Lord, Have Mercy, and to be involved in larger gestural movement for responses to the readings.

The congregation can participate in the dance-prayer experience as it is expressed by the movements of a solo dancer of fine quality, who can lift up the people's souls to God through beauty in the same way that a solo singer can. Then there is the participation of a small group of nondancers who are willing to learn beforehand a simple movement-prayer, such as the Our Father. And finally there is the general active involvement of all in a simple circle dance, or even just the joining of hands during the final song. 41

It was decided that Ms. DeSola would teach the gestural movements at the opening along with commenting on the ancient use of worship dance and the various ways movement would be employed at the particular Mass.

Company Rehearsals

At the rehearsal following the planning session, Ms. DeSola presented to the full company the liturgical theme for the Sunday service. She outlined the planning concepts and highlighted the dance ideas. Together, the company decided which members would dance the parts and planned the rehearsal schedule accordingly.
In preparing, there were two kinds of rehearsals: company rehearsals held two or three times a week in the undercroft studio of St. John the Divine Cathedral and spacing rehearsal in the sanctuary of Saint Paul the Apostle where the liturgical dance would happen.

The company rehearsal involved three types of movement making:

(1) reconstructing dances that were already choreographed and reworking them for the occasion;
(2) working in an improvisation situation, developing new movement for proclamation dance; and
(3) designing congregational movement and gesture.

Reconstructing Dances

At the start, Ms. DeSola selected dances that had been already choreographed and were part of the company's general repertoire. The rehearsals for these dances were rather straightforward. Because the dance was well-known and the choreography completed, it was a matter of some rehearsal with emphasis on the spacing rehearsal. Although some of these dances were recorded on videotape, the video playback machine was not used. The reconstruction of the choreography was based on memory of the movement, collaborative in approach. Those who had been with the company the longest helped the newer company members. In this phase there was much interaction and cooperation.
If a new member was learning the dance for the first time, the more experienced dancers instructed the dancer in terms of the steps, gestures, body placement and overall attitude. Generally, this was done without recorded music. Often the teacher demonstrated the step and had the new dancer follow. After the steps were learned, the dancers worked on the sequence as a whole. The teacher talked the new dancer through the entire dance. At times, physical corrections were made, if not done in the talk-through. Because these dances were usually short, it did not take long to learn an entire sequence.

The movement material of most dances was also flexible enough to accommodate the stylings of the new dancer's personality. Company members were encouraged to make the movement material their own. There were no expectations that the dancer would conform to some perfect mold.

In modern times, most people seem to have lost direct perception of the inner voice. Today there is more emphasis on technique based on imitation or copying the style of teachers (left lobe emphasis). Much of a dancer's life is spent doing repetitive exercises that train the body to perform actions with as little strain as possible. Most of these exercises are passed down to students from traditional vocabularies of movement. Rarely are students encouraged to add their own interpretations by tapping their own interior resources. The difficulty, or anomaly, is that training in technique is designed to ultimately free the dancer, for it is the groundwork upon which inspiration can manifest itself as the dancer matures. Unfortunately, the dancer is seldom guided through those maturing steps from technique to performance level of interpretation and, ultimately, to spiritual understanding and freedom.
We are not saying that technique is wrong, but the emphasis is misplaced when the goal of the dancer becomes glamorized, when the only objective is to dazzle and to prove one's worth as a performer.\textsuperscript{42}

Individual approach to movement making was most noticeable when the movements were intricate or complicated, such as a lift. The important element in the choreography was the quality not the manner of the movement. The dancers experimented with different approaches to the lift until it was learned and fit the flow of the entire piece. The expressive qualities and the movement's connectedness to the theme was more important than a particular step.

Training and disciplining the body so that it can do and say and express exactly, precisely what one intends. We have specific ideas about what we want to express. We do not run out wildly to express joy. We find a controlled way to express it.\textsuperscript{43}

Throughout the process, the more experienced dancers made suggestions and worked together in deciding placements and alternate moves. The choreography was rehearsed without the musical score. Sometimes the dancers counted out loud. The significant elements were:

(1) The attitude of the dancer, in terms of body, focus and "spirit;"
(2) The qualities of the movement, especially the in-unison and gestural parts;
(3) The spacing and relational qualities. (These were often changed during the spacing rehearsal.)
Dance serves to build a sense of community in congregations. Worshippers are elevated and drawn together through their common perception of the dance’s portrayal. To reveal the inner and subtle movements of God's expressions, the dancer should attempt to attain a disciplined transparency, to be a clear vehicle, so as to minimize distractions from the spiritual purpose. The dancer also needs spiritual discipline to perceive with clarity the word of God. A dancer is aided by rapport with the congregation and should be dancing with and for them, not to them. Together they can be lifted by the wings of the Spirit to experience more clearly the kingdom. When subsequently the congregation is led in communal dances the experience is one of rejuvenation and delight in shared interplay of movement in relation to God.44

Improvisation

Improvisation was the second form of preparing a liturgical dance, especially in making Scriptural-proclamation dance or Bible mime. While not a permanent part of the repertoire, the dance was made for a specific occasion, employing the technical skill of the dancers.

If we can use our training to express the Spirit, then we can improvise and work out a dance that is meaningful and uplifting. It is often deeply satisfying to me as a person even though I know it is not going to be a final dance or one on a dance program. I do not feel ashamed of it during the liturgy and really feel good doing it.45

Scriptural improvisation meant listening to the readings many times, developing characters or images from the reading and designing movement from the character images.

Company members are asked to sit in a circle quietly, closing their eyes. They are able to use their own way of centering and praying;
At first, this may involve focusing on one's breathing or silently uttering the name of Jesus. After about ten minutes of silence, a line from Scripture is read and perhaps repeated three or four times slowly, so that participants may absorb it. Each participant then begins to move from his or her stillness in response. There are no rules for what happens. Improvisation continues freely until the flow seems to stop naturally. Interaction between two or more dancers often occurs. Upon conclusion, the group members consciously recall the images and dance phrases which have come to them, writing them down so that they will be available for a later choreographic process.46

Through improvisation the dancer discovered the external movement qualities for deeper internal feelings.

Sacred dance is a movement response from the heart to the living God. Dancers often create their initial sacred dances at a time of intensity which turns their hearts and souls to God. Overflowing from this inner experience, movements become ways of expressing what is occurring internally. Often this formative experience is the foundation for later dances.47

From the core response, the dancer worked on refining the movement sequences until the dance was an integrative whole.

The work consists of refining and carefully integrating all the series of movements throughout the dance, and of polishing and practicing all the transitional steps so that the final dance is luminous, clear and retains a sense of spontaneity.48

At times, Scriptural improvisation was used with a reader. In this situation it was necessary for the reader to mark the script for the appropriate pauses. Pockets of silence were necessary to allow the movement sequence to develop. Thus, the dance carried the narrative.
Improvisation highlighted and intensified the reading, involved the congregation visually and emotionally, and allowed the dancers to bear witness to the message of the Scriptures.

Ms. DeSola called this improvisational approach "folk art." She made a distinction between those dances which are part of Omega's repertoire (fine art) and those used for one occasion (folk art). This distinction is a bit confusing because folk art usually implies the work of non-professionals and Omega's work is by trained professionals.

...We have done many dances that are not in the Omega repertory for specific things. They are not in the repertory because of the distinction we make in liturgical dance between folk and fine art. It is folk art for the occasion. But we don't keep it. We devise certain dances for an occasion. This is probably oversimplified. I really do not like working this way. For a while we had to; as we develop, we can be more critical and educate people in the art of liturgical dance.49

Folk art, in Omega parlance, is really improvisation, employing the technical skill and training of the dancer.

**Congregational Gesture**

Congregational gesture was the third type of liturgical dance movement created by the company. Ms. DeSola wanted the congregation to be involved. Each time Omega danced, she taught the congregation a gestural phrase. The purpose of this movement was to foster a sense of community prayer and unite the congregation.
As a dancer I know the special gifts that dance has to offer — gifts we all need for the fullness of life. They are gifts of rhythm with its exuberance and energy, of motion with its full spectrum of dynamics, ranging from softness and delicacy to piercing strength, and of moving shapes, shapes that can sweep through space awakening undying visions. All these comprise the unique language by which dance communicates. Perhaps dance's most important gift to us lies in its ability to unify us and make us whole by uniting our inward life with our outward expression. And this can be done when the simplest gesture is done meaningfully. What I have experienced is that the very atmosphere created by people dancing together in prayer is conducive to evoking in an easy and joyful way gifts each of us has — gifts that emerge when we are called to look freely and deeply into ourselves and then share our discoveries with others, focused on one another in God.

The usual approach of developing gestural movement was to sound the text repeatedly, responding spontaneously with the upper body and arms and fitting the movement gesture to the sense of the text. This allowed the literal and the spiritual sense to be expressed. Once devised, Ms. DeSola connected the various positions into a continuous flow.

The gestures were usually very simple. In teaching the sequence to the congregation, Ms. DeSola stressed the need to assimilate the movement into one's body. The movement was prayer expression, not performance.

For the worshiper seeking to understand gesture and prayer, it is important to understand these three points: 1. Doing a movement correctly is not as important as allowing your soul to fill the movement. 2. Getting the various positions right isn't the most important thing. How a person moves from one position to another,
how one fills out the path between, is the
greater part of the dance. When a person
jumps from one pose to another it is like
a singer's jumping, staccato, from one
salient note to the next, never sustaining
a phrase, never noticing the notes between
on the score. 3. How you look isn't
important; what's important is how you feel
(as if God were feeling your prayer, not
looking at your movements). When you practice
the following directions, notice words like
slowly, sustained, continuous, and allow your
own inner prayer to direct and mold your body.
Feel free to alter the movements so as to
develop a natural feeling with danced prayer.

Thus, the liturgy offered both dancer and non-dancer
ways to express their festive prayers in a total inte-
gration of body and soul.

Spacing Rehearsals

When the weekly rehearsals were completed, the company
re-spaced the dances in the larger church space. The wide
expanse of the sanctuary necessitated choreographic changes.
The dancers adapted the movements to the space, by con-
centrating on a single focus for the dance.

The movement of the dance was in relation to (a) the
altar, (b) the celebrant's chair in front of the high
altar, (c) the lectern on the left side, (d) the free-
standing altar in the middle of the sanctuary, (e) the
seven steps leading up to the free-standing altar from the
floor level, (f) the congregation in pews, on the floor
level, and (g) the other dancers in the space.
In addition to concern about the space, the dancers arranged various ways to enter and exit the space. At times, the dancers came out, took a position and froze until the dance began. At other times, the dancers would dance out from the side or in front of the steps, and gradually move into central position.

There is something about dancing in a church space, about the energy of the space, particularly when we dance at a high altar or in a cathedral. It is difficult to describe the feeling -- the air around, (the Karma maybe) because the space is so much more worshipful. Holy things happen there and dancing through that space, is very different from dancing on a stage or in any other environment.52

The spacing rehearsals affected the size of the movement. A dance might require a larger movement to fill up the space or a smaller movement for a feeling of intensity. Generally speaking, the large cavern-like quality of the space required most movement to be slightly exaggerated so that it appeared in scale when viewed from the congregation.

A dancer is not just involved with the body. The body is used not only to gain an awareness of the self but also to gain a greater awareness of the self in relation to space and to the Spirit which fills that space in an unseen but intuited way. The dancer relates to surrounding space with a variety of rhythms and dynamic changes. It is not a question of becoming aware of this or that "out there," as in sensing a table or other object in relation to the body. In the artistic process, one is interested in the creation of beauty and in the unveiling of what is real but not normally perceived.53
Because the church was not used in the evenings, there was rarely sufficient heat for the rehearsals. The marble floor intensified the coldness. At some spacing rehearsals, the dancers walked through the movement because the cold space increased the possibility of injury. Despite various requests, the church was never adequately heated for these rehearsals. The company would often finalize the dance on the Sunday afternoon, an hour before the Mass began when the church was warm.

**Church Performance**

The company arrived two hours early for a warm-up session. The company manager, Arthur Eaton, adjusted the additional lighting at this time. The portable lights augmented the existing church lighting. The lighting tended to focus more light on the area where the dancers performed. The lighting filled the space without giving a theatrical effect.

Ms. DeSola met with Fr. Hettel and the parish commentator before each Mass to check on all the cues and for any last minute information. The researcher set up his video equipment before the congregation arrived.

The performance aimed at uniting with the congregation by sharing a spiritual depth.

The corresponding spirituality for the dancer would be a total union of body, spirit, music, and space, forgetting the self in actualizing
the dance (this is easier said than done). When this is successful, those who view the dance also become at-one and also forget themselves. For they are equally absorbed in the aesthetic spirituality of the prayer-dance.54

The professional dancer can reach stages of at-oneness in the performance. Peter Madden, a member of Omega, described his experience as a dancer.

In a performance I go into a different reality. I feel the dancer creates a world in which it is possible to be at one with the cosmos, literally soar into new heights, creating a new reality in which, guided by the spirit, a transcendence occurs.55

Thus, the communication between dancer and congregation sparked the dancer and provided new energy and inspiration.

The Dances

The following is an outline of three separate services, which employed liturgical dance. The theme of the liturgy, the type of dance, its placement and function are noted.

(1) Sixth Sunday of the Year:
Theme: Jesus has power over sin. Christ breaks through disease and stretches forth his hand to the outcast leper and cures him.
Dances:
(a) Congregational gesture to the Lord, Have Mercy.

The congregation expressed its need for mercy by making a profound bow of the upper body during the singing of this prayer.
(b) Proclamation dance at the Gospel.

During the reading of the Gospel, two men re-enacted Jesus and the leper. This mime-dance was movement adapted from the Credo of The Gregorian Suite.

(c) Congregational gesture during the singing of the Our Father.

The congregation was asked to hold hands and to raise them above their heads at "For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory."

(d) Meditation dance after Communion.

Psalm 45, part of Omega's regular repertoire, expressed the joy and happiness of salvation. To the music of "The Trees" it is a dance of praising God, based on the rich and varied imagery of the Psalm.

(2) Second Sunday of Lent:

Theme: We are a transformed people because of Jesus Christ.

Dances:

(a) Proclamation Dance to the first Reading.

Two dancers interpreted the story of God's testing Abraham through the attempted slaughter of his son, Isaac. The reader was stationed in the pulpit in the center of the Church. His voice echoed over the congregations' head. The dance began at the steps of the altar and used the central area of the sanctuary. The movement was some-
times literal, based on the text and at others purely expressive of the feeling. The movement was sustained with little conflict in the action. This proclamation dance was designed for the occasion.

(b) Congregational Gesture with the Psalm Response.

At the conclusion of the Proclamation dance, the two dancers lead the congregation in a gesture for the Psalm refrain, "For with the Lord is mercy and fullness of redemption." The arms began opening wide, then raised above the head, while crossing. The upper body made a bow and then straightened out as the arms unfolded back into opening position.

(c) Meditation dance after Communion.

After Communion, three dancers did a structured improvisation on the effect of transfiguration. Moving to the abstract music of Olivier Messiaen, the three dancers, recalling the three disciples in the Gospel reading, discovered transformation in themselves. The movement was a contrast of bound and free with much sustained movement.

(3) Palm Sunday

Theme: Jesus enters Jerusalem as a king, but prepares for his passion and death.

Dances:

(a) Celebration Dance to set the tone.

The Opening dance prepared the way for the opening procession. Danced to music from Bach's St. Matthew's Passion, it was a visual rendering of the Palm Sunday
Gospel. Its purpose was to set an opening festive tone. This dance was re-worked from *The Passion According to Mary* by Greg Reynolds.

(b) Procession Dance to gather the ministers.

After the celebration dance, the organ began the opening song and some of the dancers ran from the sanctuary to greet the readers and celebrant by waving palm branches.

(c) Proclamation Dance for the reading of the Gospel.

Another excerpt from *The Passion*, "The Mourner's Dance" was used in the midst of the Passion Gospel reading. In this dance, the dancers re-enacted the feelings of the disciples and Mary as they watched Jesus hanging from the Cross. The music, taken from Vivaldi's *Sinfonia in B Minor*, accompanied the striking of the forehead with the fist in a rebound action.

(d) Meditation dance after Communion.

This dance, also excerpted from *The Passion*, depicted the interplay of Jesus and his mother, Mary, as he is dying on the cross. Through strong movement, Bach music and Passion theme, Mary fantasized her releasing Jesus and taking his place on the cross. Mary, understanding the pain and suffering, is replaced by Jesus, who assumes his place on the cross.
Evaluations

After each performance, the church staff and the Omega company separately critiqued the dance and the overall flow of the liturgy. The staff was positive towards the liturgical dance experiment from the start. With each performance, they became increasingly aware of how dance heightened the prayer dimension of worship.

Fr. Hettel reflects:

The contribution of the Company to the ritual-making of the liturgy itself was enormous. Personally, I have never prayed better nor enfleshed the experience of a liturgy so well as I reflect on the Dance Liturgies with Omega. Perhaps it is because, through this medium, a memory, a vivid recollection was implanted deeper within me. I remember not only the words of a reading or prayer, but also the feeling and the movement of the message which the dance communicated. But here I am speaking as an individual participant.56

The staff had to deal with some parishioners who were offended by the use of dance. Some felt dancing was inappropriate to the house of God, others felt that men should not dance, especially with each other. The staff considered these negative reactions and balanced them off with those who found liturgical dance prayerful and uplifting. Aware of the pastoral response, the church staff continued to support liturgical dance.

Fr. Hettel saw fear as a motivating factor for those ill-disposed to dance.

