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The thesis is that poetry is inherently dramatic in nature and
may therefore be staged in the manner of a theatrical production. The
dramatic definition of poetry is first established by looking at the
means poets use to objectify experience—metaphor, rhythm, movement, and
texture—and showing how these provide poems with qualities that can be
acted out: visual qualities to be seen, auditory qualities to be heard,
kinaesthetic qualities to be felt, and tensive qualities to be illustrated
and reinforced. This view of poetry is supported by evidence from the
history of oral interpretation, from rhetorical theory, and from literary
criticism. Critics such as Kenneth Burke, John Ciardi, and R. P. Black-
mur argue that many poems are "dramatic" in their shift from problem to
resolution, or from conflict to climax, and in their possession of char-
acters (speakers), setting, and action.

There are three major advantages to be gained from staging the
performance of poetry in the manner of a theatrical production.
(1) Illustration: Staged performance illustrates and amplifies the
poem, making explicit for an audience what should already be implicit
for a good reader. Of particular value in this is the "performance con-
text" which attempts to introduce the idioms of the poems to the audience
before the actual reading takes place. (2) Reinforcement: Staged per-
formance may reveal qualities in the poem which are not apparent in a
silent reading, especially qualities of rhythm and sound. (3) Cele-
bration: By engaging numbers of people to perform poetry, linking it
with other ritualistic forms—dance, drama, music—and encouraging its
identification with play, we begin to reassign to poetry its primitive
role as a controlling force and celebrative mode in the life of man.

Chapter II of the study presents ten poems such as Auden's "O Where are you Going?" Rilke's "Spanish Dancer," Hardy's "During Wind and Rain," e. e. cummings' "In Just--" and Nancy Sullivan's pop poems "Sandwich" and "Martini," and attaches notes organized in the following manner: (a) interpretative notes to explicate those elements in the poem that bear on its potential for performance; (b) performance notes which provide general guidelines for staging the performance; (c) performance notes related to the text so that specific actions are related to particular lines. The notes on Auden's "O Where are you Going?," for instance, reveal how the diction and rhythms of a poem influence decisions in staging, how tensive qualities can be embodied by performers, and how movement complements mood and meaning.

The study concludes that final justification for the staging of poetry lies in two things: its truthfulness to the poem and the quickened sensitivities of the audience. Performance is only justified when it illustrates qualities which are already present in the poem and when it subordinates all methods of presentation to the poem's own principles and proportions.

THE PERFORMANCE OF POETRY: A CREATIVE

APPROACH TO SELECTED POEMS

by

Howard Rodney Martin

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APPROVAL PAGE

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INTRODUCTION

This study divides roughly into two parts: a theoretical section on the performance of poetry, and a brief anthology of poems with notes attached showing how the principles of performance apply in practice. The theoretical section argues for a dramatic view of poetry intrinsically by discussing the nature of the poet's craft and extrinsically by using evidence from the history of oral interpretation, from rhetorical theory, and from current literary criticism. The evidence indicates that a poem is an enactment of experience using the means at the disposal of the poet and, therefore, that it may be enacted by the interpreter. The principal means used by the poet to enact experience are metaphor, rhythm, movement, and texture. The task of the interpreter is to find appropriate means to illustrate these aspects of poetry. By externalizing or visualizing them he makes explicit what should already by implicit for a good reader; he discovers added dimensions in poetry and approaches nearer to its totality; he begins to restore poetry to its primitive celebrative function in the life of man.

The poems listed in the anthology are selected to demonstrate the principles of performance enunciated in the theoretical section. Most of them are contemporary. Period poetry may be explored through the conventions of period movement styles but such an approach is often unnecessary as in the case of Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci." Examples of "pop" and "concrete" poetry are included as representative of recent trends in poetic form. As a genre, concrete poetry enacts

its meaning in visual form and therefore lends itself to overt visualization in performance.

The notes on each poem are divided into three sections: (a) interpretative notes which are explicatory in character but by no means exhaustive, (b) performance notes which discuss the essential principles to be followed in performing each poem, and (c) detailed performance notes related to the text designed specifically to facilitate the staging of the poem.

CHAPTER I

THE PERFORMANCE OF POETRY

The commonly held view of poetry is that it is a sedentary art, existing on the printed page and living only in the imagination. For years, oral interpreters have argued for the oral performance of poetry as a means of exploring its sounds and rhythms, and as a valid form of explication and literary criticism in its own right. But few have argued for the performance of the visual and dramatic qualities of poems. This section is designed to argue such a case. Are poems inherently performable? Is the staging and enactment of poetry established by historical precedent and acceptable to critical opinion?

The Poem as an Enactment of Experience

"The poet's trade is not to talk about experience but to make it happen." --John Ciardi.

The essential task of the poet is to use words in the description and evocation of his encounter with life. In the hands of a skilled craftsman, words become gestures of the many facets of experience, bearing the characteristics of the raw materials of the other arts, yet possessing a power all their own:

The words /of poetry/ sound with music, make images which are visual, seem solid like sculpture and spacious like architecture, repeat themselves like the movements in a dance, call for a kind of mummery in the voice when read, and turn upon themselves like nothing but the written word.[1]

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[1] R. P. Blackmur, Language as Gesture: Essays in Poetry (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1952), p. 12.

Poetic excellence arises from the choice and arrangement of words to approximate a significant event in the experience of the poet. T. S. Eliot[2] criticized the excessive preoccupation with words only in the poetry of his day and encouraged a return to the ritualistic origins of poetry--the concentrated power of the symbol, the union of meaning and action, body and mind. His primary concern here was the enactment or dancing out of experience, the performance of what John Ciardi calls a "ritual dance,"[3] so that words are engaged for their musical, spatial, rhythmic, and visual qualities as well as for their semantic significations.

The principal means used in poetry to enact meaning are metaphor, rhythm, movement, and texture. These elements do not, in practice, function independently of each other yet each makes a characteristic contribution to the enactability of the poem.

Metaphor is the primary process of language whereby raw experience is transformed into symbolic form and given a sense of order. It strikes up relationships among the data of experience and moves the emotions or enlightens the mind by making appeals to the senses--visual, auditory, gustatory, tactile, olfactory, thermal, kinetic, and kinaesthetic. By sharply evoking one's awareness of familiar events the poet calls forth a response to a new one. He acts out the unfamiliar in terms

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[2]Elizabeth Drew, T. S. Eliot: The Design of his Poetry (New York: Scribner's, 1949), p. 18.

[3]John Ciardi, How Does a Poem Mean? (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1959), p. 207.

of the familiar; he produces the "objective correlative" for the sub-jective and the subconscious.[4]

Certain metaphors usually stand out as being the crux and essence of the poem; these are the crucial ones for performance. The image of "quivering tongues" of flame is dominant in Rilke's "Spanish Dancer" and therefore determines aspects of setting, lighting, and qualities of movement. The image of "slim silhouetted skeletons" is dominant in Oscar Wilde's "The Harlot's House" and therefore determines similar aspects of staging: "silhouetted" suggests dim, shadowy light; "skeletons" suggests slow, mechanical movement and vague interrelationships. The dominant images in Sandburg's "Four Preludes" are arranged in two clus-ters--those relating to the past (the doors of cedar and the "golden girls") and those relating to the present (the broken doors, howling wind, rats and lizards). These determine the staging of the poem.

The rhythms of poetry are of two kinds--structural and subjec-tive. Structural rhythm,[5] especially metre, is that which relates the rhythms of the poem to meaning.[6] It gives control and order to the movements of meaning. On the other hand, its own speed and kind is largely determined by the dynamic qualities of the subject-matter.

[4]In a sense, each art form has its own characteristic transforma-tion, its own form of metaphor. The musician transforms experience into a sequence of notes and harmonies; a painter transforms it into certain lines, forms, colors, and textures; a sculptor, into felt shapes; a dancer, into body positions and relationships. This is part of R. P. Blackmur's argument in Language as Gesture. See pp. 9-12.

[5]Structural devices include metrical phrases, cadences, syntacti-cal units, time units (isochronic), syllabic units (isosyllabic), accent units (isoaccentual), word echoes, sound echoes, rhyme, stanza patterns, and visual patterns.

[6]Blackmur, Language as Gesture, p. 20.

Rudolf Von Laban[7] argues that since ancient times given metrical rhythms have been associated with certain qualities of feeling and types of movement.[8]

Variations in both metrical and non-metrical devices[9] can give cues to the changes of time connected with living processes,[10] but usually fall short of their aim even in the innovative work of a poet such as e. e. cummings. Oral and physical gesture help convey the dynamic qualities required to compensate for this deficiency.

Subjective rhythms in the poem arise from the shape of the experience being described--the setting, the action, the "characters." There is a scenario, for example, in Wordsworth's "Lines Upon West-minster Bridge" which defines the poem's subjective rhythm: a moment of reflection, a murmur of contentment, a sweeping glance, the shift of gaze from river to horizon, the fixed stare into the inner life of the city. Such rhythms, felt in the body through imaginative presence in the scene, must be made explicit in performance.

Movement in poetry involves two kinds of kinaesthetic response--organic and mimetic. The first derives from the instinctive response of the body to the words of the poem. Such is the neuro-physiological

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[7] Rudolf Von Laban, The Mastery of Movement on the Stage (London: McDonald and Evans, 1950), p. 133.

[8] Trochee ($/\cup$): graceful, placid, associated with feminine character; iambus ($\cup/$): gay, energetic; dactylus ($/\cup\cup$): grave and serious; anapaestus ($\cup\cup/$): march rhythm; peon ($/\cup/$): excitement or foolishness.

[9] Non-metrical devices include alliteration, rhyme, isolation, spacing, punctuation, syntactical patterns, vowel and consonant clusters.

[10] These include intensity, periodicity, crescendo, diminuendo, acceleration and impedence.

nature of man that verbal signals, whether vocalized or not, are accompanied by non-verbal signals which originate in the muscles, glands, skin, or mucosa. Even when a person reads silently, he responds with tension and movement in the inner tissues:

> Even the sedentary practice of reading literature involves neuro-motor responses of widespread intensity. . . . /A/ttitudinally, (the reader) repeats the actions described in the words and the feelings of the poet and the poem are manifested in the reader's own minimal actions.[11]

Rahskopf postulates that bodily activity is to some extent a part of all mental activity.[12] Washburn argues that such implicity movements are gradually organized into systems until one single movement (or gesture) becomes representative of a whole system.[13] According to this theory, therefore, gesture performs an organic function in the process of communication (not merely an illustrative one) since the overt motor responses arise from the selection and grouping of internal kinaesthetic impulses.

While the kinaesthetic reactions relate to a particular object or person they create a feeling of empathy. As Bacon and Breen point out,[14] empathy may be a physical adjustment towards something, e.g., the gesture of stopping a falling child, or it may be a physical response within something, e.g., following the movement of a bowl on the green.

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[11]Wallace A. Bacon and Robert S. Breen, Literature as Experience (New York: McGraw Hill, 1959), p. 20.

[12]Horace G. Rahskopf, Basic Speech Improvement (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 214.

[13]Bacon and Breen, Literature as Experience, p. 20.

[14]Ibid.

The latter is the most commonly found in poetry. By means of the arrangement of syllables and lines, the poet communicates tensions very similar to those of actual physical experiences--chopping wood, walking, climbing, waking from sleep. For example, the sequence of syllables in Wordsworth's "my boat / Went heaving through the water like a swan" bears a similarity to the rush and hold of a row-boat in motion. Movements of a similar rhythmic order may be appropriate to demonstrate these verbal patterns.

Texture has to do with the feeling of the sound of the words, the taste and gristle of consonants and vowels, words and phrases, in close juxtaposition. The texture of a poem may be soft and smooth, harsh and stringent, even or broken, hard-edged or willowy, repetitive or contrastive, vigorous or languorous, according to the poet's intention. The fruity textures of Hopkins' "Glory be to God" are calculated to capture the feelings the poet has for the rich profusion of the earth. The reader needs to fully explore these textures if he is to appreciate the poem. As John Dixon points out, a passive reading of a poem like Eliot's "Triumphal March" could easily "stunt the delicate, intuitive understandings to be reached through readings in which contrasts of rhythm and changes of register are to be savoured."[15]

Extrinsic Evidence for the Enactability
of Poetry

We have examined poetry as an enactment of experience from an intrinsic point of view, i.e., from what we know of the craft of poetry

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[15]John Dixon, Growth Through English (Reading: National Association of Teachers of English, 1967), p. 61.

writing and the relationship of the poet to his work and his audience.
We turn now to evidence for the enactability of poetry from three ex-
trinsic sources: the history of oral interpretation, the theory of
rhetoric, and current trends in literary criticism.

