

MOD: Open Form to Responsible Anarchy: Autobiographical Thoughts

I began dance when **improvisation** was in its infancy as form, in the fifties. Very radical was the performance that allowed for a **real-time choice**. Dance was considered “expert” through its communication values, formal structures, and inherence of vocabulary. The main quest of a choreographer was to define and make precise one’s vocabulary. At this time Earl Brown, colleague of John Cage, and others were making music scores with specific, built-in, decision making potential. Earl Brown used the words “open form” to describe these works that included choices from options within performance of the score. I became acquainted with this information at the University of Illinois, while collaborating with students of John Cage (while he was in residence there,) and then applied this directly to dance in performance. Major use of the concept of openings within form in dance at that time occurred within the work of Merce Cunningham, who used chance decision making in the creation of his pieces, but rarely during performances, (except of course when he ventured on stage to correct a problem like when Rauschenberg’s silver pillows drifted off the stage.) It was widely understood as a “losing strategy” to use chance live on the stage. But it was accepted as a compositional form. Improvisation, at that time, was considered a separate area, not part of composition.

In the **fifties** there was limited language to describe the possibility for improvisation in performance, but the vocabulary included:

- chance**: compositional procedure where choices regarding informational content are not made by human decision, but are referred to an independent “third party” source like the throw of dice.
- chance composition**: the use in composition of chance procedures (John Cage).
- indeterminate (adjective)**: not set or fixed in form, for example, using chance procedures in the process of composition or performance is an indeterminate process.
- scoring**: the mapping of formal structures; this can occur on many levels.
- real-time**: the actual time when a performance occurs.
- real time decision making**: what happens that is not material set before the performance occurs, that occurs from decisions made within the actual performance time.
- improvisation**: (1)spontaneous decision making in performance with few formal decisions made in advance; (2)spontaneous information used as a process for decision making resulting in set choreography, and sometimes, (3)choice making within performance having some aspects pre-planned, example, “We’ll use the doorway for process X and then the hall for process Y, and then anywhere for a combination of (X) and (Y).”—this is a mixing of improvisation with compositional choices.
- open form**: used by Earl Brown and others to describe musical structures that have choice making within them.
- envelope forms** (from music): specific groupings (seen something like containers) of materials to be used interchangeably within performance, usually having set or process-based ingredients.

At this time, there was much discussion about how to keep the spontaneity and surprise of process within product.

In the **early sixties**, the Judson Church revolution, spurred on by Robert Dunn, and including Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, and others, led to the possibility of performance within the art world of **de-codified dance forms using ordinary movements**, (with “de-codified,” meaning movements not formalized into a substantial technique, not yet within an established vocabulary), **and the use of forms including choices for performers in performance**. At this

time the **potential for improvised performance that included ordinary gestures as vocabulary became a reality.** Typical of their open form work at that time would be the repetition of a situational movement or game-like structure that could last for a specific period of time, or for a time determined live in performance, “until it seemed to be completed.” Yvonne Rainer stood in front of the audience and moved her belly. Steve Paxton walked on stage, and very slowly put on a jacket, then left. Anna Halprin took a bath on stage. All these were examples of openings within form in the sixties. These activities were mainly localized in small pockets within NYC, and applied broadly to include any ordinary life activities in performance. Also typical of this time in NYC was interest in alternative performance spaces like art galleries, lofts, and site specific works. These explorations spread rapidly to Europe through Fluxus and theatre groups like the Living Theatre –a culture of improvisation spread quickly in the Netherlands. Holland was particularly susceptible to the counter-cultural movements of the US anti-Vietnam War generation, and the Dutch heralded and welcomed any counter-cultural efforts from the USA. In both the US, NL, and also across Europe there were a few generous forays into the area of openings within formal structures, then called more often “improvisation” as performance. There was also potential for interaction with audiences in performances during this period. The predominate artistic milieu of this period was based in observation of detail, and personal commitment to “tight-in” looking. The close examination of objects and sculptural installations that took inspiration from real life proliferated. This was different from what had occurred earlier, as in the Dada period, through the attempt to subvert symbolic languages—in the sixties, the real was presented as real, and anti-symbolic. Anything could be called an object of art at this time, with de-construction fully on track. Linguistic analysis had very interesting affects on the NYC art world’s formal positioning, driving the analysis of communication, meaning, reality and perception to new refinement.

