William Forsythe, *Eidos:Telos*, and Intertextual Criticism

Ann Nugent

Prologue

At my first performance of Eidos:Telos, *in Frankfurt in 1998, I discover a work of penetrating power that is both ordered and disordered. It is febrile at one moment and cool at the next. It is abstract but threaded through with symbolism, and its three acts exude darkness and mystery.*

There are no obvious divisions into time or place, and the weave of obscure and fragmented allusions means that dramas build and drop away. The dancing bodies create a mass of curves, lines, and angles with astonishing fluency but in few centrally organized patterns. I try to make sense of the diversity of abstract dance that seems rooted in evasive purpose, and symbolism that lends itself to poetics rather more often than to literal meaning. I search for metaphors that will bind images together, but the imagery is delivered faster than the speed of thought. The movement is rooted in ballet, and fleetingly I sense Apollo *lingering; warm to a fragment of* Giselle *and feel a frisson of excitement when a man sinks to the ground and folds over his body, because it reminds me of Nijinsky's* L'Aprés midi d'un faune. *But though these connections continue to burn in my mind, they are incidentals and personal to what I see, and quickly succeeded by others.*

But I leave Eidos:Telos *feeling somehow different, for my body is pumping with energy and ideas, and colorful dynamics are colliding in my head. It has taken me on a journey of the philosophical, kinaesthetic, and sensual, and I need to experience more.*

Introduction

It was in July 1994 that William Forsythe and the Ballett Frankfurt presented a new one-act work at Frankfurt's Opernhaus entitled *Self Meant to Govern*, with an onstage cast of

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six dancers and a violinist.[1] In terms of company resources, this was a modest number of dancers, but Forsythe and his colleagues regarded the achievement as significant because it brought to fruition ideas about the body's relationship to space that they had been generating for several years.[2] During the six months following the premiere, the concept was expanded into two more acts. The first of these introduced a spoken text and divided its main focus between a lengthy spoken monologue and a waltz for twenty dancers. The second developed movement ideas from the original work and disseminated them among a larger group of dancers.[3] In January 1995 these two new acts were linked together with *Self Meant to Govern,* and a new three-act work called *Eidos:Telos* was born.

It turned out to be a text in the Barthesian sense—a borderless weave with a multidisciplinary approach dispensing with notions of a central focus.[4] At times it felt ordered and at others disordered, but in the midst of apparent chaos it seemed also to be guided by a geometry of precision. This produced a conundrum for the viewer, for how could the rational and the chaotic coexist, and how were so many different fragments of meaning to be made sense of?

At the beginning of the creative period, texts and drawings from different theoretical and cultural disciplines had been assembled by Heidi Gilpin, who was the company's dramaturge at the time. These included writings from Benjamin, Cixous, Deleuze, Guattari, Foucault, Merleau-Ponty, Sontag, and Valery as well as a selection of scientific diagrams and drawings, all of which were bound into a thick book and distributed to company members. They used it to trigger ideas in the dance studio, selecting random issues from the texts and probing them with a mixture of intellectual and physical questioning.[5] Though *Eidos:Telos* is usually referred to as Forsythe's creation, it is a collaboration, and the program makes this clear with an entry that reads: "Concept and Organisation: William Forsythe, in Choreographic Association with the Ensemble."[6]

What the 1994 *Govern* had signaled was a step forward in the dancers' understandings of generative systems built from inculcated knowledge. In performance they were able to execute elaborate improvisational tasks made from rapid and complex decisions; Forsythe looks on the results as virtuoso cadenzas rather than straightforward improvisation. Hence the implication in the title *Self Meant to Govern,* meaning that the dancers are the architects of their own bodies.

The collaborators constructed building blocks that served as a movement methodology for *Eidos:Telos* and became known as the Alphabet. It was not just a systematized way of moving the body but a means of thinking about movement in a continually creative way. The origins of the practice could be traced to *The Questioning of Robert Scott* (1986) in which, as Forsythe explains,

> we developed the notion of kinetic isometries, where the dancers tried to register an exterior and interior refraction of movement in their bodies, and proceed according to the "reading" that they achieved of their own states. Suddenly, mental agility had to be equal to physical agility, and that was really important. (qtd. in Sulcas 1995a, 57)

The Alphabet was comprised of a collection of incongruous words or mnemonic phrases

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referencing particular movement phrases that were held in the dancers' memories. The letter A, for example, represented Abe, or Abraham Lincoln, and a brief moment from the history of an American president who wore a hat, stood on a balcony and was shot. Signaling of "A" meant that hands would shape hats; bodies would collapse over balconies, and fists would be punched into hands to sound like shots. "B" meant Book, in this instance an atlas, and fingers would feel the atlas's binding and flip the pages, then place it on an imaginary table, slide it, and hold it to the body.[7]

Letters from the Alphabet would be triggered by various signals on stage and applied during passages of structured improvisation. They could be related to information selected from lists hanging in the wings offering suggestions such as "launching off body part," "level shift," "matching limb," "observe," or "point extrusion/collapse" or images seen from a specially made video recording.[8]

Having set up a context, a critical perspective needs to be found that is appropriate not just for looking at abstract form but also for multiple textual implications that refuse to cohere into a single meaning. *Eidos:Telos* is intertextual through and through, made up of fragmented texts that have been pulled from the past to the present, traveling from the known on a journey that has changed them out of all recognition. The notion of the past serving as a model through which *Eidos:Telos* could be made critically accountable has been destroyed, for intertextuality celebrates diversity and unconventional relationships, and it follows that the most apt response should be through intertextual criticism.

Textual Expectations

In advance of the performance itself, a title sets up expectations, and what is suggested by *Eidos:Telos* is neither simple nor straightforward.[9] If the two words are taken to mean "form" and "purpose," the Greek-derived terms "eidos" and "telos" take on philosophical connotations. Moreover, the titular balance between *Eidos* and *Telos* and the link provided by the colon presents them in both a rhythmic and conceptual relationship. The eidos might be applied not so much to the dance's abstraction and configuration of shape but through Platonic terms, looking on form as created life—in which case telos could be taken as its opposite, death. The printed program in Frankfurt in 1998 included dictionary definitions of eidos and extended into more philosophically based terms such as *Eidetic,* "mental image," and *Eidetic Reduction,* "in Phenomenology, a science of essences" (Ballett Frankfurt 1998). This added to the potential complexity, as did the reference in the Paris program to *Teleology* and Aristotle's account that "a full explanation of anything must consider not only the material . . . but also the final cause."

The Frankfurt program also incorporated literary and graphic material, which was printed across forty-eight medium-sized pages and resulted in an unusually (and therefore significantly) thick booklet.[10] Quotations from Henri Bergson's *Matter and Memory* (1991) and Maya Deren's *Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti* (1970) were brief and tantalizingly enigmatic, though a thread could be picked out connecting them to thoughts about how memory is retained, how it accumulates collectively through history, and how the impact of experience comes to be reflected in (an individual's) physical form.[11]

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A short quotation from Stravinsky's score for *Apollon Musagete* was juxtaposed with a slightly longer passage from the commissioned score for *Eidos:Telos* by Thom Willems, proposing a likely link between the two. The myth of Persephone, who was carried off to the underworld by Hades and gained control of the spirits of the dead, was referred to in a prose passage from Roberto Calasso's book *Cadmus and Harmony* (1994). But there was much besides that was curious, including the following instruction from Forsythe: "Take an equation, solve it; take the result and fold it back into the equation and then solve it again. Keep doing this a million times" (Ballett Frankfurt 1998, 18).[12]

What could it mean? Was the equation a mathematical formula intended as a metaphor for the body as it folded over and then opened in a new configuration? Was it a reference to Forsythe's fondness for algorithms? Was it suggesting a new kind of mathematical beauty?[13] Whether or not a rationale could be found from all that the program offered, the extracts were treated as appetizers by some and regarded as irritants by others. Though I felt that the texts helped prepare me for a work of conceptual richness, not all responses were positive, as could be seen from the following reference to *Self Meant to Govern:* "[T]he extraordinarily extensive program notes . . . provide little insight to the meaning of this decidedly illiterate phrase or the ballet that follows" (Scholl 1995, 13–14).

