

IMPROVISATION AND FIXED COMPOSITION IN CLOGGING

This paper developed out of a discussion of improvisation in a seminar on creativity at Indiana University. Two articles written on the subject were the main focus of attention; (i) Nettl (1974) and (ii) Puri and Hart (1982). One question was especially interesting: 'Is the process of improvisation different from the process of composition?' Both articles cited above indicate that the processes are similar.

My own view is that the very compression of time in the process of improvisational composition had to make it qualitatively different from the process of conventionally understood composition for a fixed piece. This is a subtle distinction. However, it inspired me to examine more closely¹ the nature of improvisation in clogging, a form of dancing familiar to me. The main question that will be addressed in this paper is this: 'How is an improvised piece similar to, and how different from, a fixed piece in the idiom of clogging?'

I agree with Puri and Hart that "...far from representing a dichotomy, improvising and composing are closely related" (1982:71), and with Nettl, who says that "the juxtaposing of composition and improvisation as fundamentally different processes is false, and that the two are instead part of the same idea..." (1974:6). These views are to be distinguished from the notion that in improvisation, "...the aim of the dancer is to form movement extemporaneously...A dance improvisation is either being created, in the very process of being born, or it is not at all" (Sheets-Johnstone, 1981:399).

Just as one could legitimately doubt the report of a birth which did not follow a gestation period, so one doubts the above statement which has an improvised dance 'dangling', as it were, in time without prior development in form; in a style, and thus according to some rules. Puri and Hart make the case that in dance, "...idioms are marked by a certain exclusivity. That is to say that they make use of some movements but not others" (1982:75). With this vocabulary of movement go certain rules of structure or grammaticality.

If Puri and Hart are right, then clogging has its own vocabulary of movement and the study of its structure should reveal its rules, or grammar. When the idiom has been subjected to this kind of morphological analysis, the questions regarding improvisation and fixed composition in clogging can be addressed with an understanding of the rules (and consequently, the freedoms) within the idioms.

Methods and Materials

In this analysis of the structure of clogging, the methods developed by Kaepler (1972) are utilized. Her method is based on linguistic analogy in which "kinemes" are basic movement units comparable to phonemes in a conventional language. "Morphokines" are combinations of kinemes which constitute recognized movements by natives, indigenous practitioners of the style of dancing. Morphokines are roughly analogous to morphemes in linguistics.²

The next level of organization of the dance is the "motif" level in Kaepler's system. These are recurring combinations of morphokines. The use of motif to describe larger elements corresponds to its use in folklore. Here, use is made of the motif level and one more level: that of the "phrase". The phrase corresponds to the eight-bar musical phrases in the accompaniments of each of the dances analyzed.

The kinemes and morphokines of clogging which have been identified will be rendered in Labanotation. Kaepler explains the use of Labanotation for the purpose:

As a system for recording movement. Labanotation can be used in a way comparable to phonetic notation of speech sounds. Just as a linguist working with a living language subjects a phonetic grid to phonemic analysis to obtain an inventory of the basic phonemes in a language, a dance ethnologist can subject an 'etic' movement grid recorded in Labanotation to 'emic'* analysis in order to ascertain which movements have emic relevance and thereby obtain an inventory of basic dance movements comparable to the phonemes of a language.

*The terms 'etic' and 'emic' are derived from 'phonetic' and 'phonemic'. 'Etic' refers to actual differences, for example, in sound or movement, that are culture free, while 'emic' refers to differences that are recognized by a particular culture (Kaepler, 1972:6-7).³

The attempt will be made to include as many kinds of clogging as possible in this discussion, which is somewhat of a problem as there is a great variety of styles extant in the United States. Some of the names for these styles are: buckdancing, jiggling, flatfooting, freestyle clogging, and precision clogging. All of these are permutations of the same dance idiom, which for convenience's sake are herein called clogging.⁴

Description

Clogging is a dance of rhythm-making with the feet. Hard soled shoes (with or without taps) make rhythmic accents by direct contact with the floor through gesture and weight change. Like the tap dancer, the clogger produces sound and in so doing directly participates in music making through the dancing.