In this country I think that fear of dance has a great deal to do with our culture. Except for ethnic conclaves, dance probably has a bad rep, period! Because the church consists of and
appeals to the "everyday" person as well as the artistic or more open, we might see the fear of dance in church circles precisely because the everyday member might have a terrible notion of what dance is. If dance is associated only with mating, release, lust, ambition, anger, then it is very difficult for ritual dance in liturgy not to be burdened with the same associations, unfair as that is. Once we can establish a positive bridge over this cultural bias I think dance can breathe freely and enable many people to experience beauty, drama, joy, and mystery more deeply.57

The staff evaluations were rarely shared with the dance company although Fr. Hettel might refer to a comment or two in the next planning session he would have.

The company's review of the dance was usually very short and not critical. Considering the pioneering efforts of Ms. DeSola in the field of American liturgical dance, it would have been beneficial for her to participate in the staff discussions. It seemed that most of the people who were touched by the dance spoke directly with Ms. DeSola after the Mass. Those with negative feelings would generally see the pastor or priest during the week or write a letter of complaint.

In discussing this issue with Ms. DeSola, the issue that surfaced was the relationship of body to soul and the need to trust the body more in worship.

We need to integrate the body and the spirit. And maybe there is some Puritan background towards sexuality. Since the body represents sexuality, there is a lot of fear there. Our dance is so very controlled. Any fear people may have of some wild dance is illogical because there are very few people in our culture who dance wildly. People do not see that on television. They barely see ecstatic dance
except in the black churches. Ecstatic dance
is not likely to come into the mainstream
of the church. Not that it might not be
healthy now and then!58

Ms. DeSola sees the positive renewal aspects of dance
and perceives the changes will take time.

After the five-month experiment, Fr. Hettel felt that
the use of liturgical dance was an effective part of the
worship, but a limited contribution to the overall
worship life of the community. Despite the efforts made
at education, he felt the community in the end did not
respond to the liturgical renewal effort and that
probably the community was insufficiently prepared for
the use of dance, and for a change in the liturgical
spirit.

The limited contribution comes down to this:
one, there was no pre-education of the 5:15 p.m.
community; they were unprepared. Two, the
choice of the 5:15 Sunday evening Liturgy could
not have been a worse choice. Generally, that
was the "last Mass on Sunday" congregation. I
think the greatest limitation was the lack of
creating understanding and interest among the
people coming to that liturgy. I have no doubts
now that a better course would have been to
form a specific group of worshippers who wanted to
worship in this way first, then broaden out from
there. At one point, Carla DeSola mentioned
that is normally the way she prefers it. However,
the original hope was that such persons would
eventually make up the congregation at 5:15 p.m.
liturgy. In the future, one would probably do
better starting out fitting a time to a
deliberate group, rather than vice-versa.59

This kind of information proved helpful to the
parish staff in planning future liturgical events.
Although the dance was well received, it has not been a regular part of the parish worship beyond this experimental phase. Other art forms began to consume the staff's time and the parish put more emphasis on developing a liturgically-competent parish choir.

Ritual Dimensions

In summary, a study of the ritual making process highlighted the following elements:

(1) Liturgical dance, part of a sacred dance tradition, was fitted into a previously constructed ritual structure, e.g., the Eucharistic Meal or Liturgy of the Hours.

(2) The function, use and placement of dance was dependent on the ritual structure.

(3) Liturgical dance involved the spirituality of the dancer in uplifting the congregation and communicating with the transcendent.

(4) Liturgical dance involved the use of gestural movement with emphasis on upper body movement and slow, sustained movement.

(5) Liturgical dance involved the congregation in prayer. It was not performance or entertainment.

(6) There were five types of liturgical dance which were used regularly in the service of worship.
(7) The liturgical dance choreographer worked closely with the church staff in planning the entire liturgical flow, not just the dance.

(8) Liturgical dance followed the primary aesthetic principles of contemporary dance in terms of performance values.

(9) The placement of the dance in the sanctuary was a significant element in the rehearsal stage.

(10) Liturgical dance was just beginning to be developed and accepted within the church community, despite its ancient origins.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR


4 Interview with Carla DeSola and Judith Graves. See Appendix J for full text.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Company information has been compiled with the aid of program notes, company publicity packets and informal interviews.

8 Judith Lynne Hanna, To Dance is Human (Austin, Texas: University of Texas, 1979) pps. 106-110.


10 Highwater, op. cit., pps. 17-41.

11 Carla DeSola, The Spirit Moves, p. 147.

12 The word "liturgy" comes from the Greek and means "work of the people." Current usage generally equates liturgy with Mass or Eucharist. According to Roman Catholic Church usage, liturgy refers to the various ways the Church prays or celebrates. This would include not only the Mass, but the seven sacraments, the Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Office) and other rituals and prayers.

13 DeSola, op. cit., p. 147.

14 Ibid., p. 147.

15 Ibid. p. 3.

16 Ibid. p. 4.
17 Van der Leeuw, op. cit., p. 39.
18 DeSola, op. cit., pps. 40-41.
19 Ibid., p. 95.
20 Ibid., pps. 91-92.
21 Ibid., p. 2.
22 Ibid., pps. 30-31.
26 DeSola, The Spirit Moves, pps. 120-21.
27 DeSola Interview.
29 Parish Bulletin, St. Paul the Apostle Parish, New York City, January 21, 1979
30 Interview with Rev. Mark J. Hettel, C.S.P.
31 DeSola Interview.
32 Hettel Interview.
33 Ibid.
34 DeSola Interview.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
38 DeSola, The Spirit Moves, p. 4.
39 Ibid., p. 95.
40 DeSola and Eaton, p. 77.

41 DeSola, The Spirit Moves, pps. 5-6.

42 DeSola and Eaton, p. 75.

43 DeSola Interview.

44 DeSola, The Spirit Moves, p. 147.

45 DeSola Interview.

46 DeSola and Eaton, p. 70.


48 Ibid.

49 DeSola Interview.

50 DeSola, The Spirit Moves, p. 5.

51 Ibid., p. 21.

52 Judith Graves, DeSola Interview.

53 DeSola and Eaton, p. 72.

54 Ibid., p. 73.

55 Ibid., p. 71.

56 Hettel Interview.

57 Ibid.

58 DeSola Interview.

59 Hettel Interview.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Ritual making is a complex activity. It allows men and women to keep in tune with the natural world, to explore the hidden meanings of life and to transform the everyday into a festive celebration. This paper began the search for the connections and vibrations between art and religion, between performance and worship, between the sacred and the profane. It explored creativity and commitment by examining the phenomenon and process of ritual making from two points of view: (1) ritual performance (ritual as art) as expressed in the work of Nina Wiener and Dancers and (2) performance ritual (ritual in a religious community) as presented by the Omega Liturgical Dance Company under the direction of Carla DeSola.

Emphasizing performance-oriented ritual, the study required the development and testing new research methods. In the past, textual and historical analysis has not sufficiently dealt with the full scope of ritual. This study, the first of its kind, has used qualitative and empirical methods that describe and take in the full reality of ritual. These methods included participant
observation and interviewing from the social sciences, the phenomenological approach of philosophy, movement analysis from dance research and the use of videotape.

Dance and movement became one of the principal approaches to ritual making. The researcher became aware through his studies and personal experience that dance, gesture and movement are not just a part of the ritual experience, but often are the language of the ritual, the symbolic and actual medium of communication.

With dance at the center, three techniques were employed for gathering data: (1) taking field notes, recording day by day the entire process; (2) videotaping phases of the process and the performance; and (3) interviewing those involved.

Through a qualitative approach, the researcher provided an explicit rendering of the structure, order and patterns found within the two groups. This involved a description of the characteristics and the consequences of ritual making, clearly unfolding the activities, meanings, relationships and setting.

Comparing and contrasting the two kinds of ritual making was a complex and intricate task. The analytic method was adapted from the work of Victor Turner. From the observations, the researcher noted: (1) the implicit and explicit elements of the ritual making process and the reasons why the ritual was performed;
The observational study of the ritual process, an analysis of the ritual aspects of the work and a description of the performances provided significant information.

The Ritual Process

The process of making ritual performance by Nina Wiener and Dancers involved designing core movement sequences for the upper body based on material from the life stories of the dancers, translating and manipulating this movement in a variety of ways and shaping the translation into a unified whole. The process was collaborative—more concerned with process than product. The dance structure evolved from the process, highlighting the developmental nature of the work. The process of making liturgical dance by the Omega Liturgical Dance Company involved planning the worship and use of dance by
the church staff and choreographer; reworking dances according to the liturgical needs and space and by noting the relationships between dancers and altar space, lectern, celebrant and congregation. The planning was collaborative; the overall ritual structure was pre-determined by church tradition and congregational custom.

Ritual Aspects

The rehearsals and performances of Nina Wiener and Dancers revealed certain ritual dimensions: (a) the transformation of experience into movement; (b) the communal nature of the dance company; (c) the use of movement achieved through using the core sequences; (d) a feeling of calmness, repetition and peace within the movement; (e) a sense of mystery realized through the density of the movement; and (f) a sense of contemplation achieved by attention to details, the paths in space and introspective focus.

For the Omega Liturgical Dance Company, the following ritual aspects were noted: (a) the reliance on the liturgical structure for the planning of the ritual; (b) the development of liturgical dance types, based on liturgical function; (c) the communal nature of dance in drawing the assembly together; (d) the inspirational quality of uplifting the spirit to God; (e) the evangelical thrust of witnessing and (f) the prophetic nature of dance
to challenge the congregation to live according to the gospel.

Performance Aspects

The following performance aspects were noted during The Condor Material (Parts One and Two) at the Brooklyn Academy of Music: (a) silence was used throughout, giving a meditative sense to the theatre setting; (b) in performance, different sections involved solo and group dances; (c) the dance was in two sections, twenty-five minutes each, with an intermission; (d) the costumes were non-theatrical, resembling rehearsal clothes in matching, muted colors; (e) when not performing, the dancers were out of the sightlines of the audience.

For the Omega Liturgical Dance Company, the following performance aspects were noted at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle: (a) there was different music (live and recorded, with and without lyrics) for each dance; (b) as worship the dances were part of a larger ritual; (c) the dances were short, about seven minutes, maximum length; (d) there were different costumes for each dance; and (e) the dancers were a part of the praying congregation, present to the community throughout the ritual.
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<td></td>
<td>choreographer creates core elements, company translates them into new movement.</td>
<td>choreographer/company create choreography, planning committee determines use of liturgical dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>choreographer shapes final movement based on personal aesthetics.</td>
<td>choreographer shapes the movement according to the liturgical space requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>the process determines the structure.</td>
<td>the liturgical structure is already set.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II. RITUAL ASPECTS</th>
<th>NINA WIENER AND DANCERS</th>
<th>OMEGA LITURGICAL DANCE COMPANY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attention to detail in the quality of the movement.</td>
<td>letting the movement speak as prayer is primary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arm gesture and upper body moved is used throughout</td>
<td>congregational gesture is upper body and arms throughout; dancers' movement can carry range of qualities.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>attention to the spacing of the dancer and the different relationships (to each other, to the front)</td>
<td>spacing is in relation to the altar, the lectern, the celebrant and the congregation.</td>
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**FIGURE 10: COMPARISON OF NINA WIENER AND DANCERS AND THE OMEGA LITURGICAL DANCE COMPANY**
II. RITUAL ASPECTS, CONT'D.

choreographic base of core sequences gives a feeling of repetition.
the complexity of the movement involves the audience in a sense of mystery.

III. PERFORMANCE ASPECTS

theatre
performance-oriented
the movement qualities created a meditative dance.
the dance was performed in silence.
the silence intensified the transcendent feeling.
the audience was joined to the dancers by a communal sense of time or rhythm.

repetition is contained in the very structure of the ritual.
the dancer's prayerful movements are joined with the congregations's prayer.

church
prayer-oriented
each dance had its own purpose, depending on the liturgical function.
the dances were performed to varied kinds of music.
the church architecture created the transcendent feeling.
the congregation was joined together by the total ritual act.
III. PERFORMANCE ASPECTS, CONT'D.

the dance was self-contained, complete in itself.

the audience spoke of being renewed through the sense of joining in the dancers' performance.

the entire dance was almost one hour with an intermission.

the dance was part of a larger ritual.

the congregation and staff spoke of being uplifted and joined to God through the dance.

the dances themselves were short, although the entire ritual was about one hour.

FIGURE 10 (Continued)
Conclusions

(1) The study delineated the choreographic process of a contemporary dance company through description and ritual analysis.

(2) The study examined how a parish develops its worship, plans special occasion liturgies and interacts with a liturgical dance company.

(3) The study explored the operations of a liturgical dance company. Through the study, the researcher developed a new typology for liturgical dance based on a functional analysis of the worship needs.

(4) Through study, the researcher developed a complete classification of ritual activity to include performance art.

(5) The researcher developed a typology of liturgical dance by analyzing the worship structure and function of the ritual.

(6) The researcher presented the common ritual elements of both kinds of ritual. These shared elements require additional research and analysis.

(7) Both worked in a community atmosphere.

(8) Both involved arm gesture and upper body movement as primary movement qualities.

(9) Both worked through a set structure.

(10) Both sought to involve the congregation/audience in a meditative time frame.
RESEARCH LIMITATIONS & SOLUTIONS

(1) Gaining entry and maintaining good relationships with the hosts are critical factors for the participant observer. It took two years of preparation for the researcher to develop the necessary contacts, language and experience to enter the world of contemporary dance. Observing artists at work was a delicate task and required patience and time. Gaining the confidence and trust of the hosts was necessary for the method.

The writer was concerned about his identity as a priest. This presented no real problems to the Omega Company, since they work frequently with church people. Ms. Wiener, however, is Jewish and had little or no contact with priests. Although the researcher knew his ministry was not involved in the study, he had experienced sufficient prejudice to warrant concern.

This issue was discussed with Mr. Buckley, a member of the company, who advised saying nothing unless the issue was raised.

The researcher followed this advice, which proved helpful. It was not until a month into the observation that Ms. Wiener discovered the identity of the researcher by calling the rectory where the researcher was living. Later in discussing the issue, Ms. Wiener said she was glad to have become acquainted with the writer first as a person and then as a priest. She said that she would
probably have refused entry and that the offer of videotape would not have balanced off the fear of the unknown.

Despite the preliminary precautions in gaining access to the field setting, the researcher must be diligent and cautious in all areas of personal interaction.

(2) Interviewing with a tape recorder provided more accurate field notes than reconstructing conversations from memory. Significant turns of phrases, movement descriptions and intricate distinctions can be easily lost without accurate recording. The researcher tried both methods and recommends tape recording as the preferred method.

If a researcher is inexperienced as an interviewer it is best to plan two interviews over a period of time. This allows for reflection and review of the previous interview to develop new lines of questioning or additional clarification. The researcher found multiple interviews the most rewarding.

In interviewing for the dissertation, the researcher gave his informants questions to consider beforehand. This focused the interview for both sides. The researcher recommends dealing with only one informant at a time. It makes transcription easier and gives freer rein to responding.
(3) When using videotape as an analytic tool for dance, movement or ritual, record as much as possible. Carefully catalogue and store all tapes until the study is written. The researcher conserved tape by recording over analyzed data. This was a mistake. Even though videotape is costly, older tapes might be needed for comparison studies. On two occasions, the researcher realized afterwards how an erased tape might have been useful in another way.

(4) Negotiations to gain field entry may limit the scope of the study in unplanned ways.

Although he was providing a videotape service for the choreographers the researcher sometimes felt limited in what he could shoot. Not desiring to offend or interfere, he felt constrained to shoot only what the choreographer asked. Although part of the agreement, the researcher realized the limitations of not being able to shoot everything.

(5) Physical surroundings greatly influence the quality and process of videotaping.

Because some of the rehearsal spaces were small, it was important to have a wide angle lens available. This lens included more of the space at shorter camera-to-subject distance. The camera itself was situated in a stationary position because of lighting and room size. Although a zoom lens was available it was rarely used because both choreographers preferred to see the full
dance in space and not in closeups. Rarely did the researcher re-adjust the lens once the focus was set.

Additional lighting was never required in the various locations for the tapings. There was enough natural and/or existing artificial illumination to get a good recording.

(6) **Movement observation is a difficult and painstaking process, usually requiring more time than budgeted.**

Professionally trained movement observers require hours of time with repeated viewings to notate a minute of dance movement. In using videotape with movement observation methods, the researcher suggests shooting the same sequence from as many different angles as possible to capture the entire movement.

It is also helpful to transfer the video image to a VTR, Beta or three quarter inch format. Even with the loss of some clarity in the reproduction, the stop action and slow motion features of these systems provide more versatility than the stop/start of the half-track format. The slow motion feature is helpful in notating intricate or complex movement which may otherwise go by too quickly when played at regular speed. Unfortunately, the researcher made these discoveries after his work was completed.

The researcher was assisted by two trained Labanotaters, one for the live rehearsal and one for videotape analysis. Both worked on Ms. Wiener's dance sequences of "Cooper-Hewitt." Two days of live observation in the
rehearsal did not produce much workable data. The rehearsals were too scattered and there was not enough repetition. In the beginning, the researcher was naive about the notation process, and found the field notes sufficient for his purposes.

The videotape analysis was more successful, although tedious. Realizing that this type of observation is a project in itself, the researcher limited the observation study to eight hours. In that period, the notater and researcher were able to study and analyze about one minute of "Cooper-Hewitt."

As dance research develops, movement studies may provide alternative methods for the non-professional observer.

(7) Dual observation sites can be managed simultaneously.

The researcher did not experience many difficulties with the dual site. After a month of dance observation, the process became less exciting and movements of any kind seemed tedious to watch. Fortunately, there was enough variety in style and rehearsal procedure to allow him to be intrigued and fascinated by the differences. The researcher averaged six to nine hours a week with Omega and fifteen to twenty hours with the Wiener company.
THE FINDINGS

The research findings of this study may be grouped into three areas: (1) a descriptive analysis of the process of ritual making as presented in Chapters Three and Four of this paper; (2) the presentation of ritual typology; and (3) the development of liturgical dance types.