Anna Kisselgoff (1995, n.p.) paid credit to the communicative power of Forsythe's "theatricality" and thought that the program notes did not have to be read for viewers "to get the idea." She criticized the piece for its "overload of ideas," complaining that the choreography "has little of the expected richness." Her observations raise issues about how ideas are measurable and what makes richness viable, though she was by no means the only critic to complain about imbalance. Both Tim Scholl (1995) and Laura Jacobs (1999) found the work "pretentious".[14] Scholl viewed the choreography with antipathy: "[I]n *Eidos:Telos* there is virtually no choreography (organized movement) to speak of . . . it makes a pass at every 'ism' of our century, stopping short of the formalism that might have saved it."

These, however, are judgements based on historicized knowledge and personal taste, rather than on a belief that it is the duty of a choreographer to extend the art form's possibility. Senta Driver saw that *Eidos:Telos* fulfilled "the first principle of dance [which] is movement invention" (1996, 4). Her commentary celebrated the inventiveness of "long, rich passages of sheer dance [which] carried most of the artistic information in the opening and closing acts" and delivered a closely argued analysis of the movement and different dramas. In her eyes the "emblem of the entire work" was to be found in act 2's central role and the linking of the legends of Arachne and Persephone.

Many critics made sense of the title, seeing that the microcosm mutated into a macrocosm:

> Much of Mr. Forsythe's work is about order and disorder. This theme, spectacularly enhanced by a leitmotif of death and rebirth, races through *Eidos:Telos.* (Kisselgoff 1998, 1)
>
> Becoming and Dying are the threads of a piece in which technology and

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theater, reality and myth, autonomy and entanglement hang together in a web of complexities. (Boxberger 1995, 20)

This final, haunting image of human frailty in a world that is larger, richer, more mysterious, and more frightening than we allow ourselves to imagine, points to the two poles of the title. (Sulcas 1995b, 106)

Eidos:Telos makes clear that the fulfilment of self is the end, not the means. Understanding one's membership in a community is an essential step along the path to understanding the limits of mortality, which define and liberate the self. (Wilkins 1998, 29)

These are, of course, metaphors arising out of allusion. They arouse curiosity about how the "leitmotif of death and rebirth" could have been communicated in a dance work; how "Becoming and Dying" was enacted; how "human frailty" was conceived; and what transpired to suggest "the limits of mortality." The prospect of an ending of such magnitude that it could be seen as "apocalyptic" (Kisselgoff 1998, 1) and "cataclysmic" (Sulcas 1998, 35) was compelling.

Criticism and the Ephemeral Performance Text

While metaphors such as these bring *Eidos:Telos* to vivid life, if intertextual criticism is to be viable, it needs to proceed by a methodological approach that avoids setting up prior texts as a means of judging the "latecome" text. The intertextualist shuttles between texts.[15] It makes sense, therefore, to begin in a neutral way by identifying component parts that are common to all three acts, as follows:

1. Dance/Movement
2. Voice
3. Music
4. Technology
5. Lighting
6. Sets
7. Objects
8. Dress

The *dance* is hybrid, with a character rooted in ballet. It incorporates elements of different dance styles together with vernacular *movements* and emphasizes changing spatial relationships. It is marked by continuity and flow and by dancers moving at different times, in different ways, in different spaces—and by periods of stillness that allow individuals to look at, or listen to, what is going on elsewhere. Body parts are democratized and freed to move in any direction and any order, without division into steps of preparation and completion, which means that every movement is significant.

While in the opening and closing acts monosyllabic shouts, such as "Mike," help the dancers to establish brief moments of rhythmic unity, the main emphasis on the *voice* is in act 2, when a solo speaker delivers a long monologue mixing myth and ritual into sound, movement, and drama. Several other dancers also speak in this act, making brief dramatic statements of their own.

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Willems's *music* is played by a violinist (Maxim Franke) on stage in acts 1 and 2, and by three trombonists seated out of the audience's view in the upstage left wing; the trombonists occasionally march halfway across the stage and back again. The live music interacts with musical and environmental sounds, ranging from orchestral to natural, created on computers by Joel Ryan and Dirk Haubrich in the orchestra pit.[16] When sound is heard, but not obviously connected to visual imagery, it is disembodied and feels anonymous. *Technology* plays a large part in creating sudden and drastic changes in the level of sound and lighting. The *lighting* is designed by Forsythe himself and is predominantly subtle, emphasizing twilight zones with occasional extremes of darkness and light. The *sets* are minimalist and functional and in each act wires extend across the stage, becoming complex in design for the second and third acts because of the incorporation of equipment such as video monitors and lamps and other miscellaneous *objects*. The dancers wear a miscellany of rehearsal-style *dress,* except in the middle act where they are in bustle skirts.

It is of course the flesh of performance that brings the *Eidos:Telos* text to life, and a useful strategy for collecting the intertexts together is through the notion of the "architext." Architexts are conceptual building blocks assigned by a viewer, or reader, to texts that are diverse and indeterminate.[17] They account for structural design and intertextual relations, revealing something of the nature of a text through the different relationships that are singled out. Forsythe's work, with its emphasis on architectural and textural structures and its network of meanings, is ideally suited to the concept of the architext. Consequently, the cumulative experience of watching *Eidos:Telos* leads me to identify four large-scale architexts: *The Apollonian Connective;*[18] *The Spider's Web; The Balanchinean-Bauschian-Forsythian Waltz;* and the *Forsythe Aesthetic.*

But *Eidos:Telos* still produces challenges. A literary critic may have recourse to a full text and can quote from it directly; the critical analyst of dance, denied the luxury of quotation, needs to rely on a combination of description and interpretation to represent a performance text—and choices must be made that are, inevitably, subjective and evaluative.[19] Description runs the risk of diminishing what happens on stage, particularly with a text such as *Eidos:Telos,* which can never be fully represented. But, bearing in mind that all criticism is partial and represents a text through a particular perspective, it is an essential starting point for dance. Interpretation is biased and provisional but also necessary for making sense of the work. Inevitably it is underpinned by subjective evaluation, but evaluation is a less stringent approach than judgement. Intertextual criticism proceeds, therefore, through a balance of the objective and subjective, shuttling between prior texts to make sense of a latecome text.[20]

Act 1: *The Apollonian Connective*

At the start of act 1, or *Govern,* four dancers and a violinist stand motionless on a whitened floor on a stage that is virtually bare, save for a wire extending between the two upstage wings and a scattering of small objects, which are practically invisible in the dim lighting. The performers are spread in what seems like an arbitrary arrangement of ready-to-move positions. The violinist is dressed in black and the dancers wear muted colors and figure-

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delineating outfits: when they start to move the men's drab singlets and shorts and the women's pale blue skimpy leotards will allow their movement to be seen clearly. Everyone wears socks, and the "hug" under the instep will help both their relationship with the floor (in swivelling movements, for example), and the feel of the pointed foot.[21]

The stillness is broken by one of the male dancers walking briskly forward at precisely the same moment that the violinist starts to play rapid and pointedly rhythmic music. This establishes a shared beat and buoyancy between dancer and musician. Aural awareness will become crucial to *Eidos:Telos,* not just in the regulation of pulse but also in rhythms, dynamic and tempi, and the play of dependency between—or separation from—dance and music.