The history of clogging is obscure, though many authors of instruction books (Bonner, 1983; Duke, 1984; Popwell, 1977) have advanced theories, specific and general, about the origins and development of clogging. Very little scholarly work has been done in the field. Notable exceptions are Nathan (1962) and Stearns (1968) who trace the development of tap dancing from its 'folk' roots in clogging and buckdancing on the nineteenth century minstrel stage.

Recent history of the dancing in one significant pocket of the Great Smokey Mountains is extensively treated in a thesis by Matthews (1983).

Haywood County, North Carolina, was the scene of what may have been the origin, or one of the origins, of 'team' clogging for competitions and tourist entertainment. A very strong identification still exists between clogging and the mountains. When asked from where their dancing comes, a clogger is apt to respond, "from the mountains".

Regardless of the specific history of clogging, a significant aspect of the idiom is that nearly all cloggers have a sense that there is a history, heritage, or tradition of the dancing (Matthews, 1983:31). This sense of tradition is often linked with a concept of identity. The elements of the identity may vary from group to group, place to place, individual to individual. The identity may be with a 'traditional' versus 'contemporary' entertainment culture. It may function as a rural versus urban identity, or as in the case of Matthews' sixth layer of meaning in mountain dance, "An individual's choice of one Haywood County dance style over another marks his or her sub-community identity or rendition of community truth" (Matthews, 1983:144).

Clogging is performed in a variety of settings, and where one finds it may often be linked to the style of clogging one has found. Generally, clogging is performed at community square dances, music festivals, fairs, parties, competitions, clogging classes, and on music hall stages, on television, and in talent shows.

Forms of Clogging

Clogging is not a homogenous dance form. Variations exist from group to group and place to place.⁵ The variety of names associated with the idiom is indicative of the number of styles. In this paper similarity of styles will be more in focus than differences. However, a brief discussion of the differences in form is justified as it affects, in some instances, the very structure of the dances.

There are three main forms which are fairly recognizable as distinct from each other. Using Matthews' taxonomy, the first may be called buckdancing. Some of the noticeable features of the style are that: (i) no taps are worn on the shoes; (ii) the dancing is performed solo, or in the course of a square dance. However, buckdancing is not done in square dance formation (choreography) for performance purposes, such as where a group of cloggers perform in square dance figures for an audience. Buckdancers 'clog' through a square dance because they just like it. When a performance is called for from a buckdancer it is done solo. Matthews (1983) makes a case for more distinguishing characteristics by movement and posture criteria, which may hold true for Haywood County, but are not necessarily applicable to a wider area.

Freestyle cloggers represent another form (and, possibly a next stage of historical development) in the idiom. This style includes groups who: (i) utilize square dance figures for performance choreography; but (ii) do not coordinate their footwork according to any predetermined pattern. This style features a group performance orientation, and groups usually have some concept of costuming as a feature of group identity and a part of their performing aesthetic. Freestyle cloggers usually wear taps to enhance the sound of their stepping.

The third and now perhaps most pervasive form of clogging seen around the country, especially in performance, is precision clogging. Like free-style clogging, precision clogging is a group activity specifically oriented to performances and contests. Taps, often of the jingle variety, are nearly always a part of the costuming which is uniform within the group. Precision clogging (i) utilizes coordinated footwork and (ii) choreography which may be based on but not limited to square dance movement. Cloggers in this style also consider a wider variety of music appropriate for the dancing. They often use contemporary popular tunes in addition to the 'traditional' fiddle tunes and bluegrass music used more exclusively by dancers in the other two styles.

These categories of form are distinct only to some extent in the world of clog dancing. Certainly the names and attributed features would be grist for the argument mill in clog dance circles. These categories have been named and assigned their features for ease in presenting data on stylistic variation in the idiom. The two dances analyzed here come from the first and third categories.