The Ritual Making Process

Because the aim of this study was descriptive and qualitative, it follows that the delineation of the processes constitutes a finding. The observations provide new information about the ritual and choreographic process, exploring the complex organization of making movement, the inner dynamics within the groups, and the ritual elements of performance.

Performance ritual and religious rituals share similar elements in terms of ritual making. Both rituals celebrate human expression, use a full array of verbal and non-verbal symbols, transform time and space, involve memory, repetition and patterning, adhere to aesthetic principles of composition and involve an altered state of consciousness.
The comparisons suggest similarities in the creative process, the attention to detail, the use of upper body and arm gesture and a contemplative attitude achieved through the dance. The differences are in the setting, the overall structure and intention of the group in performing the dance. Both observation studies are the beginning stages of developing "ethnologies" or case studies in the performing arts. Hopefully, the processes of data gathering and analysis will aid future researchers.

Types of Ritual Activity

After observing, recording and analyzing the process of performance art, the researcher found most ritual listings inadequate. Most studies focused on a single type and rarely developed a full typology. In a recent article in Worship magazine, Ronald Grimes skillfully analyzes the modes of ritual necessity. While mentioning performance as an aspect of ritual, he does not consider performance art or dance as a part of his modality.

Jamake Highwater broke new ground in his book, Dance: Rituals of Experience, by examining the relationship of tribal ritual to modern dance. Even though
he did not develop a full typology, Highwater included
the contemporary arts in the realm of ritual. With
this observation study, the researcher can validate
Highwater's claim that ritual significantly influences
contemporary dance and suggest his own typology.

The following classification system is based on
the person or group performing the ritual:

Ritualization - the ritual process inherent in
each human.

a. Personal rituals - private behavior modes.
b. Interpersonal rituals - patterns of social
interaction.
c. Tribal rituals - homogeneous group celebrations.
d. Ceremonial rituals - heterogeneous large group
interaction.
e. Ritual performance - ritual as art.
f. Liturgical rituals - rituals of a faith commu-
nity.

The writer will analyze each of these types and
suggest religious research questions.

**Ritualization**

The researcher suggests regularizing the termino-
logy of ritual studies and broadening the concept of
ritualization to include both genetic and cultural
understandings.

Ethologists use the term ritual to refer to an evolutionary process in the development of human behavior. Ritualizing is not random selection, but rather a highly organized complex of formalized behaviors, a specific style of being.

Ritualization, developed on the animal level, is the basis for ritual behavior. It involves repeated patterning of gesture and posture. "Ritualization is how we style our genetic heritage."\(^3\)

Biologists and anthropologists use a variety of ways to express this behavior. Biological studies of ritualization focus on "signal acts," often called "displays," which are stereotypical forms of interaction. Ethologists have sometimes termed these activities "ceremonies" or "rituals" and the usage of all four terms overlap.\(^4\)

The ambivalence of terminology spills over in other areas. Biologists use the term "ritualization" to refer to signaling behavior of a genetic type. Anthropologists, especially those traditionally trained, study ritual behavior as the product of non-genetic, i.e., cultural factors.\(^5\)
Private/Personal Rituals

This style of ritualizing involves behavior patterning or a routine approach to performing a task. As a way of coping with the everyday, this type is an automatic response to situational coping. Examples of this type include the way people brush their teeth, set out their clothes, pray when alone. This type indicates the basic human orientation to ritual activity.

A comparative study of personal prayer rituals and large group religious rituals might uncover new prayer gestures.

Interpersonal Rituals

Interpersonal rituals have been developed and studied by Ray Birdwhistle and Erving Goffmann. These rituals explain how an individual manages to control face to face interaction by gesture and bodily expression. The ritual behavior can be calculated in advance to achieve desired results. Some call these rituals "decorum" or "interaction rituals."  

An analytic study of interactive church behavior might suggest ways of introducing change to a con-gregation.
Tribal Rituals

Tribal rituals have been placed in a separate category because of the current research among liturgists in studying the culture and developing indigenization, whereby Christian worship speaks the full language of a group - verbally, non-verbally and culturally. The researcher recognizes the homogeneity of some tribes and incredible diversity in others. The separation of tribal reality from contemporary life is intended to highlight the current research in this area.

Ongoing research may hopefully produce principles of indigenization which would be applicable to the liturgical development of different cultures.

Ceremonial Rituals

Ceremonial rituals involve large group interactions including ethnic, civic, neighborhood, political and academic rituals. These rituals usually have an expected structure - for example, the tossing of a coin to begin a football game; the slogans and bumper stickers to endorse a political candidate; and the singing of the Alma Mater to conclude a graduation. Ceremonial rituals provide for the large group what interpersonal rituals do for the individual.
Observation studies of different ceremonial rituals might reveal a ritual constant that focuses the entire event.

Ritual Performance

This type of ritual is new. Because it is associated with the performing arts, it is often not included in ritual studies. As contemporary performance artists continue to experiment with the blend of dance, theatre and real life with a variety of sensory media, ritual elements and structures often emerge as significant factors.

Contemporary research might explore the ritual elements of performance art to discover whether art ritual can satisfy the human need for ritual.

Liturgical Rituals

Liturgical rituals are the rituals of a community who are bound together by a shared faith or belief system. These rituals have usually been handed down from generation to generation. The expression of these rituals may change with the culture, but the underlying truth celebrated remains unchanged.
Future studies might include a kinesthetic analysis of the gestures of the Mass or the congregational use of "sacred space."

Developing Liturgical Dance Types

To describe the liturgical planning process, the researcher developed a typology of liturgical dance according to its placement, function and source material within the service. Up to now, most liturgical dance has been described according to style (e.g. meditative), text (scriptural) or design (circle).

The development of these types should provide liturgists, musicians and planners with a common language, rooted in the liturgical tradition.

The researcher suggests that liturgical dance serves the worship according to four modes, which resonate with the models of the Church developed by Avery Dulles.  

(a) communal - drawing the community into the mysteries;  
(b) prophetic - revealing new implications of the gospel;  
(c) evangelical - witnessing to the beauty of God;  
(d) inspirational - eliciting a faith response from the community.
DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

For years the word "ritual" was a dirty word. It carried with it the idea of straight-jacket rubricism, mindless conformity and the smells and bells of an ancient church. Ritual was perceived as a shell without content. Today ritual is being reborn as a powerful agent of societal and religious reform.

The questions that concern ritual makers focus on the meaning, structure and form for twentieth-century celebrations. Respecting the traditions and liturgical cycles, church ritual makers are needed to transform ritual worship into the activity of a living community by involving the arts community.

The following recommendations point to new directions for research studies and exploring art, ritual and celebration.

(1) Ritual and the Imagination: What roles do image and imagination play in ritual making? Does ritual require images? How does the imagination effect ritual? What images that are a part of everyday culture could be used effectively in ritual? Has the church lost its regard for the imagination?

(2) Ritual and Symbols: How are symbols made? How long can they last? How does a technological or techni-cultural society value symbols? Does advertising affect
symbol making? How does one gauge the effectiveness of a
symbol? Can symbol open the imagination? Is society today
symbolically blind? Who are the symbol makers of today?
What is their responsibility to the future of society?

(3) Ritual, Play and Celebration: Can workaholics
learn to play? Does the stress factors of today's world
indicate a loss of celebration and a need for more play?
Are we stuck in an Appollonian structure of order and
reason? How can we re-discover the passion of Dyonysiac
revelry? Who can free us from our typewriters, word
processors, calculators and computers?

(4) Ritual and Performance Art: Will art continue
to hang on museum walls? How far can performance art go
in creating new rituals and unifying people? Will ritual
theatre be a liberating force in the art world? Will
post-modern dance survive? Will contemporary art lose
its alienating edge by lifting the Spirit? Can artists and
religious groups begin to work together? How will the
religion - art dialogue continue? Will religion re-value
the gifts of artists and begin supporting the arts? How
can artists benefit?

(5) Ritual and Festival: Should we renew our sense
of ecology? What is the role of festivity and fantasy in
everyday life? How do rituals employ the fantastic? Can
we be festive in a time of national crisis, war or
economic strife? Will city planners consider a Director
of Ritual for the cities of the future? Will the plans
of Paoli Soleri and the Arcosanti project revitalize the spirit of the festival?

(6) **Ritual and Liberation**: How can ritual set us free? What new forms can we play with: the ecstatic; the holy; the everyday; What values can ritual unearth to let dance and play?

The interchange of the arts and religion is necessary for the future or ritual. Religious rituals depend on the vision of the artist to discover new forms and express them in new and vibrant ways. The study has demonstrated that there are strong connections between art ritual and religious ritual.

Artists are needed to improve the quality of the expression and the environment of the ritual: visual artists and architects for creating and adorning the space; dancers/choreographers for gesture and movement; and the poet for the language of the ritual.

As the new-old identity of liturgical dance is being recovered so too the old-new relationship of the arts to religion can be fostered by generating new ritual expressions and artistic forms.
NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE


3 Grimes, op. cit., p. 126.


5 Ibid., p. 54.


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RELEASE FORM FOR RESEARCH STUDY OF THOMAS A. KANE

I give my permission for THOMAS A. KANE to study _______________. The study will involve observation of making the dance, the use of photography and videotaping, and the interviewing of the company. The study will be conducted January through May 1979. The study is in conjunction with a dissertation on the nature of ritual-making and the ritual process through the Graduate School at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. Members of the company may be mentioned in the dissertation.

Signed:
Dear Carla:

It was good to be with you again in Pittsburgh. My research and work are coming along and I am getting some focus on what I am doing.

I have a few points to discuss with you:

Fr. Frank DeSiano, the pastor at St. Paul’s, 59th and 9th Avenue is interested in some arrangement with you for liturgical dance. He will be in contact soon. I will give him your address.

My research will begin happening some time in January; I will focus on the process of ritual-making in terms of dance, liturgical dance, and liturgy-planning. I begin working with Nina Wiener, a former member of Twyla Tharp’s group in January. She is open to my research and is interested in the video-tape possibilities.

I would like very much to study you and your group in the overlapping time period, some time between February and May. As I develop my research plans, I will keep in touch. I am basically asking to be allowed to be present at rehearsals as you make or re-make new/old material; and if you wish, I can help with providing video equipment and make that service available to you and the group.

It would be good if the St. Paul's opportunity could go. I could combine your studio/rehearsal work with actual Church planning/performance.

I will be in New York on October 29, a Sunday. Can we meet that day?

My work is progressing quicker than I thought and I am trying to organize these aspects in a short time. I think if we meet and talk, things will seem a little clearer and not so jumbled. I have my comps in 4 weeks and anxiety is already setting in.

I have also heard about a religious group which is beginning to fund liturgical dance. I am trying to get more info – it might be beneficial to your company’s growth.

I hope you are doing well and that we can meet on October 29.
Dear Frank:

This is a short letter because I am trying to prepare for comps, but wanted to write you. I have written to Carla DeSola, and enclosed her address.

I have suggested to Carla that there may be liturgical dance/planning opportunities at St. Paul's and told her you would be in contact.

I hope to do research with Carla on the nature of the planning process and can use the St. Paul's Liturgy as part of my research. Right now I am in the process of clarifying these possibilities, but it looks good. Would you or the staff have any problems with this? I can spell out later what this means. Basically, I am looking at the process ritual-making takes in a variety of situations.

If we can make the necessary arrangements, it might also be a way for me to be involved in your ministry. I do not intend to present myself as a "miracle man" or to come off as the person with the answers. I am more interested in how you and the staff are doing liturgy and planning. I will certainly help in ways you and the staff might find serviceable but I want you to know I will try to be aware of your needs and of the ways you are developing your liturgical ministry.

Sensitivity is involved, because of the nature of the research and the need for me to be "an objective researcher." Know that I am interested, that many details will have to be worked out, but I feel it is a good beginning.

I appreciate your hospitality and if there is a need, we can work out the research and living arrangements over the next three months.

Hope this is somewhat clear. My research is very much in process right now, and each day brings clearer and sharper focus.
November 17, 1978

Dear Nina:

Greetings to you and Happy Thanksgiving!

I have just completed my general comprehensive exams and am preparing my research grant. Following University procedure, I must get the permission of the people I study. Anyone who studies a human subject must get the clearance and permission.

I am very excited about my study and I think things will go well. I have already requested the video system which I will be getting soon. I would appreciate it if you would have your company sign this release form and send it back to me. I cannot proceed with my research until this is taken care of.

I would like to meet with you in December when I am in New York to check your schedule and to chat. I would also like to explain my study to you, at least in general terms. I cannot tell you how happy I am about your openness and willingness to this project. I think it will be of great help to myself as a researcher and I also think you will gain some real benefits.

Best wishes to you and your company.
November 17, 1978

Dear Carla:

Greetings to you and Happy Thanksgiving.

I have just completed my general examinations and am preparing my research grant. Following University procedure I must obtain the permission of the people I study.

Anyone who studies a human subject must get the clearance and permission.

I am very excited about this study and about working with you. I have already requested the video system which I will be getting soon. I would appreciate it if you would sign this form and anyone else in your company dancing at St. Paul's and send this form back to me. I cannot proceed with my research until this is completed.

I hope I can meet with you in December before Christmas. During the study I will be staying at St. Paul's, 59th Street, NYC.

Best wishes to you and your company.
APPENDIX B

DANCE OBSERVATION OF MODERN TECHNIQUE CLASSES
Modern Technique: Beginning Class

This is beginning dance class. Some dancers have had some training, but for most it is the beginning of their dance training. The class begins with some talking; most dancers are on the floor, warming up, stretching; some have been there for 15 minutes; others come just in time for class. When the instructor arrives, there is roll call.

The first exercise is for breathing and general exercise. The instructor gives a complete description of the movement, describing it fully. She discusses the body feelings. She counts out loud and checks each student after two run-throughs. She uses verbal correction for some body parts, e.g., "you need a loose shoulder."

After basic warm-ups, she tells the class there will be no floor work today because of colds. She teaches a somewhat familiar phrase and does it in three different positions. She talks about energy, where it goes and what energy does.

She gives positive reinforcement of what is correct in addition to adjusting student's body form. Correction is done in these sections by some talk or description, but more often she molds the student's body, touching them and correcting their adjustments.

One student asks about the meaning of a curved back. She talks about the curved back, shows through demonstration with another student what a curved back looks like, and talks about how it feels. Throughout the class, the verbal descriptions tend always to include how it feels. Teacher will also use a student for demonstration purposes or show the movement or flow herself.

The next section the teacher says that the exercises are for rhythmic breathing and weight transference. She wants the students to understand why they are doing what they are doing. Throughout the entire section, she is very much interested in checking out each student and gives appropriate directions...She also tries to connect what these exercises do in terms of the dance itself.

Throughout each section, the teacher counts aloud and gives specific instructions to certain students who are not quite doing it properly.

About one hour into the class, the teacher talks about the "new" material for the week that the class will be working on. In describing the material she uses energy, body and weight descriptions. She has the class do it; does individual attention; adjusts torsos. Again, words and touch are the means of communicating.
My suspicion is that the teacher is trying to teach the students to be critical of their own body posture, to teach them to use the mirror, and to correlate his verbal cues with what they are doing.

The only variation is when the group does running and walking across the entire room. For the sake of looking and doing, he breaks the group into two sections. Eventually three people move across the floor. The students at times may indicate to another student who is dancing just what they did right or wrong. There seems to be a helpful and caring atmosphere in the class. The group movement across the floor is difficult to watch in the mirror. I think the student's comments are important for their success at working on the new material.

The class seems to be rather predictable in the teacher's organization of material and teaching style. The rest of the material involved: turning, jumping, running, hopping, turning and walking.

The finish is a type of relaxation exercise. The class ends in applause.
Modern Technique: Intermediate

Before class begins, the atmosphere is animated, lively; there is lots of chatting before class. The instructor has been in the studio for a while warming up and he is chatting with the drum player. Suddenly class begins. It begins with floor exercises to the drum beat. The instructor also does the first set of movements on the floor with the class. He does the set and then speaks the directions.

The second set of floor exercises is still on the floor. This time the instructor walks around the class, talking through the exercise. He talks about body feelings and does a few touch corrections. This is the only time the instructor actually touches or makes body corrections himself.

The students all face a large set of mirrors. As the teacher describes the next set of movements, he watches the groups and the group watches itself in the mirror. He continues walking around the group.

The teacher then runs through the next phrase, slowing and describing the movement. Students question a certain section. The teacher again describes the body feeling, shows what it should look like. The drum continues to beat out the rhythm. The teacher continues to pay close attention to the students, calling out corrections. The student responds by looking in the mirror and making the visual correction.

The teacher reviews the next phrase. A volunteer student goes through the movement with the teacher, showing the entire class. The instructor talks about the sensations of doing the movement.

Next, the teacher reviews the material. There is much repetition. The repetition is difficult for the body. After the section is finished, the students take quick breaths and collapse for five seconds.

There is a pattern in the teacher method which holds for the rest of the class, regardless of the material:

1) He talks through each movement section;
2) He demonstrates the body movement, with himself or a volunteer;
3) He reviews the muscle factor, the energy, and the pull of the movement;
4) He has a practice runthrough and then questions, and
5) The students respond to the verbal commands by looking in the mirror.
The descriptions of the movement tend to be highly visual. She asks: "Did you see what I did?" She breaks the movement phrase into simple elements and reviews them painstakingly. She repeats touch correction and verbal description until everyone seems somewhat sure of what this new phrase is about.

The students then ask very specific questions about body movement, body posture, and rhythm.

In the first hour there is much less teacher talk than in the last half-hour of teaching new material. As the class progresses, there seems to be more and more talk.