<div style="text-align: center;">Evidence from the History of Oral</div>
<div style="text-align: center;">Interpretation</div>

Since earliest times there has been a close relationship between
the voice and physical movement in the performance of poetry. In Classi-
cal Greece, the rhapsode, who arose primarily as a reciter of Homer,
supported his performance with gestures, the rhythmic beating of a
laurel staff, and, sometimes, costume.[16] At the great Athenian festivals,
such as the quadrennial Panathenaea, the reading of poetry was associated
with pageantry, drama, music, rhetoric, and dance.[17] Many of the verse
forms of ancient Rome were designed to be performed at festivals and to
be accompanied by dance and drama.[18] Saturnian verse originated in the
rhythms of an ancient rustic dance; Fescennine verse was often associated
with festivals of joy; Fabulae Atellanae were a form of broad comedy in
verse; and the Satura were a fruity composite of "situations" and verbal
interchange. The minstrels in the South of France combined the arts of
the Roman reciter poets, the mimi, and the histriones.

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[16]Eugene Bahn and Margaret L. Bahn, A History of Oral Interpreta-
tion (Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Co., 1970), p. 5.

[17]Ibid., p. 10.

[18]Ibid., p. 27.

During the Renaissance, Abraham Fraunce and Thomas Wilson taught that gesture was a response of the entire body and that bodily action should reflect the "action of the mind."[19] In approaching the problem of "just delivery,"[20] the eighteenth century elocutionists developed two schools of thought: the mechanical, consisting of laws formulated from the observation of nature, and the natural, which placed primary emphasis on understanding the text.

The nineteenth century evolutionary scientist, Charles Darwin, believed that bodily expression and emotion were organically linked: if the body were inactive, the emotions were non-existent. S. S. Curry used this as a basic premise in relating oral expression and bodily action. Francois Delsarte called gesture "the agent of the heart" and believed that the most powerful gesture was "that which affects the spectator without his knowing it."[21] Gilbert Austin made a detailed study of bodily action in vocal performance but his system tended to focus on action for action's sake and led to an artificiality which was rejected in the twentieth century (with the unfortunate loss of valid principles).[22]

Modern views on the relationship of movement and speech have been influenced by new theories on the nature of myth and ritual and

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[19]Ibid., p. 95.

[20]Thomas Sheridan's phrase quoted in Frederick W. Haberman, "English Sources of Education," in History of Speech Education in America, ed. by Karl R. Wallace (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954), p. 108.

[21]James Roose-Evans, Directing a Play (London: Studio Vista, 1968), p. 28.

[22]Bahn and Bahn, History of Oral Interpretation, p. 141.

recent developments in the psychology of language. A growing number of
linguistic philosophers are finding language much more significantly
related to man's total humanity than it was previously considered to be.
Foremost among these is Suzanne K. Langer who believes that the motive
of language is the "transformation of experience into concepts, not the
elaboration of signals and symptoms. . . . /M/etaphor is the law of
its life."[23]

Such views of language have been accompanied by an increasing
concern to experience literature as a felt form. Suzanne Langer postu-
lates that all living forms are made up of acts.[24] A poem, therefore,
is an act, made up of a series of stages characteristic of all acts--
inception, acceleration, climax, and cadence. Moreover, it shares an-
other property with all living things--tensiveness. Tensiveness is the
state of aliveness which is expressed in stresses and strains between
ideas, images, values, meanings, emotions, or characters. To be appre-
ciated, therefore, the poem must become a realized event, a "virtual
experience."[25] The reader must actualize the poem, embody it. As Bacon
puts it, "The poem is indeed, at the moment of its being experienced, the
act of the mind experiencing it, the body embodying it."[26]

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[23] James E. Miller, Jr., Literature in a Revitalized Curriculum
(National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, 1967), p. 28.

[24] In Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling. See W. A. Bacon, "The Act
of Literature and the Act of Interpretation" in Oral Interpretation and
the Teaching of English, ed. by Thomas L. Fernandez (Champaign: National
Council of Teachers of English, 1969), p. 2.

[25] The concept is discussed at length in Suzanne K. Langer, Philo-
sophy in a New Key (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957).

[26] W. A. Bacon, "The Act of Literature," in Oral Interpretation
and the Teaching of English, ed. by Thomas L. Fernandez (Champaign:
National Council of Teachers of English.)

Choral speaking and readers theatre are relatively recent efforts to relate voice and body in the performance of poetry. In 1934, Carrie Rasmussen wrote:

Children must love a poem to like it; their feelings and emotions must be allowed to be expressed around, about, and through a poem. . . . I have discovered that I can make the greatest appeal to children with poetry through bodily movement.[27]

M. M. Crawford used the phrase "language eurhythmics"[28] to refer to this phenomenon: movement in space which supports the literary text. In 1938, Marjorie Gullen argued that children best learn to appreciate rhythm by making bodily response to it.[29] In the 1940's, Charlotte Lee experimented with choral verse speaking combined with rhythmic movement.[30] She began with the normal ingredients of the verse choir and added movement related to meaning and mood: changing positions of the hands and head, and varying arrangements in levels. This "kinetic projection" required an appreciation of the tensive qualities of various gestures and was best applied to poetry that contained strong suggestions of movement and a variety of tempo. Lee felt that kinetic projection fostered a deeper appreciation of melody, of the flow of metre, and of mood changes in poetry.

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[27] Carrie Rasmussen, "Verse Speaking and Bodily Activity," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XX (April, 1934), pp. 282-286.

[28] Mary Major Crawford, "Speech Choirs in Europe," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXII (October, 1937), pp. 444-449.

[29] Mary H. Armstrong, "Certain Aspects of Choral Speech," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXIV (February, 1938), pp. 117-119.

[30] Charlotte I. Lee, "Choric Reading and Kinetic Projection," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXVI (December, 1940), pp. 545-550.

A much more recent development in the enactment of poetry, and one which owes more to contemporary philosophies of language, is readers theatre.[31] Irene Coger argues that readers theatre calls for the involvement of the whole man, including the movement of his body, in the act of literature.[32] Keith Brookes believes that since the task of the director of readers theatre is to explore as fully as possible the potential of the literature, he is justified in using elements of the theatre in his production, "so long as these are kept within the realm of suggestion."[33] By using space in staging the poem, he may suggest psychological distances between characters, ideas, and emotions. By using properties, costume, make-up, sound, and light, in a symbolic and non-illusionistic way, he may enhance the sense of locale and mood, and "attune the listener to the literary experience."[34]

Evidence from Rhetorical Theory

Rhetorical theorists have established that a rhetorical element exists in poetry. Its amount and kind varies according to the type of

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[31]A number of names have been attached to this gentre. David E. McArthur, in "Readers Theatre: Variations on a Theme," Speech Teacher, XIII (January, 1964), pp. 47-51, notes a number of terms applied to what is loosely termed readers theatre: concert theatre, chamber theatre, interpreter's theatre, platform theatre, staged theatre, staged readings, oral interpretation of literature. He adds that solo performance of literature may be termed "reader's theatre" or "monologue theatre."

[32]Irene Coger, "Theatre for Oral Interpreters," Speech Teacher, XII (November, 1963), p. 330.

[33]Keith Brookes, Robert C. Henderhahn, and Alan Billings, "A Philosophy on Readers Theatre," Speech Teacher, XII (September, 1963), p. 229.

[34]Ibid.

poem. The subjective lyric and rhapsode possess a rather covert rhetorical quality. The idyll, pastoral, and narrative involve a greater awareness of an audience, dramatic poetry, even more, while didactic poetry, satire, and epigrams occasionally cross the border from poetry to rhetoric. From the point of view of rhetorical theory, poetry such as Poe's "Bells," Southey's "How the Waters Came Down at Lohore," and some metaphysical verse, are little more than epideictic oratory in metrical form.

In contrast to most "aesthetic" theories of the lyric, Marsh[35] argues that the lyric is a "dramatic form of imitative action,"[36] an imitation of a character in the act of persuading or proclaiming. "Thus," says Marsh, "the oral reading of a typical lyric poem is essentially identical with the art of acting."[37] There is a sense, too, in which the lyric poet "commends" his thoughts to a reader or listener. Samuel Johnson once wrote:

> Rhetoric and poetry supply life with the highest intellectual pleasures; and in the hands of virtue are of great use for the recommendation of just sentiments and illustrious examples.[38]

According to Thomas Sloan,[39] some poems, such as Donne's "Satire III," cannot be fully understood without a rhetorical analysis. He

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[35]Robert Marsh, "Aristotle and the Modern Rhapsode," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXIX (December, 1953), p. 493.

[36]Ibid., p. 494.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Wilber E. Moore, Samuel Johnson on Rhetoric," Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXX (April, 1944), p. 165.

[39]Thomas Sloan, The Oral Study of Literature (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 137.

proceeds to analyze the poem in terms of a speaker, an audience, and a situation. He describes the structure of the poem as consistent with a "discretionary" speech delivered in a political situation. He adds that all literature may be considered "rhetorical" insofar as it attempts to engage the attention of the reader. On this assumption, he argues that rhetorical analysis is an aspect of literary criticism which cannot be ignored.

The ode is an example of a form which is best understood by rhetorical analysis. Irene H. Chaynes shows how the romantic poets, by intensifying the rhetorical elements in their work, changed the ode from an allegorical or didactic form to a dramatic one.[40] She points out that the ode can be considered dramatic in the sense of possessing plot (in a broad Aristotelian sense). Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is perhaps the best example. The rhetorical-dramatic progression of the ode brings about a total inversion of the relationship of the speaker and the wind: the protagonist rises from his submission to join the force of the wind, masters it, and turns it into an instrument of his own purpose. Such movement in the ode applies similarly to other forms of poetry:

> The subtle drama of shift, progression, and enlightenment in
> the course of what is formally a rhetorical address or a sub-
> jective meditation continued . . . in poems which might well have
> been called odes although some may belong to generic category at
> all: Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" . . . .[41]

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[40] Irene H. Chaynes, "Rhetoric as Drama," _P.M.L.A._, LXXIX (March, 1964), p. 67.

[41] _Ibid._, p. 79.

Evidence from Literary Criticism:

Language as Gesture

When the phrase "language as gesture" is used, it refers to three things: (a) The theory, now largely discredited, that words are morphologically imitative of the actions they describe. Rather more important is the view that words can be so expressed as to be imitative of the objects and actions they describe.

(b) The view, originating with Kenneth Burke and articulated by critics such as John Ciardi and Don Geiger, that words are symbols for actions or drama which exist independently of the words.

(c) The view of R. P. Blackmur that words themselves are gestures: "Gesture, in language, is the outward and dramatic play of inward and imagined meaning."[42]

All of these theories are important in the performer's approach to poetry. The first finds action in the structure of the symbols themselves; the second finds action in the referents of the symbols; the third finds action in the interrelationships of the symbols.

The theory of the gestural origins of language first appeared in 1862 when Dr. J. Rae postulated from his study of Polynesian languages that words begin with the imitation of gesture by the speech organs.[43] In 1872, Charles Darwin called this a form of "mouth pantomime."[44] In

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[42]Blackmur, Language as Gesture, p. 6.

[43]Alexander Johanneson, Gestural Origin of Language (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952), p. 9.

[44]He uses the phrase in his book Emotions in Man and Animals. See the preface to Johannesons' study Gestural Origins of Language referred to in note 43.

1930, R. Paget[45] conjectured that a large number of body gestures have phonetic counterparts, e.g., "reaching up" is spoken with the tongue reaching up to touch the hard palate. His findings were supported by Otto Jesperson, Neville Whymant, and A. Johanneson, the Icelandic philologist. On the basis of data collected from six unrelated languages, Johanneson[46] concluded that gesture words, which constitute about 50-60% of the total in these languages, have come about by unconsciously imitating with the speech organs the gestures of the body, especially the hands.