Concurrent to these developments in NYC, (and having heard of them only through one review in the New York Times when I was in high school in 1963,) I entered the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana, as a dance student in the dance department led by Jan Stockman. As an undergraduate at the University of Illinois, 1964-1968, and later as a graduate student, 1968-70, I came into contact with Willis Ward and his improvisation classes that focussed on **process**. In this work, process was used to describe and define what happened within improvisation to lend formal compositional concerns to improvisational work. Detailed movement descriptions and limitations of vocabulary were described verbally and converted into movement language within real-time explorations, and this was called “**process**.” Sophisticated composition with openings in form developed from this construct. Ward’s work originally derived from Barbara Mettler’s work in improvisation, that occurred in the Southwest of the USA, but developed into his own imaginative landscape of potentials. Ward was also acquainted with the work of Anna Halprin, and on his recommendation I studied with Anna in the summer of 1966.

Also at the University of Illinois, coming into direct contact with John Cage (and the concepts of his works,) I collaborated extensively with James Fulkerson, one of his students at the University of Illinois. (Jim Fulkerson’s music since that time has made, and continues to make, a huge and valuable contribution to my life’s work.) John’s direction began to interest me greatly. John’s **chance structures** intrigued me, and I wished to experience fully a chance procedure within performance. Eventually I performed one of my own choreographies in the first performance of his **Music Circus**. At that time, John’s thinking combined with my study of Willis Ward’s work in an interesting and formative way. Bill Ward’s work contained **improvisational statements based in processes** that existed only within the realm of class work. John’s work was created through chance processes, sometimes arriving at formal moments, and sometimes entirely

composed of choices for musicians within performance. I was able to see process based work as open form.

The open formed music of this time was called aleatoric. Aleatoric works were also related to flow charts existing within the scientific community of that time, (when computers which were so large they had to be housed in huge buildings.) John's scores allowed for choice, arrival at a new point, and then another choice, etc. Flow charts were used at that time in the development of computers to allow for planning of the flow of information, creating choice making, with consequential structure, wherein one choice defined a path to at least two secondary choices. This process could be repeated, indicating infinite developmental series. In this way, through the use of machine language, it was possible to actually come into contact with the concept of infinity. People set their program cards into the computer and came back days later to receive a huge box of information print-out through which they could create music and discover some of the millions of numerical decisions available to be applied to music. They then read these numerical decisions through formulas to create music based on randomness, (chance procedures). This was seriously like a miracle. Infinity became actual, and "graspable." The computer seemed to make the complexity of Einstein's work accessible to the lay person.

When I formed my own company at that time, in 1966, eventually consisting of 7-12 dancers and non-dancers, men and women, in almost equal numbers, I was able to formulate complex structures based in a process of continual decision making that remained open on two levels, moment-to-moment, and overall shape of the piece. The design was linear only on a sectional level, with the potential for real time choice making through process occurring within each section. In doing this, I applied choice-making within the use of chance processes, producing works that included open and closed forms on different structural levels.

I did not use chance structures, as these seemed confining, and difficult to apply genuinely within complex choice making in real time. I greatly admired the works of Merce and John, but knew that the feeling and emotional intelligence that was within my soul yearned for something more filled with the texture of humanity, than the pristine clarity of chance based decision making. (I continued to study with Merce, through the early seventies, even taking his teacher's course twice, and this indicates how much I also appreciated and still appreciate his cool, precise, deeply creative work.) I also choreographed later, in the seventies, a work for Albert Reid, one of the profoundly interesting Cunningham performers and teachers, and a choreographer in his own right.

My early choreographic choices led to extensive opening of formal structures. Choice making, "choose from this or that," or "choose from the following options" and "repeat or continue until a decision is offered to change," became for me evaluative decision making tools for dancers in real time in performance. These works were highly structured, with processes embedded in other processes, and individuals taking responsibility for the overall evolution of form through giving individuals the decision when to cue changes that moved the piece forward in time. The process structures that I developed were in themselves a continually evolving series of movement events, and these were somewhat influenced by the structures of Anna Halprin's works. At the recommendation of Willis Ward, I studied with Anna Halprin in 1966 in San Francisco. Anna's works were formally coherent through purposeful activities, like actually taking a bath on stage, or coherent through space, as in "Parade and Changes" where each dancer walked through a serpentine floor pattern of clothes and objects, picking up and discarding objects and clothing to continually change appearance.