Styles and their features may be more accurately described as a convergence of interlocking continua. Matthews (1983) uses thirty-five "Relevant Data Categories" in comparing dance styles in Haywood County, North Carolina. The purpose here is not description or comparison of styles, but a morphological analysis of the genre.

Morphological Analysis

We will now focus on two dances: a solo performance in buckdance form,⁶ and a duet in precision clogging form.⁷ The method used is slightly different from Kaeppler's due to my having an intimate familiarity with the dance genre. Therefore, analysis is from the point of view of an indigenous performer. The kinemes of clogging were written down and then checked against videotaped performances to be analyzed. The morphokines were derived from the buckdancer's own description of his steps, and from my own familiarity with the steps used by the two precision cloggers whose performance was recorded. Higher levels of the organization of the dances were derived from the repetitions of morphokines, evident in the videotaped performances.

Kinemes

The body can be easily divided for morphological analysis into head, torso, hips, arms, and legs. The head does not produce significant movement in clogging. Generally the head is held in a 'normal' position facing the line of direction and neither tilted nor rotated. Neither is the torso involved in significant movement in the dancing. To continue the linguistic analogy, it might be said that in some 'dialects', or regional styles of clogging, one or another posture may be specifically described. Matthews (1983) describes the hyper-extended back of the Haywood County buckdancer. Thus, posture may be a distinguishing feature of a style, but movement of the torso within one dialect is not emic. Statements that are true of a dialect in this sense would also be true of an 'idelect', or an individual's style.

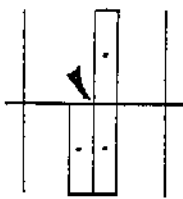
Hips move in clogging only to the extent that they follow or accommodate leg gestures. There is no emic movement of the hips in the idiom. Normally the arms hang loosely at the sides, moving only in response to other body movement. Recently, however, a major exception to this rule has developed in precision clogging where limited choreographed arm movement or positioning takes place. This is a good example of 'breaking the rules' or violating the aesthetic of clogging, in some people's opinions.

There is no developed repertoire of arm movements in clog dance forms, thus such movements and positioning as occasionally might appear will be treated as an innovation; a breaking of the rules, so it will not be included at the kineme and morphokine level, but will be discussed at the level of 'phrase' and 'whole dance'.

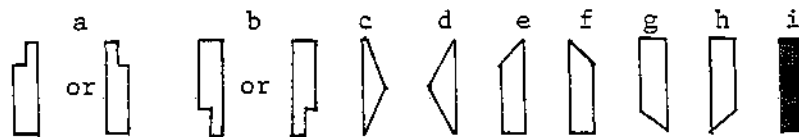
The legs produce significant movement in clogging. Fifteen kinemes pertaining to the dancer's legs have been identified which are described in conventional language, then rendered in Labanotation. A number of 'allokines' associated with some of the kinemes have also been identified. These are etic variations of the emic movement which are undifferentiated by the dancer or which are not seen as different enough to constitute a separate kineme.

Kinemes for the legs will be designated with the upper-case letter, 'L', a number, and in the case of allokines, a lower-case letter to identify the variation.

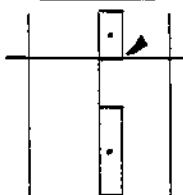
L1--Step



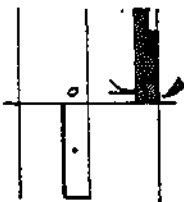
L1 is a step in place. A step consists mainly in the lowering of a foot to the floor to accept body weight. A step may include the raising of the foot off the floor, or it may follow a kineme where the foot is already off the floor. A step is always made with enough vigor to produce a sound when the foot strikes the floor. Allokines of L1 are steps made in different directions. L1a is a step forward; L1b, a step backward; L1c, a step to the right; L1d, a step to the left; L1e, forward diagonal right; L1f, forward diagonal left; L1g, backward diagonal right; L1h, backward diagonal left. All L1 kinemes can be executed with either foot. L1i is a step at a slightly lower level, flexed knee.