Margaret Schlauch,[47] however, warns that the relationship of sound and sense in such words is less imitative and more arbitrary than might be supposed. She argues that such words as "thunder," "lightning," "swoon," have had sound values placed on them rather than being intrinsically appropriate to "sense," and that most words in their present form differ from their linguistic roots. Therefore, she concludes, what symbolism exists is based on articulatory factors (friction, explosion, conjunction) which may be brought into relationship with subjective psychological factors. Rudolf Von Laban supports this contention.[48] He argues that each of the fundamental movements--pressing, thrusting, dabbing, wringing, slashing, gliding, flicking, floating--will produce a different sound quality and meaning when it is applied to a spoken syllable, e.g., the word "no."

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[45]Richard Paget, Human Speech (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1933), p. 134.

[46]Johanneson, Gestural Origin, p. 10.

[47]Margaret Schlauch, Modern English and American Poetry: Techniques and Ideologies (London: C. A. Watts, 1956), pp. 145-149.

[48]Laban, Mastery of Movement, p. 106.

Schlauch's view is the most significant for the performance of poetry. It implies that poets choose words not for their inherent imitative qualities, but because they possess sound qualities which best serve the purposes of their poems. By understanding the poem, therefore, the interpreter knows something about how to read the words.

Kenneth Burke and Don Geiger are strong contenders for the "dramatic view" of literature that words convey the experience of given persons or speakers in particular situations. Burke[49] coined the phrase "symbolic action" to refer to the fact that words are the symbolic form of acts involving speakers, actors, settings, and events. Don Geiger[50] describes the dramatic view of literature as the poet's grasp of reality expressed through "his dramatic speaker's utterance." Every poem, according to Geiger, has a speaker or persona. In deciding the tone of voice to be used, the reader examines how the speaker in the poem would say it, using primarily internal evidence such as word-order, vocabulary, symbolism. The reader then approximates within himself the dramatic speaker's attitudes as they emerge from word to word and line to line. In other words, he externalizes what any good reader must experience--the likely intonation and behavior of the dramatic speaker uttering the poem.

Geiger[51] suggests that a dramatic analysis of a poem can be undertaken by seeking answers to the questions who? what? when? where?

[49]Don Geiger, The Dramatic Impulse in Modern Poetics (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1967), p. 43.

[50]Don Geiger, The Sound, Sense, and Performance of Literature (Chicago: Soctt, Foresman and Co., 1963), p. 60.

[51]Geiger, Dramatic Impulse, p. 43.

how? why? The elements are organically related and a change in our understanding of one will affect our interpretation of the others. However, our understanding of these elements will provide clues to the performance of the poem but will not be equivalent to the poem itself.

John Ciardi speaks in similar terms when he refers to the poet as a character who enters into a "sympathetic contract"[52] with his readers. The reader submits himself to the role which the poet has assumed. Ciardi also discusses the analysis of the lyric in dramatic terms: the principal actor, the scene, the acting out of feelings, dialogue, and "performance."

R. P. Blackmur is primarily concerned with the symbols themselves as they function in poetry. He regards gesture in language as "that play of meaningfulness among words which cannot be defined in the formulas in the dictionary but which is defined in their use together."[53] The gestures of writing consist in rhythm, cadence, interval, the gestures of the voice that speaks, and the look and feel of the man as he speaks. The good writer achieves such gestures by the inner echo of the sound of his words, and the texture, juncture, and pattern of words recalling gestures in life and producing new gestures of their own. Words, not necessarily in their meaning but in their context and usage, suggest a posture, a tone, an attitude, a setting for action.

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[52] Ciardi, How Does a Poem Mean?, p. 850.

[53] Blackmur, Language as Gesture, p. 6.

A Justification of the Enactment of Poetry

Having determined that a poem is an enactable artifact which is, in a sense, re-made when it is performed, we turn to the question of the advantages that accrue from such performance. Why stage poetry? There are three main reasons: (a) To illustrate the poem's encounter with experience. (b) To re-approach the truth of the poem. (c) To objectify the celebrative function of poetry.

To Illustrate the Poem's Encounter
with Experience

Assuming a dramatic view of poetry, as defined, for example, by Don Geiger, the interpreter may view the text of a poem similarly as he views the text of a play. A play offers the reader "exact cues to sequences of movement and gesture expressive of a particular human interaction."[54] In a different sense, so does a poem. A lyric, for example, may be viewed as the drama of a poet's encounter with himself and his world. The words of the text give cues for three kinds of interaction: the movements in the poet's mind and emotions (subjective); the movements in the structure of the poem (structural); and the movements in the objects of the poet's attention (objective). Since both the objective and structural elements serve to give concrete form to the subjective, the visualization of the poem will concentrate on these elements.

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[54]Dixon, Growth Through English, p. 41.

The essential task of the director in theatre is to visualize or illustrate the total significance of the play. His responsibility to the script is to understand its "meaning;" his responsibility to his audience is to translate this meaning into intelligible terms. To help his audience appreciate the themes, conflicts, and moods of the play, he creatively engages the basic picturization techniques of the stage: line, movement, space, mass, color, sound, and light.

Picturization, then, is essentially for the sake of the audience. It magnifies and clarifies meaning. By using the picturization techniques of the stage, the interpreter may help his audience understand the total meaning of a poem: its sense may be clarified by showing the relationship of ideas by means of the relationship of characters; its feelings reinforced by the use of color, line, mass, body position, and pace; its tone established by the relationship of the spoken word and actions of the body; its intention declared by setting a "performance context."[55]

When Robert Lewis[56] staged Soroyan's _My Heart's in the Highlands_ in 1939, he reached for a poetic expression of its content. For example, to visualize the idea that the people are nourished by art he conceived the image of a plant flowering as it is watered. He built this picture with his actors, a human cornucopia, and textured it with color, light, and music to produce what he called "theatre poetry."[57]

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[55]This concept is explained later in the text.

[56]John Gassner, _Directions in Modern Theatre_ (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1956), p. 137.

[57]From Cocteau's phrase "poesie de théâtre."

In essence, the problem before us is the translation of poetry into "theatre poetry." When dealing with a poem, the interpreter must decide on its fundamental statement (whether explicit or implicit, intellectual or emotional, concrete or abstract) and on the crucial poetic methods of making the statement--metaphorical, rhythmic, motional, textural--and determines his picturization accordingly. The essential statement of Thomas Hardy's "During Wind and Rain" is the passage of time, a statement made by a series of images which contrast the nostalgic memories of the past and the grim realities of the present. Such a statement might best be reinforced by contrasts in spatial relationships. Straight lines and symmetry are used to stage "Poem to be Read Aloud" in order to reinforce the computer-like inhumanity of bombing-missions. Similar line and space values are employed for "Unwanted" to establish the anxious anonymity of the persona's mind. Mass is used to represent the strength of the forces of opposition to "rider-farer-hearer" in "O Where are you Going?" Two groups set apart in space represent the past and present in Sandburg's "Four Preludes," solidarity and glory of the past contrasting with the brokenness and tawdriness of the present. The mood of lyrical despair in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" is established by the sparse, bare set and low intensity grey lighting.

Of primary value in visualizing the poem is the creation of a "performance context" to establish the setting and atmosphere and provide basic cues to meaning. Each poem has its peculiar idioms--a unique slice of experience which it purports to represent, its own characteristic use of symbols, diction, rhythms--which must be

comprehended, usually by intrinsic processes, before the poem is under-
stood. By staging a dramatic situation into which the words of the
poem are performed, the interpreter prepares the audience for these
idioms. The performance context of Rilke's "Spanish Dancer" calls for
the lighting of a series of candles so that the audience can observe
the flames bursting into life and so have the central image of the poem
fixed clearly in mind. The performance context of Wallace Stevens'
"Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock" clearly establishes the color white
as representing the absence of imagination and red and green as its
opposite. The performance context of Denise Levertov's "Did the People
of Viet Nam" prepares the audience for the suppressed horror of the
answerer's words by means of the shattered emblem and the sound of the
siren.[58]

Gestures are the building-blocks of visualization. They may be
defined as "expressive movements of the body of every degree of inten-
sity"[59] which serve to illustrate or emphasize the spoken word. In
acting, such gestures are complete and overt (although selective and
conventionalized); in interpretation, they are suggestive and incipient,
representative of larger gestures.

Gesture in interpretation serves a double function: (a) to
intensify the emotional qualities of words, and (b) to amplify the mean-
ing of words, to reinforce their semantic and emotional qualities. Ru-
dolf Von Laban[60] supplies evidence for both functions. He argues that

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[58]These examples are developed more fully in the notes on the
poems, but Levertov's poem is not included.

[59]Bacon and Breen, Literature as Experience, p. 301.

[60]Laban, Mastery of Movement, p. 106.

each of the fundamental movement types[61] produces a different sound quality when applied to a spoken syllable. "By accompanying sound expressions with a gesture of the quality indicated, the reader will become aware of the connection between audible and physical movements."[62] He also supports the view that gestures visualize the meaning of words: "When speech . . . is colored by mime gestures, it is far more expressive than it would be if they were absent."[63]

By means, then, of the picturization techniques of the stage, the performance context, and gesture, the interpreter illustrates the poem for his audience and so helps them to appreciate more of its meaning.

To Re-approach the Truth of the Poem

Bodily response and emotion are closely linked. According to Stanislavsky, "there is no physical action which does not involve desires, aspirations, objectives, or feelings which justify the action. . . ."[64] When one is angry, for example, body chemistry and muscular tensions change. Therefore, physical gestures are integral to the expression of emotion. Words alone are often inadequate to express the totality of an inner state, emotional or imagined, and movement may help approach that totality:

> Language expressing feelings, emotions, sentiments, or certain
> mental states will but touch the fringe of the inner responses

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[61]Viz., pressing, wringing, thrusting, etc.

[62]Laban, Mastery of Movement, p. 106.

[63]Ibid., p. 101.

[64]Constantin Stanislavski, Stanislavski's Legacy, ed. and trans. by Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood (New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1968), p. 47.

which the shapes and rhythms of mime evoke. Movement can say more, for all its shortness, than pages of verbal description.[65]

Adolphe Appia[66] believes that gesture has the capacity to reflect the feelings of the soul by translating the dimensions of time into the dimensions of space, e.g., the agony of hours may be revealed in a gesture of seconds. By modifying the proportions and duration of its gestures, Appia believes the body can be "put to the service of our inner life"[67] in the same way as music, i.e., to express it rather than merely symbolize it.

Conversely, according to William James, imitation by recall of the bodily changes accompanying an emotional state can reproduce and intensify the emotion in a performer or listener. Hence, gestures, postural sets, vocal intonations, and silence may emotionally transcend the lexical significance of the words.[68] Stanislavsky went even further. He believed one could, by physical means, touch the subconscious.[69] To explain his notion he used the analogy of an aircraft gaining momentum for take-off;[70] he equated the take-off with the objective, the inner truth of thought and emotion, and the runway with the physical action. Therefore, according to his theory of acting, we build the truth of inner reality by physical action[71] because physical actions are easier to fix

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[66]Adolphe Appia, The Work of Living Art: A Theory of the Theatre, trans. by Barnard Hewitt(Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1960), p. 11.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Bacon and Breen, Literature as Experience, p. 52.

[69]Robert M. Post, "Oral Interpretation and the Stanislavski Method," Central States Speech Journal, XXXII (1966), pp. 181-182.

[70]Stanislavski, Legacy, p. 46.

[71]Ibid., p. 47.

than inner feelings. Stanislavski encouraged the actor to concentrate not on how he felt but on things to do.

Rudolf Von Laban used the same theory in his approach to movement training for the actor: "Movements can . . . be named and described, and those who are able to read such descriptions and reproduce them might get the feel of the moods expressed by them. . . ."[72]

According to this theory, then, physical movement in the performance of poetry may reveal depths of thought and emotion which can be approached in no other way. For example, the mounting terror as the soldiers advance in Auden's "O What is that Sound?" may only be fully felt when the audience and performers feel the threat of a physical advance.