After my study with Anna, I had far greater confidence in the forming of processes into open form compositions. Anna's works were guided by the sense-making of ordinary procedures, whereas I chose to provide openness of formal possibility through the use of abstract movement constructs involving both dance movement and everyday gestures. These were not logically rooted in everyday processes as were Anna's. They were rooted in formal consistency of threads of energetic response and also based on emotional shifts in audience perception. Time could shift within my works, and at that time, when they were accompanied by the music of James Fulkerson, the music sometimes had to be cued by the open form of the dances. I was interested in formal decisions that took place on all four levels of composition, as described by Iannis Xenakis, the moment-to moment level, sub-sections, sections, and overall form. Simply stated, I was doing work that I found interesting, and that held a complexity of open forms, through the continual, compositional involvement and responsibility of every dancer.

By 1969 I had brought openings in form to my own dance composition, from exposure to the musical world, and yet I still considered it as open, (adjective) and form (noun). It was over quite a time that my interest in paradox would lead me to describe Open Form as a one-ness, with form being both set on one or more architectonic levels, and open on one or more architectonic level, through exposure to process at every moment. Very early I became concerned with personality development of dancers, in the real time of a performance. The subject of process within product was consuming. And I had no ethical language to rely upon. This developed later. We dealt only with the specificity of open-ness and closure within forms, and refined processes to sometimes very small details.

With Joan Skinner's arrival at the University of Illinois, in 1966, my idea of process was challenged. Joan was researching the beginnings of **Skinner Release Technique**, indicating a staggering potential for psycho-physical complexity that stood out as a huge mountain compared to the landscape of processes that I had encountered within improvisation. Though I was not in a position to study with Joan directly very much, I was curious to understand and apply the potential of the depth of process I respected in this work to my own compositional developments with open form.

The early Skinner Release Technique was based in exploration that I associated with process, and this made such a huge impression on me that I felt it necessary to suspect the use of the word process for any minor foray. Through the contact with her work I began to see process as an extended scientific or philosophical enquiry, not just as a choice of a few elements or ways of working. I was unable to find language to adequately distinguish between these two. Joan's process of Release (to become Skinner Release Technique) was at that time rooted in mechanical imagery, such as the tongs used to pick up a hot potato being likened to the leg function of lying on one's back with knees up and opening and closing the knees. I was sure that there must be more poetic imagery than this, and of course Joan developed this as she began to use her own, original archetypes to name and describe an image world. But I went another route, through Marsh Paludan's making a connection with the students of Mabel Ellsworth Todd, especially Barbara Clark. (Marsha was a devoted graduate student of Joan Skinner, and independently found out about the Todd teaching in NYC, of which Barbara was an important part.)

Through Barbara, with whom I was able to study extensively, I found Mabel Todd's heritage, and Barbara's application of this. Their anatomical imagery satisfied my curiosity for in-depth, process based, study of the body; but I continued to associate forms, often from nature, to satisfy my wish for a more poetic and integrated language than anatomy alone could provide. There was a divergence between the Skinner Release Technique, and Release due to these differing

routes. In fact, they became two distinct studies. The greatly in-depth pursuit of process based work is in evidence within both routes.

Also from the mid sixties, the reading of Hugh Mearns' writings on childhood education had stimulated me to think about how imagination develops, and I became interested to apply his thoughts to a lifetime of creative enterprise. This, combined with the stimulus of Joan's work, indicated a compelling richness that was irresistible. The life of imagination within dance had become a quest by my third year at University. I was aware of the lack of language to describe and discuss this work, and began to research it through the making of process-based dance performance, this contributing heavily to the very complex forms that produced my works, that were simultaneously open and closed on different structural levels. John Cage was the only audience member who genuinely supported my first major work, and he said it was the best piece he had seen in years. (He had laughed noisily with pleasure during the whole of the piece—which was somewhat disconcerting, but manageable for the dancers.)

