



David Gordon: The Ambiguities

DAVID GORDON'S work over the past eighteen years has been concerned with finding structures for framing the individual, fleeting act. In one sense, he views choreography as self-defense: since the ideology of modern dance has always promoted tolerance for individual performance styles and body structures, it can be forced to make room for those dancers whose bodies and styles fit into no one's vision but their own. They survive artistically by becoming choreographers. But this kind of self-defensive thinking has also put Gordon on the offensive. Inventing new systems for ordering movement—changing the rules—means criticizing and discarding academic formulae. As a student, Gordon always managed to find the holes in the teaching. But he will criticize the new as well as the old. In the heyday of the Judson Church, his trenchant *Random Breakfast* (1963) parodied his peers' new methods of making dances. And his most recent dance, *Not Necessarily Recognizable Objectives* (1978), comments ironically on its own content and construction.

Refining his offensive/defensive strategies slowly, finding highly systematic constructions with which to frame the most elusive or undistinguished movements, concentrating on minute details of simple actions, and using repetition as a key device, Gordon has evolved a choreographic practice that works analytically. Like a cubist painter, he accumulates and organizes multiple views of a single phenomenon into one composition—a method that despite apparent distortion often reflects more accurately the complex psychological processes of visual perception. As Cézanne and his followers made near and far objects equal in the picture plane, so Gordon effectively erases

hierarchies between classes of movement. Transitions between one kind of gesture or step and another become as important as the step itself. Or transitions disappear entirely. Habitual or functional gestures appear side-by-side with abstract movements. But an inclination of the head or the lifting of a chair may be given even more weight than a jump. The process of isolating and focusing on particular movements tends to stress their formal qualities, though Gordon's dances also bristle with humor, irony, and social comment.

In the debate on theatricality among post-modern choreographers, Gordon espouses spectacle. But he uses spectacular moments and glamorous touches cunningly, often intensifying them until a gap between the movement relationships and their theatrical overlay throws the movement into high relief. Or, until ultimately the ambiguity of what is "real" and what is dramatic, or scripted, floats tantalizingly to the surface of the dance.

Gordon was born and grew up in Manhattan. He earned a degree in fine arts from Brooklyn College, where he performed with the school dance club. In 1956, while still in college, he began dancing in James Waring's company. From Waring, he learned to value wit and style, to consider any movement as something that might be included in a dance, to study the work of Merce Cunningham, Merle Marsicano, Katherine Litz, and others who were outside of what was then mainstream modern dance. He studied composition with Waring, choreographing his first publicly performed duet with Valda Setterfield¹ for a program of work by Waring's students given at the Living Theater in 1960.

While studying with Cunningham on a scholarship at Connecticut College in the summer of 1960, Gordon decided to take Martha Graham's technique class and Louis Horst's composition class as well. "I had no knowledge of this work that everybody else had revolted against," Gordon remembers.² He wanted to find out what Waring, Cunningham, Marsicano, Litz, Aileen Passloff and others had left behind.

He found Graham "extraordinary" but after the first week, she turned the class over to another teacher who was disappointing. Gordon's interest in Graham technique ended. In Horst's class, Gordon immediately found the chinks when he tried to fit his own content into the preclassic forms Horst assigned. "I did an ABA number in which the A part was jumping around and shaking a lot and the B part had to do with leg lifts and the A part was a return to shaking again." Gordon admits he was looking for trouble when he

told the teacher that the name of the dance was *The Spastic Cheerleader*. But he believes that his attempt to solve the next assignment, a duet in ABA form, was earnest. He asked Setterfield to be his partner. She would do the A section, Gordon would come in and together they would perform B, and then he would do her A movement at the end. Horst objected to the dance as soon as Setterfield began it, saying that it wasn't a duet at all. "He didn't let us continue and he wouldn't see it and after that he wouldn't call my name . . . So that ended *that* kind of knowledge-gathering."

Gordon's next duet for himself and Setterfield, on the Waring program in 1960, was *Mama Goes Where Papa Goes*. Setterfield recalls that at the time, Gordon was interested in awkwardness and in disturbing fluidity of movement.³ Gordon remembers his motivation much more specifically: "Valda was so lyrical-looking and competent." The piece opened with Gordon standing on stage, his arms full of rubber balls. He opened his arms, dropped all the balls, and when they had stopped bouncing and rolling away, he walked off. Setterfield had a solo that was a series of jumps, one followed immediately by the next, involving different body parts, without any transitions or preparations. At another point in the dance, Setterfield limped on crutches to center stage while Gordon followed her; he pulled away the crutches, and she walked.