To Objectify the Celebrative Function
of Poetry

There is an organic relationship between ritual and poetry. In the primitive traditions of man, words were considered to have a magical power over life.[73] This power could be released by ritual incantations associated with formal ceremonial dances and chants, thus bringing about the active cooperation of voice and body in the quest for control over the primitive forces of life. "Of all this," writes Elizabeth Drew, "the modern poet is left with the rhythm of his words alone."[74]

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[72] Laban, Mastery of Movement, p. 98.

[73] Elizabeth Drew, Poetry: A Modern Guide to its Understanding and Enjoyment (New York: W. W. Norton, 1959), p. 19.

[74] Ibid.

The union of poetry with the other animating forces of life--
percussive sound, dance, music, mime--is a primitive instinct to which
poets, performers, and critics are recalling us. For some, the identi-
fication of poetry with ritual is evidenced by the child's instinctive
response to it. C. Day Lewis thinks the child's first responses to
poetry are related to his intuitive love of words, the exhilaration he
gets from entering this new yet immeasurable element, "wantoning about
on the surface of words, feeling their undercurrent rhythms."[75] David
Holbrook associates the child's first love of poetry with his delight
in rhymes and games.[76] The child associates language with play. The
rhymes he spontaneously enjoys possess certain qualities which endear
them to him--anonymity, rhythmic strength, simplicity, and sincerity.
Moreover, they have a material and accepted function; they enable him
to enter the group experience, to feel accepted, and help him to en-
counter life in an orderly fashion. John Ciardi says that play begins
with the child's first response to rhyme. The child "recognizes its
performance" and wants to act with it in an "immediate and muscular
way."[77]

The "play impulse"[78] in poetry is most evident in such elements
as rhyme, punning, metre, repetitive devices, and nonsense. Rhyme sets
up expectancies which may or may not be met; the game consists in

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[75]Cecil Day Lewis, "The Poem and the Lesson," College English,
XXIX (March, 1968), pp. 434-435.

[76]David Holbrook, English for Maturity (Cambridge: University
Press, 1961), p. 75.

[77]Ciardi, How Does a Poem Mean?, p. 667.

[78]Ibid., p. 669.

anticipating the effect and being satisfied or surprised by it. Punning
is a game which identifies elements of sound with elements of meaning.
Metre is the universally enjoyed game of fitting syllables to metrical
patterns and discovering rhythms which support or run counter to mean-
ing. The repetition of elements is as important to poetry as it is to
play. Nonsense is playing with words for their own sake, quite outside
the usual frames of reference.

A consideration of the relationships between poetry, ritual,
and play brings about Holbrook's conception of poetry as celebration.
In English for Maturity he writes:

> I have grave doubts about the poetry reading as such for it
> has often seemed to me embarrassing and cold-blooded. It seems
> to lack those dramatic elements which take us from the individual
> voice and the individual poem to a "third ground." Music, drama,
> percussion, comedy seem to help this. . . . It is possible to devise
> programmes of poetry, song, music, choral singing, and even choral
> speaking . . . which have sufficient drama in them to become some-
> thing of a celebration not just a reading.[79]

According to this view, the poetry forms part of a larger event;
it is performed as a game within a game; it now functions for the per-
former as it does for the poet who writes it, as a celebration of his
engagement in life--joy and sorrow, life and death, love and conflict,
peace and war. In a sense, poetry is the essential ritualistic act and
finds its maturest expression when combined in performance with other
ritualistic modes.

Summary

The thesis is that since poetry is dramatic in nature it may
be staged and performed in the manner of a theatrical production. The

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[79]Holbrook, English for Maturity, pp. 78-79.

dramatic definition of poetry is first established by intrinsic evidence, i.e., by looking at the means used by poets to objectify experience-- metaphor, rhythm, movement, and texture--and showing how these provide poems with qualities which can be acted out: visual qualities to be seen, auditory qualities to be heard, kinaesthetic qualities to be felt, and tensive qualities to be illustrated and reinforced. The dramatic definition of poetry is then supported by extrinsic evidence. The history of oral interpretation affords precedents for the union of speech and the methods of the stage. Rhetorical theory and literary criticism both provide critical procedures for approaching poems as drama.

The argument then turns to a justification of the staging of poetry. Three reasons are given. The first is to illustrate the poem by means of the picturization techniques of theatre so that an audience readily appreciates its essential statement and participates more fully in its totality. The second reason is to discover new levels of truth in a poem apparent only when it is performed. The third reason is to promote a return to the primitive function of poetry as a celebrative mode in the life of man. The relationship of poetry to ritual and play is discussed in this context.

Having justified the dramatic view of poetry and its performance, the study will proceed to show in practical terms how poems may be staged.

CHAPTER II

SELECTED POEMS WITH NOTES ON PERFORMANCE

O WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

W. H. Auden

(1) "O where are you going?" (2) said reader to rider,

(3) "That valley is fatal when furnaces burn,

(4) Yonder's the (5) midden whose odours will madden, (6)
    That gap is the grave where the tall return."
                          (7)

(8) "O do you imagine," said fearer to farer,
    "That dusk will delay on your path to the pass,
    Your diligent looking discover the lacking
    Your footsteps feel from granite to grass?"

(9) "O what was that bird," said horror to hearer,
    "Did you see that shape in the twisted trees?

(10) Behind you swiftly the figure comes softly,

(11) The spot on your skin is a shocking disease?"
                          (12)

(13) "Out of this house" --said rider to reader,
    "Yours never will" --said farer to fearer,
    "They're looking for you" --said hearer to horror,

(14) As he left them there, as he left them there.

                              --W. H. Auden, Collected Shorter Poems,
                                1936-1944 (New York: Faber and Faber,
                                Ltd., 1954).

Interpretative Notes:

1. "Reader," "fearer," and "horror" could be three aspects of one person
    (or group), or three different persons ("he left them there").

2. "Rider," "farer," "hearer" may be interpreted as one person.

3. The whole poem is visualized as a series of encounters on a journey, almost a Pilgrim's Progress, with the "rider-farer-hearer" moving from one body of opposition to another, defying each of them, and leaving them behind. The performance of the poem will therefore call for the establishment of tension between the protagonist and the forces of opposition as well as a sense of the progress of a journey.

4. Evidence from the poem supports the proposition that each of the forces of opposition has a different mood and motive in his approach to the protagonist.

    a. In stanza one, the "reader's" opening question, followed by words of such dire warning as "fatal," "burn," "midden," "madden," "grave," suggest a threatening mood. The rhythm of line three (three dactyls followed by a trochee) lend a staccato vigor and aggressiveness to the threat. Since the trochee cuts the rhythm of the line short on an exciting syncopated beat, there is a momentary suspension before the beat of the next line begins. This pause may well be filled by a significant action in performance. The spondee of "that gap" slows the pace and brings to the threat a more sinister, insinuating quality.

    b. The mood of stanza two is one of mild cynicism. This is established by "fearer's" long rhetorical question asking "farer" whether he expects miracles to be performed on his behalf. The kinetic image "the lacking / your footsteps feel" rhythmically suggests a mocking imitation of the protagonist's precarious

footsteps. (The running dactylic rhythm is broken by two tro-
chees which pitch the line headlong towards the "granite" and
the "grass.") Complete absence of vision is implied: hence
groping movements, or rather abstractions of such movements,
will be appropriate in the performance of the stanza. If the
proposition is accepted that the lines are mocking the "farer's"
fate, the groping movements will imply a distinct slowing down
of the pace of the whole stanza.

c. The mood of stanza three is one of intimidation and fear. "Horror"
uses the tactics of confusion--first pointing up and out to a
specter in the trees, then behind to a figure swiftly approach-
ing, then in to the signs of disease on the "hearer's" own per-
son. These changes of location should be suggested in
performance by means of change of focus and should be so timed
as to heighten the sense of confusion.

5. "Reader," "hearer," and "horror," in their efforts to confuse and
persuade, move with little pause from stanza to stanza. However,
if we imagine "rider-farer-hearer" moving from one body of opposi-
tion to another in some confusion in the first three stanzas then
declaring himself with strength in stanza four, we may expect a
brief period of transition between the mood of stanza three and
that of stanza four. Such a period may be externalized and illus-
trated by an intensification of the postures of groups representing
the forces of opposition and a change in that of the "rider."

Performance Notes:

1. The forces of opposition are represented by a kinetic chorus[80] ar-
   ranged in three moving tableaux each comprising, say, five members.
   There is a close relationship between the words of "reader," "fearer,"
   and "horror" and the movements of the chorus:

   a. In stanza one, the tableau interprets the threatening qualities
      of the "reader" and, at the same time, visually represents the
      locations he points out. The shape of the movement is determined
      by questions of place; the style or quality of the movement is
      determined by mood.

   b. In stanza two, the tableau interprets the cynicism of the
      "fearer" and acts out the mocking mimicry suggested by the
      rhythm of the lines.

   c. In stanza three, the tableau interprets the intimidating quality
      of "horror's" words and provides a focus for the changes of
      location suggested in the text.

2. "Reader," "fearer" and "horror" are placed a short distance from the
   tableau appropriate to their speech and act as antagonist in each
   stanza. Their movement and tone of voice are the keys to the move-
   ment of the chorus.

3. "Rider-farer-hearer" represents his encounter with the three modes
   of opposition (perhaps to be understood as arising within his own
   nature) in a series of dance-like movements designed to set the tone
   of the "drama" of the poem and build up a sense of contrast and op-
   position, i.e., to firmly establish the sense of conflict in the

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[80]The phrase is coined to refer to a group of performers trained
to express with their bodies the movement values of the poem.

mind of the audience. As this takes place, the tableaux stand in fixed positions vestigial of their attitudes towards the protagonist. As the performance of the poem proceeds, "rider-farer-hearer" moves from tableau to tableau as if on a journey and is accosted by each antagonist in turn.

4. The tableaux are arranged on levels to increase visibility and movement possibilities.

Detailed Performance Notes Related to the Text:

(1) "Reader" intercepts "rider."

(2) Words are spoken by the narrator: either an independent reader or members of the tableau.

(3) Tableau I begins with four performers in a kneeling crouch and one standing, all with heads and hands down.
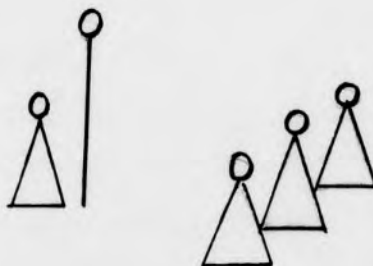
(4) All begin moving upwards slowly—raising heads and stretching trunks.

(5) Stand, slowly, rhythmically, leaning outwards, heads averted, arms bent at elbows rising upwards, fingers outstretched.
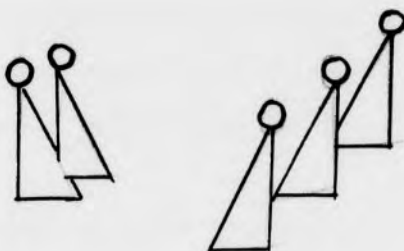
(6) Arms outstretched (palms and fingers open) at assorted angles to give a visual impression of confusion. Performers two and three kneel to position as for (3).

(7) Protagonist moves quickly on but is intercepted by "fearer."

(8) Throughout the stanza the tableau moves slowly and rhythmically, by movements reminiscent of walking blindfolded, from one static tableau position to another.

(9) Stand in positions capturing the textures and lines of gnarled trees.

(10) Point vigorously over the head of the protagonist.

(11) Back to positions somewhat as for (9), but movements more crabbed and inward.

(12) Transition: each tableau in turn intensifies its statement; the
protagonist views each in turn, growing successively in confidence
and defiance. (As the protagonist views each one, the appropriate
tableau whispers its key phrase: a. "O where are you going?"
b. "discover the lacking / your footsteps" c. "shape in the trees."
This interpolation may clutter the performance of the poem unduly
but it may also clarify the relationship between the statement made
in each of the first three stanzas and the response made in the last
one. This is a matter to be decided by experimentation.)

(13) The protagonist stands before each tableau in turn to deliver his
half-line.

(14) The protagonist walks off during first half-line; the whole chorus
speaks the second at low volume.