In the end she breaks the group up in two sections so that she can see the individual work better. After the new material section is over she ends the class with groups of four doing different kinds of walking, quick runs. They end class with some final breathing exercises and then the teacher talks about the need for watching your diet because a lot of dancers have been getting colds. She recommends a food booklet and asks for appointments for certain students. The class ends in applause.
Before the class begins the dancers are warming up - doing stretch exercises, yoga positioning, mainly on the floor. There is little conversation. The mood is quiet.

The room is rather large with mirrors lining one wall of the room. For the class, the dancers face the mirror.

The class begins quickly as soon as the instructor enters. She gives a verbal cue to begin and snaps her fingers to give the beat. The movements are in place. The students seem very familiar with the set. She makes a few corrections after the first segment, demonstrating the correct way herself.

For each new movement phrase, the instructor performs the phrase, saying very little. After the students watch twice, they perform the phrase. It was difficult to determine if this was new material. My guess is that it is somewhat familiar because of the quickness of the students to pick it up. However, I feel that it is a difficult phrase because after it is performed by the dancers, the instructor makes individual corrections. She touches, molds, and shapes the body of the student to show the correct position. There is little talking even among the other students.

After 45 minutes of repetition of this material, the teacher begins new material. She presents the material in front of the class. The class repeats the long phrase immediately. After they do it once, the students have an opportunity to ask questions and clarifications.

The class is basically no-nonsense. Everyone works on each phrase quite diligently. There is no break between movement sections. There is no talking except for an occasional clarification. The teacher usually responds with both verbal explanation and body demonstration. If the problem is experienced by more than one student, she performs the phrase herself. If it is an individual problem, she talks with the individual student and manipulates that particular person until it is right.

For the new movement section, the teacher claps the beats. For each phrase, she is always beating, counting. She is intent on the exact counting of the phrase. For the new phrase, in addition to the demonstration, she also talks it through. There are occasional verbal cues. For the brand new material, she takes the class in sections. She continues counting out the phrases. There is much repetition, followed by individual corrections, some discussion.
and then questions. This new phrase is done for a long
time. It is performed in place. Up to one hour of class
there has been little feet/body movement on the floor.
Everything has been done in place.

The last part of the class includes lots of movement around
the room. There is spinning, walking, and a little jumping.
The instructor has the students in a line and there is a
one-by-one doing of the material. This affords individual
comments by the instructor. She continues to beat out the
counts and gives verbal cues for pulsing and quick head
turns.

After the class has gone through the various floor movements,
the teacher then explains various alternate ways of moving.
She explains and performs them. She demonstrates arm swings,
and suggests that the students put their arms on their
shoulders for turning.
APPENDIX C

VARIABLES FOR MOVEMENT OBSERVATION IN THE STUDY OF RITUAL
Variables for Movement Observation in the Study of Ritual

These variables are based on the framework of Rudolf Laban as presented in Personality Assessment through Movement (North, 1972), A Primer for Movement Description (Dell, 1977) and A Handbook for Modern Dance Educators (Preston, 1963). The concept was developed with the help of the Dance Department of the Ohio State University through conversations (1977-78) with Angelica Gerbes, Associate Professor of Dance History and with the assistance of Vera Maletic, Associate Professor, who teaches courses in Dance Description/Labanalysis, Effort, and Harmonics in Space. The variables presented are the result of work done in these classes.

A. Use of the Body

1. Body actions and activities (stillness, gesture or locomotion: running, jumping, walking, skipping, hopping, leaping, running)

2. Symmetry or assymetry

3. Use of the center of gravity: labile or stabile

4. Initiation of Movement:
   a. proximal - torso
   b. distal - extremities

5. Body flow:
   a. successive or sequential
   b. isolated body parts

6. Manner of use of body:
   a. total body movement
   b. isolated body parts
1. Motion Factors and Effort Elements

Laban formulated the concept of Effort as derived from a choice between two opposing attitudes towards the motion factors of space, weight, time, and flow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Going with yielding/accepting</th>
<th>Going against restricting/contending</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flexible (indirect)</td>
<td>direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Weight</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>light</td>
<td>strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sustained</td>
<td>sudden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Flow</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>free</td>
<td>bound</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2. Combination of Two Effort Elements

a. weight/flow

   e.g. light/free (sensitive ease)

b. space/time

   e.g. direct/sustained (slow precision)

c. weight/time

   e.g. strong/sustained (slow persistancy)

d. space/flow

   e.g. flexible/free (carefree ease)
3. Combination of Three Effort Elements

ea. space/weight/time (flowless)

   e.g. flexible/light/sustained (floating-like)

b. space/flow/time (weightless)

   e.g. flexible/free/sustained (in a meditative way)

e. weight/space

   e.g. light/flexible (all-round awareness)

f. flow/time

   e.g. bound/sudden (restless)
C. Use of Space

1. Expansion: amount of space covered in relation to defined area

2. Extension: use of kinesphere

3. General level orientation
   a. high
   b. medium
   c. low

4. General directional orientation:
   a. dimensional
   b. peripheral
   c. planal

5. Description of spatial path:
   a. central
   b. peripheral
   c. transversal
D. Relationships

1. Choreographic orientation to the performing space:
   a. one front (proscenium stage)
   b. several fronts (e.g. in the round)

2. Choreographic procedure:
   a. in unison
   b. in canon
   c. in counterpoint
APPENDIX D

NINA WIENER: DANCE BACKGROUND
Dance Training:

Patricia Green - Modern dance and Daelcroze Eurythmics, 1952-54
Lestor Horton Dance Company - Modern Dance (Bella Levitsky, Carmen de Lavallade, Jimmy Truitt, Joyce Trisler), 1954-58
Dephne Geard - Ballet, formerly of the Royal Ballet, 1954-58
Leon Danielian - Ballet (private lessons), 1956-58
Balanchine - Ballet, 1958-61
Patricia Wilde - Ballet, formerly of the Ballet Russe, 1958-61
Robert Lindgren and Sonia Tyven - Ballet, Character, Pointe Adagio, 1961-1965
Evelyn Schumacher - Ballet, Pointe, formerly of the San Francisco Ballet, 1965-69
Elfie Hosman - Modern, 1965-69
Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival: Modern - Normal Walker, Hindu - La Meri, Flamenco - Mariano Parro, Ballet - Margaret Craske, Summer, 1966
Connecticut College Festival: Modern (Graham Technique) - Richard Kuch and June Lewis; Jazz - Talley Beatty; Ballet, Modern, Composition, Repertory and Technique - Paul Taylor, Alvin Ailey, Yvonne Rainier, Twyla Tharp, Summer, 1969
Graham Technique with the faculty at Graham Studio, NYC, 1969
Merce Cunningham - Modern, 1969-77
Joffrey Ballet School - Ballet, Pointe, 1969-72
Francis Cott - Corrective Dance Physiology, November, 1973 - September, 1974
Alexander Technique - Dr. William Conable, September, 1975 - April, 1976 New York School of Ballet - Ballet, Richard Thomas and Barbara Fallis, 1972-77
David Howard - Ballet, presently
Professional Dance Experience:

Meredith Monk: October-November 1969
Merry Go Rounder Musical Theatre: July 1971-January 1972
Twyla Tharp Dance Company: January 1972-July 1974
Performed in several dance works for television including a fifty minute special for London Weekend Televisions' AQUARIUS series
Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project: January 1978-September 1979
National Endowment for the Arts Choreographer Stipend January 1979

Places Taught:

Sarah Lawrence University, Bronxville, N.Y. January-March 1979
University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois June-July 1978 (mounted work)
Henry St. Settlement, New York, N.Y. April-May 1978
A community service project involving workshops, lecture demonstrations and an informal performance.
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan May-June 1977
Environ (476 Broadway New York City) daily advanced Modern Technique Class October-December 1976
Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio September 1975-March 1976 (mounted work)

Short Term Residencies (Under Three Weeks):

York University, Ontario, Canada April 1978
The Place, London, England
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota 1978 and 1974
Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts 1974
Ohio University, Athens, Ohio 1973
UCLA, Los Angeles, California 1972
Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio 1972
State University of New York at Elmira, New Paltz and Binghamton 1972
Works Choreographed (1974-80):

*Palindrome*: premiered March 20 and 21, 1974, New York City. Three one minute solos performed sequentially by a single performer; also performed at Cornell University, July 1974.


*Eliza's Rhythm*: premiered at American Theater Lab, on four Tuesdays in October, 1976, New York City. An eight minute proscenium work for four dancers; also performed at Harvard and Radcliffe, May 5-7, 1977 and in New York City, April 17 and 25, 1977.

*The Condor Material (Part 1)*: premiered January 3 and 5, 1978 at Danspace, St. Marks Church, New York City. An evening's work for four dancers; the piece is made to be viewed from multiple fronts and deals with a structural use of personalized material.

*Someone Else's Nickel*: premiered July 7, 1978, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. A ten minute work for six dancers based on the third port de bras from *The Condor Material*.

*Cooper-Hewitt*: premiered September 26, 1978 at the Cooper Hewitt Museum Garden Series, New York City. A seven minute work for four dancers based on the second port de bras from *The Condor Material*.

*The Condor Material (Part 1 and 2)*: premiered April 19-22, 1979 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, New York. An evening length dance for five dancers concerned with the relationship between port de bras (upper body movement) and leg movement. The dance originated in three different sequences created on the upper body. These were translated into leg phrases and combined in a stream of vernacular gesture and rhythmic variation.

*Kemo Sabe*: premiered October 27, 28 and November 3, 4, 1979 at the Emanu-El YW-YMHA. A 25 minute dance for four dancers and four percussionists dealing with western themes. The western themes partly emanate from the score, which builds percussive slapping and stomping sounds into the dance movement. The overall aim in this work is to explore the relationship between audiol and visual rhythms and to produce a kind of dancing that is gutsy, full-bodied, active and vigorous in the western mode.
Integers: premiered May 8-11, 1980 at the American Theater Lab, New York City. A full-length collaboration between Nina Wiener and writer James Sherry. A solo work about reaching a private resolution through a public means which incorporates a soundtrack of a spoken score. The relationship of the soundtrack to the movement is structural rather than subject oriented. The dance utilizes principles of spoken language to create the movement base.

Rides Again: commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts, to be premiered at the Walker Art Center in Minn., Minnesota, October 25, 1980. A twelve minute sequel to Kemo Sabe, this work emphasizes the interplay between characterization and formal elements. It is a work for five dancers.
INTERVIEW WITH NINA WIENER, January 11, 1981

Q. How do you perceive the special nature of The Condor Material?

A. I feel a particular fondness to The Condor Material because I felt like I had a really, truly innovative and creative idea. I used arm material and we translated it into leg material and made all the material before the dance was put together. I constructed the dance out of what had been core material instead of doing both things as we went along. I had been stuck with that idea of making the material first and then molding it into a dance or changing it or transforming it into what I need. I develop a certain type of movement material before I start making a dance so the material has a certain nature of its own and then I deal with it. The Condor Material is special for a number of reasons: 1) It was a very spiritual dance. I am not quite sure why that was, but there was a certain kind of calmness and introspection about the dance. 2) It represented a real change in the kind of work that I was doing, almost a maturity. I felt like all of a sudden I was an adult or I was an artist. 3) I was on my own. I felt like the dance was mine and did not really owe allegiances to anything else.

Q. We talked about the core material. I know it by nicknames; for Alison's port de bras, "Bugsy", "Christopher's Song" for Bebe, and "Down on the Floor", for Tim.

A. It was actually originally called "Down on the Farm" because Tim was originally brought up on a farm, but he did not like it being so specifically related to his personal nature, so we called it "Down on the Floor."

Q. Is the core material really a reflection of the inner-person of the dancers?

A. I would have to say, that is true somewhat, but I deal with them more physically. You can never divorce someone's real personality from the
physicality, because it is like body language. You know from the way they are dancing, if they are tense, or if they are not tense, if particular things are bothering them. It all comes out physically, so what I deal with is where they need to grow physically as dancers. But it has a lot to do with my personal feelings for them as personalities and people, and those particular three people more so than people I might be working with now. Not to downgrade the people I am working with now, but the three started working with me when it was really a very personal process. There was really a very strong relationship that developed between me and my dancers, partially because there were not very many of them, partially because we all were working for nothing, and we were working long hours. There was a real common belief in what was happening and I think that they were interested in staying with me because of that. They were also being integrated into the work. The Condor Material was one of the places where I learned how to really do that in a dancerly way - in terms of the structure of the dance and the material itself.

Q. In looking back over the process, the thing that struck me was your relationship with the dancers, and the dancer's relationship to one another. In many ways, a real community seems to have been translated into the dance.

A. Definitely, I think part of that was because we had some real problems to solve. We were making the vocabulary and, in a way, we were all doing it together. I think the dancers felt more of an involvement because I would make up core material and then they would have the opportunity to make up material based on problems from that core material. That was the very beginning of a whole new way of working, involving discovery and trust (my trust in them to do that) and teaching them about it, almost as if they are another Nina brain. In some way, the two brains must connect. They have to understand just what I want, but their brain also has input. And you cannot get more communal than that. It is both a physical and intellectual communal process which is about as close as you can get without being lovers, I mean in a working situation.
Q. All the dancers remarked that this process allows them to use their brain, and if we were to put an ad in the paper for a Nina Wiener dancer, in addition to technique skills, an active brain would also be necessary.

A. Large brain and the ability to work by themselves is essential. There are people with good brains, but they do not have much strong, individual creative output. Every one of my dancers has to have a really unique personal style and be able to create from these problems, to work on their own and to give me input for establishing new kinds of problems. Ultimately, I am the artistic director - I make all the decisions and I am responsible for the work, but it is not really a dictatorship. If we are going along and Tim gets an idea about something, he does not feel like he cannot say it. He says it, and when he has an idea, he will play with it, and show me what he has been playing with. I really mold the material on the dancers. They give me a little something and then I mold it on them. There is really an incredible interaction.

Q. Structure, however, is important to your dance?

A. It is totally based on structure. That is what the work is about. More recently we have been taking that structure and presenting it in a way that does not hide the structure, but allows the audience to decide whether or not it wishes to center on the structure and technique utilized in the work.

Q. One of the things that became clear to me in observing had to do with your personal aesthetics. It was always amazing how quickly you would watch each miniature, make some corrections, and then do that subtle molding.

A. I am looking for something that is a little unusual, and things that go together in ways that I am not used to seeing, that are physically mysterious, so that you watch them and you cannot quite believe they got from beginning to end in that way. When you get to the end, you have had some kind of experience with the movement. You are not just looking at the shape of the movement, but actually it is very subtly emotional without being specific. It is not associative, but I try to put things together in a way that someone could read it differently. So that it is not beating your breast, it doesn't deal with basic
emotions, but deals with putting together all kinds of subtle emotions to form a fabric of a feeling.

Q. Are the dynamics and the vitality of the dancing more significant than particular steps?

A. I do not consider any one step terribly important. I really consider the nature of the series of material important. When I made Kemo Sabe, I wanted it to be a Western. Condor I made in a meditative vein. It was made to make the company a unit.

Q. The critics referred to part one as a ritual. Is it?

A. I think that when people are talking about ritual, they are also discussing attention to detail. When you are involved in a ritualistic activity, you pay attention, and each act is special. Some are private and others are communal. The reason that people thought the dance was ritualistic was because we paid a lot of attention to each thing we did, and it was meticulously rehearsed. It was almost like one person breathing. When one person moved, you could feel someone on the other side of the room start to move with your back to them. You were so familiar with the quality and the choices that they make, you could join in or not, as you chose to do it. That was one of the things that was built into the dance. When you are discussing church ritual, everyone is familiar with it. All the dancers were very familiar with this, that is why we rehearsed part of it so well, but not to death. It still had life and still had potential. Part of that was because it was so difficult; we were doing coordination problems. No matter how much attention you paid or how well you knew it, there was always an element of risk.

Q. The fact that a number of dancers were doing the same thing at the same time seemed to reinforce a ritual quality.

A. The material was very strongly related by the port de bras. Even if someone was doing different legs, the port de bras would be similar. There was a strong compositional connection at all times between what was happening on stage. The material was made to show the relationships that were possible between the arms and the legs so that it was entirely based on compositional relationships.
Because the legs were doing the same thing as the arms, there were more solutions to a problem than one.

Q. Since there was no music or score, what did the silence add?

A. One of the things is that movement has a possibility to develop its own range and speed. If you use a score or music, then you are defining that for the movement. You are making a grid. You are locating it in time. Whereas, if you do not use any music, it has to locate itself at times. Each thing has some place in time where it is a perfect speed for the movement. It is right and you feel that. I think it also adds to the sense of meditation or ritual. In meditation, you are trying to reach a certain speed in a way; the same speed as the world is going. And one of the things that we were trying to do in The Condor Material was to reach that speed, the same speed as the world, so everything was humming at the same time. I know that sounds exceedingly abstract, but that was one of the things that I was trying to do.

Q. You are also transporting the entire audience into this time frame?

A. The audience tries to figure out what is happening. This material was made to show the process. That is why it was called The Condor Material. It was a dance about process. It was showing a process. I had this really innovative idea about the arms and I wanted to show this idea in some way that was going to involve the audience and the dancer, and in this dance, the audience has to work.

Q. Intellectually?

A. Well, physically too. Because when they tune in, they also are going that same rate. They are pulled into that same rate, so everything is going at a harmonious rate.

Q. I know you are familiar with the concept of "game and playing" in terms of previous works you did. How do you work with space?

A. I am making a structure for them, and some of the sections in The Condor Material were more open than others. In some of the sections, we had to
dance within a certain space but the space was different every time. So even though we had this complex of physical material to work with, we also had to be careful not to run into anyone, to make directional changes, and still keep it alive. But it was a game structure. I have always used little game structures. Sometimes I use game structures to make the material and sometimes I use it within the material. One of the things that I try to do is to take some of those post-modern ideas, game structures and open-ended compositional elements, and use them in a way that is modern so that they are being used within a dance, not as the end of the dance.