L2--Hop



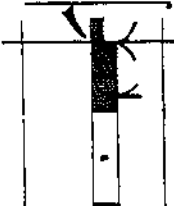
L2 is a hop. A hop is a small jump made on one foot, rather than from one foot to another. The weight-bearing leg springs the body weight up so that the weight-bearing foot leaves the floor and then returns to make a sound as it lands again. The allokines for L2 are the same as for L1, they are directional variations a-h. These lower-case letter designations shall remain directional in meaning. Other variations of kinemes will be designated by letters "i" and following.

L3--Brush

L3 is a brush, or low swing of the free leg such that the ball of the free foot makes contact with the floor to produce an accent. The foot swings through, or beyond, this point of contact with the floor. The movement is made with enough force that the sound produced is a tap, rather than a 'sh' sound. Allokinies for L3 include a-h.

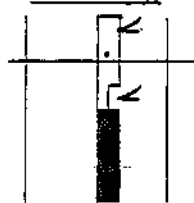
L4--Scuff

L4 is a scuff. This is a similar gesture to L3 with a swing of the free leg such that the heel of the free foot makes contact with the floor and produces an accent. However, with L4 only allokinies a,c,d,e,f, apply. This is a matter of physical possibility.

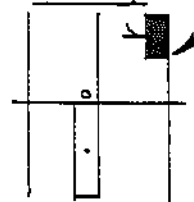
L5--Slide

L5 is closely related to L2, but different enough to be its own kineme. The weight-bearing leg springs the body weight up and forward just enough to allow the weight-bearing foot to move forward. The ball of the foot does not lose contact with the floor during the movement, and the heel strikes the floor at the end of the movement to produce an accent as the weight returns in full on the foot. Because the ball of the foot maintains contact with the floor as the movement proceeds, a slight 'sh' sound is produced prior to the accent

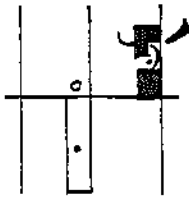
made by the heel returning to the floor. Allokinies of L5 include a,e,f, and L5i, which is executed on both feet simultaneously.

L6--Drag

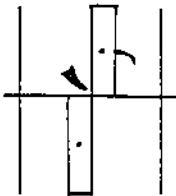
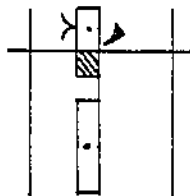
L6 is called a 'drag'. This movement starts with the knee of the weight-bearing leg flexed. The weight-bearing leg springs the body weight up just enough to allow the weight-bearing foot to move backward. The ball of the foot never loses contact with the floor. The movement finishes with the knee of the weight-bearing leg extended, and no strong accent. The sound produced by this movement is like the oral 'sh' sound. Allokinies include b,c,d,g,h, and i is the movement done on both feet, or legs, simultaneously.

L7--Tap

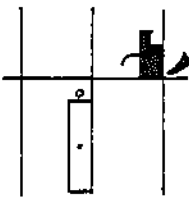
L7 is a tap made with the ball of the foot of the free non-weight-bearing leg. This tap is made without a swing of the lower leg, or a brushing motion. It can be done directionally anywhere from the body, so its allokinies are a-h.

L8--Toe

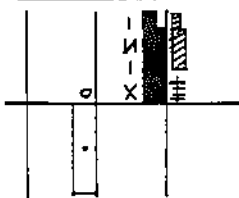
L8 is a tap made with the toe of the foot of the free leg. It is possible to do this to the side or behind body center, so its allokinés are c,d,g,h.