SPANISH DANCER
Ranier Maria Rilke

(1) As in the hand a match glows, (2) swiftly white
(3) before it bursts in flame (4) and to all sides
(5) licks its (6) quivering (7) tongues: (8) within the ring
    of spectators her wheeling dance is bright,
(9) nimble, and (10) fervid, (11) twitches and (12) grows wide.

(13) And suddenly is made of pure fire.

    Now her glances kindle the dark hair;
    she twirls the floating skirts with daring art
    into a whirlwind of consuming flame,
    from which her naked arms alertly strike,
    clattering like fearful rattlesnakes.

Then, as the fire presses her too closely,
imperiously she clutches it and throws it
with haughty gestures to the floor and watches
it rage and leap with flames that will not die--
until, victorious, surely with a sweet
greeting smile, and hiding her head high,
she tramples it to death with small, firm feet.

> --Ranier Maria Rilke, <u>Fifty Selected Poems</u>,
> (Los Angeles: University of California
> Press, 1941)

<u>Interpretative Notes</u>:

1. The poem is sustained on an extended comparison between a flame and
   the dance:

   a. As the match sputters and glows before it bursts into flame, so
      the dance holds momentarily in "nimble," twitching movement be-
      fore it bursts into full strength.

   b. As the flame flickers and spreads among the kindling until it
      becomes a consuming body, so the dancer's eyes "kindle" her hair
      until her skirts and arms become part of a flaming body of move-
      ment.

   c. The focus of the comparison changes in stanza three. The dancer
      now appears to be threatened by the very fire she is creating--
      her movement is as if she is threatened by the flame, throws it
      to the floor, watches it leap up, then tramples it with her feet.

2. There is, then, a close connection between the movement of flame, the
   movement of the dancer, and the movement of the poem:

   a. In line one the juxtaposition of "glows, swiftly" (with a comma
      between) suggests the hissing suspension of match flame before
      it fully ignites.

b. In lines two and three the alternation of anapaestic and iambic rhythms suggests the flickering and quivering of a catching flame.

c. In lines four and five the introduction of a phyrric foot into an iambic line:

    ". . . within the ring

of spectators her wheeling dance is bright."
adds a free-flowing quality to the spinning turns of the dance, and the use of anapaestic, trochaic, and spondaic feet in line five sets up a repetitive spinning action, especially where the two trochees meet across the caesura then open out excitingly on to the spondee.

d. Line six runs along a series of unstressed syllables building tension and pace toward the spondaic climax of "pure fire."

e. In lines seven to eleven the predominance of fricative consonants with the iambic rhythm supports the stronger, smoother rhythms of "floating skirts" and "whirlwind" movement. However, in lines ten and eleven, plosive consonants become more prominent and in line eleven the rhythms become anapaestic and trochaic thus supporting the staccato vitality of the dancer's arm-movements.

f. Lines twelve to eighteen contain a number of words, gestural in quality, which substantially embody the movements of the stanza: "clutches," "throws," "rage and leap," "hiding," "tramples," "small, firm feet." The final spondee following the iambic establishes the firm, even movement involved in trampling out a flame.

Performance Notes:

1. The image of a match bursting into flame must be strongly established in performance.

2. The actual movements of the dancer represented in the poem could well be choreographed and performed either preceding or simultaneously with the reading. However, this task would require a trained choreographer and a trained dancer.

3. Alternatively, the "focus" of the performance could be on an imaginary dancer in the middle of a group of spectators. Once the dominant image of the poem is established, i.e., the comparison between the burgeoning flame and the dancer's movements, the dance takes place in the imagination of the spectators, fanned and shaped by the rhythms and gestures of the poetic language.

4. The progress of the central image goes through several stages, each accompanied by appropriate changes in the rhythms and textures of the language. These must be visualized in performance:

    a. The unfolding of the dance (lines one to six).

    b. The maturity of the dance (lines seven to eleven).

    c. The vigorous build towards a climax (lines twelve to fifteen).

    d. The cadence and conclusion (lines sixteen to eighteen).

5. The sense of movement in the poem can be enhanced by using a number of voices in the group to read the lines--the changes of voice reinforce the changes in rhythm and texture. If four voices are used they should be selected as follows: Reader one--male, low pitched; Reader two--male, medium pitched; Reader three--female, medium pitched; Reader four--female, high pitched.

Detailed Performance Notes Related to the Text:

A. The performance context is established:

    a. Ten performers arranged roughly in a circle as spectators pro-
vide a focal area for the dance.

    b. The stage is darkened.

    c. One performer stands in the center, lights an oversized match,
cups his hand around it, and watches it burst into flame. He
then lights a candle held by a performer in the circle of
spectators.

    d. The flame is then passed on to seven other candles around the
circle in each case illuminating the upper part of the body.

B. Stanza one could be read as follows (the numbers used here relate
to those in the text of the poem: (1) Reader one, (2) Reader two,
(3) Reader three, (4) Reader four, (5) Reader two, (6) Reader four,
(7) Reader three, (8) Reader one, (9) Reader two, (10) Reader four,
(11) Reader two, (12) Reader four, (13) All readers. The eyes of the
other performers should focus on each reader in turn.

C. When the final line is read, the performers extinguish the candles
one by one.

D. Music would be a useful addition to the performance of this poem.

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DURING WIND AND RAIN

Thomas Hardy

They sing their dearest songs--
He, she, all of them-- yea,
Treble and tenor and bass,
    And one to play;
With the candles mooning each face . . .

</div>

Ah, no; the years O!
How the sick years reel down in throngs!

They clear the creeping moss--
Elders and juniors-- aye,
Making the pathway neat
   And the garden gay;
And they build a shady seat . . .
   Ah, no; the years, the years;
See, the white storm-birds wing across!

They are blithely breakfasting all--
Men and maidens-- yea,
Under the summer tree,
   With a glimpse of the bay,
While pet fowl come to the knee . . .
   Ah, no; the years O!
And the rotten rose is ript from the wall.

They change to a high new house,
He, she, all of them-- aye,
Clocks and carpets, and chairs
   On the lawn all day,
And brightest things that are theirs . . .
   Ah, no; the years, the years;
Down their carved names the rain-drop ploughs.

                    --Thomas Hardy, Collected Poems of
                      Thomas Hardy (New York: The Mac-
                      millan Co., 1968).

Interpretative Notes:

1. The persona thinks nostalgically of days past and, as the rain falls
    and the winds blow, reflects on the inevitable decay and loss of
    things that once were vibrantly alive.

2. The memories of past events, the languid, rocking rhythms, the repetitions of "O!" and "aye," suggest old age. The poem is built around the joyful memories of old age mingled with its sad regrets, symbolized by the falling leaves, the storm-birds, the withered rose, and the rain-drops.

3. Each stanza involves a transition from the pleasant dreams of the mind to the harsh and bitter realities of the external world. What does this suggest about the setting of the poem?

   a. Something causes the mind to go back to memories of a growing family and an active home-life. Could it be pictures on the wall? A family photograph album or sketch-book?

   b. Something causes the transition--the aging person can see leaves falling, and storm-birds flying past. Perhaps, then, he is sitting at the window of the old home dreaming of the past. As he reflects, he looks out the window at the leaves falling and is thereby forced to consider the transitory character of life.

4. Each of the series of reminiscences ends in an ellipsis--a dream interrupted and unfinished. It implies a longer pause, forming a bridge from dream to reality.

5. The phrase "Ah no!" has a double function in the performance of the poem:

   a. It is a denial of the present reality of the dream.

   b. It is a wistful sigh over the passing of the dream, the breaking point of the moments of transition.

6. The words "the years, the years . . ." imply a wistful consideration of the ravages of time.

7. The final line of each stanza is the particular aspect of reality selected out because it is a reminder of the degenerative effect of the passage of the years.

8. The word "see" in line fourteen suggests that the persona is actually observing the events which cause his pessimism.

Performance Notes:

1. The diction of the four stanzas suggests the possibility of voicing each differently for different members of the family. Stanza one could be voiced by a girl. (As he dreams, the aging man recalls the voice of his daughter.) Stanza two may be voiced by a boy, perhaps the old man's son who had often helped him in clearing the garden. In stanza three he recalls the voice of his wife. In stanza four, perhaps, he recalls the voice of his own younger days.

2. The basic contrasts of the poem can be established by a series of moving tableaux with the old man watching. The themes of the tableaux are:

   a. Singing--reeling down.

   b. Working--storm-birds winging.

   c. Breakfasting--dying, rotting.

   d. Moving house--the sad remembrance of death.

## Detailed Performance Notes Related to the Text:

1. The tableau for stanza one is as follows. Line one is allocated to performer eight; line two to performers two, six, one through seven, one; line three to performers three, four, five; line four to performer seven. The tableau freezes at the end of line five with the focus on performer eight. Close eyes on line seven.
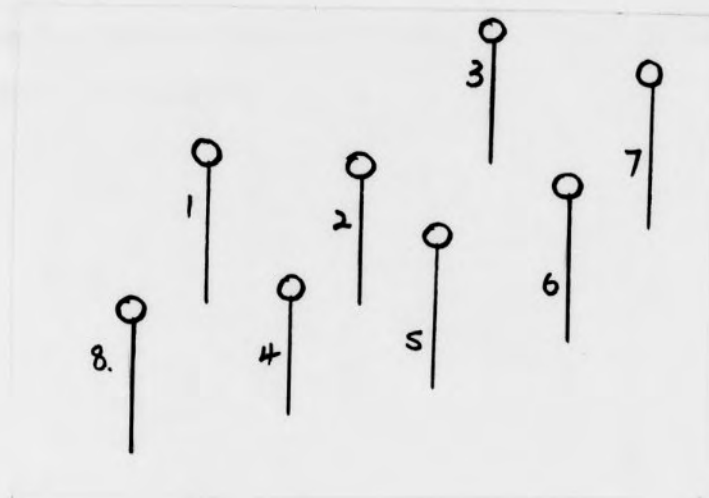
2. The tableau for stanza two is as follows. Lines are allocated according-
ing to the textures of the voices. The tableau freezes at the end of
line five and on line seven with a sweeping motion across stage focuses
off right.
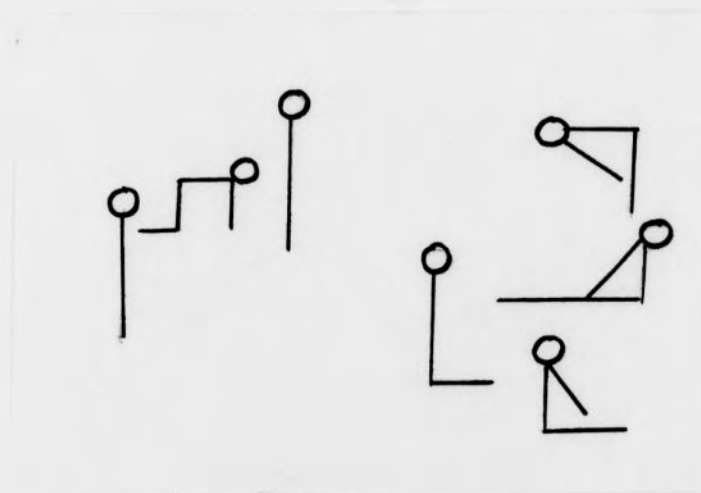
3. The tableau for stanza three is as follows. The tableau freezes on line five and on line seven focuses off left. Performer eight focuses left as well.
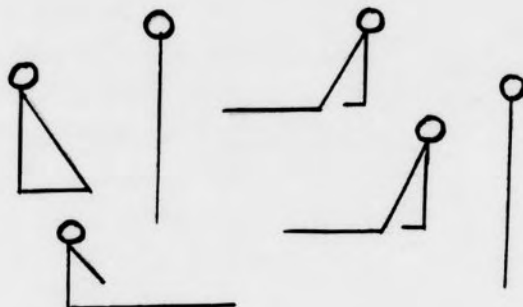
4. The tableau for stanza four is as follows. The tableau freezes on line five, and on line seven holds its position motionlessly with a fixed stare to the front.
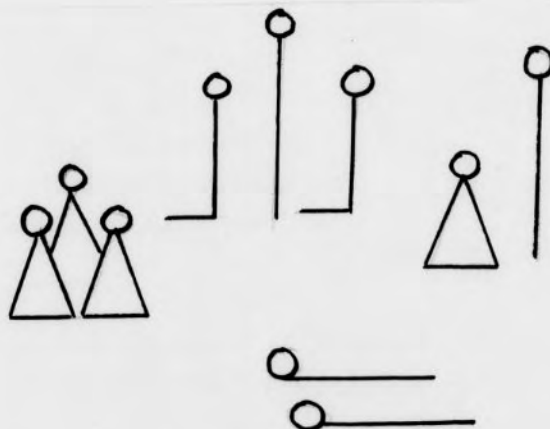
FOUR PRELUDES ON PLAYTHINGS OF THE WIND

"The past is a bucket of ashes"

Carl Sandburg

I

(1) The woman named Tomorrow
sits with a hairpin in her teeth
and takes her time
and does her hair the way she wants it
and fastens at last the last braid and coil
and puts the hairpin where it belongs
and turns and drawls: Well, what of it?
My grandmother, Yesterday, is gone.
What of it? Let the dead be dead.