Nascent in *Mama Goes Where Papa Goes* are a number of themes that were to continue as concerns in Gordon's work. One is the ironic tribute to the myths cherished and disseminated by Hollywood. Another is the reversal of the notion that dancing is movement made to look easy; in the jump sequence, dancing was awkwardness and blatantly difficult maneuvering. A third theme, embodied in the opening sequence, is that the handling of objects and the duration of an action can dictate timing, a rejection of musical or dramatic sources for rhythm that has occupied the work of other post-modern choreographers as well.

Continuing to study sporadically with Cunningham, and by now married to Setterfield, Gordon discovered that refining technique interested him far less than making dances. He took composition with Cunningham, and then in the class taught by Robert Dunn, which later exploded into the Judson Dance Theater. But having learned chance techniques already from Waring, Gordon found himself as uncomfortable with what he perceived as a rigid approach to chance in the Dunn class as he had been with Horst's preclassic forms. He continued to look for ways to beat the system. When Dunn allowed the op-

tion of using Satie music in various ways, Gordon chose to ignore the music entirely. He made *Mannequin Dance* and *Helen's Dance* (both 1962) partly, he claims, to irritate the teacher.⁴ But despite his discomfort with Dunn's dogmatic approach, he recalls that class as "an extraordinary meeting of explosive material with its catalyst . . . the contact with each other, many of us for the first time, was as instrumental as the classes in producing that explosion."⁵

Mannequin Dance was originally conceived as material to be repeated ten times in one evening, surrounded by clothed or nude department store mannequins which would be moved around and have their costumes changed in between the solos. Another continuing concern — repetition — emerges, though Gordon never did perform the piece more than once in an evening.

Gordon's fascination with show biz reached an apotheosis in *Random Breakfast* (1963), in which all sorts of performance styles and conventions are presented and pulled apart, from Spanish dancing to Milton Berle's imitations of Carmen Miranda, from striptease to happenings to the Judson Church dances to Judy Garland.⁶ In several dances before and after *Random Breakfast* he has used flamboyant costumes, stagy demeanor, lavish music, or Hollywood cliché imagery: he sings "Second Hand Rose" and "Get Married Shirley" in *Mannequin Dance*; in *The Matter* (1972), the performers imitate the frozen glamour of fashion models, striking bathing beauty poses, and later in the same piece the group performs low-key movement material accompanied by a recording of the wedding march from *Lohengrin*. Gordon's *Chair* (1974) opens with a sixteen-piano rendition of "The Stars and Stripes Forever." In some versions of *Sleepwalking* (1971), the dancers put on coats and hats that suggested gangster or spy costumes. And in *Not Necessarily Recognizable Objectives* (NNRO), Gordon is compared to Nijinsky in the spoken text.

But his use of glamorous signals is paradoxical. Glamour excites a whole set of romantic cultural connotations: luxury, power, mystery, instant success, sexual display and desirability, vanity, artifice, and nostalgia. Partly these signals function as sincere tributes to movies, performers, and music Gordon admires. But also, embedded in the context of a Gordon dance, the glamorous qualities clash violently with other elements: casual activity; everyday or sloppy clothing; repetition approaching tedium; the acknowledgment that dancing is work and the demystification of the choreographic process; and, especially, the presentation of individuals as unique beings, with highly idiosyncratic bodies. The notion of glamour proposes a standardized ideal of physical beauty, one that must be emulated and that will provide a

key to the total transformation of one's life. But Gordon's dances ultimately emphasize the differences between bodies, celebrating the qualities of awkwardness and confusion, as well as grace, elegance, and authority. The stark contrast between the spectacular and the mundane in the dances has several functions. It raises the common features to the status of acceptable theatrical material, by lending them the fanfare normally spent on extraordinary elements. But also, it raises fundamental questions about theatricality by distancing spectacle from movement. During the performance we are forced to consider how movements become theatrical. How is the peculiar aura of glamour manufactured? Does the glossy exterior of spectacle hide, alter, or enhance serious content? Can a performance ever escape its own historical moment — the fact that it has inherited a legacy from the institution of theater, whether it follows or breaks from that tradition, and the fact that the audience brings to a performance certain shared expectations about theatrical dancing? By referring directly to theatricality in his unconventionally theatrical works, Gordon situates his dances firmly. They are not entertainments, but artworks that analyze and criticize entertainment. They show the power and mystique entertainment can create, the art it can popularly present. Invoking symbols of nostalgia, Gordon shows that his work is the product of a historical process, yet very much of the present.