L9--Heel StepL9i--Heel Drop

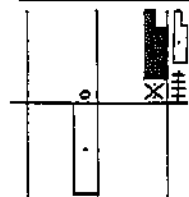
L9 is a step onto the heel of the foot such that the ball does not make contact with the floor. Directional allokinés include b,c,d,e,f. L9i is a heel drop, where the weight is borne on the ball of the foot and the heel of that weight-bearing foot is lowered to the floor with enough force to produce a sound.

L10--Heel Place

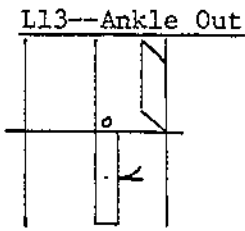
L10 is a placing of the heel of the free leg such that it produces an accent. Its allokinés are a,c,d,e,f.

L11--Kick Out

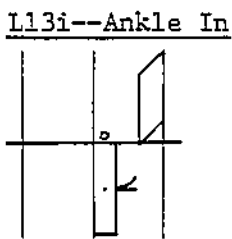
L11 is a gesture with the free leg, usually the lower leg only. It is a swing from the knee that may be described as a kick. The ankle is flexed, the toe never pointed. Its directional allokinés include a,c,d,e,f,g,h.

L12--Knee Up

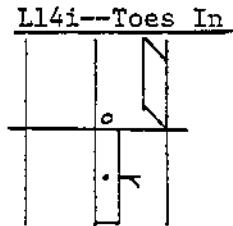
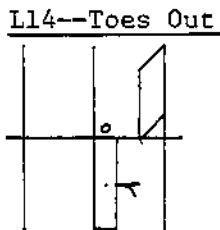
L12 is also a gesture with the free leg, generally when the weight-bearing leg is slightly flexed. The knee of the free leg is brought up into a position parallel and in front of the hips and is flexed. Again the ankle of the free leg is also flexed. Allokinés are a,c,d,e,f.



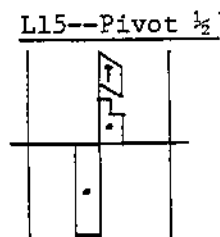
L13 is an ankle gesture which can be made with a free or weight-bearing leg. With the ball of the foot remaining stationary, generally in contact with the floor, the lower leg is rotated so that the ankle turns out, away from body center (the opposite of a 'turn out' in ballet). As this kineme is a body part rotation it can be executed in any position, allokinemes a-h.



L13i is an allokineme in which the rotation is reversed so that the ankle swings in toward body center.



L14 is a related kineme to L13 in which the heel of the weight-bearing foot is in contact with the floor and the lower leg is rotated so that the toe swings out, away from body center or, as in L14i, the rotation is reversed so that the toe swings in.



L15 is a pivot, or turning step. After a step the body pivots on the weight-bearing leg, more specifically on the ball of the weight-bearing foot. The amount of the spin may be specified by a fraction following the kineme or incorporating morphokine and referring to the amount of a pivot (360 degrees = one whole turn) to be completed.

Summary of Kinemes

Fifteen kinemes significant to clogging have been identified. There are probably more existing in this living and ever-changing dance tradition, but these account for all the movements in the two dances analyzed. Some informed observations are now possible.

Significant movements in clogging are produced by the legs, more specifically, the lower legs. Ten of the fifteen kinemes produce sound. Nine of them produce sound loud enough to be considered percussive accents. In contrast to the activity in the legs, the upper body (torso, arms, head and hips) remains comparatively still.

Morphokines

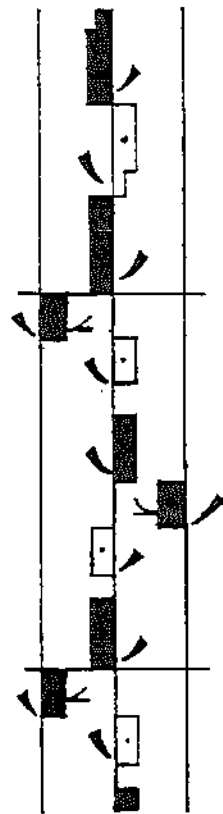
The next level of structure in the dancing is the combination of kinemes into morphokines, or what cloggers often refer to as steps or 'licks'. Generally speaking, these are the smallest units of division in the view of the dancers themselves.