II

(2) The doors were cedar
and the panels strips of gold
and the girls were golden girls
and the panels read and the girls chanted:

We are the greatest city,

the greatest nation:

nothing like us ever was.

The doors are twisted on broken hinges.

Sheets of rain swish through the wind

where the golden girls ran and the panels read:

We are the greatest city,

the greatest nation,

nothing like us ever was.

III

(3) It has happened before.
Strong men put up a city and got

a nation together,

And paid singers to sing and women

        to warble: We are the greatest city,

        the greatest nation,

        nothing like us ever was.

And while the singers sang

and the strong men listened

and paid the singers well

and felt good about it all,

(4)   there were rats and lizards who listened

      . . . . and the only listeners left now

      . . . . are . . the rats . . and the lizards.

(5) And there are black crows

crying "Caw, Caw,"

bringing mud and sticks

building a nest

over the words carved

on the doors where the panels were cedar

and the strips on the panels were gold

and the golden girls came singing:

    (6) We are the greatest city,

       the greatest nation:

       nothing like us ever was.

(7) The only singers now are the crows crying, "Caw, caw,"

(8) And the sheets of rain whine in the wind and doorways.

(9) And the only listeners now are . . . the rats . . . and the lizards.

IV

(10) The feet of the rats

scribble on the doorsills;

the hieroglyphs of the rat footprints

chatter the pedigrees of the rats

and babble of the blood

and gabble of the breed

of the grandfathers and great-grandfathers of the rats.

(11) And the wind shifts
   and the dust on a doorsill shifts
   and even the writing of the rat footprints
   tells us nothing, nothing at all
(12) about the greatest city, the greatest nation
   where the strong men listened
   and the women warbled: (13) Nothing like us ever was.

          --Carl Sandburg, Complete Poems
          (New York: Harcourt, Brace and
          World, Inc., 1950).

Interpretative Notes:

1. Stanza one is a statement on the fixedness and certainty of fate and the deadness of the past. The image of a woman doing her hair is not linked visually with the other images of the poem: it has the feeling of an image plucked out of time and space. Since the image is about time, it is significant that it should be made up of details of time and space: "in her teeth," "takes her time," "fastens at last, the last braid and coil," "where it belongs."

2. Stanza two begins with a salute to the glories of the past: the images are generalized and concerned primarily with the external appearance of things.

3. Throughout the preludes the glories of the past are overwhelmed by the grim realities of the present: broken doors, howling wind, rats, lizards, and nesting crows.

4. These representative forces of degeneration are summarized at the end of Prelude III before the final statement is made: the past is meaningless, the rat footprints are unintelligible; the future speaks (Prelude I) but ominously.

5. In Prelude III, the first half talks about the builders of the city's glory (the strong men); the second talks about the builders of the city's shame (crows).

Performance Notes:

1. Since Prelude I is isolated in time and space it may be performed in darkness.

2. In Prelude II the performance of the first chorus should reflect the glory of the past, with a hint of irony suggested by the word "chant." The second chorus should be mixed with the sounds of wind and rain: the chorus should echo through as if coming from a distance.

3. In Prelude III the same approach to performance is required; in this case, the second chorus should be mixed with the sound of crows. The word "warbled" in the first chorus implies irony on the part of the poet and therefore for the performer.

4. The summary stanza strongly asserts the dominance of the forces of destruction. In performance, therefore, the sounds of the crows and the wind should be created vocally and the narrator's voice come through thin and distant.

Detailed Performance Notes Related to the Text:

(1) Read the stanza in darkness, giving a sense of disorientation in time and space. The pace should be slow, taking the tensions and timing of a woman fastening her hair. A slow pace is suggested by "drawls," and "takes her time." The two names, "Tomorrow" and "Yesterday," are essential to the meaning of the poem, so must be firmly established in the mind of the audience. Hence, in line eight, emphasize "my" as well as "grandmother."

(2) Position two groups opposite each other--as if one mocks the other; the first represents the former days of greatness; the second, the present. The two groups are organized to represent, respectively, solidarity and brokenness.
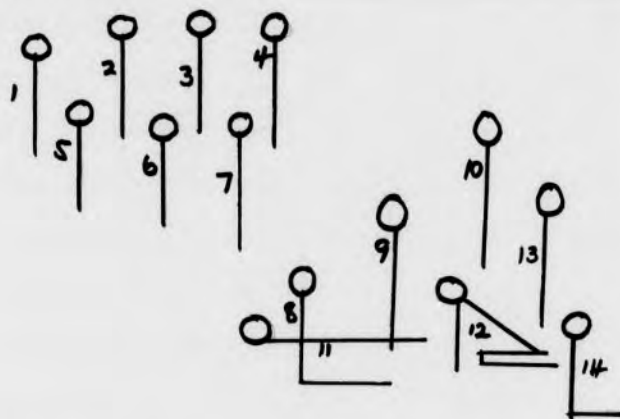
Readers are allocated as follows: line one--reader one; line two--reader two; line three--reader five; lines four, five and six--all; line seven--reader eight; line eight--reader thirteen; line nine--readers twelve and nine; lines ten to twelve--reader fourteen; (background whine--readers eight through thirteen).

(3) For Prelude III the readers should be allocated as follows: line one--reader three; line two--readers five and six; line three--readers seven and eight; lines four to six--all; lines seven to ten--assorted readers.

(4) Place a third group in a medial position, performers grouped closely together and follow the action with their eyes. Readers fourteen, fifteen and sixteen voice the three lines by sense-units.

(5) A fourth group is established to perform this: placed higher than group two, and to the left.

(6) Lines nineteen to twenty-four are read as for (2) but the background is a "caw" sound.

(7) Reader from group four.

(8) Reader from group two.

(9) Reader from group three.

(10) The narrator from group three reads lines one to seven. He is joined by the whole group on the words "chatter," "babble," "gabble," and "of the rats" in line seven.

(11) Lines eight to eleven read by members of group two. All whisper "nothing at all."

(12) Lines twelve to thirteen read phrase by phrase by each of the four performance groups in turn.

(13) The final phrase is read by one member of group three.
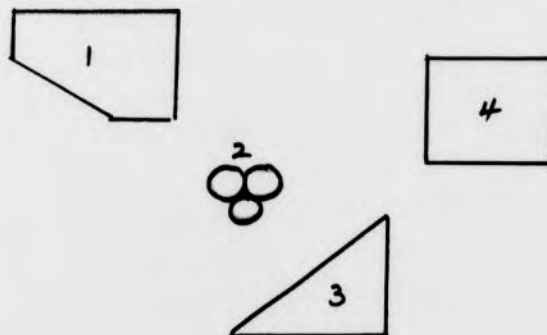
LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI
John Keats

(1)

(2) 'O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

(3) 'O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

(4) 'I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.'

(5) 'I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful--a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

'I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

'I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

'She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna dew,

And sure in language strange she said,
    (6) "I love thee true!"

(7) 'She took me to her elfin grot,
    And there she wept and sigh'd full sore;
And there I shut her wild, wild eyes
    With kisses four.

'And there she lulled me asleep,
    And there I dream'd--Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
    On the cold hill's side.

'I saw pale kings and princes too,
    Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
Who cried--(8) "La belle Dame sans Merci
    Hath thee in thrall!"

'I saw their starved lips in the gloam
    With horrid warning gaped wide,
(9) And I awoke and found me here
    On the cold hill's side.

(10) 'And this is why I sojourn here
    Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
    And no birds sing.'
        (11)
            --John Keats, Poems (New York:
            E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc. 1944)

Interpretative Notes:

1. The poem is a dialogue between a questioner (who speaks in the first three stanzas) and the knight.

2. The "scene" appears to be a lake's edge, on the heath, at the end of autumn. The time of year is suggested by "the squirrel's granary is full" and "the harvest's done."

3. The questioner seems to be a woman, judging by her concern over the knight's appearance and her references to flowers to define her condition: "palely," "haggard," "woebegone," "lily on thy brow," "with anguish moist and fever dew," "on thy cheek a fading rose."

4. The poem exists on two or three levels of reality. The first, the encounter of the knight and the lady, possesses the quality of a legend; the second, the recollection of the knight's encounter with the "belle dame," possesses the quality of romantic fantasy; the third, the knight's dream of "kings and princes," possesses the lyrical horror of a nightmare. There is a return from the third level to the first in the eleventh stanza: "And I awoke . . ."

Performance Notes:

1. Since the scene is a lakeside at the onset of winter, any suggestion of setting made by the performance should be bleak and spare.

2. The "questioner" should be performed by a woman, standing at a higher level and in the first two stanzas, some distance from the knight.

3. The knight is "loitering;" hence, he should be standing disconsolately, moving infrequently and wearily. This should be established at the beginning of the performance. When the reading of the lines begins, he is not moving.

4. The repetition of "O what can ail thee knight-at-arms?" implies a change in the knight's position, perhaps enabling the questioner to see his face.

5. Since the observations of stanza four are even more detailed, the questioner has probably moved towards the knight to see him more clearly and express sympathy.

6. To help establish the second and third kinds of reality, a small chorus (three to five performers) may be used especially for voicing the recalled voices.

Detailed Performance Notes Related to the Text:

(1) The "scene" is set as follows:
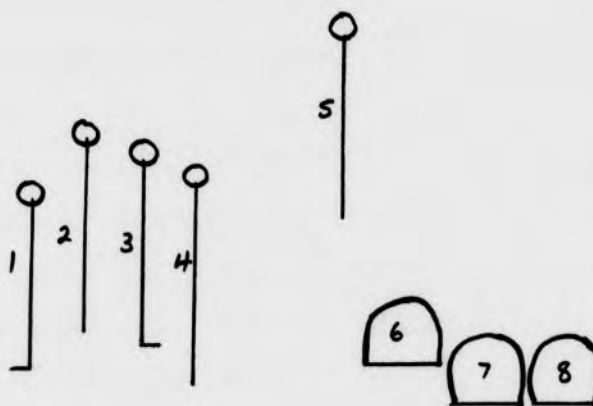
Performers one to five are standing with feet and hands together; six to eight are sitting, feet together, arms clasped around their knees. The knight "loiters" on. As he walks past five, the latter, who is facing upstage (back to audience), turns slowly to follow the knight's movements.

As the knight walks past performers one to four, they turn away from encounter with him until they end in positions similar to those diagrammed. As he passes six to eight, they lower their

heads. These positions represent the emotional state of the knight; this seems to be justified in view of the poet's use of nature for the same purpose.

(2) The lady speaks.

(3) The knight looks up at her; she views his haggard condition and changes her tone to one of deeper concern.

(4) The lady kneels and reaches out a compassionate hand. The knight is still looking at her.

(5) The knight takes several short steps away from the lady and speaks. His eyes are fixed on an off-stage focus.

(6) The phrase is repeated in a distant, haunting manner by performer two (a woman).

(7) The phrase is repeated by performers one to eight in chorus; they repeat the phrase "in thrall" with diminishing volume until it becomes a whisper. They continue to whisper the phrase during the next two lines. The knight's tone is one of fascinated horror.

(8) The knight's tone rapidly changes to that he used at the beginning.