Q. I think that structure, silence and your sense of timing reinforces the ritualistic qualities strongly.

A. In ritual, time and attention are the really important things. What you are trying to do in ritual is bring a multitude of people into a single frame of mind. In some ways that is what you do when you are making a performance. The object is to bring the audience to a single frame of mind or to a multiple frame, cutting down on the possibilities of what is going on.

Q. In your present work, are you still interested in these issues or have you gone somewhere else?

A. Well, I am still interested in these issues. I think one is always interested, but they develop into different ways. In my new work, the audience does not have to work so hard and it is moving into a more entertaining aspect. We got tired of doing the same kinds of problems, the same kinds of performing, and we wanted variety as performers. I wanted to continue with my own explorations of structure, but I wanted to make the work acceptable and to educate more people into what I was doing. To do that, I had to make it accessible to them. Educating is to make it accessible.

Q. Would you use the word "cool" or "abstract" to describe some of the material of The Condor?

A. I would say that some of The Condor was almost entirely abstract. The whole purpose of The Condor was to deal with different levels of abstraction. In a way it was like looking at an abstract painting, where you sit and your mind sort of makes associations for itself. The painting keeps everyone within the same kind of boundary yet
allowing their minds to go free within those boundaries. I think The Condor did the same thing, even though some of the port de bras were quite specific. The port de bras I made for Alison were quite abstract and the port de bras that I made for Bebe were more literal, although it was not put together in sentences. There are still little flickers of things that in your mind touched off memories of certain other things. Tim's was about the pure mechanics of manipulating yourself on the floor and we just stood up and did it. So, in some ways, it was similar to mind, but it also had to do with action - you were looking to see what kinds of actions related to floor only when you were standing. So that one is difficult to define in a way.

Q. Would you say that body action, or body activity and gesture, seemed to be at the core?

A. I think that when you use your hands, people define it as gesture, because hands are very expressive. People are used to watching hands make gestures. People always tend to see some kind of gestural possibility, because everybody makes gestures with their hands, but not everybody dances.

Q. If I had to use one word to describe "Cooper-Hewitt," I would use gesture.

A. "Cooper-Hewitt" was made from Bebe's material, which was more gestural than others. When I was making Bebe's material, I realized that whatever I gave her, she was going to make into some kind of sentence or story, because that is the way she dances. To hold the things together, in her mind, she makes up little stories about what she is doing. When she does it, even when she is walking across the floor and doing nothing else, you get these little possibilities, you start having a narrative in your mind. I gave her a little more gesture than the others because I was interested to see how she was going to put this together. Even though I did not give it to her in any kind of sentence form, I knew that once I gave it to her, if I gave her any possibilities, she would make it into a whole number.

Q. How would you describe what Alison did with the material?
A. It was in Condor that I realized that Tim was incredibly athletic and had a certain kind of potential in dealing with the floor and with space. That made him feel like he was catapulted into space. That is where I got this idea of making his material so that it was oriented towards the body moving in the space. You had to look and see what the mechanics were. The object was to figure out the mechanics of the material. Because at that time I could never quite figure out how he got around, and the way that he did material was not evident. He would sort of magically appear in a Jump and you could never quite figure out how exactly he did the jump because it was in some way different from the way a normal dancer would do the jump.

Q. Have you figured that out yet?

A. Yes. He has come a long way in his dancing. He is much more fluid than he used to be, but he is still extremely athletic. Sometimes I think it has to do with the fact that he is a man. He has a certain kind of musculature approach to the world. I think his being a male was very important to The Condor Material, and is even more important now.

Q. Is Condor Material really about individuals?

A. It is. It is about my relationship with individuals and it is very private. In those dances, there are things that are really private - just between me and my conception of the dance which never really gets seen. Sometimes when I am doing a lecture demonstration I might let somebody know about it, because it gives them a really personal view, something they cannot really get from just looking at the dance. In some way it justifies the reason for doing a lecture demonstration. But it is true, The Condor Material was entirely about my discovering that I wanted to work in a certain way and that it was personally related to the individuals involved in my work.

Q. There is a group of dancers now who are being labeled post-modern. I am not interested in labels except in terms of how they help me understand. Would you call yourself "post-modern?"

A. I would not use that word to define myself, but others do. They do not really label me strictly post-modern. I think post-modern has to do with
a certain eclectic approach where you feel you can use anything - you can use walking around, pedestrian movement or any structure which comes to mind. You can use games, things that are not considered to be AB, BA, BAB, ABA, or you can use alternate vocabularies, all at the same time or differently. That is why when they look at my work they consider it post-modern. But it is not post-modern in the strictest sense of the term - because that is not all I do. My life is not dedicated to showing that you can do these "other things." I use them in making my dances because I figure you can use anything you can think of. You should never be constricted to use any one thing.

Q. You do use bits of information, like post-modern choreographers, do you not?

A. I do use bits of information to establish possibilities in the viewer's mind, narrative possibilities, but not defined there. For example, in Kemo Sabe, the girl does not sit down with the glass, punch the guy in the mouth and he walks out. You can see the guy and the girl on the stage together; you could see a punch somewhere, and other possibilities. There is no story involved, but there is an emotional context set up by using these bits.

Q. Let us go to the floor material - Part I of Condor - in which you are all on the floor sitting and doing this, (driving a tractor motion).

A. Yes, well that is how Tim's arms were made. That was Tim sitting on his tractor as a bit. So what we do is we show how the arms were made and then we do the arms in Part II.

Q. Well, there is a bit and an image. Whether you know it is "Down on the Floor" or not, both are present and, if you are really tuned in two or three times, those images do affect you.

A. Well, yes, of course, they are meant to affect you and they are meant to be there, some images more than others. Some images are more literal images.

Q. I have often wondered how a choreographer would react to having someone come up and say, "I know you are a choreographer, but you also seem to be a ritual maker."
A. When I made *The Condor Material*, none of this ritual idea was in my mind. It was not surface. You make a dance and a lot of your ideas about the dance are not surface. Part of the interest is to see how people respond to it, and then you can look back and say, "That was what was in it, but it never occurred to me." Part of what never occurred to me was that this dance was very spiritual and ritual-oriented. In fact, when Jennifer Dunning wrote her review and called it, "Nina Wiener's New Ritual," I was stunned. But, my feeling is that when people look at your work and have perception, then it must be there. If someone sees it, it is there, even if it is just there for them. In this particular work, I would have to say that the majority of people who saw it felt it was a very spiritual work. Part of that was due to the ritual nature. You cannot really separate the spiritual and the ritual, because they have that connection of bringing something intimate to a communal activity. Ritual tends to put you in a space which is pleasant and calming for the most part.

Q. If I were in that position, it would be thrilling to know that something I worked on for a period of time would have that power and effect on people.

A. It took me a long time to realize that was the case with this piece. As with anything, when people think about it, it does not correspond with what you think about it. I initially reacted to it in a sort of negative way. But I would have to say in retrospect that I was very pleased the way *The Condor Material* worked out.

Q. It was a new approach?

A. It was a very innovative idea. I think that when you really hit upon something that is really new, that the newness is like something that is in the stream of things, but no one has illuminated yet. People look at it, and it feels like they should have known it all along, but they did not. And that is what makes something really innovative. When you go to the theatre or something and you see a really fantastic idea, and you think, "God! What a really great idea - what a logical progression."
Q. In conclusion, how do you feel about the observation process?

A. I think that any person in the space who is not involved in what is happening disturbs the energy of the space. I cannot speak in those terms and speak in concrete terms, but I think that is really a problem. When people come in and look at the work and you are making work, their vibrations disturb your thought patterns, and I found with you that that was not the case - somehow without putting any input into the space, to really be an observer and not to disturb anyone. This is really difficult when you are making a work. Any sort of reaction that anyone has makes you feel real paranoid, because it is all very tenuous.
LECTURE DEMONSTRATION


The Condor Material is an evening's dance for five. The first part was shown at Danspace, St. Marks Church, January, 1978. The work is based on three separate series of upper body movement, sometimes referred to as port de bras. The object of the piece was to explore the relationships within dance material. What interested me was to create a new and different dance style; the problem was to stay within the demands of that style and not stray back to familiar ways of moving and choreographing. I tried in this work not to base my decision on a value system of good and bad. I realized there were different goods and bads and the important thing was consistency within a set of choices. A style is internal integrity, which has everything to do with consistency. Styles are reflective of different ways to communicate things. The parts of The Condor Material we are dealing with this afternoon are the first two (out of three) series of arm choreography nick-named "Bugsy" and "Christopher's Song."

*Alison performs "Bugsy"

(Voice over) I wanted to make a bridge between dance movement, gesture and non-dance movement. I started with the arms because the audience is not used to looking at arms as a primary movement focus. The overriding idea for Condor, used as a structural connection, is the relationship between the arms and the legs. I wanted to create a new vocabulary and thereby a new way of looking which had no previous associations. So, I related the arms and legs in different ways to create a kinesthetic blend.

Where did the legs come from? The leg movement was derived from the arms, i.e., translated from the arms. We will not be dealing with primary translations this afternoon. Instead, we will be dealing with more complex translations. Translations are built on the basic characteristics of the arm movement.

*Alison will show the first arm phrase from "Bugsy" used for translation material.
* Alison, Bebe and Tim perform Arms Translation as it is described.

The arms can be interpreted as doing several things:

1) Alison's elbows rise so the body rises.
2) Bebe's arms act as a preparation for something to come. Takes a breath.
3) For Tim the actual explanation was to press the elbows forward, so the knees press forward.

1) Alison's elbows shoot down and straighten so the legs bend and straighten. The hand pulls back, the dancer relevéés. The feet are experiencing the same sensation as the hands.
2) Bebe's arms go down, the legs bend. They reach forward, pulling the dancer toward them. The hand pull is used here as a punctuation statement.
3) Tim's elbows scoop forward and straighten, hurling the dancer away from the arms. The hand pull gives the dancer a slight forward impetus stopping him.

* The right hand pulls the left hand across. The hand turns over and makes three outward circles. The left hand makes two circles and rebounds from back to front.

1) Tim makes two turns and rebounds out of pliés. The force from the arm coming around, slides him forward.
2) In Alison's I wanted to create an illusion of the body moving around the arm not the arm moving around the body. I used the circles as shifts of weight to keep the body synced with the arms. The arms stay in place and the body moves around it.
3) Bebe's is like Tim's except more circular in the air.

The image I gave to the dancer when teaching the arms was wiping a table and keeping the arms parallel to the ground to create a sense of another plane. They will now do the translations together so you can see the differences.

Each dancer will now do phrase three - arms and then the corresponding translation so you can see the relationship.

(Voice over Alison) There were three basic physical characteristics; the legs were build on (1) that they look like the arms, (2) that they have the action of the arms, and (3) that they take directional force from the arms.
(Voice over Bebe) In the more complex translations I used more than one characteristic or any associations that came to mind.

(Voice over Tim) In these translations the arms and legs are done simultaneously. Variety is achieved in the translations by breaking up the arm movement in different places so that different things about the movement are important. Some things get bigger or smaller than they were and some things get faster or slower.

Putting the arms and legs together not only relates the movement to itself but makes the visual picture very complex. The choice is left to the audience about whether to focus on individual gesture or not. The essential thing we are dealing with is paths in space, not places in space. Part of the dance which shows this very clearly is Tim's solo.

* Tim's Solo

The dancer must not think of a picture, but of the linear sensations his body is experiencing. I never use mirrors when rehearsing so the dancer never knows what he looks like; only what the dance feels like. Neither the dancer nor the audience can speed-read the statement because it does not develop in expected ways. There are no familiar ways to approach these steps. When the steps are this demanding, they develop their own tempos within the dancer's body.

In the section called the "Big Box" there are three such solos. Bebe's jumping solo is very different from Tim's.

* Bebe's Solo

The problem we worked on was coordinating force and stretch. By concentrating on the range of different qualities possible and allowing them to change and develop the solo became very fluid. There is a third solo in the section called the "Big Box" so you can see how the solos fit together.

* "Big Box"

The dancers have total special freedom. They can take the material you saw in any direction in the space. In the "Big Box" the dancers enter the space from a specific point. Like pinballs they careen around the space and themselves, bumping and avoiding each other randomly; each time is different. Eventually, this creates a high energy in the space.
The next section is called the "Little Box" or "The Miniatures." The "Little Box" is the crystalized energy from the "Big Box." It is made up of miniature versions of parts of the three solos in the "Bix Box." The miniatures are made according to the way each dancer remembers and picks up movement. Doing this enabled me to understand each of my dancers better, allowing me to explain what I want faster and more fully. The material in this section reflects the dancers' personal memory patterns. Here is one of the solo sections from the "Big Box" used as direct material for the "Miniatures."

* Tim's jumping excerpt and its corresponding miniature.

1) We have abbreviated gesture but Tim maintains all details. Movement comes from follow-through in the back. Tim's miniatures are always the smallest.
2) Bebe deals with things according to their phrasing. This miniature is literal and simple - a smaller version of the larger one.
3) Alison remembers things by changing weight and using her plié rhythmically with drops and level changes.

Of course, none of this matters while actually viewing the dance, but this is the secret structure which holds the work together.

Now we will use the entire section we have been discussing. Each section in The Condor Material so far begins by first presenting the port de bras used in that section in some way.

* "Big Box" Section

Now we are going to deal with the second section, "Cooper-Hewitt." I call this section "Cooper-Hewitt" because it was made for a garden performance at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum. I originally wanted it to be an enormous piece of sculpture using 60 people all doing the arm choreography in unions, but I rehearse and work on my pieces for five months and after two weeks of looking at it every day, I got bored so it turned into something else. First, I want to show you the basic port de bras, "Christopher's Song."

* Bebe performs "Christopher's Song"

This port de bras is much more gestural than the first one and it looks like it is telling a story. I treated this port de bras differently from the way I treated the last section. What holds the section together is that the port de bras is maintained in unison throughout. I was thinking
of a child's toy explanation. I was also thinking of field painting where one follows the surface complexity of the painting not focusing on individual strokes. The whole picture creating surface and volume. The individual strokes like the individual steps not being important. At this point I felt that translations are the style and could be forgotten and just used.

* Nina, Alison, Beba and Tim perform "Cooper-Hewitt"
APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW WITH TIMOTHY BUCKLEY
INTERVIEW WITH TIMOTHY BUCKLEY, November 12, 1980

Q. How would you describe Ms. Wiener's choreography and her process in making *The Condor Material*?

A. (The closing solos were made near the end.) The original phrases were first made. There were three of them: One for each dancer in the company (Bebe, Tim, Alison).

Q. They had nicknames, did they not? "Bugsy", "Christopher's Song," "Down on The Floor (Farm)?"

A. There were nicknames but they never stuck. The material was named for each person.

Q. What was Nina doing with Alison's material?

A. It was the first base material made which meant that Nina would first attempt getting away from leg movement and working specifically with arm movement. I don't recall that it has as much to do with Alison as Bebe's material has to do with Bebe.

Q. So, there is development?

A. I think there was a development between making the material for Alison and making material for Bebe and that somewhere in there, Nina finally got interested in character and personality and was more interested in developing a general relation to that, which she did not have when she made Alison's. Although she allowed Alison to take on some personality and character, but I do not think it was made for any specific reason in mind.

Q. What was Nina doing in making material for Bebe?

A. She had Bebe in mind and she wanted to isolate the movement, to port de bras of her upper body. She wanted it very introspective and meditative in relation to Bebe's character, to Bebe as a person. It is material that allows Bebe's expression to reveal itself. Even though the movement itself is rather abstract and not connotative or representative of anything else. It is only designed in
terms of the flow and sequence of things and size to allow Bebe's personality to be expressed.

Q. Where did Bebe's original material end up?
A. The bulk of "Cooper-Hewitt."

Q. Does the original material ever show up in The Condor Material?
A. Yes. At one point Nina is doing it on the floor in the back; there is a translation of it into the legs for a trio.

Q. But they are all translations of material originally made?
A. Yes but the original material is also being done in the background at the same time and it is being matched up with the translated material.

Q. What was Nina doing with you?
A. She was trying to make something that was more athletic and that involved the entire body. The third port de bras was made for me and originated on the floor, in moving the body on the floor.

Q. Do you like to work on the floor?
A. Yes, it is a challenge. Nina was not sure about how to make material for me. She did not feel comfortable just standing and making something happen to the body so she made material for us on the floor that involved using the arms as supports which gave it another kind of strength that the arm movement would not have had if it were made standing up in place.

Q. What about that little sequence of the tractor?
A. When she was making the floor material she tried to incorporate some of my character or history into the movement. Often it is something she saw me do or a story I told her. She may have pulled something from these and used them in the phrase. For example, in the floor material there is a little hand gesture trick that I once knew; I showed it to her and she stuck it in. So the movement does have personal elements.

Q. How do you personally feel about that material that was made for you? Do you feel it captures a part of you?
A. A part of me, not a big part, just a part. I think it captures a part of me, the part that Nina saw or felt or experienced, or the part that I allowed Nina to see or experience. I cannot say this material is me and belongs to me. It is material that Nina made, so it is Nina's view of me, not my view of myself, and it is limited to a specific time and specific space.

Q. Well, how often does this material show up?

A. These three original phrases are carried throughout the whole piece. You cannot say it shows up here, or it shows up there -- it shows up everywhere in one form or another. Whether the arm material is done with simultaneous legs from another section, there is a continual visual thread that is always related to the three original phrases. Whether you have a sense of seeing them or not, it is there. This gives an incredible unity to the piece.

Q. How do traditional choreographers do leg material?

A. It is based on a vocabulary of steps and the steps are often interchangeable or re-arranged. Instead of taking that very direct approach, we come in through the back door and arrive at those things that would not be called steps because they are actually steps themselves, but because they are based on material that had nothing to do with walking.

Q. What did it have to do with?

A. It had to do with one limb in relationship to another, with fine articulate movements, whether in the hand or in the shoulder, or elbow, with movement that is generated in relation to the back.