Morphokines which share certain features are organized into six groups, and numbered one through six. The 'M' refers to 'morphokine', the numerical designation refers to the characteristic group, and the lower-case letter designates the specific combination of kinemes within that group.

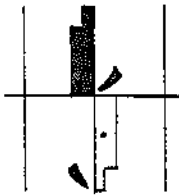
M1 morphokines are those which may be called 'basic steps'. These are combinations of kinemes which are repeated many times throughout a performance, and constitute a holding pattern, as it were, for the dancer. These can be preparation steps or steps which frame a variation.

- M1a - rock-step, kineme L1 repeated, often L1b, L1ai
- M1b - hop shuffle, kinemes L2, L7, and L1i
- M1c - basic step, combination of M1a and M1b
- M1d - triple, combination of 3 M1b and one M1a
- M1e - Lotus' shuffle, L1i, L4, L7, and L9i
- M1f - swing shuffle, L4, L2, L7, and L1
- M1g - L1, L2, L7, and L1i

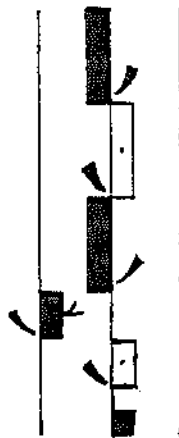
M1d--Triple



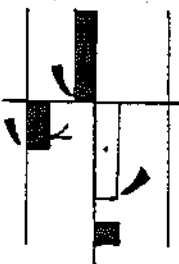
M1a--Rock Step



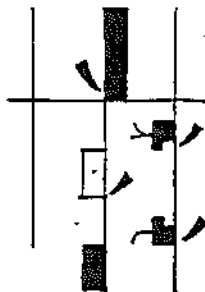
M1c--Basic



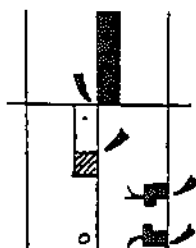
M1b--Hop Shuffle



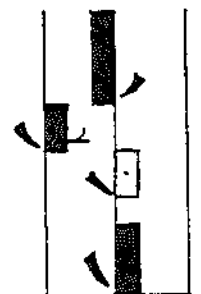
M1f--Swing Shuffle



M1e--Lotus' Shuffle

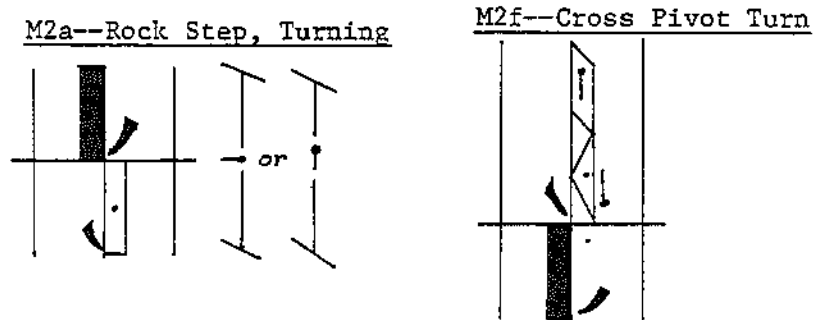


M1g--Prep Shuffle



M2 morphokines are turning steps. The turning steps are generally pivots in place. The first five (a-e) correspond to the basic steps of the same letter-designation. They are simply performed while turning. (See M2a below.) M2h is a special turning step based on the pivot kineme L15. It is a combination of L1, L1d (or L1e, depending on which way the pivot goes) and L15. The amount of turn can be indicated with the morphokine designation. M2a $\frac{1}{2}$, for example, indicates a 180 degree turn while executing a rock-step.