(9) The knight turns again to face the lady.

(10) The chorus exits in the following order: five, eight, seven, six, one, two, three, four. The knight pauses momentarily, then exits.

UNWANTED
Edward Field

(1) The poster with my picture on it
Is hanging on the bulletin board in the Post Office.

I stand by it hoping to be recognized
Posing first full face and then profile

But everybody passes by and I have to admit
The photograph was taken some years ago.

I was unwanted then and I'm unwanted now
Ah guess ah'll go up echo mountain and crah.

I wish someone would find my fingerprints somewhere
Maybe on a corpse and say, You're it.

(2) Description: (3) Male, or reasonably so
    White, but not lily-white and usually deep red

(4) Thirty-fivish, and looks it lately
    Five-feet-nine and one-hundred-thirty pounds: no physique

(5) Black hair going gray, hairline receding fast
    What used to be curly, now fuzzy

(6) Brown eyes starey under beetling brow
    Mole on chin, probably will become a wen.

(7) It is perfectly obvious that he was not popular at school
    No good at baseball, and wet his bed.

(8) His aliases tell his history: (9) Dumbell, Good-for-nothing,
    Jewboy, Fieldinsky, Skinny, Fierce Face, Greaseball, Sissy. (10)

(11) Warning: This man is not dangerous, answers to any name
   Responds to love, don't call him or he will come.

> --Edward Field, <u>Poems of Protest Old
> and New</u> (New York: The Macmillan
> Company, 1968).

Interpretative Notes:

1. The whole poem may be interpreted as occurring in the mind of an unwanted man.

2. Stanzas one to five present his thoughts as he stands in front of the photograph gallery.

3. Stanzas six to twelve present the memories and imaginings that flood back to him as he reads the "wanted" notice. As he reads the "Description," he recalls things said by doctors, psychologists, gossips, women he has known. As he reads the "Aliases," he recalls the names he has been called during his lifetime-- tokens of hate and indifference. As he reads the "Warning," he makes a personal plea for understanding; this plea goes on in his mind, but is also, in part, an editorial comment on the whole poem.

Performance Notes:

1. All performers are masked to establish a mood of neutrality and anonymity.

2. By means of back-lighting, the set is silhouetted to establish distance and impersonality.

3. The gallery of photographs in the post office may be suggested constructivistically--five performers stand behind black wooden "frames" as if pictures in a gallery. The performers function as a chorus.

4. Five more performers are placed relative to the gallery as passers-by.
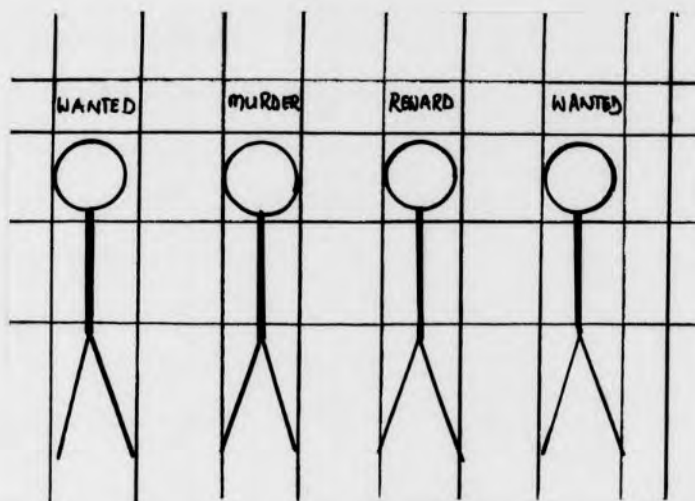
Detailed Performance Notes Related to the Text:

(1) "Unwanted" stands observing the gallery, looks at the picture, turns full front, looks at the picture, turns profile, front again, sighs and shrugs, then speaks stanzas one to five.

(2) The word "Description" is spoken with flat vigor by the chorus.

(3) The first passer-by reads the lines in the manner of a radio announcer giving details of a missing person.

(4) The second passer-by reads the lines as a gossipy neighbor.

(5) The third passer-by reads the lines as an attractive woman—implying a sexual rejection of "Unwanted."

(6) The fourth passer-by reads the lines as a doctor reporting on "Unwanted's" state of health.

(7) The fifth passer-by reads the lines as a psychiatrist reporting on his state of mind.

(8) The chorus reads the statement.

(9) Different members of the chorus and the passers-by speak the names
with the energy of a verbal assault. In order of their appearance,
the words are spoken as if by a school-boy, a teacher, a neighbor,
an army officer, a woman, an officer of the law, a school-boy, a
worker.

(10) After the word "sissy," "Unwanted" moves slowly to a kneeling posi-
tion, covering his face with an arm.

(11) The chorus speaks the final stanza.

<div align="center">

IN JUST--

e. e. cummings

(1)

</div>

(2) in Just--
spring when the world is mud--
luscious (3) the little
lame balloonman

(4) whistles far and wee

(5) and eddieandbill come
running from marbles and
piracies and (6) it's
spring

(7) when the world is puddle-wonderful

(8) the queer
old balloonman (9) whistles
far   and   wee
(10) and bettyandisbel come dancing

from hop-scotch and jump-rope and

(11) it's
spring
(12) and
the
goat-footed
balloonMan (13) whistles
far
and
wee   (14)

--e. e. cummings, _Poems 1923-1954_
(New York: Harcourt, Brace and
Co., 1959).

Interpretative Notes:

1. According to the evidence of its diction and structure, the poem seems
to be an evocation of a child's view of the onset of spring: the
frequent use of "and" as a connecting device; the expression "just-- /
Spring" referring to the early signs of the new season; preoccupation
with the balloonman's lameness; the breathless concertina-expressions,
"eddieandbill," "bettyandisbel;" the references to running and danc-
ing, "marbles and / piracies," "hop-scotch and jump-rope;" the
tumbling confusion of images and the repetition of those which cap-
ture the attention (e.g., the lameness of the balloonman); and child-
expressions such as "queer," "wee," "goat-footed."

2. The poem is a celebration of the festivity of spring--the world breaks
to renewed life after the death of winter. The mud and puddles are
the remaining signs of winter; the balloonman, with his colorful
balloons, heralds the arrival of spring and child-joy breaks into
the world.

3. The focus of attention in the poem shifts from the proximate, rapid-changing world of the child to the distant, regressive, slow-moving world of the balloonman. Yet the balloonman is an important symbol of the child's conception of the world and the distant and fantastic qualities of adulthood.

4. The view that the expression "goat-footed" is a muted reference to the satyr of Greek mythology is not consistent with the general tone of the poem since it introduces the note of lechery which is not apparent anywhere else.

Performance Notes:

1. Performance of the poem must enhance its profusion of texture, pace, and color. A festive atmosphere can be created by means of devices such as colored light, balloons, streamers, and a rich variety of movement.

2. The performance should also illustrate the essential contrasts of the poem—those between the playing children and the balloonman.

3. The poem makes its statement about the world of the child partly by means of its structural circularity. This circularity provides the basis for staging the poem.

4. Although the balloonman recedes spatially into the distance, he remains psychologically in the focus of attention. The performance of lines referring to him may best be handled by means of various levels.

Detailed Performance Notes Related to the Text:

(1) The performance context is established:

   a. The stage should be set as follows:
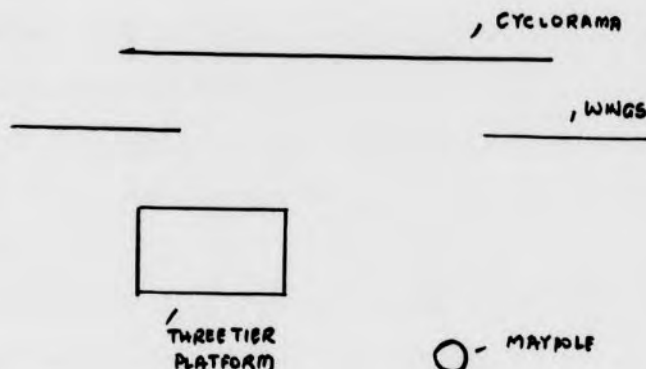
b. The sound of a tune being whistled breaks onto a darkened stage followed by the muted music of a "maypole dance."

c. The music stops and the cyclorama is lit leaving the rest of the stage in silhouette.

d. Twelve performers forming Group 1 move to positions roughly surrounding the "maypole" and take up closed postures (representing the death of winter).

e. A performer representing the balloonman limps on stage carrying balloons; he weaves among the performers giving a bunch of balloons to three and streamers from the maypole to the other nine, then begins to walk off stage right. His movements are followed by a spotlight.

f. The balloonman disappears from view; the performers in Group 2 detach themselves from the others as if following him and form a line on the platforms, one at each level.

      g. General stage lights dim up and the reading of the poem begins.

(2) The performers in Group 1 begin to open up to a standing position. The lines are spoken by various members of the group, keeping in mind the child's sense of wonder and his vocal qualities.

(3) Members of Group 1 turn to face the point where the balloonman disappeared.

(4) The three members of Group 2 divide this line among them, the last word being taken by the performer furthest upstage.

(5) The performers in Group 1 weave in and out systematically as in a maypole dance while various of them speak the lines.

(6) A chorus response of reduced vitality to suggest burgeoning life.

(7) The performers continue to weave, some on tip-toe as though avoiding puddles.

(8) The movement freezes in a pose with the focus off stage right.

(9) Performed as for (3), but with an increased sense of distance in the voice.

(10) The maypole dance takes on new movement qualities: skipping, hopping, and jumping.

(11) A chorus response of considerably increased vitality.

(12) The focus is again off stage right.

(13) Spoken with a greater sense of distance.

(14) The lights fade out except for one spot on the balloons held by the performer on the highest platform.

(1) SANDWICH
Nancy Sullivan

(2) Let it be pastrami on rye,
(3) Lox on a bagel,
(4) Bacon, tomato, and lettuce
(5) In between toast.
It's (6) one thing on top of (7) another
Thing on top of (8) another thing
(9) With a top on.

(1) MARTINI
Nancy Sullivan

(2) In a clear glass, its surface
Smooth as a trampoline,
Just a hint of gold shivers around.
(3) Down, down there the olive
Rests (4) lumpily, lustfully hoarding
Gin and vermouth in its meaty cave.

--Nancy Sullivan, The History of the World as Pictures (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1966).

General Notes on Interpretation and Performance:

1. The object of performance will be to communicate the spirit and vitality of the "pop" idiom as well as enhance the effectiveness of its unusual glimpse of the ordinary.

2. The tableaux for the two poems take the shape of the subject of each.

3. Although the two are not logically connected, they are closely related in style and manner of performance. They may therefore be performed in quick succession, with a "runner" setting the pace by

first placing himself in a selected location on the stage, calling
the name of the poem ("Sandwich," "Martini), then taking his place
in the tableau which forms around him. The details of this are dis-
cussed separately.

Interpretative Notes: Sandwich:

1. "Lox" (Yiddish)--a variety of salty, smoked salmon.

   "Bagel" (Yiddish)--a bread roll made of yeast dough, twisted into
   a doughnut-like shape, simmered in water and baked in an oven.

2. The diction suggests an Italian accent for line one, a Yiddish ac-
   cent for line two, and an American accent for lines three and four.
   This heterogeneity suggests New York, so the pace, intonation, and
   pronunciation of the last three lines may be that of an average
   New Yorker.

3. The rapid pace of lines one to four and the repetitions of lines
   five and six are appropriate to the feelings of harrassment experi-
   enced by those serving behind a New York lunch-counter. The phrase
   "with a top on" humorously suggests the taciturn and sometimes light-
   hearted resignation with which the counter-people meet the frustra-
   tions of their profession.

4. There is sufficient coherence in the diction to call for one speaker,
   but more variety would be introduced into the performance by using
   different speakers to represent the different nationalities.

5. If we imagine the lines being spoken in the midst of the rush of
   business, we can postulate a raised level of projection.

6. The timing of the primary stressed syllables in lines five and six
   seems to be associated with the actual rhythm of making a sandwich:

"It's one thing on top of another / Thing on top of another
thing . . ."