Q. What about the relationship of port de bras, upper body movement to the legs?

A. The Condor Material is about port de bras, it is of interest to choreographers to find another way of making choices about steps rather than having a vocabulary laid out on a piece of paper and saying I am only going with this number of steps, and all I am going to do is re-arrange them and make a dance of them. With this work, one tries to find a new approach to the choices about making steps.

Q. Who makes those choices?
A. The original choices are made by Nina. And they are the base material and it needs to be a strong, interesting base material. And from that point it is the dancers' responsibility to look at the movement that is given to them. They may be required to translate it into another shape or form whether it be in the legs or on the floor; to understand the dimensions of the movement, the range of it (time or space); to consider spacial relationships, the fluid movement in it, or which part of the body is moving. All of this gets translated into the legs. What the dancer finds out is that there is a range of freedom in making choices in that translation.

Q. How about the individual dancer's style or way of doing things?

A. That's what you find out. What you discover is that a person's style is directly related to their way of seeing.

Q. So that even though the original material made had been made by Nina or designed by her, it can still be claimed by the dancer.

A. Because it goes through this process (through another person) it becomes altered. It is like a blind person needing a seeing-eye dog. What the person is seeing is what the dog is seeing. So what the dancer is showing is what the dancer is seeing. Nina provided a media with which the dancer works.

Q. Would you say this is new in terms of choreography?

A. It's always been there but it hasn't had the emphasis or the kind of attention it deserves.

Q. Who else would use this approach?

A. I think even it's most simple terms -- ballet has used it, in terms that the ballet dancer, even though she is working with a very specific vocabulary of steps, she's making choices within those steps. Making choices gives the ballet a certain style. One dancer will emphasize something more over something else. We are going very extreme with it, and allowing the dancer a much wider range of choices within the vocabulary.

Q. Would you use the word "partnership" with the choreographer?
A. I would say collaboration. And then Nina takes on the role of Editor.

Q. Is Nina's personal aesthetic very much part of the editing process?

A. She likes things that are much cooler and not sentimental, not obvious in terms of choice or direction, especially when we are talking about a translation of one piece of material to another part of the body. Some of the most obvious and direct choices are not the best because they tend to look rather provincial, or not as interesting, especially if you are going to rely on existing steps that you already know and try to fit them back into the translation. The idea is to try to avoid those things that you are already aware of and that you have already used and try to find something in the translation process that gives one a new insight into the step or a way of moving.

Q. Doesn't this process make dance more intelligent and challenging?

A. It requires an intelligent dancer because the mind is so much more active.

Q. My experience of watching choreographers in the past has been that they have an idea of what the dance is to look like and they teach the dancers a series of steps to learn.

A. The task of many dancers has been to see how well they could accomplish the choreographer's aesthetic or mimic the choreographer.

Q. With Condor, you are collaborating with the choreographer and using all your resources as a translator and dancer and also helping other people understand how you translate.

A. That's what gives the dancing a specific look. Trying to accomplish something physically involves a very strong mental process. When one sees the actual physical movement, one sees another dimension or depth to it. That depth I have labeled intelligence, movement with intelligence, rather than movement to accomplish a certain task or to make a certain line or shake.

Q. Although shakes or lines would be important.
A. Well, shakes and lines are actually only a result of the movement. With the Condor, there really is no emphasis on making a specific shake, design or line. Those are static terms. Since we are working mentally with an ongoing process, (almost linear, but, at the same time disjunct) it is something that is static. If one is working mentally with movement, it shows up in the movement. The movement does have a different kind of fluidity and a range of motion.

Q. Would you describe the choreography as dry?

A. It may be dry in that we are not trying to add another layer to the moving, except what is already there. The movement itself is so rich that it has its own emotion. One does not have to layer on some other attitude or emotion.

Q. In their reviews, some of the critics talked about the focus of the dancer as very inward and almost as if the audience happened upon these people dancing rather than a group dancing for an audience. What do you think about this quality of focus?

A. Well, it is meditative, but it also involves a certain kind of presence without pretend presence. It is a more clear and direct sense of presence, rather than finding how to make myself present (I have to do this with my hand and I have to do this with my eyes). If one is actively thinking while moving, there already is a certain kind of presence which does not have to be obvious or concealed. I think that is why the dance is very cool. It is difficult to have a very calm and relaxed attitude about it because it is strenuous activity.

Q. There was an incredible strenuousness to rehearsals, yet the performances looked simple. My suspicion is that the choreography is very deceptive. It appears much more easy than, in fact, it is.

A. Well, that has to do with integrating the movement into one's body and not having a sense of struggle. If you are constantly working towards only physicalness, there is a sense of struggle that you are never really accomplishing the perfect line, the perfect shape. There is always a 'let down' person, of not doing as much as one would like. If one is thinking through the movement, allowing it to become integrated into the body, one is not thinking about specific shapes, but about the body in space and the range of motion. That is why from
one performance to another the dance is never the same. There are so many variations in performances. It may not be obvious to an audience because the material is so dense and complex. But, within that density and complexity the person, the dancer, is making an incredible amount of choices and decisions on the spot. This keeps it very fresh and alive. It is not dead, it is not like pulling out a painting.

Q. In developing language to talk about dance or movement, people try to find direct ways of speaking. You used the word 'dense.' What is it about density that applies to you as a dancer?

A. Dense is relative only because the density happens over a period of time. A dancer develops, he is able to handle more and more complex movement sequences. Because our company is working with arms on top of legs in two complex sequences going simultaneously, one on top of another, it sets up a range of material with a lot going on and a lot to look at. The dancer doesn't have a sense of that, isn't aware of it, because the choreographic process has happened over a period of time and has developed to such a point. Density is only relative to the person who is watching or the person who is dancing. Because I can dance something that I feel very comfortable with (it could be complex), I don't consider its complexity until I actually sit back and look and reflect on it.

Q. Does density bring about mystery?

A. To me the mystery happens because people are not used to seeing such complex, dense material appear all at once from one person. It does have mystery because we are not used to a dancer moving mentally. We are caught off guard by that. Suddenly the audience is confronted with a thinking person and not just a body trying to be the vehicle of a choreographer.

Q. Does this kind of process require then a very special audience?

A. No, not necessarily. I think we discovered that with our new pieces like Kemo Sabe, that we are still working with the same processes that we developed in The Condor material. We are now trying to allow it to surface and take on a life of its own. For some reason, it is much more accessible to an audience and they are not caught up in where we are in the program and who is translating
what, where, when, why and how. I think it has to do with Nina's development as a choreographer and her total concept. It also has an entertainment level to it because we are more comfortable with these manipulations of material. We don't hold ourselves back. We can push ourselves further. It does have this wonderful entertainment element because it involves this mysterious mental process. It seems that some intelligence is behind this dance you are looking at. You're not exactly sure how it relates or where it is coming from at the same time you're looking at it.

Q. Jennifer Dunning referred to Condor as ritual-like. What is your reaction to this?

A. I think she was speaking about the meditative properties about the dance, because it was done inside. She felt that there was a transcendence happening or going on and that gave it a richer quality.

Q. As a performer, did you ever feel that?

A. Well, I do not think there was any real attempt to make a sense of ritual. It is only because of the way the dance is set up, the process. The fact that it is in a specific place at a specific location and time. People have gathered whether it be two people or 50 people; it has a beginning and end; it even has a body between the beginning and an end, and I think because it passes through a series of thoughts, ideas, or emotions. I think that's what gives it ritual qualities.

Q. Do you experience transendence while performing?

A. What usually happens in a performance is that one does transcend. There is this other level of consciousness which is different from thinking. It is on a different level, but I don't mean to say that it eliminates other levels. I think there is another dimension of consciousness that is present during a performance. You can still think about being in the wrong place at the wrong time (you never lose that), but it does allow, (I don't want to call it thoughtlessness) a range of consciousness that has depth. The depth of it allows you awareness of the moment and situation. And it doesn't mean that it is so cosmic that one will want to exist only in that state. It is something that comes out of the movement so integrated in the body that one is no longer thinking in those terms. On a very complex level the body has its own intelligence.
Q. Would you compare dance to ritual?

A. Yes, in that dance is a coming together of people for a shared experience. I think that's the most direct relationship.

Q. What about the material itself? Do you think the movement material can give indications of ritual?

A. It can, but I don't think that is the intent. I do not think it intends to do that. It evokes ritual unintentionally because I think it has to do with the audiences' state rather than the dancer's so if the viewer is open to a ritual experience, it will happen.

Q. What about the setting, the quiet?

A. If the audience is in a quiet, meditative, introspective state, ready to take in something, they will have a ritual experience with themselves. I don't think it is required from an entire audience. It is more of an individual experience. The possibility is definitely there for each individual because people have different responses to ritual. Some people respond to it more intensely than others and some people even have, I suppose, an aversion to it - the other extreme. I think one has to allow the possibility for the different levels of experience.

The interview continues. At this point we both watch a videotape of The Condor Material, paying attention to certain sections in Part Two.

("Cooper-Hewitt")

Q. Let us talk about "Cooper-Hewitt" and what you are doing in this section.

A. Here the legs are only reacting to the motion of the arms. It is built on Bebe's arm phrase and the assignment was to allow the body to move through space, allowing one to take a step or turn or jump as a result with the arms and back moving.

Q. What qualities were you interested in? For example, Alison says you like to do things that are "quirky, unusual or bizarre." Would you use that kind of language to talk about what you were about?

A. Well, I wouldn't. That is only her perception of it. I don't think I consciously choose something because it is "quirky or bizarre."
Q. What qualities would you find interesting? Aesthetic?

A. Things that are off balance and have an element of risk in it give me a thrill. It seems to be alive and doesn't come from any preconceived notions about movement or steps. I think it has to do with being mostly off balance as much as possible and constantly moving around one's center. You oftentimes look teetering.

Q. Now, would you describe the duet of you and Bebe in "Cooper-Hewitt?"

A. We are doing the exact same arm movement simultaneously, but we both translated the rest of our body in different directions. We're making different choices and so, from the waist down, we're moving differently because we've made different decisions on how to identify the arm movement. So, it was put together with the arms being in sinc, then simultaneously. Because, if you'll watch it, you'll see that things extend and fold at the exact same moment.

Q. What about your last solo of "Cooper-Hewitt?"

A. It's all the same. It's just speeded up version. I've been repeating the same thing throughout. Now, it's just inverted the space, so it's going back into the opposite direction and it's been speeded up.

Q. When you say inverted...

A. It means that I've turned the walls around. So, what I had in front of me the last time is now in back of me.

("Miniatures")

Q. What is the process of making "miniatures?"

A. It is a very simple structure or system. There is always a (miniature, miniature, large, miniature) to set and the order is Alison, Bebe, Tim. The process is repeated three times or nine sets of miniatures. After the third set, Bebe continues with her original material, her solo, which means she leaves the group, so to speak, and continues until the next person's solo. The two exchange, so Bebe enters the group again as someone else is off doing a solo. It is all clued to the original phrase of the large one.
Q. But, what about the addition of Glenna? Is the system intact?

A. There were some changes made because I needed more time before I came back in. We added a phrase, a miniature phrase for Glenna. We also had to manipulate the structure a bit because of four, not three people dancing. In the end we did not stick to the original sequence of miniatures. From the middle to the end of it, it goes off on another system, which is only specific to that section. It starts out with this thing, but it goes off then... and you can't really follow and say this is exactly what it is. I suppose it is possible to sit down and outline or reconstruct it, but you'll find that it does break its logic, break the system. I think it's of no interest other than as a choreographic device.

Q. Where did the large one come from?

A. Those were choices that Nina made, pulled out of the solo material that you see at the finale.

Q. Let us talk about the process of miniaturization.

A. It is a combination of things. One, I think it was a result of being in a very cramped studio and one day there were no lights. It became very dark and we could not see, so we started dancing very tiny and small and it gave us an idea, this miniature version contained all the information that the larger version had. So it was more. It was not an indication of a larger version, but it was a miniaturized version of it.

Q. And, then you continued that process on through?

A. And, what we realize is that each person codes the information differently. It's different for each, depending on the phrase that you are working with. It has to do with not thinking directly about what it is that you are miniaturizing, but allowing the body to have a sensation that you're experiencing the same larger movement, only it's smaller and condensed.

Q. What do you tend to emphasize?

A. I think I emphasize the direction and the space. And, I pick out the most interesting elements that remind me of the phrase and I sometimes exaggerate them. If it's a funny twist in the arm or the knee, I'll exaggerate them; it codes that large phrase for me.
Q. What were your concerns in making a miniature?

A. I wanted to see how small and condensed I could get. I made an attempt to see how far I could push that original assignment in condensing the material more and more. So that they'd become faster, smaller, more indicative. The others went off in the other direction and found specific things in the larger phrases that they preferred. They almost begin to translate it into another phrase which was equally as large. It was just their version or translation of the large phrase.

Q. When the Condor Material was redone again a year later, the "miniatures" were not done. Why were they pulled?

A. They were too difficult to reconstruct because they were coded. It was coded information and that information didn't seem to have an extensive life because it came from passing moments when one recalls movement or indicates movement. It is like a memory, so it doesn't have a long life. Once the movement is established and set with this quality, it is too difficult to try to reconstruct it. It would have been easier to start all over with the original assignment and work from there and make an entirely new set. It would have taken the same amount of time to look at a videotape and try to reconstruct it.

("Big Box")

Q. How would you describe the movement inside the "Big Box." especially your part?

A. There wasn't any movement made specifically for the "Big Box." It was all taken from the final solos. It's just that we were put in a very tight, isolated space. This box was on the floor giving a sense of chaos. There was a dangerousness to it and sort of a frenetic energy quality about it.

Q. The solos we are going to see in the finale are glimpsed in the "Big Box."

A. Yes, entirely.

Q. Is this obvious?

A. No, because it is done with other people in the space. One isn't given a chance to take in the entire solo all at once, because you're watching three or four different bodies at once.
Q. The movement is set, but the spacing is not set?

A. We were making special choices and decisions on the spot in this frame on the floor. Trying to stay out of each other's way, we tried to experience each other at the same time, even if it is just a recognition of passing, or sharing of proximity, or sharing a distance.

Q. Although there is no touching here, this is the only time there seems to be any connectedness of the dancers to each other.

A. It is the most connective in that we are recognizing each other, especially the proximity; I think the distance is just as important.

Q. What were you trying to do with your solo in the "Big Box?"

A. One tries not to get into a pattern with it and always choosing to go in the same direction. At the moment you are having to make this choice, you may discover the opposite direction that one would naturally intend to go, or find a new way of initiating. At the moment you make a choice, you sometimes find that somebody else made the same decision and then you expose what kind of problems you run into. At other times, you make a choice as a result of somebody else's.

Q. As a performer, what differences...do you like working this way?

A. It is much more difficult. I think it is a nice relief from the other things as a performer, but it gets worn out very quickly. You find that you have a range of choices. What you do, each time you perform, is to pick out three out of ten that you know of, rather than making ten more. So, after a certain point it gets to be sort of a hassle, or not as enjoyable. It doesn't have that excitement anymore. It becomes very safe after a certain point.

("Finale Solos")

Q. What about the solos?

A. We all used Alison's material for upper body.

Q. Where do the legs come from?
A. The legs were an extension of the problem that we began with 'Cooper-Hewitt' that the legs be a result of the motion, for the back movement.

Q. Where does your core material end up?

A. All the "Illinois Material" is based on it -- Glenna's solo, "Candace," "Mary Novak," "The Arm's Race." "The Arm's Race" is an upper body translation of the original material. "Mary Novak," Bebe's solo is a translation of the arm material which was a translation of the floor material. "Angelea" is the same thing. These are third-generation (tertiary) translations. So, this is how we can see how, based on those three fundamental - or core port de bras, we have an entire dance. The pieces are here and there. The upper body may be someone else's and legs may be a response to the upper body or legs may be someone else's translation of what the upper body used to do when they did it.

Q. If you were to give me an interpretation beyond arm movement, what would you say The Condor Material is about?

A. It is mostly about Nina's needing to discover things about herself in making a dance in relation to dancers, opening up new possibilities and avenues.

Q. Suppose I am a person coming and I look at this dance. I've never heard of Nina Wiener... I've never seen this company before. What do I look for?

A. Well, first of all, you can't look for a story. You can't look at it being representational, because it's not. It's purely aesthetic. For the most part, it is an aesthetic that one either appreciates or doesn't appreciate. I think that it stimulates the mind and the visual senses.

Q. How about the feelings?

A. I don't think you can detach yourself from it, especially as audience. Because certain images provoke certain feelings and responses, it certainly is not predetermined for you. It is hard to say that it's really about something because there isn't any intention there to evoke any specific feeling or attitude, so that it's different for everybody.
Q. Although, for example, "The Arm's Race" done as a race, is very funny.

A. Well, it is funny. But we did not sit down and say, "Let's make a funny section."

Q. I realize that. I am trying to be able to look at where meaning or interpretation comes from, and I'm wondering with this kind of material how an audience might respond.

A. You can't know?

Q. You cannot know but what we can know is how we respond and how we see something. Now, when you look at the tapes of The Condor Material, do you see a discovery process? Is that what you see when you look at it?

A. Hers and mine, but that's about it.

Q. And, that's all you see?

A. Yes, because I can't be completely objective.

Q. Fine, let's be subjective and talk about what you see when you look.

A. What I see when I look is what (this whole thing) I've been through. I don't think it has the mystery to it that it might have for some other person. My seeing is more of a learning tool and that's an asset for me.