In 1966, Gordon gave up on choreography after his solo *Walks and Digressions* was badly received. He describes the piece as "a sequence of events, non-related, with bridges . . . I remember very clearly as the material came out thinking what the fuck am I doing, this is really grotesque, I'm walking around holding my crotch and pulling my pants down and spitting. These are really ugly things. And I thought all right, I'll keep it, I'll see what happens. And when it came time to perform it I was exceedingly uncomfortable . . . and so I set the lights so you could barely see it." The audience booed and walked out across the stage as Gordon performed. Robert Morris, reviewing the dance for the *Village Voice*, was harsh: "Certainly the work was not shocking (the underwear was so very clean) nor did it manage any incisive humor. When a work is presented that suggests that it might have aimed at such results but fails to bring off either, the performer is stranded in his own vacuum of self-indulgence." And Clive Barnes called the entire concert (which included works by Steve Paxton and others) "nothing but the exercise of puerile egocentric minds in the futile quest of shocking the already unshockable . . . pitiful, adolescent caterwauling."

Gordon had felt like an outsider in the Judson Church situation from the

beginning. At this point he was dancing with Yvonne Rainer as well as making his own work, and he questioned his own methods seriously. He was not prepared for a strong negative reaction to his work, and he stopped choreographing until 1971.

By that time he was partly fortified by his work with Rainer and with the incipient Grand Union. Rainer asked him to teach her students during her trip to India, and the classes, affording a leisurely situation in which to work with a large group of dancers and nondancers, impelled him further. The piece that emerged was *Sleepwalking*.

The basic movement theme of *Sleepwalking* is acceleration. The dance is a cluster of identical solos — a sequence that moves from strolling to walking to running to racing, between two walls. Finally the performers lean against one of the walls as if asleep, leave to put on hats and coats, return to the wall and fall, writhing violently, as if shot. Because walking is such a simple activity, the differences between various styles of walking among the group come clear long before the movement changes, giving the spectators time to examine them carefully. Turns, a twist of the torso, the switch from walking to running, are all magnified enormously because the background is so consistent. But as the walking metamorphoses rapidly into running and then racing, we make another set of comparisons. We notice how effort and muscular deployment change as speed modifies the action. Since each performer chooses randomly when to change pace, at times the dance is a rich field of walking, running, turning, and bolting. The shoot-out imagery at the end provides an overlay of meaning, a possible (though not necessary) motivation for the speedup. And the accompanying sounds — sexual moans, sighs, and shrieks that intensify as the movement quickens — provide another possible, conflicting significance.

The Matter, another large group piece, made with twenty-five performers during a Grand Union residency at Oberlin College and performed by forty in Manhattan, uses the opposite operation for clarifying movement details.⁸ Here halting, freezing, and interruption of movement prevail. Performers strike poses; at one point, involved in manipulations of objects like a stool, a box, a piece of wood, or their own pockets, they halt at random as the action progresses. Throughout the piece they suddenly freeze, or take positions and revise them. Setterfield's nude solo in *The Matter*, a series of held poses taken from Eadweard Muybridge's *The Human Figure in Motion*, exemplifies Gordon's shared concern with the photographer: to capture accurately the mercu-

rial attitudes of the body by arresting it constantly in flux. The comparison between nude and clothed bodies, and among people in underwear, sleepwear, and street clothes, underscores the differences between readings of a single pose.

In *Chair, Alternatives 1 through 5* (1974), Gordon uses persistent repetition to point out two types of distinctions. The dance begins with an empty stage and a sixteen-piano recording of "The Stars and Stripes Forever." Next, two conflicting, fictional accounts "explain" how the piece was made. Then Gordon and Setterfield repeat four times an eight-minute sequence of evenly flowing action, with a folding chair — sitting on it, kneeling on it, lying on it, falling off it, folding it, pulling it over the body, leaning in it, stepping on, over, or through it, et cetera. But each repetition of the double solo is a slight variation. First the sequence is stated by the two simultaneously. The second time, each performer stops the flow at various points to repeat a fragment over and over. The third time, Setterfield reverses directions, so that instead of a double image of the same dance, we see one image and its symmetrically inverted reflection. And the fourth time, the two sing the Sousa march while executing the actions slightly faster. The dance ends as the two finish the fourth sequence and stand during the finale of "The Stars and Stripes Forever," this time played by a military band.