Performance Notes: "Sandwich:"

1. Performance requires, say, five performers.

2. The performers take their cues from the "runner."

3. The aim of the tableau is to enact the creation of a sandwich.

Detailed Performance Notes Related to the Text: "Sandwich:"

(1) The "runner" calls "Sandwich." He stands alongside a cube (12")
    facing the audience; the other performers turn towards him.

(2) One performer moves towards the "runner" as if ordering a sandwich.
    He speaks with an Italian accent.

(3) A second performer moves similarly, speaking with a Yiddish accent.

(4) A third performer, speaking with a Brooklyn accent.

(5) A fourth performer, using the same accent. The four are now grouped
    around the sandwich man as if at a counter, backs to the audience.

(6) All performers turn to the audience and form a straight line, legs
    apart ten to twelve inches, feet and shoulders touching those on
    either side, arms lateral. The narration is now undertaken by the
    "runner" who stands hidden behind the tableau. He uses an exag-
    gerated Brooklyn pronunciation.

(7) The performers in the tableau bend their left arms and place their
    forearms at right angles across their bodies.

(8) They lay their right forearms across their chests thus forming a
    second layer.

(9) The narrator stands on the cube to deliver the line, peering over
    the top of the sandwich tableau.
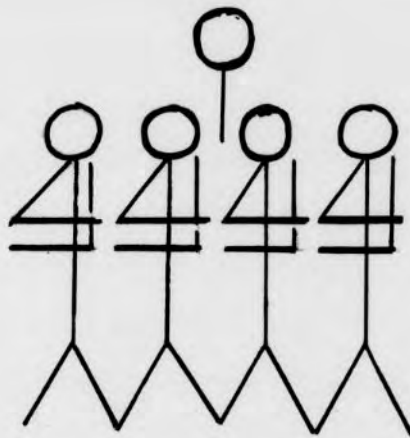
Interpretative Notes: "Martini:"

1. The diction of lines one to three, especially words such as "glass," "trampoline," "hint," "shivers," suggests clear, sharp lines--a clue to both vocal delivery and movement.

2. The word "trampoline" humorously hints the changes to take place in the diction and visual focus of the poem: its surface is clear and disciplined, but breaking its surface can bring about repercussions of a very different order.

3. The olive sits lumpily (drunkily?) at the bottom of the glass--a contrast to the sharp lines of the vessel and surface as defined in lines one to three. The caesura after "lumpily" and the strong vocalic quality of the words "hoarding" and "meaty" slow down the pace of the last three lines.

4. The alliterative effect of "lumpily" and "lustfully" suggests the brief dance of the olive as it moves and settles in the glass.

Performance Notes: "Martini:"

1. The "runner" moves to another location on stage and the tableau forms
   alongside him.

2. The martini tableau may be formed as follows: two performers kneel
   back to back, hands extended outwards and upwards, thus forming the
   base of the "glass;" two performers stand immediately behind them
   and extend their arms to continue the line of the glass upwards.

3. A separate narrator may be used to speak the poem as he observes
   the tableau. Alternatively, the "runner" may act as narrator for
   the first lines, then, with a leap to the base of the tableau, act
   lumpily as the olive.

Detailed Performance Notes Related to the Text: "Martini:"

(1) The "runner" calls out the title.

(2) The narrator speaks.

(3) One member of the tableau takes over the narration. On the first
    "down" the narrator leaps to the base of the tableau into a tightly
    closed sitting position.

(4) While the narrator continues, the "olive" responds to the liquids in
    "lumpily," "lustfully," rather lazy rhythmic movements of the head.
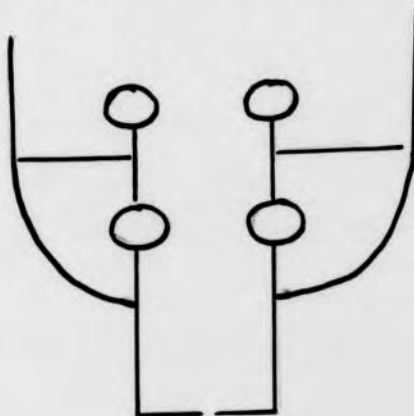
DISILLUSIONMENT OF TEN O'CLOCK
Wallace Stevens

(1)
(2) The houses are haunted
   By white night-gowns.
(3) None are green,
(4) Or purple with green rings,
(5) Or green with yellow rings,
(6) Or yellow with blue rings.
(7) None of them are strange,
   With socks of lace
   And beaded ceintures.
   People are not going
   To dream of baboons and periwinkles.
(8) Only here and there, an old sailor,
   Drunk and asleep in his boots,
   Catches tigers
(9) In red weather.
(10)

--Wallace Stevens, The Collected Poems
of Wallace Stevens (New York:
Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1951).

Interpretative Notes:

1. The poem is about the loss of imagination.

2. The poem's statement is largely negative ("None are green," "people
   are not going . . ."), yet the negative is what is positive about it;
   the things that do not exist, or exist only rarely, are the things
   to be desired. Hence, the contrast between the undesirable reality
   and the desirable "unreality" must be clearly established in per-
   formance.

3. "Ceinture:" a belt or girdle for the waist.

4. The essential contrast of the poem is most clearly established by contrasts of color but supported also by subtle changes of rhythm. The white contrasts with the green, purple, yellow, and red; the "night-gowns" contrast with the "socks of lace" and the "beaded ceintures;" the empty dreams suggested by "haunted" contrast with the dreams of "baboons and periwinkles" and catching tigers "in red weather." There is an interesting contrast between the rhythm of line two and the four lines which follow it. Line two consists of an iambic foot and a trochaic foot in juxtaposition; the boundary between them requires a brief hiatus which produces a slight uncertainty and discomfort heightened by the repetition of the /æt/ sounds. This rhythmic phenomenon is contrasted with the exciting flow of lines four to six; each line is made up of an anapaest followed by trochee which syncopates the beat.

Performance Notes:

1. This poem needs to be set in a "performance context" designed to establish the basic contrasts firmly in mind, and to familiarize the audience with the associative significance of the images used in the poem, e.g., that white is associated with sterility of imagination while "green," "baboons," and "tigers" are associated with richness and variety of imagination.

2. A great deal can be done with imaginative lighting in the performance of this poem, especially in projecting the color and texture contrasts.

3. The performance of the poem itself is best handled by readers who are part of the performing group.

Detailed Performance Notes Related to the Text:

(1) The performance context is established. One performer, white-robed, walks slowly across stage carrying a candle and disappears. He walks back on the same plane, but another, downstage, walks in the opposite direction. Both walk off stage, then return, and a third joins them walking on another plane. Distance separates them at all times. As they walk, they repeat the words "haunted" and "white." Into this context leap four or five performers, moving and leaping with vigor. Whenever group one use the word "white," group two reply with "green," or "red," or "purple;" whenever group one use the phrase "haunted by white," group two reply with "dream of baboons," "of periwinkles," or "catch tigers." This context must be established by experimentation, using the suggestions of students. Once the various performers are set in position, the reading of the poem itself can begin. The transition could be handled by a "freeze."

(2) The opening lines spoken by members of group one.

(3) The line is read by a member of group two. A green slide is flashed onto the group.

(4) As for (3) using a purple slide.

(5) As for (3).

(6) As for (3) using a yellow slide.

(7) Various readers from group two speak these lines while a series of slides of various textures is flashed onto the group.

(8) Spot one performer who reads the lines.

(9) A red slide is flashed on.

(10) Group two performers run off energetically. The red slide goes off and performers in group one move off slowly.

LIKE ATTRACTS LIKE
Edwin Morgan

```
like       attracts      like
like       attracts      like
like       attracts     like
like       attracts     like
like     attracts    like
like   attracts   like
like attracts like
likeattractslike
likattractàike
likètraclàke
làkraàtke
àtkeàtke
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--Edwin Morgan, "Like Attracts Like,"
in Concrete Poetry: A World View,
ed. by Mary Ellen Solt (Bloomington:
Indiana University Press, 1968).

Interpretative Notes:

When you look at the poem, you feel a sense of thrust towards the center
until the two peripheral words are completely identified as one.

Performance Notes:

1. The shape of the poem must be illustrated by the placement of per-
   formers.

2. The movement of the performers must demonstrate the "drive" of the
   lines towards the central merging point.

Detailed Performance Notes Related to the Text:

1. Three performers are chosen: one to perform "like," one to perform
   "attracts," the third to perform "like." All dressed in yellow.

2. Five other performers placed in an irregular arrangement to represent
   the antagonists to the forces of attraction. These performers are
   dressed in a variety of colors.

3. The three "like" performers stand widely separated. Each moves
   on the word. The two outside performers move on a diagonal towards
   a central point, the middle performer moves step by step in a
   straight line towards the same point.

4. By taking a diminishing count for the pauses within the lines, and
   allowing the count at the end of the lines to anticipate that of
   the following line, the performers may achieve an effective temporal
   as well as spatial merger.

5. The lines of movement may be diagrammed as follows:
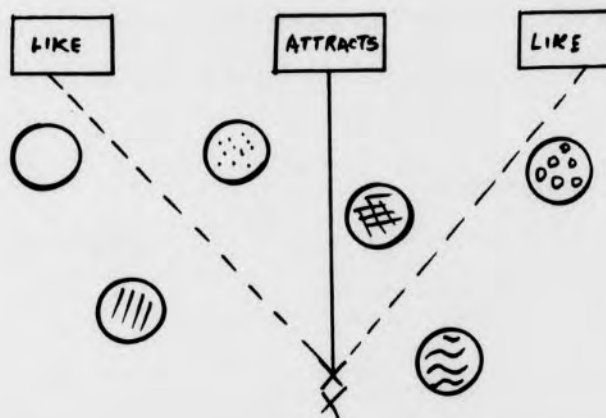
6. The pattern of counts may be tabulated as follows. The phonetic
   symbols in lines seven, eight, and nine refer to the sounds of
   each word on which the sound of the next word begins. The process
   ends in complete merger on line ten.

LINE	COUNT (INTERNAL)	FINAL
1	6	5
2	5	4
3	4	3
4	3	2
5	2	1
6	1	0
7	0	0
8	/k/ /ts/	1
9	/aɪk/ /ækts/	1
10	-- --	

Summary

Since the purpose of this chapter was to illustrate the principles of staging poetry, it may be helpful to summarize its findings in tabular form:

Poem	Principles Illustrated
"O Where are you Going?" (Auden)	How the diction and rhythms of a poem influence decisions in staging. How tensive qualities can be embodied in performers. How movement complements mood and meaning.
"Spanish Dancer" (Rilke)	How a central image is used as the basis for determining staging methods and movement style.
"During Wind and Rain" (Hardy)	How diction determines "characters" in a poem and how structure reveals the relationship between characters and ideas.
"Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind" (Sandburg)	Use of space to illustrate contrast of ideas.
"La Belle Dame Sans Merci" (Keats)	Use of setting to reinforce lyrical qualities and use of space to separate levels of reality.

Poem	Principles Illustrated
"Unwanted" (Field)	How staging clarifies the setting of a poem.
"In Just--" (cummings)	The influence of structure on meaning and how staging is determined by this relationship.
"Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock" (Stevens)	The use of a "performance context" to prepare the audience for the idioms of a poem.
"Sandwich," "Martini" (Nancy Sullivan)	The use of staging to reinforce the intention of poems.
"Like Attracts Like" (Morgan)	How visual structure can be illustrated by dramatization.

CONCLUSION

The ideas presented in this study are preliminary and theoretical and therefore open to experimental modification. They are more significant as clues to an approach to poetry than as proven methods of performance in themselves.

In preparing to present a particular poem, the interpreter needs to take several important steps. He needs to understand the poem and discover its essential statement, whether conceptual or not. He needs to ascertain the crucial means used by the poet to make the statement—rhythmic, metaphorical, structural, or textural. He consequently decides on the appropriate methods of staging the poem.

The final justification for a particular staged performance of a poem lies in its truthfulness to the poem and in the quickened sensitivities of the audience. The integrity of the poem must remain inviolate; performance is justified only when it illustrates qualities already present in the poem and when it subordinates all methods of presentation to the poem's own principles and proportions. The risk is considerable. But a performance handled by a creative and sensitive artist will do much to foster an appreciation of the poem and a love of poetry.

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