Time features variously. Each passing second is registered on a digital clock positioned upstage. Small plate-like objects arranged in a circle are either thought of as part of an abstract design or disregarded. But as the eye adjusts, and "hands" are seen jerking round with an amplified rattle, the plates come to resemble clocks. How much detail can be seen on the plate-clocks depends on strong eyesight and proximity to the stage, for around the perimeters are alphabetical letters rather than numbers. The dancers do not obviously look at the clocks and the audience is not given information about the coded signals. What is actually happening, as I came to discover, is that the position of

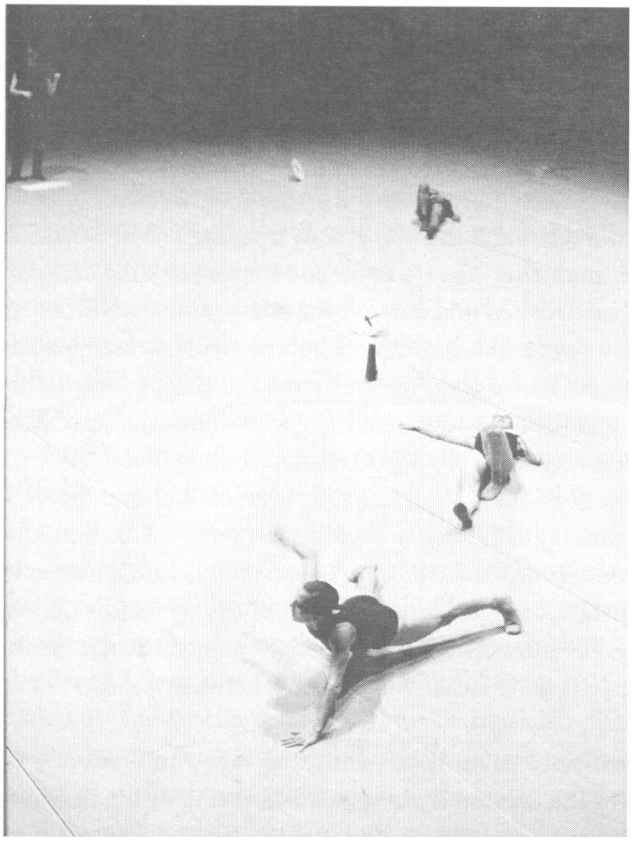


Figure 1. Eidos:Telos, *act 1. Photograph by Dominik Mentzos. Used with permission.*

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the hands against particular letters on a plate sends a signal, which the dancers relate to the Alphabet in conjunction with other improvisatory tasks (see Figure 1).[22]

The first dancer's movement summons the others to action, including two "latecomers," causing a stationary dancer to project a limb into space, line it up with the surrounding environment, and keep the line as he drops to the floor. Two dancers connect by extruding their hips in the same way and then shifting into a canon of winding arms. Muscular buoyancy is prominent, though the general mood is one of calm as if all six are reflecting on the forms they are creating. Generally four men and two women are cast in this act, though the ratio varies between performances and sometimes there are five men and one woman, or three of each sex. The differences that arise from these changes can be accounted for by individual style, for the choreography is not gender specific.

All the dancers move with the grace of ballet, the freedom of contemporary dance, and something personal to the text itself that shows up in fluidly transposing forms. Bodies are held vertically, with open torsos and lifted arms, but the dimensions and proportions of the forms keep changing so that ballet principles come into the frame and are dismissed. Letting go of upright stance and turnout and emphasizing the horizontal plane brings not so much a loss of stability as awareness of a freer play of movement possibilities between the head, arms, torso, and legs. For example, legs or arms may be angled into a shape that must be maintained as the torso moves along from high to low; the line of a lower arm may be held parallel to the floor and kept there as the dancer collapses to the ground; two dancers mirror each other as one moves forward and another backward so that movements radiate connections between oppositional limbs. There is always something meticulous about the execution, no matter how rapidly forms are reconfigured.

Recurring motifs serve as linking points, as in brief moments when dancers extend both arms in front of them and link their palms together. After the flow of forms, the eye holds on to this brief moment of stasis. Sometimes the physical dimension becomes two-dimensional, with a twist at the waist and the upper body opening out in a martial arts style. Sometimes, too, there are moments of unity between some or all of the dancers. Occasionally five of them form a vertical line and move from side to side with little leg and foot extensions in a gesture that triggers an incomplete but momentary resemblance to act 2 of *Giselle,* at the point when Giselle and Albrecht cross the stage from side to side, passing each other to deliver a graceful gesture to the opposite side of the stage. The music, too, suggests Adam's surging melancholy but in the briefest of references.

Often a dancer's gaze is averted or the eyes seem to look inward, rather than beyond the line of the movement, as if thinking is honed to an inner awareness.[23] Indeed, the muscular knowledge, or proprioception necessary in improvised passages, requires concentration and mental acuity, and the making of instant decisions that connect mind to body, or muscle memory to spatial organization. Then coordination and articulation are clear, throwing the emphasis on to the dance itself and the trust between dancers—and their willingness to take risks.

Breaking away from dependent systems of movement often seems to inject a note of irony into the dance, and part of this section is also given a flavoring of the baroque, as in bows executed with an element of courtliness. The gestural folding forward may

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seem courteous, but the body is not organized in the familiar manner of counter tensions and, more often than not, the leg and arm extend from the same side of the body as if to draw attention to correspondence rather than opposition. The viewer is all the time being asked to look differently at aspects of movement such as shapes between joints, at the relationship between the body and the floor's surface, and the rhythmic resonance sustained in the dancers' bodies.

The upstage wire extending across the stage horizontally rarely impinges on viewer awareness because the lighting is low.[24] When it does, the connection is aural more than visual, caused by a reverberating throb when the dancers pluck it. However, there comes a point when the violinist takes his cue from this activity, and runs his violin along a wire to produce an eerily squeaky and fractured sound; then he turns the instrument upside down and weaves it about, mockingly imitating the curvaceousness of a woman's body. But almost immediately comes a change in atmosphere, and the darkness deepens to suggest another, more ghostly world.

The ghostliness is sensed in Willems's score and its interpolations of Stravinsky's *Apollon Musagète* (1928). Though the connections are incomplete, traces of certain rhythmic patterns, the harmony of a chord, or the progression of several musical notes have a familiar ring for the model, or competent, viewer and instantly awakens memories (see Nugent 2000, 40–42).[25] Those of us who have seen the printed program, with its Stravinsky notation set opposite Willems's notation (four bars against twenty-two), have probably been anticipating connections, though possibly not in such an intertextualized way. For these fragments link sound to sight and recall the inseparable association between Stravinsky's Apollonian score and Balanchine's choreography. It is this that persuades me to nominate *The Apollonian Connective* as my first architext.[26]

Connoisseurs of Balanchine's *Apollon Musagète*, or *Apollo* as it is more generally known, will experience these musical connections as keys to the unlocking of memory and make connections with *Apollo*'s choreographic style, which is glimpsed in the lift of the dancers' upper arms or in the amplitude of a step. But any hope of finding actual quotations from Balanchine's choreography will prove fruitless, for there are none, and that is the paradox.[27] The music creates a disturbance in minds programmed by expectation to feel things that cannot necessarily be explained. It is the intertext functioning as an instrument of allure, igniting desire for a more complete union with that which is denied.