During the first statement of the chair material, one notices the distinctive ways Gordon's solid, muscular male body and Setterfield's thin, angular yet sinuous female body accommodate the physical facts of the chair and, reciprocally, are emphasized by it. (There is one action Gordon performs but Setterfield does not: lying across the back of the chair on the pelvis. It simply was painful for Setterfield, though it was not for Gordon.) The functional actions with the chair act like markers to point out the workings of the joints, muscles and bones; during the part of the phrase where the chair is lightly dragged over the body as the dancers lie on the floor, the chair literally traces a profile of each body. The differences, rather than similarities, are stressed since the movements are rarely synchronized exactly and tend to slip into rhythmic canon. Though the individual actions are simple, the sequence itself is complex. It is slippery, hard to remember, since the various actions have many elements in common and they flow by without transitions. Their diversity is glossed by a fluent, uninflected rhythm which slows down and accelerates but rarely pauses. The pace of the movement also changes the action from task to dance.

But the second time the sequence is repeated, reiteration functions within the phrase to clarify individual actions, rather than to emphasize physical differences. Each performer can decide where and how long to get stuck, so the repetition changes from one performance to the next, and it throws the entire canon out of order. The repetition also creates a tension between simplifying the movement — it becomes familiar to the spectator both because it repeats what we saw in the first alternative and because it magnifies certain details — and complicating the movement. The repetition evokes images that lend meaning to the abstract activity. For instance, when she touches her head to the floor repeatedly, Setterfield appears to be bowing submissively. Sexual imagery is suggested when the chair is rubbed back and forth over the body, or when the movement of the pelvis from side to side is rhythmically repeated while hunching over the seat of the chair. At other times, though, the action suggests child's play: sitting backward on the chair with one leg through the back, it is walked around in circles. Or the action resembles a child's tantrum: the chair is placed emphatically on the floor over and over until it turns into obstinate banging. Getting up from the floor converts into situp and pushup regimens; stepping forward and back over and over again seems to signal indecision; rearranging hands and feet or shifting weight repeatedly while sitting implies nervousness, or even autistically ritual behavior. When Gordon's head is stuck through the back of the chair and he almost lifts it off a number of times, we suddenly see him as a powerless prisoner. The second chair alternative shows us the power of our tendency to create contextual meaning for movement.

During the third repetition of the phrase the movements, now clarified and familiar, are done in their original form, but we see them in mirror image. Again our attention is called to the formal details of the actions and the way the pattern changes when we see it from a different angle. Gordon's execution of the movements in their original direction serves as a glancing board against which Setterfield's reversals stand out saliently. The fourth alternative, when the performers sing as they manipulate the chair, again imparts psychological meaning to the phrase. We see it as a difficult task requiring effort; we hear them losing their breath or going out of tune at troublesome points. This time, the rhythm of the phrase seems altered, dictated by the rhythm of the song. The action begins to look perfunctory in a way that the previous three versions had not; though it may be because the phrase is performed faster, it seems to be because the singing predominates over the action. The contrast

between the significance of the action when juxtaposed to music or repeated methodically and its relative neutrality in different contexts makes any interpretation ambiguous.

The duet *Wordsworth and the motor* + *Times Four* (1977) carries this ambiguity further. A series of arm and leg gestures, again performed several times in overlapping rhythmic canon, reads differently when the performers (a) describe what they are doing ("turn, jump, straight arm, circle arm, walk, walk, walk"); (b) assign functional meaning to the gestures ("hi, put it there, where did I put it, who's he, go away"); (c) give soliloquies from Shakespeare while moving, the gestures seemingly turning into conventions of stage oratory. The spectators' visual screens are wiped clean with an interlude, *Times Four* (1975), a chain of semaphoric actions performed in precise, side-by-side unison, with each gesture or step repeated in four opposite directions. Then the Wordsworth sequence is done again, accompanied by the sound of a motor, as a wall, which blocks each dancer from the view of half the audience, is built between the two dancers. One remembers the text one heard on tape before the dancing began — from David Pye's *The Nature of Design* — and one starts making logical connections.