Q. How?

A. To get an idea. Because what I think I'm doing is not necessarily the thing that I see myself doing.

Q. Can you give an example of that?

A. When you're moving through space, you have certain sensations and some of those sensations feel better than others. What you discover in seeing yourself is that those sensations are not clear to someone who is watching. Those sensations are only isolated to the dancer, to the movement, and they really may not be of any interest to anybody else. They may not even look good. So, what I'm saying is, what you do or what you feel is not the same thing that you show or the thing that is perceived.
Q. This may be too personal, but can you give me an example of something you felt that wasn't communicated in how you moved?

A. I don't know, I guess maybe there was some wiggle on my toe that I really enjoyed doing, but I don't think it was so clear or interesting when I saw it. I had spent so much time with it that, when I got to that moment, I looked forward to it, and then retained the memory of it as I went through the dance. For someone who is watching it, it's only just a passing moment like everything else, so it doesn't have the strong emphasis that it has for me as a dancer.

Q. One of the things that is happening in dance research is the whole question of the use of videotape. Nina obviously has had experience with videotape. Do you find that when we tape parts and replay before the performance that you change movements because of the videotape?

A. It did allow for change. It did inspire me to change the material, not to drop something or eliminate it, but to reduce it or clarify it. Mostly the changes had to do with clarity. So you have to go back and find how you're going to reemphasize it.

Q. I can think of moments when we taped your solo, for example, and you had a feeling that something was happening. Then you go to a videotape and say, "Oh, now I see, that looks different to me." Nina was constantly focusing on clarity. In some way she acted as a lens, but that was different. How do you respond to her verbal cues? To the tapes?

A. It is not the same. One is more defensive with someone else's direct opinions. Because something feels a certain way, you have a certain possessiveness. The first thing you want to do is to reject someone's opinions, or what they are seeing. It is easier to trust the camera's eye and the camera is your eye. You're looking at it, so you can trust your own opinion more.

Q. Is the movement on the screen really what is in the theatre?

A. No, the movement on the screen is not the movement in the theatre because of the size of the screen, the size of the body that you're looking at, and the fact that there are other things around you. You're looking at the lights, the lighting is
different, it lacks the audience, it lacks the real sound of the dancers being there. It is not the same, so you don't have the same response to it. Because the tape tends to wash out the weight of the movement, it lacks the floor connection. There are detailed elements about dance that one can't pick up on the video.

Q. So you have an automatic corrective in your head saying that you recognize these limitations.

A. Oh yes, you notice right away whether it's explained to you or not.

Q. How about something that you may have thought may have been very broad, and which on videotape isn't that broad? Would you tend to make it even broader then, generally?

A. Probably, yes.

Q. The last question has to do with memory. We talked about reconstruction and how things were translated. One of the things that I notice with the rehearsals I attended was, at times, there seemed to be a dependence on you as the computer bank of the company.

A. Retention. I think it's probably just a mental skill, which also has to do with brain intelligence and body intelligence. I think part of the brain is delegated to the body and that we are not aware of it. The body also has its own memory bank. And then, there is also the conscious memory that one has. I think probably I have a combination which complements each other. I can retain large quantities of sequences of movement because of body memory and conscious memory.
APPENDIX H

REVIEWS OF THE CONDOR MATERIAL
Nina Wiener and three dancing friends gathered for 50 minutes of dance at the St. Marks Church Danspace on Tuesday. It was a solemn hour, as rapt and hermetic as some alien ritual.

The dance, called The Condor Material, was composed of four free-flowing sections danced in silence. In each of the first three parts a phrase or series of phrases was developed into a set of quirky exercises, and then "translated," as the abstruse program notes would have it, often into a far less complex sequence. In the fourth section, elements of the first three were repeated.

The initial phrases, stylishly referred in sequence as first, second and third ports de bras, although they bore little relationship to the balletic configurations of the same name, had the look of a Westernized t'ai chi calisthenic exercises. In the opening, unison section for Alison Pearl and Miss Wiener, arms reached into space with supple elegance, shoulders shrugged and twitched Cunningham style, and hands suddenly tugged at noses or played at imaginary children's games. Much of the dance was performed in place. With Timothy Buckley's crotchety entrance into the fray, the dance began to resemble a slowed-down sequence from a work by Twyla Tharp, with whom Miss Wiener has performed.

A falling and crawling dance for the company in the third section was coolly resilient; Miss Wiener had earlier provided an absorbing solo for Bebe Miller that was full of quick reverses that pointed up this dancer's style of compact, aggressive attack and sensual small gesture.

Each of the dancers was very good and although Miss Wiener's piece, that scourge of new dance— a work in progress— has some undeniable though mysterious interest, its performance is the chief attraction. "The Condor Material" will be seen again tonight at Danspace.
Nina Wiener's The Condor Material was about setting up a problem and playing with it. "The Condor Material" itself was three series of ports de bras that occasionally had the quality of long-winged birds in flight; much of it was like fragments of mime, broken up narrative, or imaginary day-labor. Four dancers performed at the St. Marks Danspace: Alison Pearl, Bebe Miller, Timothy Buckley, and Wiener. Pearl and Wiener commenced with a port de bras, and, gradually, legs were added under the flurry of arms - "translations," said the program, of the movements. It may sound weird and arbitrary, but the dancers found the kinesthetic blend that made it a dance.

When the legs danced, roots showed. Wiener danced with Twyla Tharp for two and a half years, and a sleepy, stretchy solo for Bebe Miller was mildly Tharpian, but in general the work was after Cunningham, especially in its dry and inventive syntax and technical matter-of-factness. It was movement study with no ulterior motive, not unlike discovering intelligent organisms on a microscope slide.

Sometimes I think Jimmy Carter found the keyword of the '70s when he spoke last year about competence: Wiener's dancers are all highly competent, and the choreography valorized competence and the centering that makes it possible in a dancer. It is difficult to single out any of them—their homogeneity was part of what made the work feel so even-handed and intelligent. Wiener ran nearly all the material twice, shifting the front to show how things looked from the back. She must want people to be sure of what they saw.

Much of the movement was in unison, and it often felt as if in moving together the dancers were entering the same train of random thought. Sometimes I wanted a bit less seriousness in their expressions, which to me would have suggested a trust in the material's ability to signify without coercion. But perhaps the logic of play is too serious a business.
"REVIEW"
by David Vaughn
DANCE MAGAZINE, March, 1978

Nina Wiener and Dancers gave the first performances of The Condor Material at Danspace (St. Mark's in the Bowery) on January 3 and 5. This was a fifty-minute work by Wiener, or rather something over twenty-five minutes, most of which was repeated. Wiener belongs to what I suppose we shall have to call, for convenience at least, the post-Tharp school of choreographers. In both movement and structure, her work is strongly influenced by Tharp, in whose company she danced for some time. The structure is a complex version of theme and variations; at the beginning Wiener and Alison Pearl state the basic material, identified as First Port de Bras, a long sequence in which the arms describe wide circles in the surrounding space or tight ones around the dancers' heads, plus other gestures—forearms snapping, fingers twitching, hands clapping and twisting together, and so forth—while the dancers stand in a wide second position, sometimes bending the torso straight forward from the hips and then slowly curving upright again. The sequence is then varied in terms of tempo, dynamics, and spatial relations, and other movements are added, including some Tharpian swivels, wiggles, isolations, and dislocations; the dancers may perform different variations simultaneously, or the same one in unison. As so often nowadays, one admires them—Wiener, Pearl, Bebe Miller, Timothy Buckley—not only for their technique and aplomb but for their ability to retain and transmit faultlessly an amazing quantity of movement information, far more than the average spectator can absorb at one viewing, or even two consecutively. I'm not sure, in this respect, that it's a good idea to give a detailed breakdown in the program of who's doing what when— one shouldn't have to refer to program notes to understand structure any more than to follow a story, but if they are there, the temptation is to try to keep track. I gave up after a while and just watched, but the impression persisted that there is something obsessively schematic about the work even though most of the time it was fascinating.

"DANCE: NINA WIENER"
by Jack Anderson
The New York Times, Friday, December 8, 1978

Nina Wiener offered the preview of a coming choreographic attraction Wednesday evening in the gymnasium of the Hunter College Campus School. That preview, however, proved to be an attraction in its own right.
Like many other choreographers these days, Miss Wiener appears to be as much interested in the sheer process of choreography as she is in turning out a finished choreographic product. Some choreographers never even bother with finished products. Instead, each of their concerts consists of fresh reformulations of the movement problems with which they happen to be involved.

For several months, Miss Wiener has devoted herself to a project that she calls "The Condor Material." In her case, this material will finally result in a finished product that will be shown next spring.

On Wednesday, Alison Pearl, Bebe Miller, Timothy Buckley and Miss Wiener danced portions of what will eventually be the work's second part. Perhaps realizing that a hunk of choreographic raw material, presented without explanation, might bewilder audiences, Miss Wiener commented upon events as the dance proceeded.

She explained that her choreography emphasized movements for the upper body, particularly for the arms. One did see movements for the legs, often brilliant movements. But, according to Miss Wiener, they all somehow reflected the dancers' arm movements.

All of Miss Wiener's choreography consisted of multitudinous variations upon a few key phrases. Two of these phrases were demonstrated and analyzed. One contrasted bit circles of the arms with smaller, more finicky, movements. The other was vaguely reminiscent of the complex hand gestures of certain Oriental dance forms.

Among the variations upon these themes were a scuttling solo for Mr. Buckley, a jumping solo for Miss Miller, a sequence in which three dancers dazzled the eyes by performing three brilliant solos simultaneously and a sequence in which the dancers performed exactly the same arm movements while their feet took them off in different directions. The choreography looked quirkily inventive and Miss Wiener's commentary was informative and devoid of pedantry.
"DANCE: NINA WIENER PRESENTS 'CONDOR MATERIAL'"

by Jack Anderson

The New York Times, Monday, April 23, 1979

What do you think of when you think of dancing? Some people may picture a ballerina in her toe shoes. Others may imagine a tap dancer clattering away or the bare feet of a modern dancer thumping the floor. These are certainly disparate images of dancing. But all suggest that dance is something for the feet.

Nina Wiener had her own ideas about dancing in "The Condor Material," presented by Nina Wiener and Dancers Saturday night at the Lepercq Space of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Miss Wiener sought to explore the possibilities of movement for the arms and upper body.

One might not have automatically guessed what her intentions were if she had not stated them in a program note, for she kept feet and legs, as well as arms, perpetually busy. Nevertheless, one could have noticed that the choreography she devised for Alison Pearl, Bebe Miller, Glenna Hamm, Timothy Buckley and herself emphasized a fluid upper body and gestures that ranged from casual shrugs to florid gesticulations in what could be termed "the grand manner."

Part of the fun of "The Condor Material" was figuring out on what principles it had been assembled. Thus, while watching Miss Wiener and Miss Pearl dance together, one suddenly noticed that their arm movements were identical. The steps seemed different, however, because the dancers were positioned at different angles to the audience. Later, there was a moment when three dancers did essentially the same things, except one was kneeling and so could only do the choreography for the body from the waist up.

Other passages seemed derived from sports. Mr. Buckley danced a solo filled with what looked like ball players' pitching and catching gestures. Dancers on the floor made signals like participants in a relay race. Another episode suggested yet another kind of race. Four dancers waved their arms and seemed to be puffing and panting. They could have been cross country runners, but their feet remained motionless.

Performed in silence, "The Condor Material" was crammed with choreography. It was also short, each of its two parts lasting only about half an hour. Therefore one wondered why an intermission was necessary. The two halves
did not seem radically different and the dancers did not appear to require a rest. Whereas the first part captured the attention, the intermission came as a distraction. And so the second half had to woo the viewer all over again.

Finally, one nagging question remains, The Condor Material was certainly ingenious. But what did it have to do with condors?

"FLYING LOW"
by Tobi Tobias
The Soho Weekly News, May 3, 1979

The earliest image I recall from Nina Wiener's The Condor Material is one of wide-swooping, winglike arms hovering over the dancers' splayed open, bent-kneed stance. If this were ballet you'd call the legs' placement a deep second position plié, and the legwork throughout the hour's worth of movement - at least while the dancers are still upright - sticks too blandly stated balletic reference points: the planar second position, the cross-legged open fourth. It's the arms that have all the interest and character.

Appearing singly and in combination, Wiener, Alison Pearl, Timothy Buckley, Bebe Miller and Glenna Hamm demonstrate and reiterate three kinds of arm language. The first is long and rippling, suggesting the flight of powerful birds or Middle Eastern dancing as the arms make a waving frame for the head, or, winding up for the pitch, a gangly athletic ease. In contrast there are tiny, almost literal gestures: hands tucking themselves into imaginary pockets; cryptic finger-to-eye-to-nose signals that catchers make to pitchers; hands folding over one another or neatly spooling. A third area of arm work consists of flat, angular strokes: a hand cutting across the throat, slicing out, away from and toward the breast; arms crooked at the elbow and flung upward, the fingers stiffly apart as in a silent movie comic's "Oh horrors!"

It's apparent, without reading the program note, that The Condor Material "originated in three different sequences created on the upper body." But we don't really see how the arm schemes were "translated into leg phrases" until the dancers take to the floor horizontally, lunge across it, sprawl and roll on it, the work of the lower limbs mimicking, complementing, or performing subtle variations on what the upper limbs are doing. Perhaps the most inventive sequences are the ones that have the performer prone or supine, the body's contact with the ground not the feet but the belly, the buttocks, or the base of the spine. With all four limbs free, the
dancers slough off the limitations of conventional human posture and assume an intriguing creaturely guise, although their program of motion is no less methodical and exacting.

Choreographically the piece is rigorous and quite dry, didactic in its insistence upon your seeing its basic materials and following their permutations. Frequently, to make her point, Wiener has two or more dancers execute the same material in unison or canon, stationed at different points in the performing space, angled differently toward the viewer, or set at different heights - erect, crouching, kneeling, lying down. And more than once she takes you back to a slow, deliberate statement of the original themes, as if she couldn't quite trust the viewer or the piece itself to keep them in focus. It's not surprising to hear that when it was shown as a work-in-progress, The Condor Material incorporated a lecture-demonstration and step-by-step program notes. Its structure might have been plotted on graph paper. I frankly can't tell if Wiener, like great radical dancers before her, is concentrating intransigently on bare-bones essentials as the first step in what may be a long, fruitful development, or if she's stepped into a deadend street.

At this stage, it's the performers who give the material its color, its juice. Although they make little contact with each other and even less overtly, with the viewer, their physical individuality is expressive and warming. While Wiener and Pearl are like twins in their lean, lithe fluidity, Bebe Miller is rounder, not so insistently linear and stretched out. When she dances along at one point she looks kittenish, sensual even, curving one segment of her body against another, her hands now and then curled up like paws. Timothy Buckley has morebulk, weight, muscle. This heavier, sinewy quality is wonderfully shown in a sequence that conjures up images of native Slavic dance. Rooting himself on one leg, he skids the opposite booted heel sideways, then, like a whip-wielding Georgian, springs ferociously, knees bent, to the tips of his toes. Glenna Hamm is a gymnast with a comic flair. Her body is more squared-off, stockier than the others', and she works like an athlete. You watch the springy tension as she gathers herself in, more than you watch the shapes she draws in space. She doesn't mug, or play to the audience, but her body shows off the humor of setting a tumbling's hunkering down to pounce against a string of roughed-out brises. As much as Twyla Tharp, with whom Wiener danced for a couple of years (and with whom she shares her taste for uncompromising form and for the colloquial gesture magnified into dance). Wiener has a canny sense of playing one vivid movement personality against another.
The Condor Material - like Wiener, I have trouble calling it a dance - is performed in workaday silence, accompanied only by the sound of the bodies against the floor and the occasional slap of palm against palm or thigh. The costumes are workaday too: jerseys, sweat pants, legwarmers cuffing the calf and ankle, supple-soled boots or jazz shoes, each outfit in shades of an easy-to-live-with color - off-white, turquoise, golden brown, rust. The dancers' manner is imperturbably matter-of-fact. The overall picture could serve as an illustration of Casual Functionalism, the theatrical style of 1970s dancing.

"NINA WIENER AND DANCERS"
by Deborah Jowitt
The Village Voice, May 14, 1979

What turned out to be the most intriguing about Nina Wiener's The Condor Material, which she, Alison Pearl, Timothy Buckley, Bebe Miller, and Glenna Hamm performed at BAM's LePercq Space was the combination of rigorous form and no-nonsense delivery with sensuously appealing and witty movement. The material that Wiener and her dancers have created based on three long sequences for arms alone is surprisingly flexible and susceptible to manipulation. You may see intricately detailed solos or Wiener in the background quietly introducing an arm pattern, while others wheel through the space in front of her. You may see an up-front view of the dancers taking turns with an arduous sitting, lying-down dance. You may understand that Glenna Hamm, on the floor, is doing with her legs what two standing dancers are doing with their arms. You may enjoy a let's-see-who-can-finish-first calisthenic routine, or puzzle over three dancers who share an arm pattern, but are doing completely different things with their legs and bodies. Some of the group work is extraordinarily involved, with individuals phasing in and out of a fast, space-covering dance.

The feeling is pure and uncompromising, but not belligerent. The silence is full of the sounds of dancing. The dancers wear simple, elegant pants and shirts and shoes, each dancer in a single color from head to toe. Only the lighting (offhand) is unhelpful and the intermission unwise. The dancers work easily with complexity - sometimes silkily, sometimes with a splattering force. There seems to be no part of the body they can't concentrate on - twist, slide, jab, shiver - yet even the quirkiest gestures (nose-wiping for instance) flow logically from what comes before and slip into what comes after. There's a fine intelligence about the material and the performing of it, so that the dancing appears to be like a language capable of much nuance and expressive modulation.
"REVIEW"

by Amanda Smith

DANCEMAGAZINE, July, 1979

A new version of The Condor Material was performed by Nina Wiener and Dancers at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Lepercq Space (April 19-22). In making an evening-length work that focuses most of her efforts and our attention on arm movements, Wiener has reclaimed a forgotten or underplayed aspect of dance. Hand and arm gestures, fundamental to Oriental dance, have a mainly auxiliary function in the dance styles of the West.