Midway through the act, however, comes the most vivid *Apollonian Connective* of all, establishing itself through a combination of quality and atmosphere and emerging out of a passage in which the dancing rhythm of the man whose walk started the act finds another kind of contact with the music. Now the violinist becomes devil's advocate, buffeting the man about into increasingly elaborate and frenetic movement. The dancer seems first to enjoy the challenge and then to become infuriated by the pressure it exerts on the dance. He marches over to the violinist (who has by then dropped to his knees) and makes as if to snatch at his bow, but the musician plays on wildly, apparently oblivious to the dancer. With a tactical shift, the dancer plants a kiss on the violinist's head and walks away. The music grows quiet and a woman approaches to become the beneficiary of this newly meditative, Apollonian mood.

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She takes hold of the violinist's shoulder, as if he were her dancing partner. He is compliant, and her limbs can extend into space in an adagio sequence that draws from ballet as an existing sign system and variously incorporates an improvised mixture of *developpés, ronde de jambes en l'air,* and arabesques to find a union with the now slow and melodious music.[28] Her qualities are momentarily Balanchinean, and I find myself making connections with the earlier ballet's climactic *pas de deux* between Apollo and Terpsichore.[29] Even though the circumstances and movement are different, sound and sight nonetheless pull at something deep within (my) psychological memory, and I sense the emotional intensity of this link between the old and the new, with its altered thetic position.[30]

Soon the woman's mood changes as if she has had enough of this nostalgia, and she marches away from the violinist to flick on a metronome at the front of the stage. This introduces a newly regulated pulse, picked up by all the dancers as they engage in a series of fast runs, flying leaps, and brief pauses. So many movements are fitted into this final section that it changes character and takes on a mood of Dionysian urgency, as if hastening to the end through a speedy recapitulation of all that had preceded it. Punctuated bursts of sound from the trombones, zigzagging scales from the violin, and further noisy "playing" of the wires, adds to the general chaos. But the scene ends calmly, with a return to the Apollonian mode.

The dance in *Govern* is rooted in classical form, but a form that has been taken apart, and what is recognizable is largely through a relationship with what is missing. Apollo is an invasive connective as, to a lesser extent, is its Dionysian opposite. The *Apollo* that memory has summoned recalls authors, genre, and a historical work of seminal importance. It evokes a precursor text of neoclassical dance that was already an intertextualization of a Greek myth and cultural beliefs that have come to be associated with it.[31] Forsythe's minimalist staging has left space for imagined glimpses of the mythical *Apollo,* or for brief moments that can be related to the Greek god's prevailing imagery and forms of beauty that are not invariably lyrical, linear, or ordered—and at times are even disordered. As *Govern* shifts between presence and absence, *Apollo*/Apollo is "seen" to be hovering like a ghost, and though the ghost does not imitate the earlier text, it is the connective providing the rationale for the architext.[32]

Act 2: *The Spider's Web*

At the start of the second act the stage is shrouded in darkness, and random sounds—like the cries of wild animals—and mysterious objects turn it into an alien place.[33] The only direct connection with the previous act is the violinist, who now sits playing at center stage. Wires are very much in evidence, but they have multiplied and are suspended on high in a network of irregular angles. The look is functional because of the video monitor hanging from a central intersection and the large theater lamp and chest below. Viewers in circle or balcony seats can look down on a floor design that suggests patterns of small islands, which adds to the feeling of remoteness.[34] My architext for this section, *The Spider's Web,* is suggested not only by the visual metaphor of wires, which makes the objects ensnared able to be equated with a spider's prey, but also because of the strange

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references to a spider that are made during the ensuing monologue, which was written, and is delivered, by Dana Caspersen.

Out of the shadowy upstage darkness a lone figure emerges, crossing the stage slowly and purposefully. Through the dim lighting, it gradually becomes possible to see the outline of a small woman with short blonde hair. She wears an ankle-length bustle skirt of orange velvet, but her upper body is naked, which is an odd juxtaposition emphasizing womanhood both through what is revealed and what is concealed. She begins to speak, in a voice of silvery charm but in words that are bizarre: "This is a spiders voice, then this voice is a spiders [*sic*]" (Caspersen 1998).[35] The claim, "this is a spiders voice," is not specific enough for viewers to be able to identify the "this" in question, or to know whether the woman is alluding to herself as the embodiment of a spider and, possibly, to the myth of Arachne.[36] Then she becomes possessive, referring to "my spider," all the while walking back and forth and gesturing with her hands. The interweaving of wildlife and musical sounds continues, and the gloom is still stygian in a scene that points to a woman of power who is on some kind of mission. Her voice grows stronger and more agitated:

> When I return from underneath, I return to an island,
> and I return tasting dirt and salt and dark . . .
> I return screaming. (Caspersen 1998)

But why, what is she reacting to, and what sense is to be made of this return travel, with its tumbling into dark wildernesses? Is it to be connected to Persephone, given the program's retelling of the myth? If so, the link with Persephone's travel between two worlds is intertextualized rather than recounted as a straight narrative.

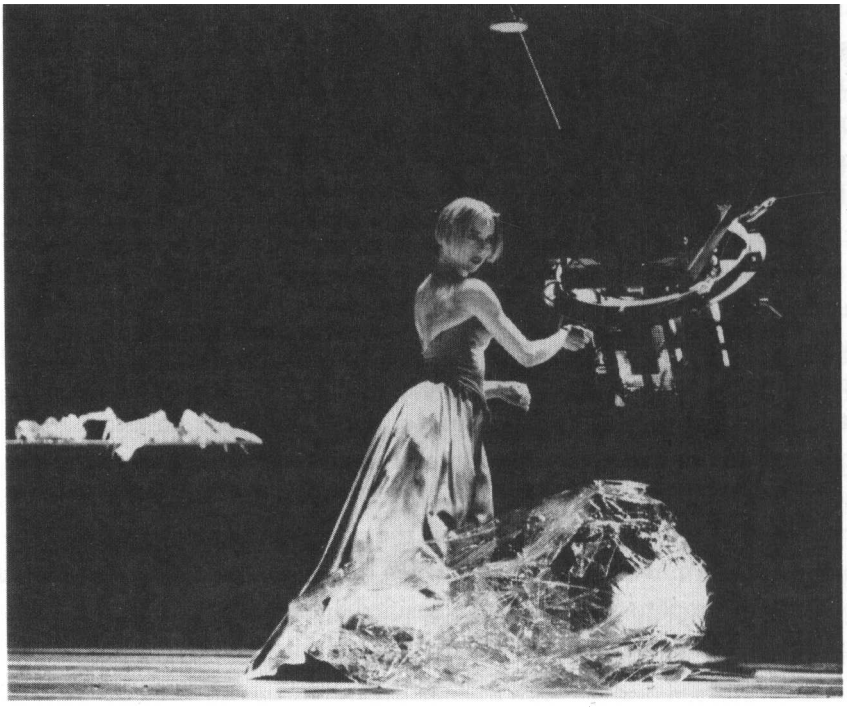
The woman has to carry out tasks. When she announces in a matter of fact manner, "I must attend now to the clouds," and goes to pull a white flag along one of the set's wires, she makes it seem as though this has been enacted for generations and she is responding to ritualized memory. She talks of flowers and seeds, and the imagery is ripe with innuendo. For example, the Persephone of myth was picking flowers when Hades abducted her, and so Caspersen imagines the memory of a scent that is associated with fear: "The earth opens and it's a place where dogs would lose sight of their quarry, so violent is the scent of flowers" (Caspersen 1998). Moreover, it was because Persephone ate pomegranate seeds that she was forced to return to the underworld each year. But the reference to seeds, and the physical evidence of a woman suffering, may also be linked to Persephone's mother, Demeter, goddess of agriculture, and to her suffering when her daughter was snatched away.