By the late sixties, the **Judson Church**, NYC had become notorious for dance experiments. By 1968-69 they longed for new structures, and a group of interested persons formed up under the leadership of Yvonne Rainer. They were invited to the University of Illinois in 1969, when I was in graduate school there, for the first performance outside of NYC of **“Continuous Project Altered Daily.”** This performance by Yvonne Rainer allowed all the participants to be active within each performed creation of the work. This work was named after a sculptural work by Robert Morris, and therefore represented his primary conception. Yvonne and her group had become improvising artists, using a limited framework of information and highly repetitive elements based on every-day gestures, rarely or never inclusive of and referencing to “dance” movements. The work included, among several processes, a scene where two people stood on each side of a black box. There was a piece of paper on the box, and each of them could pick it up. They took time to do this, or did it immediately. The section was based in process and choice making, and was very typical of their work from that period. It lasted perhaps eight minutes, with several exchanges of picking up the paper, and thoughtful faces in between. Few people, perhaps only I, appreciated their work at Illinois. During that visit my work was generously recognized and appreciated by both Steve Paxton, and Doug Dunn, as they watched a rehearsal. Doug told me I was ahead of them through my knowledge of how to rehearse improvisation, (here I was rehearsing and refining process, drawing on knowledge from the compositional vocabulary of Earl Brown, Willis Ward, and Anna Halprin and applying this to performance.) From this contact at the U. of I., Steve Paxton offered to support me in my first performance in NYC. Steve also did me the favour of recommending me for the job he shared at that time with Barbara Dilly and one other person, at the University of Rochester, New York.

I took up Steve's offer to help me get my first performance in NYC in 1971, when I was working at that University. I was able to use the Grand Union's mailing address through Steve and Yvonne. The Grand Union was at that time the outgrowth of Continuous Project Altered Daily. My work at the 14th Street YMCA (a “with it” performance venue for dance at that time) was well received and beautifully critiqued. After that I performed group works frequently in the City. I had formed a group, **The Tropical Fruit Co.**, (so named because we spent our publicity money on fruit for the audience rather than paper, thinking it was more ecological.) Through this Company I began to explore **processed-based work within overall defined, but not set forms, with open-ness and closure occurring on four levels.** These were: moment to moment; moments grouped together forming short units; short units compared; and total unified forms. Mostly I used open form within the first and second structural levels, keeping the overall organization of pieces as a totality, thus preserving identity. All works by the Tropical Fruit Co.

were performed in NYC as well as at the University of Rochester, and once at a state conference in upstate New York, where I was pelted with oranges from outraged audience members. Students also led the creation of works for Tropical Fruit, and we performed their works professionally as well as my own.

I have continually perceived this work as different from improvisation, wherein there would be fewer pre-determined, higher levels of structure that would direct meaning to a particular end, thus being continually open and never achieving “openness of form.” Leaving the University of Rochester, where I had become head of Dance, I moved to Berlin in 1973. There was no interest in process based works among dancers there, but great interest and curiosity for the use of theatre elements in Ballet, where the travesty style of cabaret entertainment was often an influence. I did see Pina Bausch there, with a very formal dance solo, that had as its basis a highly emotional yet unspecific context which I associated with the influence of expressionism. Hers was a modernist work, with structures of movement that flowed in a traditional way—mildly referencing to every day gestures, performed to become abstract through repetition. This was a feature of New York at that time. She had returned from study in NYC, and her work was evidence of that study, and obviously set form.

I performed my own works on several occasions within the seven months I was in Berlin, with mixed success. One of these works was broadly jeered, and by contrast one was highly acclaimed. I continued to work with the constructs of **process-based works, within overall openness of Forms, but then also including set-material elements within these forms.** (Though I longed to see Mary Wigman in Berlin at that time, I was not able to see her because my dear teacher Marion Yahr, her great friend, thought that she was too old, and not really able to have visitors.)

I called work at this time “open form,” continuing to believe that form could be extremely interesting when “opened.” Through this work open form began to be perceived by me as a paradoxical noun, not an adjective-noun, describing process leading to and simultaneously becoming structure.