In order to understand how Gordon's repetitions and ingenious variations operate, one has to visualize his movement style. He says of himself that he is not a technically trained dancer, and that he is lazy. "My leg never went up very high, and turning still makes me vomit."⁹ Yet movement looks easy and authoritative on him. Whether working with dancers or nondancers, he uses movements that look more like *behavior* than choreography — the sorts of movements people make routinely, unconsciously, and therefore often decisively. Legs rarely go straight in the air; even a high kick is done with a bent knee. Torsos yield, arms relax. In every Gordon dance I've seen, the movements are specific and deliberate, yet performed with a casual demeanor that nearly belies their careful design. Thus Gordon's repetitions are often shocking. We don't expect to see two people, or a whole group of people, duplicating movements that look spontaneous and idiosyncratic. Nor do we expect dancers to remember so precisely a long string of movements that are nearly indistinguishable. And we are surprised that material so similar to unconscious behavior can be varied so distinctly, and in so many ways.

If all behavior is performance, as sociologist Erving Goffman argues,¹⁰ how can we distinguish between performances that are spontaneous/rehearsed, scripted/improvised, accurate/flawed, controlled/out of control, fact/fiction?

Not Necessarily Recognizable Objectives solves the dilemma by emphasizing the contradictions. The distinction between polar opposites becomes less intriguing than the tensions and ambiguities. In *NNRO*, occurrences at rehearsals — arguments, laughter, mistakes — were incorporated into the (verbal and kinetic) script; also, the structure allows for spontaneous action and talk at specific times. The spectator is never allowed to feel certain about what is planned and what is new. And since the planned events often look very much like the sort of disruptions that might mar a performance, every action carries ambivalence and tension. The dancers stumble, but when they stumble in unison, you realize it's planned. But one dancer falls during the stumbling; when Gordon glances at him, then continues across the floor, you wonder again if it's "for real." The performers stop to have an argument — is it genuine? They express confusion verbally as well as in movement, but at the same time they provide clues that all the confusion is scrupulously choreographed. They scratch their arms, smooth their hair, rest their hands on their hips, stop to complain, hold their noses, mutter to themselves, ask to go back to the beginning, consult with each other. And all this behavior forms around a movement combination that is repeated many times, and varied. They run, but in slow motion. (The running occurs at points throughout, with different pairs and with the whole group. Once again, you compare body types, as first Gordon and Setterfield run together, then Setterfield and Stephanie Woodward — whose heights are in the same uneven proportions as Gordon's and Setterfield's had been.) They look in one direction and move the opposite way. Clear positions crystallize momentarily during transit. *NNRO* is a ballet of crossed signals. And the spectators participate in the ambiguities, reading the crossed signals first one way, then another.

The performance begins with a tape of Agnes Moorehead, from *Sorry, Wrong Number*, asking the operator to dial again the wrong number she's just reached. Then a voice recites a passage from Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* that outlines all the little mistakes that can botch a performance. Gordon and Setterfield enter, run in a circle, then along diagonal lines. Then they stand facing the wall. A script is taped to the wall. You can see that dialogue is written on the script, but as they talk it's hard to tell what they're reading and what they interpolate. They tell each other what comes next. But when they quote ostensibly correct lines, the quotation marks are lost in the telling, and the statements curl back on themselves enigmatically. "So I never say 'what' like it's a question . . ." the dialogue begins. "You have

to say you have to say now it's you," Setterfield insists. "You have to say now it's you," Gordon says obediently. "Now it's you," she responds. They argue about whether they've turned at the right time, and whether they ought to start the dialogue again from the beginning, and soon they actually do start again from the beginning, but this time switching roles. When the dialogue is repeated exactly, down to the laughs and about-faces and hugs and pauses, we realize that the entire scene was scripted.

Next comes a movement sequence, concentrated and silent, in which the two revolve constantly, their arms wrapping and unwrapping each other's shoulders, slowly and deliberately, as they adjust their bodies to fit snugly together. Their taped voices appear, to start another circular discussion, this one about arguing. Predictably, it turns into an argument about their inability to argue constructively. Woodard enters and she and Setterfield start the slow run around the circle; as Woodard's body enters the running circle, becoming Setterfield to Setterfield's Gordon, her voice slips into the verbal circle on the tape. Later, the same movement circles and diagonals are done by the whole group of dancers.

During the piece, the performers casually join and leave activity; Martha Roth stops to wonder aloud whether the movement, continuing inexorably without her, would look better as a duet than as a trio, and she ruefully concludes that no one will even miss her. Gordon and Setterfield join the two, and suddenly Roth is left out of a quartet. But when she repeats the punch line of her earnest speech again, and when the other four stop to determine whether they've picked her up at the right spot, it's obvious that the whole interruption has been rehearsed.