Often Caspersen is on the edge of panic, and there comes an attenuated passage when her voice grows hysterical and her body contracts in pain. She screams and shakes as if the memory of some deep fear is locked within and she must rid herself of it. This is a kinaesthetically powerful moment, as is the episode in which she stuffs about fifty yards of lighting gel into an onstage lamp, when the crunching of the gel is picked up by microphones and amplified and, under intensified lighting, made to glow like flames. It is a symbol of hell fire—and technology blurs the distinction between seeing and hearing (Figure 2).[37]

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Words and movements have the power to open up worlds, and we cannot tell if this enactment of pain belongs to a remembered trauma or to a more general pain experienced by women. Do we watch Persephone, Demeter, or Everywoman? Certainly there is something about the woman's contractions, and the effect they have on her physical and emotional state, that suggests the pain of childbirth. This is an illustration of how the body continues to hold on to the memory of pain, justifying the program's inclusion of Bergson's words: "there is no perception which is not prolonged into movement" (Ballett Frankfurt 1998, 13). But every reference in this scene, with its emphasis on hunter or hunted, or spider and victim, opens out to other texts, which makes it seem like a paradigm of intertextuality—hence the architext of *The Spider's Web.* The woman of myth has entered a more contemporary and complex society. Her journeying between worlds, and her continuing responsibilities, impose an Apollonian order from which she has no escape, but when pent up feelings are released into violent physicality, her response is colored by a Dionysian impulse. The intricacies of this *Spider's Web* mean that the narrative elements can also be seen in more abstract terms as a poetics of language and movement. But as I—the unraveller of this performance text—try to make sense of it, I "unmake" myself, for the text is "a tissue of interwoven beliefs" and I become "like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of its web" (Barthes 1990, 64).[38]

Figure 2. Dana Capsersen, Eidos:Telos, *act 2. Photograph by Dominik Mentzos. Used with permission.*



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Act 2: Bridging Passage

After the potent monologue, the "spider woman" ceases speaking and there comes a period of respite when she is still—listening and observing. Another woman enters, waltzing from upstage right to center stage. She is lithe and light, like a dancer at the peak of her powers. Then she begins to deteriorate, shrinking into herself until, bent like an old crone, she croaks out the lines of a song, "luck be a lady tonight." It is as if the body that had seemed so plastic has become imprisoned by the ravages of time, which is an ironic comment on the different stages of human life, or on the limitations of a dancer's career. Possibly, too, it is an indictment of the fate of Persephone, or even of Arachne. We can, again, sense the interpretative possibilities of Forsythe's intertextuality.

Occurring midway through the central act, this scene acts as a bridge between the monologue and the large-scale waltz that will follow. A waltz has been hovering suggestively during the earlier monologue with drumbeats marking out the rhythm in a distant and muffled sound, almost as if the viewer is being programmed at the subliminal level for what will follow. With hindsight, I came to see too that in some of Caspersen's more idiosyncratic movements, when her body was distorted and contracted, she was also sketching out the shape and rhythm of a waltz step, and occasionally even in the first act the outline of a waltz was present.

Act 2: *The Balanchinian-Bauschian-Forsythian Waltz*

When the crone has exited, Caspersen begins talking again. Her tone and the references she makes have altered, however, and she looks on to a different world. This encourages me to assign an architext, *The Balanchine-Bauschian-Forsythian Waltz,* that spans the work of three twentieth-century choreographers and a historicized dance. The names are already textualized and for the competent viewer will summon up images characterizing the different choreographers' works.[39] The waltz belongs within an identifiable sign system.[40]

Caspersen (1998) speaks of "the ranks of the dead," and as she does, waltzing dancers enter in a line, sweeping across the front of the stage. The sound is still skeletal, with a squawk on the trombones followed by two drumbeats, but more pronounced than previously and establishing the rhythmic pattern in advance of what will follow. The rhythm actually develops as a ländler in a six-eight rhythm, but I am calling it a waltz because of the style of the dance.[41]

Initially, the dancers take a wide step on the first beat followed by two smaller steps; then they change course, letting their bodies execute a graceful, lilting sweep followed by a half-body curve turning them to a new direction and re-establishing verticality. Arms reach out in the direction of travel, then lift from the side of the body to a height (balletic fifth position) that provides the impetus for the next downward sweep of movement. Other waltzing dancers enter, filling the stage with asymmetric patterning and slight variations in dynamic. In contrast to the earlier act, and the *Apollonian Connective,* the waltz step is recognizably defined and the Balanchine style projected distinctively in the performers' elegance and in the aggrandized lift of the upper body.

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Nonetheless, the darkness of the earlier scene continues in an underlying mood that is macabre and threatening and removed from familiar romantic notions of the waltz. This is not so much a dance for couples as for a throng of women; at least that is how it seems as they enter in a uniform line, dressed in bustle skirts (which link them to Caspersen) of glowing colors (Figure 3). Yet on closer examination the genders are seen to be mixed, and the women wear pale vests and the men frock coats. More dancers enter in lines from the stage's two sides, and the dance takes on the character of a procession ironizing gender and recalling the alternative parade introduced so often by Bausch, when her dancers appear in formalized dress, as if to indicate a particular behavioral code, which they then destroy through quirkily idiosyncratic acts of individuality.

The waltzers may symbolize "the ranks of the dead" (Caspersen 1998), but their orderliness is interrupted by a man who steps out of line to protest at his situation, shouting, in a self-pitying tone: "I'm fuckin' dead, man." Between the suavely elegant dancers and the vulgarity of the man, who, like them, is also in a skirt but breaks the code of decorum, the contrast is marked and, again, made to seem ironic because of the contrasting extremes. He goes on to shout out a torrent of obscenities that are directed at named members of his family, in the manner of a petulant child intent on revenge, and for a time the other dancers continue waltzing, apparently unaware of his activities. But then the man switches character and becomes an autocratic ballet master, intoning the beat—"one, two, three, four, five, six"—like an order in the rehearsal studio. This time the dancers hear the command and hasten into new positions.[42]

The Balanchinean poise continues, but now the waltz's simplicity gains an embroidery of quick little jumps and emphatic arm movements. A woman breaks out of the patterned lines to launch into an imaginary telephone dialogue with a film crew. Like a schizoid director she shouts out commands in the tone of one who must be obeyed, then changes tactic and tries to wheedle help by pouring out her problems and anxiously talking about the difficulty of getting everything done in time.[43] Once again the ensemble dancers carry on waltzing.

Caspersen, who has disappeared from view during the waltz sequence, returns in the role of narrator. The musical sound increases, enlarged by "blasts" on the first beat of each bar from the offstage trombonists, and several dancers begin to talk vehemently in different European languages. Their speech rhythms weave in and out of the sound of the waltz, and the accented passions of the different voices become more significant than any literal meaning. It is as if they are speaking in their mother tongues and drawing from deep personal memories, but again the onstage community pays no attention. For a moment this episode moves *Eidos:Telos* closer to cinema or theater, reminding me specifically, on the one hand, of Harold Pinter's writings and their emphasis on characters who are unaware of the explosive tensions they are provoking and, on the other, of the terse antagonisms generated by Samuel Beckett's characters.[44] Yet what the different styles of movement and language, the undermining of systems, and the shifting aspects of power between men and women proclaim most forcibly is a connection with the tanztheater of Bausch.[45]

Throughout the act the symbolism of darkness as death has been focused on, but then comes a neat shift. The gravitas dissolves as Caspersen and a man dressed in a short skirt

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Figure 3. Eidos:Telos, *act 2. Photograph by Dominik Mentzos. Used with permission.*

to look like a floozy are left alone on stage and embark on a flippant song and dance routine. They appear to be engaged in spontaneous play, testing their individual memories of the song against each other, as if they are relieved to have let go of the responsibilities of performing and can enjoy a moment of freedom.[46]

The Forsythian text has used different approaches to dance and theater to explore social division. The waltz is layered with irony, dramatizing both the movement's stylization and theatricalized hyperbole. The pulsing music is mournful, and the drumbeats combine into a sound resembling an anxious heartbeat or a death toll. The dance has been presented through a mixture of history and departure. If its vertical grace, patterned lines, and amplified movement pay homage to Balanchine and the neoclassic impulse, the mixing of the theatrical with the everyday conjures up Bausch. Like Bausch, and the behavioral traits that emerge out of Forsythe's different worlds, the divisions between public persona and private individual appear to be blurred. Like Bausch, Forsythe parodies heterosexual romance, using the waltz to point to similarities between men and women who share the same choreography and engage in what is essentially a feminine style of graceful dancing. Like Bausch, he reveals a propensity for encapsulating ideas about troubled personality in gestural expression. But ultimately the hallmark is Forsythe's.