As time passed, my growing interest in the potential for the paradox to enhance awareness began to be specified. I extended the time limit of my performances to being at one time as long as one hour, forty minutes. The challenge was to create discreet processes that could be re-invented every time they were performed, but would have coherence overall as communication, approximately the same, but also different, each time performed. I was interested in challenging audiences to develop extreme abilities to perceive and carry forth information, accumulating imaginative abilities. Looking back, I recognize in these pieces the background notion for the **“Holding Form”** of Responsible Anarchy. My language at this time was of **refinement of process, creation of product within real time, and opening form within composition.** The relationship between these interested me, as did the use of almost exclusively non-dance material. **Detail within process** was my primary interest. Each person would have a different route through every piece, and these would dove-tail at certain moments, though these moments did not always occur within a set time frame. Sometimes there were group processes that evolved differently each time they were performed, and these stayed on the level of the work Yvonne Rainer had done, involving choice between possibilities, but differed, through being defined by process expressed through different, individually chosen, complete horizons of meaning, not specific activities. For example, “Explore a different emotional context within a specific range, each time you travel this distance. Travel mostly upright, using arms, legs and head to interrogate the emotional journey--a primarily gestural language. Deviate from upright,

though temporarily. The path remains the same every time, though the articulation will completely vary. The choice of emotion can be either up to the dancer or the choreographer on different days. The urgency of the journey is paramount.” At that time such a process could involve one of my dancers in, from five seconds of activity to much longer times. Later on, my processes became involved with more and more devolution of articulation to dancers.

After only six months in Europe, at the age of 27, I was offered Head of Dance at Dartington College in Devon, England. At this time in London, the Place supported a very essential and stern Graham aesthetic. This and the Laban Institute had a rivalry that had up to then eclipsed any new vein of experience within the English field of dance. Survival demanded adherence to one side or the other. Since I denied to conform to either, Dartington became the “bad seed” of English cultural dance. When I began at Dartington, I faced intelligent non-dancers.

Richard Alston, and Co., including Nanette Hassal (Australia) and Eva Karczag, became my students in 1971-2. Richard and Nan were extremely inquiring of mind, acute and stimulating in their questions and extremely interesting individual performers, and Eva was a beautiful and receptive dancer, easily able to “lose herself” in the investigation of process. The combination of people was a gift to my work.

“Open form” to me then meant “sequenced, (in the sense of ordered in time), process-based” forms where choice making of dancers was based on their own intuition, judgment, and abilities. Work was created within a circumscribed sphere of activity, that could include both openness and closure.

My teaching and choreography then began to really develop conceptually, as I searched for solo structures that would enliven my dancing and teaching in the isolation of deepest Devon for fourteen years. My language formation regarding **integration of set and improvised forms** developed there. I used **process to open forms and to create simultaneity of thought within overall form. Open Form Compositions (in the sense of open and formed on a moment-to-moment level, through individuals being simultaneously in different phases of form and process in performance,) became entirely different from openings for choice making within linear, formal structures).** Composition then meant to me the creation of structures to allow real-time decision making on several compositional levels, through overlapping processes and formal structures within performances. Within my solo work I explored openness and closure of form, as well as the life of objects within performance.

Through the **Dance at Dartington Festivals** (ten years) I was able to assist the development of the early experimental field in England, gaining space for **a new aesthetic based in actual, real-gestural and process based works.** This aesthetic needed a name. One day at the end of a workshop I taught at X6, the organizers of the X6 Collective and I tried to figure out what to call the dance form we were supporting, and the name **“New Dance”** was our choice. The **New Dance Magazine** of X6 subsequently took that name also.

The influence of X6 and the influence from Dartington eventually led to a new funding body being set up within the British Arts Council, around 1986 for the **“built piece.”** (concept Peter Hulton). This would cover both movement and theatre, with the possibility of an inclusive aesthetic position ranging from every day experiences to highly traditional forms. This was seen to be entirely different from Performance Art.

From Dartington I supported and collaborated with the X6 Collective. I supported the re-positioning of dance in England, allied with the X6 Collective, though this was never a formal relationship. I travelled more than any of the X6, across Europe and overall to 17 countries, (eventually to 18 countries) and seven US States, continuing to use the College as a base from which to teach and perform solo works. In nearly all locations my work included workshops and the concepts of Release, and the work forms I used were freely spread. I ran the Dartington program alone but with constant visiting staff who also derived influence from my research and spread this as their own, with my encouragement. An additional force in the spreading of ideas that I have supported was the association of Release with Contact Improvisation. Having had a strong and formative work relationship with Steve Paxton, and having had Tropical Fruit Company members perform in his work and mine, and having myself participated in the first performances of Contact in NYC and Europe, there was great overlap of experience. Contact was growing in this period as a conceptual force as well as a physical-creative force within the field of dance. I felt it necessary to retain integrity of processes between the two, release work and contact, though many concepts, images, skills and exercises became broadly shared. Integrity was achieved through processes being very discreet between the two, as Contact developed on an improvisational level from a primary beginning in physics principles and Aikido background, to include psycho-motor awareness, social codes of practice, and philosophical enquiry. Release fed directly into imaginative experience, from there touching process based work through personal, ethical decisions, emotional development, psycho-physical awareness and also philosophical enquiry. These two, Contact and Release continue to overlap in their discoveries, though processes to arrive are still different. They remain reference points for each other.