The three women press together gently to repeat the arm wrapping sequence Gordon and Setterfield had done. They turn around and around, and add lying down and getting up in unison, so that now you see knees descending, now an arm resting across a back, now buttocks rising in the air, now shoulders coming forward. Romantic music from *Swan Lake* and *La Fille Mal Gardée* suddenly fills the room; abruptly the women, balanced delicately in a row, look like wilting ballerinas about to bourrée primly across the floor. But they lie down again, piling slowly on top of one another, then cradling like spoons across the floor.

The other four dancers stand in a cluster to watch Gordon do "his new solo." They become a corps de ballet that functions now as dance critics, now as groupies, joined by the stage manager, assistant stage manager, and coordi-

nator. They all comment on Gordon's performance and on the structure of the dance: an erratic distribution of seemingly arbitrary, offhand gestures — stifling a yawn, folding the arms, looking down, moving the chin — mixed with preparations, transitions, repetitions, and stillnesses. He strikes an exquisite, pliant pose — the head held back, both arms lifted limply in front of his face. He lunges, turns, and quickly changes directions several times. He points his finger against the tip of his nose and swivels his feet. The corps discusses every action minutely. They misunderstand each other. They note his character and depth ("Oh, I didn't know his work was like that," one exclaims), and they worry that his appearance of indecision will be misread ("What if someone thinks he doesn't know what he's doing?"). A taped voice has earlier explained that these comments are supposed to undercut the vanity inherent in the solo; but "Don't be fooled for a minute," the voice warns. And yet, the solo as egocentric manipulation by the choreographer *is* undercut when the group replicates it exactly, and in its slowest, most concentrated version it is transferred to Setterfield as a grand finale. Singing by the Alabama Sacred Harp Convention gives the dance grandeur as the group performs it; when Setterfield, who has started later than the others, is left alone on stage, Joan Baez's voice appears. One recognizes the song she's singing — "Amazing Grace" — and the term seems apt for describing Setterfield's rendition of the by-now-familiar solo. Yet Baez teases, never singing the chorus; her voice is cut off after a transitional riff. The spectator's imagination is left to fill in the blank. Yes, amazing grace.

Gordon's dances, persistently changing meaning, construct circles of perception that are suggestive but elusive. When Gordon uses words, despite the way they change according to context, they are specific in a way that movement refuses to be. Yet the most appropriate description of Gordon's stragem is a literary one, in spite of his kinetic medium. He is a supreme ironist, subverting impressions as fast as he projects them.

David Gordon, Response¹¹

"... he accumulates and organizes multiple views of a single phenomenon into one composition ..." (page 97). A terrific description of what I think I'm doing.

"Gordon admits he was looking for trouble ..." (page 98). I *was* looking for trouble. I still am. I thought that one of the things about making art was looking for trouble. I teach now sometimes. I always look for the student who is looking for trouble.

"They are not entertainments, but artworks that analyze and criticize entertainment" (page 101). I like this sentence. And I like it about my work. I would, however, change "criticize" to "comment on." I have no desire to criticize but I talk a lot and I can't help talking about digested information. It is part of a process through which I discover whether or not anyone sees what I see. I want to discover that they do indeed see what I see. Somebody recently said to me "... but you've chosen to walk alone ..." Bullshit. I never knew I was going to be alone. I thought we were all in the same boat. It was and continues to be shocking to discover myself, by myself, at sea.

Writing about someone's life, in relationship to their work, leaves out the days, the weeks when nothing was happening, or when nothing good was happening. Or the times when one doubted. Or the times when one doubted everyone else. The lows seem not to have existed and the great highs seem somehow flatter than they were. Example: "Inventing new systems for ordering movement — changing the rules — means criticizing and discarding aca-

demic formulas." Actually, "inventing new systems for ordering movement..." means yippee and some terrific Chinese food if you happen to know at the time that you have indeed invented a new system which most likely you don't even know until someone writes about it. Or tells you.

And what about the dancing? What about how amazing it is to be hurtling along and stopping still and making some personal order out of all the movement information you have gathered and continue to gather and continue. And performing? And all of the implications of being a "performer." And how to make money. And being young, and getting older. And how all things change your relationship, day to day, every day, to your work, the work which is all these things and more.

I'm trying to say that what reads as a matter of fact plan achieved with intelligence and foresight is often a network of chance or fate and foolishness and paranoia and alternating aggressiveness and passivity and envy and naivety and good humor and some smarts and time and more time.