Act 3: *The Forsythe Aesthetic*

The final act is radically different from what has gone before, and the choreographic action is so dense that some people find it impenetrable. A new network of black wires spread across the upper regions of the stage supports a video monitor and a shiny silver ball.

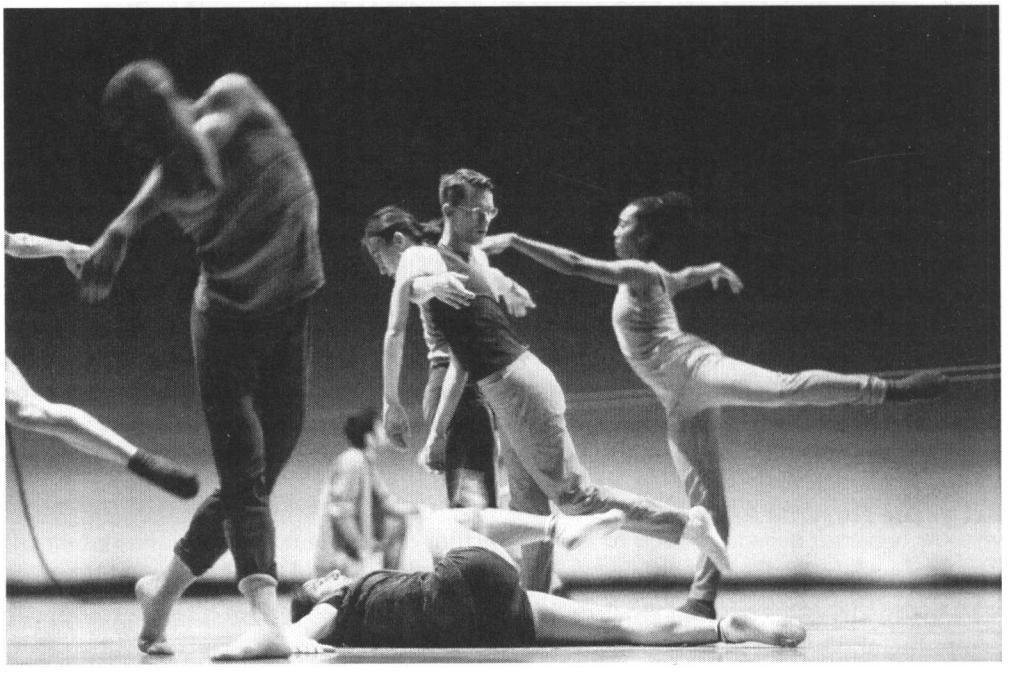
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The ball makes a comment of its own when it starts to sparkle and spin as if parodying a more showy type of performance. It is the challenge to our habits of looking at dance that initiates my final architext: *The Forsythe Aesthetic.* This is an architext because, as indicated earlier, the name Forsythe is textualized and representative of the achievement of an oeuvre. Once again, my approach is descriptive, drawing out certain elements from this act that contribute to this textualization.

Despite the apparent contrast in style, much of *Eidos:Telos*'s third act is actually a reworking of the act 1 movement material. Yet everywhere something different happens, and because there are more dancers—up to twenty-four at times—the stage turns into a sea of turbulent activity, bringing an increase in volume and energy that make it impossible to catch sight of every small wave as it rises and falls. Searching for a logic of order and distinctive patterns (according to the habit of viewing), attention is claimed instead by disorder and randomness because the dance spreads out along planes and trajectories that keep changing. Each dancer may be engaged in different movement sequences, but each is evidently conversant with the same laws. The positioning onstage may seem arbitrary, but the geometry is somehow linked. The more carefully the dance is scrutinized, however, the more evidence there is to collect about relationships. The action begins to seem like that of a new kind of kaleidoscope, in which the bigger picture is implicated in the movement of every form (Figure 4).

Like its predecessors, the act begins in stillness with a tableau that links it to the opening act, though with eight dancers dressed in a miscellany of shirts, shorts, and tights. At first there is silence, and the absence of instrumental music becomes increasingly significant as

Figure 4. Eidos:Telos, *act 3. Photograph by Dominik Mentzos. Used with permission.*



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the dancers move out of their stillness, for they establish their own sound score in rhythmic dances so that the thuds and squeaks of their footwork, or the hitting of body parts with hands, show, once again, not only that metric impulses are intrinsic to their dance but also that the qualities emerging from it are pointed and dependent on the acuteness of their listening. These qualities transfer to the audience, though not everyone would agree with this. Scholl singled out the act for its lack of a "rhythmic base" (1995, 14).

Other dancers enter running, to leap and twist with an energized freedom, putting emphasis on the effortlessness of the coordinated body in virtuoso achievement. Changes in timing alter the look of a step or stance, as when legs flick casually into arabesques that almost immediately collapse, or circling arms pull the body out of its vertical hold. The hand motif from act 1, with the arms extended forward, is reintroduced, like a safety valve reassuring the dancers that, despite all their differences, they share the same wavelength. Arms often also reach out backward into the space behind the upper body, focusing on an area that is so often ignored by other choreographers. Arms are important to *The Forsythe Aesthetic*, particularly in the awareness shown of the charge of energy running from shoulder to fingertip.

Sometimes the body takes on a look of transparency, an openness suggesting that the dancers are so ontologically attuned to what they are doing that they no longer have secrets to hide. Forsythe explains the approach needed to achieve this in another intriguingly enigmatic observation that is included in the program: "The more you can let go of your control, and give it over to a kind of transparency in the body, a feeling of disappearance, the more you will be able to grasp differentiated form, and differentiated dynamics" (Ballett Frankfurt 1998, 18).[47] I have come to understand that transparency comes out of the surrendering of self by each dancer to the moment of delivery. It is achieved by a combination of things, in part by the simultaneity of making a decision and throwing the body into successive and risky movement sequences, and in part by the re-evaluation of turnout through the acknowledgement both of its importance and then its rejection. While turnout provides the dance with an outer edge, the different rotations that enable the undersides of leg and arm joints to be seen in changing planes of movement blur understanding of what is exterior and interior.

This is partly because Forsythe's dancers do not project their thoughts toward an idea of perfected form but, instead, envisage the tasks with which they are charged. To achieve these tasks their muscle memories have been turned into databases stocked with investigative knowledge about weight, shape, dynamic, trajectory, and plane, to which they apply proprioceptive awareness. The approach can be likened to that of physicists searching for a veracity of form that is dependent on achieving a precise union between muscular memory and discrete processing practices.