The first syllabus presentation for dance to the CNAA from Dartington in 1975-6 relied on Release, its process and its relationship to compositional form. This was dramatically refused. The word “Release” raised such hackles because of its association with the Contraction and Release of the Graham Technique, that the Laban oriented panel was infuriated. During the visitation to evaluate the course, one of the adjudicators screamed “I will die before I see the Graham Technique taught in the schools of this country.” This confusion was not understandable to Nanette Hassal and me, we who had proposed the syllabus, but the syllabus failed profoundly. We faced a wall of misunderstanding. Odd, since Release as I used it was also based in the search for economy of movement. Our final submission to the CNAA was to the theatre panel, as I had been forbidden to use the word “dance” to describe the all-inclusive movement work at Dartington. We passed a syllabus titled **“Movement for Performance,”** through the theatre panel of the CNAA. This offered us the possibility to do anything, from traditional dance forms, to dramatic action, to actual real movements from every day life, and was a much better option. **“Movement for Performance” became a nomenclature for performances that were inclusive of any-of-all moving structures.**

Through writing these syllabi attempts, **theatre and dance processes** for me then became different from **openness in forms**. **Theatre and dance processes were planted firmly and continually within a changing and developing context, sometimes existing within performances.** I began to distinguish between forms allowing for development in real time and process, through the degree of openness of choice making, and forms that involved improvisation. Form had the most limited interpretive choice-making based only in the “how” of attitude regarding individual interpretation. Process had the power to change actual event, but with contextual and overall meaning remaining recognizable.

Of course this proved inadequate as definition, because form is continually open on an interpretive level, and process is continually and stubbornly rooting itself in histories as process is repeated.

These concepts evolved through meeting audiences in Australia who wished to know specifically how one could perform without technical codification, and arrive at approximately similar states of meaning. I spoke with audiences after each performance, answering questions about **form/content and real time decision making**. Their questions spurred me to definition. By the early eighties I was lecturing audiences about **similarities and differences between open and closed forms**:

--open forms at that time being open from across four macro-structural to micro-structural levels, through the use of process based structures

--and closed forms being open only on extreme, micro-structural levels within the performance of specific forms.

I described my interest in the paradox of associating opposites. With growing understanding of the potentials of Release, my mind was escaping the boundaries of conventional thought, and the paradox was a way to bring this into concept. I taught the paradox as a tool for indicating possibilities, thus Open Form.

In the early eighties I met Lyotard, and his writings, and **post modernism** became my fascination. In order to achieve potential within this area, needing greater complexity that could only be created through the use of several persons on stage, in the early eighties I began to make primarily group works. Solo work also continued to a lesser degree.

The complexity of **process within product** needed new language. Pieces became much more complex, ideas needed further qualification. I searched for **Living Forms in the belief that the complexity of life itself could be a model for open form composition..**

The complexity experienced was not encompassed by the nomenclature available to me at that time..

I then, through group work, in the 80's, clarified the potential for five differing relationships to materials:

--Improvisation (entirely open—which I hardly ever used),

--Process Based Works (with developed guidelines, rules and directions to choose from),

--Field Compositions (with spatial definitions for performance of process-based parts that could occur in any order) (Field, John Berger)

--Open Forms (reflecting the paradox of something simultaneously open and closed, made most possible through the participation of more than one person) (Pagan Annie, 1986) This piece occurred with anyone performing on the night who was available, from three to ten people.

--and Closed Forms. (entirely closed—which I rarely used.)