Wiener's movements include many hieroglyphic, mime-like, or common signals and gestures, but most often they are clever, abstract shapes, flicks, slides, curls, twists, rotations, and more. They slip from one into another with little time to signify anything except their formal beauty. Whatever the rest of the body is doing—second position pliés, torso flops or swings, leg swivels or kicks, crouches, rolls—is overshadowed by the arms and often draws its motivation or control from them. It is as if Wiener has turned our vision upside down and, stubbornly and contentedly, it stays that way.

Wiener, Alison Pearl, Timothy Buckley, and Bebe Miller have delicate bodies, buoyancy, and impressive concentration. Glenna Hamm, who first appears in Part II, has an athletic firmness and weightiness—she played on a collegiate women's football team—that she uses with great control and flair. As if Hamm's qualities guided its spirit, Part II shows more acceleration and force.

The entire work is performed in silence, but on the evening that I attended, rock music from BAM's Opera House could be heard in the Lepercq Space, giving Part II an unexpected accompaniment, and probably making the dancers' mental work that much more challenging. This pulsating undercurrent did not disturb me. In fact, I found the combination of these dancers, this movement, and the rhythms of rock exciting.
APPENDIX I

CARLA DESOLA: DANCE BACKGROUND
Liturgical Dance Experience (as a soloist and with the Omega Liturgical Dance Company)

Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine
St. Mark's Cathedral, Minneapolis, Minnesota
First English Lutheran Church, Baltimore, Maryland
St. Peter's by the Sea, Rhode Island
St. Paul the Apostle, New York City
Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis, Indiana
St. Bartholomew's Church, New York City
St. John's Episcopal Church, Bridgeport, Connecticut
Mary Immaculate Seminary, Northampton, Pennsylvania
St. Paul's (Woodstock Chapel), Columbia University
St. James Cathedral, Brooklyn, New York, 1980 and previous years
Second Southwest Liturgical Conference, Lafayette, Louisiana
Yankee Stadium, Charismatic Conference
General Convention of the Episcopal Church, Denver, Colorado
Immaculate Conception Seminary, Darlington, New Jersey
Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
Unitarian Church, Mt. Kisco, New York
St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Bird S. Coler Hospital, Roosevelt Island
First Presbyterian & Trinity Church, South Orange, New Jersey
St. Augustine Episcopal Church, Santa Monica, California
Temple Emmanuel, Yonkers, New York
Calvary Hospital, Bronx, New York
N.Y.U. Artist's Mass
41st Eucharistic Congress, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
B'Nai Israel, Sabbath Services, Connecticut
United Nations Prayer Services, New York City
Yoga Ecumenical Retreats, Annhurst, Connecticut
Places Taught:

Cathedral School, Children's Liturgical Dance Company, 1980
St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1980
Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois, Summer, 1979
St. Charles Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1979
Loyola University, Los Angeles, California, 1979, 1973, 1971
N.Y. Theological Seminary, Lay Division, 1972 - 1977
Jesuit Institute of the Arts, Fordham University, New York, 1975

Works Choreographed:

Quem Quaeritis: Original score by Stewart Powell, 17 minutes, 1980

Fair Forward Voyager: Music by Rochester Folk Arts Guild and David Grisman, 8 minutes, 1979

Without Understanding: Source unknown, John Cage Pink Floyd, 10 minutes, 1979

Gregorian Suite: Traditional Gregorian Modes, 15 minutes, 1978

Mary/Martha: Music - Japanese Koto, 8 minutes, 1975

Psalm 45: Music by the Trees, 10 minutes, 1976

Images of the Spirit: Medley, 15 minutes, 1976

Gloria: Misa Cariolla, 5½ minutes, 1975
Television Programs:

"Everyman." WMAQ-TV (NBC), Chicago, Illinois, July, 1979

"Dance in the Spirit" (with Margaret Beals)
   Diocesan Television Center, Rockville Center, 1974

"A New Heaven and a New Earth," Channel 5, Boston,
   Massachusetts, 1974 and re-runs


"A Time To Dance," Diocesan Television Center of Rockville
   Center, N.Y.: Seven Programs on dance and prayer for
   first and second grade students, 1972

"The Dance in The Liturgy," Channel 10, Providence, Rhode
   Island, for the Word In Action, a program", of the Diocese
   of Providence, Rhode Island, August 27, 1972

Books and Articles:

"Awakening the Right Lobe Through Dance" (co-authored by
   Arthur Eaton) in Aesthetic Dimensions of Religious
   Education, edited by Gloria Durka & Joanmarie Smith,
   Paulist Press, 1979

The Spirit Moves: A Handbook of Dance and Prayer, Litur-
   gical Conference, Washington, D.C., 1977


Liturgy Magazine, Liturgical Conference, Washington, D.C.,
   Monthly article on Dance, 1973 -- 1980

"The Dancer and the Christian Community," Liturgical Arts
   Magazine, August, 1971
INTERVIEW WITH CARLA DESOLA AND JUDY GRAVES, January 12, 1980

Q. How did the Omega Liturgical Dance Company get started?

C. Fr. Robert McGuire, then a guidance counselor at Regis High School, asked me to work with a small group of people interested in dance and the writings and spirituality of Teilhard de Chardin. Omega refers to the end point, the convergence of all things in Christ, which is part of Chardin's spirituality.

Q. What was the original purpose of Omega?

C. The purpose of the company has changed over the years. It is being redefined all the time. The original purpose of Omega Liturgical Dance Company, in its earliest days, (probably before Judy) was simply to be together (dancers, painters, people interested in the arts) and explore levels of meaning in the Scripture by improvising with movement. There was also a singer in the group who would play songs around the theme and a painter. From there, workshops evolved and only rarely did we think of taking any dance into a church setting. The main purpose was exploration and experimentation rather than choreographing a work and polishing it. Later on, as the company developed into a more professional company, (and it is developing more and more) we continued to work with the process of improvisation and common prayer together, but from these we developed dances based on our reflections of Scriptural themes and other inspirational songs. For instance, Psalm 42 - no one came in and learned the piece from a repertory (as they do now). We took the different lines, we sounded them out, we did a million kinds of things, improvised and then set the dance.

J. When I first came to OMEGA, my purpose was to find a way to work actively for God and for the spirit. Because most of my life seemed everyday, I wanted actively to express my spirituality. Dance was what I was interested in and what I was about. When I heard about Carla, it seemed an ideal way to integrate those aspects of my life.
Q. How did you first hear about Carla?

J. I saw a poster at NYU where I was working towards my Masters in dance therapy. I saw a picture of Carla and a phone number to call for more information. I remember, particularly, Carla's hands in the picture, the expression and movement. I called and found out more about her.

Q. So your dance technique was on a rather developed level?

J. Yes, it was already.

Q. Was that true of those who were joining at the time when Judy came?

C. Half and half. It was a mixed level technically. The main purpose of the company was not technical. Spirituality was more important at that point. Now, they go hand in hand.

Q. When you first joined the company what was it like Judy?

J. When I joined, the company was doing The Passion. It was the first time for us, and there was a need for a Palm Sunday sequence. I fit right in there. We did it for St. Paul's, Columbia-Woodstock.

Q. Was that the first time you danced in a church?

J. No, I had danced in church once before as an undergraduate in college, to Ash Wednesday a poem by T. S. Elliott.

Q. How did you feel being part of a group that was going to be dancing in a church? Was that part of the spiritual quest?

J. Yet, it was. I had grown up in the church as a child, had gotten away from it and now come back to it in dance. The idea was very attractive to me.

Q. How has the original purpose and direction of Omega evolved?

C. We strive to be a finely-trained dance company that still maintains a diversified spiritual quest on each person's part. Everyone does not have to believe exactly the same things. It has never been that way. All over the country there are many beautiful, small religious dance groups that work on a prayer level, but rarely on a technical level. I felt the need to have a company that is able to combine both, and to push the boundaries of what is
spiritual and religious. The problems I have faced in the company over the years suggest the complexity of the human being. This complexity takes in a variety of spiritualities and beliefs. I see Omega in a very deep ecumenical sense of not being divisive in spirituality or purpose. Omega represents the combination of being able to serve liturgical needs in the church, and to delve more deeply into dance and spirituality. In performance we might show pieces that would not be particularly suitable for church, but would be pieces that are spiritual (which is not to say that other pieces in any dance company might not be). Thus, we say explicitly that even though some dances may be very abstract, or whatever, they do show through the spirituality of dance. Omega is then able to serve churches, to do workshops, teach and show methods to other people.

Q. (To Judy) As a performer, do you find a difference between dancing in a performance space and dancing in a church space?

J. I do. There is something about dancing in a church space, about the energy of the space, particularly when we dance at a high altar or in a cathedral. It is difficult to describe the feeling—the air around, (the Karma maybe) because the space is so much more worshipful. Holy things happen there and dancing through that space is very different from dancing on a stage or in any other environment.

Q. In terms of the dance itself, is there a difference in the movement quality or theme that might not be appropriate in church but contain spiritual or sacred elements? How are those distinctions made?

C. One day they may be appropriate in church. It is more a comment on what seems appropriate now. The church's view is not that sensitive. I think that, if a congregation can read dance and is aware of dance as an art form, it would accept a new dance more readily than a congregation that has almost no knowledge of dance at all. It might be mystifying rather than uplifting to them.

Q. How would you describe a dance that would be suitable?

C. In a beginning situation it helps if it is more overtly "religious." Ultimately, I do not define dance as religious in terms of its subject matter. To do liturgical dance is to do a dance that is substantial in form, contains religious content
and is not just thrown together. In addition to the religious subject matter, it has to have flow and be suited for a liturgical situation. What makes it correct is if it is right for the timing of the whole liturgy. There is usually no problem if it is connected with a set part of the Mass. A Kyrie is a Kyrie, whether it is danced or not. There is more concern that the meditation after Communion, or a psalm response fit the whole flow.

Q. Was Gregorian Suite first developed for a performance or for a church?

C. For a performance.

Q. Do you make many changes when you do a "performance" dance in the liturgy?

C. There were not many changes made. It is rare that we would do the complete dance at one Mass. Usually, we would do selections; we did so at one point at St. Paul's - we did the Kyrie and the Credo.

J. And I think we did the Sanctus as a Communion meditation.

Q. Are there any dances in your repertory that had their origin in a liturgical rather than a performance situation?

C. The Gregorian Suite almost was. I figured that it would be useful because we could adapt it. But that is not starting first with an assignment from the church to do a piece for a certain day, and then taking it specifically that way...we have done many dances that are not in the Omega repertory for specific things. They are not in the repertory because of the distinction we make in liturgical dance between folk and fine art. It is folk art for the occasion. But we don't keep it. We devise certain dances for an occasion. This is probably oversimplified. I really do not like working this way. For a while we had to; as we develop, we can be more critical and educate people in the art of liturgical dance.

Q. I would imagine that a group of professionally trained dancers doing "folk art" is different than ordinary people doing folk art?

C. We need a third distinction. Our dance in these situations is not the same as folk art. It is more of an improvisation based on the liturgical situation. It is a carefully honed, worked-out piece.
Q. If dance is a form of communication, then it would seem to me that almost any part of liturgy could be dance?

C. I agree with you. One can dance the Kyrie, the Gloria, the readings, the psalms, the Gospels, the processions, after Communion, at the offering, the blessings, during the eucharistic prayer and sermon, yes.

Q. What would be some of the elements toward a definition of dance?

C. It is a focusing of internal energy combining the elements of religion in space and dynamics within the human being. Taking ordinary movement and filling it with a spirit could be one definition. Even if the spirit is abstract, it is giving the dance an energy. The human being combines these primary energies with their experience and awareness. It could be a folk dance or a hop through the woods. It has the elements of rhythm and space in an aesthetic sense. Whether there is real music or not, it is like a song incarnated.

Q. The word "dance" is used to cover a variety of movement expressions, e.g., some of the Gospel dances could also be called mime. Are these distinctions in form really necessary and important?

J. The Hindu religion speaks of the whole process of living as a dance - the whole dance of life and Shiva. The creative aspect of dance is doing the dance of creation where the whole thing is a dance.

C. Actually, the whole liturgy is dance even if there are no actual dancers dancing it. It might take the awareness of a dancer to see the ebbs and flows.

Q. You just said that the whole liturgy is a dance. What do you think about the celebrative aspects of liturgy or ritual and the repetition element?

C. In a sense, it is an artistic problem - how to use an element of repetition which is important in a ritual as well as in art. It can be deadly if it is not used by an artist with a religious perception of ritual. I can be absolutely necessary to the ritual or absolutely deadening to it, depending on the awareness of the artistic use of repetition. But, it is not just repetition.
Folk art is legitimate and our in-between stage would be legitimate. Our improv is not done to get away with something. Simply, we use our training to do a dance appropriate to the occasion.

Q. (To Judy) How do you see the connection between your artistry and your quest for the spiritual of sacred? Does it all fit together?

J. It is not a problem at all. If we can use our training to express the spirit, then we can improvise and work out a dance that is meaningful and often uplifting. It is often deeply satisfying to me as a person even though I know it is not going to be a final dance or one on a dance program. I do not feel ashamed of it during the liturgy and really feel good doing it.

Q. (To Judy) How do you feel about Carla, the director of the company negotiating what elements are going to be danced in a liturgical situation?

J. I trust Carla totally in that way. I am not "very Catholic" and I do not know that much about the liturgy. I have learned a tremendous amount about it from dancing with Omega, but it was fine with me for Carla to make those kinds of decisions.

Q. What areas in the liturgy have been most suitable for dance?

C. After Communion is a good time because there is no interruption. One can do a whole meditation dance (5 to 7 minutes). I have danced at almost every section of the liturgy. Recently I found dancing the common parts of the Mass (which are usually shorter and not that satisfying as a dancer) very satisfying when all put together. By the end of the liturgy the parts were nicely spaced out, giving a feeling of integration. One can dance almost any psalm because they are so full of imagery, sound and emotional impact.

Q. (To Judy) What is Liturgical dance?

J. Dance in the liturgy, one in religious services.

Q. Do you see it as a radical or a liberal thing?

C. I always get the sense that it is the opposite, of going back - way back into an ancient feeling. Whenever we dance, I get the sense of dancing as an ancient way of expressing these things.
Q. In discussing the elements of ritual, what are the other important elements?

C. Timing, the sense of space, the awareness of the mystery are important. The leaders need to be aware of the depth of the mystery, because the ritual is providing a form for people to see with "second sight" and to enter into a mind set, a soul set, or a spiritual set. By praying they enter into, evolve and work out their ecoselves. The people want to participate in order to affirm their change.....at the same time, one cannot always be on a creative edge so that the ritual has a function of providing a structure to allow these new perceptions to come through. Some structure is supportive of this function.

Q. Would you say the Eucharist provides such a structure?

C. Yes.

Q. Does the structure of the Mass provide you with a place to put a dance from the repertoire?

C. I usually work in a formal situation, and never have the time to work on structure, to play with things and to know what could be done. In all the more informal workshops, the timing and the whole setting of space is so different that it does not become a model for the church with pews. Keeping to the same liturgical framework can be very satisfying. With workshops the time frame is so different that you could spend a half hour on a psalm if all the different workshop groups took that long to work it out and to be involved actively in doing it.

Q. Do you feel that some of the dancers are inserted into liturgy or they really come out of liturgy - or both?

C. Both. Hopefully, what looks like an insertion is really a "voice," sounding a little different, but speaking in context. I think things come about rather gradually. This raises the question of really caring about being part of the whole community. The dance is a powerful energy. Church people are often afraid that the dancer will really go wild, or maybe be silly, giggle, fall, who knows what, or that the dancer does not know how to do anything with depth.

Q. Do you think with church people there is a fear of the body - since dance uses the body as its primary instrument?
C. We need to integrate the body and the spirit. And maybe there is some puritan background towards sexuality. Since the body represents sexuality, there is a lot of fear there. Our dance is so very controlled. Any fear people may have of some wild dance is illogical because there are very few people in our culture who dance wildly. People do not see that on television. They barely see ecstatic dance except in the black churches. Ecstatic dance is not likely to come into the mainstream of the church. Not that it might not be healthy now and then!

Q. What would be some of the elements that contribute to control?

C. Training and discipling the body so that it can do and say and express exactly, precisely, what one intends. We have specific ideas about what we want to express. We do not run out wildly to express joy. We find a controlled way to express it.

Q. Most dance in church has an "other" quality, uplifted and, if we can use the word, ethereal. Do you think there will come a time when there will be more sensuous or passionate dancing?

A. I think there has to be. One of our early criticisms of our work is this "other worldly" quality. We have been trying to achieve a balance: Doug Adams calls it "inspirational," rather than "prophetic." He uses these two distinctions.

Q. What kind of dancer would you use for "the eternal mother?"

C. I would want a very large dancer, and rather big, who would represent a real fullness. She would be a mixture of an earth mother and spirit mother combined, what you would think of it as an eternal image. I think she would have more weight and grandeur than either a floating disembodied spirit or sprite.

Q. When I looked at the tapes of the liturgical dance at St. Paul's, what impressed me was the "opening out" qualities, the expansiveness and the upward orientation with breathing impulses giving a sense of exaltation.

C. Exaltation is an important factor. Often when you are feeling very depressed (down and heavy), you do not even want to move. If you are carefully choreographing a dance that relates to this process rising
up out of that heaviness, you are working through a heaviness of the soul to a sense of ease. That is our normal pattern of spirituality. We experience exaltation in the midst of the mire. In general, we are escapists. We do not look at the dingy subways, at the reality. The dancers reflect the church reality. As a choreographer, I go for the exalted side, working through the body.

Religious dance does not mean getting stuck with a limited number of images. We need both a sense of exaltation and a way to express the human conditions, the fears, the agony and the pain.