Dancers variously stamp a leg or clap hands, letting the impetus lift or swing them around, rather as if they are playing games with each other. They relinquish verticality to collapse inert on the floor. They let a body part protrude and twist away. They coalesce momentarily into a line, holding a brief point of unified stillness before dancing off in different directions. Devices such as inversion and fragmentation, together with continuing changes of spatial, numerical, and metric scale, maintain the act's momentum.

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Momentum also develops with various entries from the trombones, at first through sounds that punctuate the air sharply and later in a mysteriously somber melody. Two male dancers achieve a perfected moment, finding a point of suspension that allows each to pull away from the other. Other men join in, dancing different little steps together, then lifting and pushing each other around, as if engaged in a game of physical intelligence or in the kind of combat that has no need to assert a superior strength. I am reminded of Lincoln Kirstein's expression "unwinnable games" (1971, 242), which he used in the context of Balanchine's *Agon*.

Movement echoes something else, as when a man twists at the waist, opens out from the torso, and sinks to the ground, which is what suggested the connection with Nijinsky's *L'Après-midi d'un faune* (1912).[48] But there is no wider context that connects what I see to Nijinsky's ballet.

Toward the act's end the tension increases; as the dancers engage busily in a series of entries and exits, it takes a more dramatic turn, for Caspersen appears from an upstage wing to stand looking on as a silent presence. She is Persephone once more, destined to travel between the earth and the underworld and signaling death in the midst of life. Emphatic slides from the trombones, computerized drones, and shifts from darkness to light make the action increasingly urgent, and this is reflected by individual dancers who begin extending their limbs slowly in a mood that is suddenly serious. Other dancers form a line, plucking at the wire and backing away from it, almost as if trying to escape from some hidden fear. Then they shift so that they are facing each other and advance and retreat with a calming motion to contrast with the activity of yet more dancers who are running about the stage. There are parallels with the previous act's waltz when lines of dancers surged toward each other, but whereas the waltzing lines emphasized an ornamental style, this action is different, and at the wire's twang bodies contract vigorously.

Persephone is at her most vulnerable, as can be seen when she moves forward, steps out of her skirt, and sinks to the ground to scrabble along the floor, with her skirt, attached to her by a tape, following behind like an afterbirth. She rises once more, now fully naked, catching her arms to her chest and stumbling backward and forward in imitation of the dancers' ebb and flow, but in the manner of a woman struggling against all the odds. If the literal meaning remains obscure, the theatricalization of this moment—with the drama of loneliness in the midst of other activity and a crescendo of sound and lighting—makes it, somehow, cataclysmic. It is at this point that the imagination can make an intertextualized leap between the eidos and the telos and sense the apocalyptic moment.

A climax such as this might signal culmination, arrival at a zenith of high art. But this is not the grand gesture of classical ballet, and Forsythe the postmodernist again parodies the scene's gravity, leaving a lone man at center stage engaged in balletic ritual and executing a series of small knee bends and pointe tendus. In the face of such enormity, it is an incongruity that typifies *The Forsythe Aesthetic* and its predilection for turning abstract dance and symbolic representation into dramas of the other.

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Conclusion

This article has considered *Eidos:Telos* and its multiple texts through intertextual criticism. Working with description and interpretation, and identifying certain elements of performance, it introduced the architext as a method through which different elements could be linked to themes. The four architexts discussed, along with their overarching themes, emphasized unfamiliar connections, associations, and relationships. *The Apollonian Connective* drew attention to the Balanchine/Stravinsky *Apollo* and communicated something about the first act's style, quality, and rationalized order. *The Spider's Web* of act 2 brought together imagery and symbolism and a visual image linking all three acts. Also in act 2, *The Balanchinian-Bauschian-Forsythian Waltz* looked at the textualized identities of the three named choreographers and saw how their work was reflected in a waltz that both acknowledged history and subverted it. I argue that it was undoubtedly Forsythe's hallmark that was stamped on the act. Finally, *The Forsythe Aesthetic* focused on act 3 and aspects of this hallmark.

In all three acts, death came to be seen as a hovering presence. It was indicated by the absence of Balanchine's *Apollo;* hinted at in the symbolism attached to *The Spider's Web;* and echoed in the drums sketching out a waltz that sounded like a death knell. If the intensity of sound and movement in the closing moments of act 3 pointed to the forcefulness of life, so the reappearance of Persephone signaled death. In this way the eidos could become a metaphor for life inextricably linked to the telos as death, and the microcosm of performance could be interpreted as a macrocosm.

Intertextual criticism enables the latecome text to be recognized in its own right. It avoids traditional forms of criticism that position prior texts as models through which judgment can be delivered by emphasizing instead the openness of a performance text. It is always open to interpretation, and Forsythe's *Eidos:Telos,* whenever it is seen again, will always exude darkness and mystery.

Notes

1. I am indebted to Professor Janet Lansdale for her advice on this article and for directing me to Forsythe's work in her role as supervisor of my earlier doctoral thesis, from which the article derives. It was she who recommended both the scholarship from the University of Surrey that helped with the costs of traveling to see his work and the UNiS Research Promotion Initiative to work on this article.

Forsythe was born in New York in 1949. His choreographic career began in 1976 when he was a dancer with the Stuttgart Ballet and created a duet, *Ürlicht,* to music by Mahler for a workshop performance; soon afterward *Ürlicht* was incorporated into the company's repertoire. In the three successive decades Forsythe's prolific oeuvre has brought him international renown. Mostly his reputation has been garnered from his twenty years as director of the Ballett Frankfurt (1984–2004). In 2005 he launched his present ensemble, the Forsythe Company (TFC). For discussion of Forsythe's background, see, for example, Nugent (2003).

2. Several personal discussions with Forsythe make it clear that he regarded *Eidos:Telos* as a major work in his oeuvre, which is why it was one of the few to be singled out from the one

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hundred or so works that were named on the former Ballett Frankfurt's Web site (http://www.frankfurt-ballett.de, accessed 2000). It was revived in March 2004 for the company's final season and is listed in the repertoire for the Forsythe Company. Although it has not yet been performed by TFC, this indicates that some day it may be revived.

3. Numbers vary in act 3. On this occasion there were twenty-four dancers, but in Antwerp in 1996 the program listed twenty-two.

4. The text that is capable of generating endless meaning is discussed by Barthes in his essay "From Work to Text" (1977). Barthes's theorizing of the text—which he regards as a methodological field remaining open and accessible to new meaning, whereas the work is closed and finite—has led me to refer to *Eidos:Telos* as a text in most instances. However, in a dance context, "text" and "work" are not always interchangeable, given that a performance is a living, changing entity and that "work" is applied in a broader sense than in a literary context; therefore, sometimes the reference to a dance work has seemed more appropriate.

A performance can be theorized as a text if it reveals itself as a discrete entity, is reproducible, and is found to have certain properties, chief among which are "completeness" and "coherence." Clearly, *Eidos:Telos* fulfils these conditions. For further discussion of what constitutes a performance text, see De Marinis (1993), Elam (1980), and Nugent (2000).

5. For an understanding of the different methods employed creatively by Forsythe and his dancers, see the CD-ROM *Improvisational Technologies* (Forsythe 1999) and "It Starts from Any Point: Bill and the Frankfurt Ballet" (Caspersen 2000).

6. Because Forsythe initiated the concept, subsequent references in my text are to Forsythe alone without further mention of the collaborators.

7. By the time act 3 came to be created, the Alphabet included 130 different movement phrases, according to Caspersen (2000, 32).

8. The players' response could also be affected by Forsythe and Willems, who sit in the stalls at each performance armed with microphones and headphones and issue instructions, perhaps to lengthen a particular passage or repeat it, as ideas occur to them. The performers hear these instructions but not the audience (at least not generally), and stage technicians can also respond, when directed by Forsythe, to change his lighting design.