For my part, by the mid eighties, I was interested to create detail within Openness of Forms beyond what others did. I recognized the paradox of Open Form, treating it as a paradoxical noun. **But especially, I explored this in terms of expanding consciousness for performers and audience members, often taking great risks with time scale and complexity. Perhaps these were among my own main contributions to Open Form.**

This was achieved through:

- real time exploration of imagery** (not choice between one / other known outcomes) within performance;
- specific, individual parts for performers, each separately described and ordered in process, though not set formally**, thus varying irrationally and separately,
- performance as a series of processes that moved in and out of different group constructs;**
- open form emotional journeys, solo, and group**, based in arrival at points of understanding within personal history, including the persons' history of rehearsing works;
- and primarily, through **image journeys that provided frameworks for continual renewal of method and experience, with points of arrival being occasionally fixed, and sometimes, later on, with points of arrival being cued through logical development of the piece in unspecified time, or in specified time through response to musical cues which were necessary to the flow of information within the auditory world of the piece.**

These structures required ethical decision making from performers.

By the late 80's I began to distinguish open forms between:

- open forms with "open" as an adjective describing form throughout the piece, resulting in complex process based work, (Animal Dances)**
- and Open Form Composition where "open" and "form" had simultaneous force in the concept, resulting in Open Form. Example: "The Thread of the Plot" (1992-3) was arranged with two competing centres of activity, the stage front and the rest of the whole stage, each choreographed separately, and occasionally dovetailing through the script. Sometimes all persons entered the stage, and no one was front. Sometimes all were front. Once the boundary was crossed to enter the audience space.**

On moving to the Netherlands in 1987, I developed aesthetic concepts and writing further, completing the last of my post modernist papers wherein a small, virtual voice escaped from the author's mind and created an on-going diversion, an independent life, in the text. This corresponded with virtual thought being established as having a life of its own, and the possibility of the "thinking" computer.

Throughout the post-modern period, I became more and more concerned with density of information and resources, and the links between imaginary and real landscapes, that typified post-modern forays into virtual consciousness, entering a philosophical debate through publications of my own writing on the subject of post-modernism. But I remained deeply involved in aesthetic, (compositional) exploration.

By the 1990's my choreographies were situated between set movement and improvisation, being substantively the same every time, but having different means to arrive at substance each time performed. I described them as **Open Forms**, meaning paradoxical in nature, based in different and even paradoxical interpretations of imagery. Discussion with dancers included the description of a "**Breathing Form**" that left room for the performer to access additional information, and "**Responsible Anarchy**" which was a form that moved overall in structure to be according to the immediate exploration of the interior design of the work.

I left post modernism with the last writing of my post modern papers in 1987, but the subject lingered for me until 1991, and emerged later in After Eden. During this period, surrounded by highly intelligent and questioning dancers of EDDC, among them Joao Da Silva, Ursula Raffalt, Marcus Grolle, Joao Nino, Amelia Bentes, Peter Michael Dietz, Andrea Pisknik, Anna Ktrina

Kalmoes, Marcus Kuchenbuch, Eve Mills, and Carsten Wiedemann, I developed the concepts of **Holding Form, and Responsible Anarchy**. The **Holding Form** came about through the need to create linear structure that traversed a journey through both open and closed form. **Responsible Anarchy** came about through an interest in anarchy, influenced by reading Against Method by Feyerabend. In his writing, **Anarchy** is praised as the only truly humane form of organization. I first approached **Anarchy** as a structural possibility, but this was not easily manageable through personality differences that allowed more space to the greedy and competitive personality. This occasioned a need to modify form away from being purely anarchic towards **Responsibility**. Each formal advance that I made tended to satisfy my long lasting fascination in the paradox, in order to encompass the gap in reality that can occasion a creative mental synapse of understanding within the performer's experience similar to that which I had been able to experience as a soloist. **Responsible Anarchy became for me a dual-stream subject within Open Form Composition, wherein the Holding Form achieved Responsibility and served to transport a consistent meaning of a piece of work, and Anarchy provided individual significance and a field of experience that situated the work differently each time it was performed. Responsibility was likened to a river bed and Anarchy was likened to the river, with both carving out the identity of the work simultaneously, and with the river bed being the Holding Form.** This is still the most extreme positioning of Open Form Composition that I have yet discovered.

As I am working in 2005, Openings in Solo Form are created through process for continual development within works. These provide the performer with a depth of practice that allows for continual renewal, constant re-forming of imagery, and personality exposure, live within the performing of a piece. It appears from the audience perspective to be improvisation, open form, or form, depending on the choices made. The linear nature of becoming images, whether set or improvised, is perceived to change, between set forms, (almost totally closed form) and improvisation, (almost totally open form), and to revolve around a specific process and locus, having continually new boundaries for existence. None of these exist at the same time within solo work, lacking the potential for duality and paradox. The opening of form for the performer becomes a change of being on the stage that alters the thread of performance significantly through the opportunity for ethical choice making. Solo work is extremely difficult to present as Open Form, since the possibility for paradox in presentation is difficult to achieve within only one source. I prefer to call these works process based solos. However, it is possible for an individual to engage in Open Form if he/she carries a dual positioning, say for example if the body is engaged in a movement process, and mind is on a richly unrelated journey. This may occur through very well known physical process being accompanied by a mind function which in itself would lead to a different sort of physical experience. Very difficult, but truly evidence of paradox. It is also possible for an individual to be present in a state of Open Form through the creation of thought process that develops each time to a deeper psycho-physical positioning, as movement process proceeds to develop consciousness of essences and experiences.

Open Forms as group works: Group works easily contain the potential for paradox, with both open-ness and form possible at the same time, thus becoming exemplary of the paradoxical construct. To be a minimal example of Open Form composition, information offered in a piece should occur at least one time, in at least two layers, with the informational relationship between open-ness and form present simultaneously.

Complexity of individual participation may be created through making different architectonic layers of experience involved simultaneously in open or closed forms. There may be layers of information that exist as closed form, repeatable each time, co-existent with layers of information

that exist as indeterminate, leading to openness of form, etc. This complexity is possible through multiple exposures of imagery. It is possible to use Open Form within a part of a piece, or a totality. Group works that open forms within composition, yet are not exemplary of the totality of the construct, may travel between the two constructs of repeatability and indeterminacy without ever achieving the paradox of simultaneous presentation of openness and closure. Very clear examples will exhibit a large percentage of Open Form through multiple simultaneity of different participations within imagery. Thinking in terms of Open Form allows for a complexity within improvisation that challenges perception, and allows for some level of continuity.

This sort of thinking, within a post-modern context, is what led to the exploration of Responsible Anarchy, typifying one example of the paradox of Open Form Composition. In Responsible Anarchy, each part travelled the full range of experience, with responsibility referring to the upholding of set, mind-body structures, and Anarchy referring to the absence of set structure, allowing for continual re-forming of imagery, often within different zones of desirability for the performer's investigation contributing to change within the overall meaning of the performance.

To explore Responsible Anarchy, it became necessary to define a social code of behaviour. This became necessary through the process of exploration where individuals of a quieter and more supportive nature were being eclipsed by some who exhibited a more aggressive and loud performance mode. An ethical basis for choice making became necessary. I eventually used the words **Ethical Reformation to describe the human construct that would continue to allow full responsibility and full anarchy to each performing individual, and then also give them a means to function, based on their own awareness of the effects of their choices.** Ethics became an issue, and a Reform of social relationships on stage and personal awareness of responsibility was necessary in order to continue explorations along these lines.

This term, Ethical Reformation, appeared to me as a social construct that could apply as a name for our time, where extreme objectification of the individual is leading to a need for reforming of ethical positioning. I published this concept as a name for our time at THNRW in 1996.

At this moment I am interested to continue with the exploration of Responsible Anarchy and the relationship of this construct to Ethical Reformation. I feel interested to explore borders of definition that will interface with performer's innate understandings and meaningfulness, to provide performers with the greatest possible range of choices, and the greatest possible focus simultaneously, these being re-created in real time by the performers themselves, according to a **greater plan** that evolves according to real time definition and communication of work. I also wish to discover exactly what level of guidance and freedom is necessary for essential, repeatable, zoned meanings of composition to develop in shared, real time creation. This process will depend on the ability of individuals to grasp the master plan, to master the process of discovery and arrival at fixed points, and to balance the individual ethical choice making process with the demands of the total need of a performers' society. Also, this process will succeed only if I as choreographer find the way to exactly communicate the holding forms and the anarchic potential of each dancer's involvement. **This process makes the dance a platform for the exploration of societal ethics, with the training and management of individual responsibility and freedom being the basis.**