9. *Eidos:Telos* is a title that served the multinational Ballett Frankfurt not only in Germany but also on tour to other European and American cities.

10. In Frankfurt the *Eidos:Telos* programs were in German and English, whereas on tour they were generally in a single language and sometimes did not include as many texts. Not all performances of *Eidos:Telos* have been supported by such a lavish program, particularly when the work has been given on tour.

11. Memory played a poignant part in the creation of *Eidos:Telos,* for Forsythe's second wife, the dancer Tracy-Kai Maier, had died in February 1994, at age thirty-two.

12. In the 1998 Paris program for *Eidos:Telos,* Forsythe's quotation is attributed to an interview he gave to Sulcas (1995a). This is not identified in the 1998 Frankfurt program. Forsythe's text is reprinted in Birringer (1998, 100).

13. Forsythe has talked to me several times about how mathematics excites him and how he considers mathematical knowledge to be an important element of his work.

14. Scholl (1995) said it is "longest on pretension" and Jacobs (1999) called it "pretentious as hell."

15. The term "latecome text" is used by Worton and Still (1990) and the idea of textual shuttling by Riffaterre (1990).

16. Music generated on the computers mixes live and prerecorded sound.

17. In his *Introduction á l'architexte* (1979; published in translation in 1992), Gérard Genette explores the architext through the theory of genres and the intersection of different modes of

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enunciation. For further discussion of the architext and the idea of its application to themes or building blocks, see Worton and Still (1990, 22) and Allen (2000, 98–103).

18. In an intertextual context, "connective" is a more appropriate term, pointing more readily to travel than "connection," which is static. It is employed by Riffaterre in "Compulsory Reader Response: The Intertextual Drive" (1990, 56–78).

19. My approach to intertextual criticism draws from Sally Banes's proposal that there are four main approaches to dance criticism: contextual, descriptive, interpretive, and evaluative, and that these can be applied in fifteen different combinations (1994, 24–50). The debate about the merits and problems of description is explored in two issues of *Dance Theatre Journal* with arguments from Copeland (1993) and Adshead-Lansdale (1993/94). In the intervening issue letters from Selma Jeanne Cohen, Val Rimmer, and Copeland build on this discourse (vol. 10, no. 4 [1993]: 3–4, 54–55).

20. My knowledge of *Eidos:Telos* comes from seeing fifteen live performances in various cities—Frankfurt, Paris, New York, and London—as well as two single-act performances of *Self Meant to Govern.* It has been supplemented by attendance at various rehearsals and time spent with Forsythe in a studio in Paris when he kindly demonstrated some of the intricacies of the Alphabet. I have also had access to several video recordings made by the Ballett Frankfurt and have read all the reviews and critical writings that I could get my hands on.

My interpretations should be seen as speculative, leading to a hybrid text that has emerged out of these different experiences but without privileging any single performance (and of course there are differences between performances given the inclusion of improvisation). Undoubtedly my thoughts are directed by my experience as a dance critic and, before that, as a ballet dancer. Other analysts would light on different intertexts.

21. For a dancer the softness of a sock creates an awareness that feels different from dancing in shoes or with bare feet.

22. Caspersen has written about how the letters convey codes to the dancers, signaling information about improvisatory tasks and prearranged systems (2000, 32–34 and 37). See also Midgette (2000) for a discussion of readings between different improvisational worlds in *Eidos:Telos.*

23. It is often said that dancers' eyes darken when they are improvising.

24. For insight into Forsythe's approach to lighting, see "William Forsythe and Jennifer Tipton: A Conversation about Lighting" in Driver (2000, 41–78), and particularly the discussion on *Eidos:Telos* and shifting projections (61–63).

25. In looking at the role of the reader, Eco constructs a theorized "Model Reader" as an idealized recipient of the text, in whom is vested a "series of competencies" (cited in De Marinis 1993, 167). An idealized receiver of performance is identified by De Marinis as a "Model Spectator," but since a spectator is a seeker after "spectacle," I prefer the term "model viewer." Better still, however, is the idea of the "competent viewer," since there can be no idealized reading, or a moment at which meaning is fixed.

26. Stravinsky's score was commissioned by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge and premiered in Washington in April 1928; two months later it was presented by the Ballets Russes with Balanchine's choreography in Paris.

27. As Culler points out, "one function of the notion of intertextuality is to allude to the paradoxical nature of discursive systems" (1981, 103).

28. These ballet terms are included as general indicators of the type of movement likely to be executed in each performance.

29. Not everyone looks on the Willems-Stravinsky connection as a positive force. Indeed, Laura Jacobs, referring to Willems as Forsythe's "partner in crime," complains that he "likes to lift a measure of music from some iconic ballet score" and, singling out *Eidos:Telos,* "torture it on the rack of his synthesizer, making it groan and scream." She goes on to complain: "Neither Forsythe nor Willems risks putting a coherent phrase onstage. If they did, we might see what's missing" (1999).

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30. The word "intertextuality" was coined by Julia Kristeva, who argued that for travel between texts to be properly intertextual a change of thetic position was essential (1984). Other theorists have taken a less rigorous stance and considered interpretation, translation, and quotation as intertextual by virtue of the move from one text to another (see, for example, Culler 1981, and Allen 2000).

31. For discussion of how authority is vested in a precursor text, see Riffaterre (1990, 56–78).

32. For an analysis of absence, presence, and the intertext, see Riffaterre (1990, 56–78).

33. Although the second act continues without interruption, I have separated it into two architexts plus a bridging passage because of clear demarcations between content, style, and tone.

34. People sitting at or below stage level will not see these "islands." Forsythe is renowned for giving people different experiences according to where they sit.

35. Caspersen's printed line is without apostrophes, as reproduced here.

36. Arachne was, of course, the beautiful maiden whom Minerva transformed into a spider to atone for lack of humility in acknowledging the gifts bestowed on her.

37. Caspersen is, incidentally, the sole interpreter of this role, and the dynamic feels inimitably, and irreplaceably, linked to her small stature and strong performing persona.

38. "Text," as Barthes points out, "means Tissue" (1990, 64), or something that is woven together.

39. For chronological comparison, the choreographers' dates are Balanchine (1904–1983), Bausch (b. 1940), and Forsythe (b.1949).

40. Belonging to semiotic theory, sign systems are discussed in both Elam (1980) and Culler (1981).

41. The company also refers to it as a waltz.

42. It is not just the contrast between behavioral patterns that is ironic but also the private joke about art imitating life, for the role of the man was taken by Antony Rizzi at most performances (that I saw) and he was also one of the company's ballet masters. The dancers were used to responding to his demands, though this kind of martinet drilling was contrary to any of the rehearsal practices I witnessed.

43. I have seen two women in this role, Helen Pickett and Crystal Pite. Both deliver the lines with a theatricalized urgency and an American accent, presenting, initially at least, an image of an American stereotype of a woman who is used to having her demands met.

44. Later, I learned from talking to Antony Rizzi that during the rehearsal period the company had worked with several film scripts and a Beckett television play. Caspersen also refers to this and several other approaches to the making of *Eidos:Telos* (2000, 37).

45. For a helpful summary of the history of and beliefs about dance in twentieth-century Europe, out of which tanztheater evolved, see Manning and Benson (2001).

46. The calculation behind the suggestion of spontaneity can be seen plainly in patterns that recur in successive performances.

47. A longer version of the text is reprinted in Birringer (1998, 100).

48. When a text is named it becomes particularized, as could be seen through the imagery associated with the waltz. It enables sequences of movement to be gathered into memory through an encompassing term, or intertextualized network.

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