Only one of the turning basic steps is notated, the principle being the same for the rest. In the two dances under discussion only basic steps M1a through M1e were performed while turning, making them M2a through M2e. However, I have skipped to letter designation 'h' for the pivot turn to avoid confusion, and because M1f and M1g could be performed as turning steps.



M3 morphokines are side steps, that is, steps which move laterally. (See Figure 1)

M3a - combination of kinemes L1, L1d, L1, L10

M3b - L1, L1di, L1, L1e, L1ci, L1

M4 morphokines are those which feature the kineme L5. I call them slide steps. (See Figure 1)

M4a - L5, L12

M4b - L1b, L5, L1b, L5, L12

M4c - L1b, L11, L5, L12

M4d - L3, L5

M4e - L7, L6, L5, L12

M5 morphokines feature brushes and kicks. (See Figure 1)

M5a - double toe, L3a, L3b. This combination of L3 kinemes can be done in a variety of ways with different L3 allokinemes. This morphokine is included in M5b, for which two alternative ways of performing the double toe are shown.

M5b - Combination of morphokine M5a and kineme L9i

M5c - L8, L9i

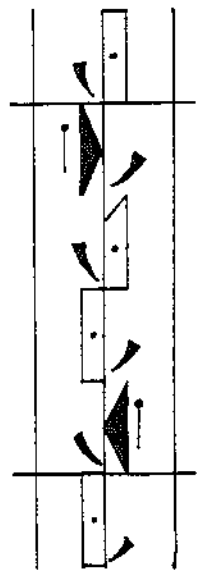
M5d - L3, L3, L3, L2, L12, L1

M5e - L1, L11, L1, L11

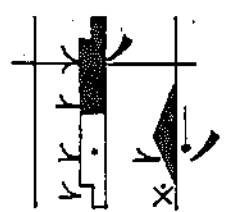
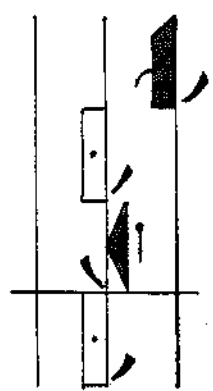
M6 morphokines feature ankle swings. (See Figure 1)

M6a - L13, L14, L13a, L14a

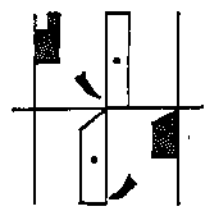
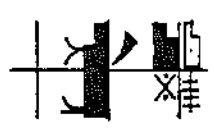
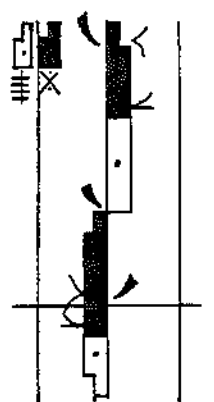
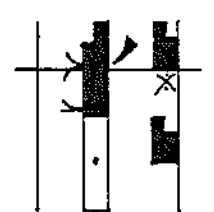
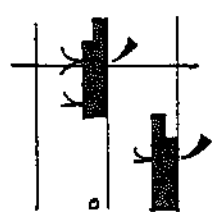
M6b - Charleston, L1, L13, L13a, L7, L13, L13a, L1b, L13



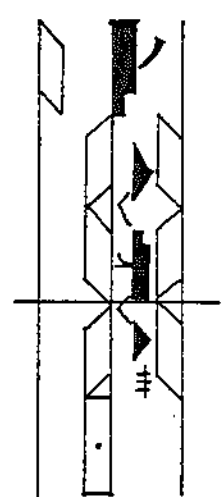
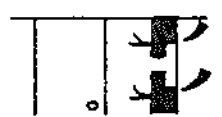
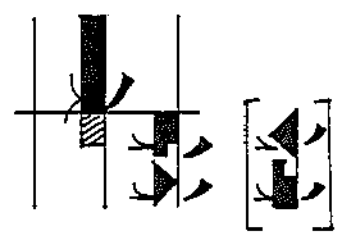
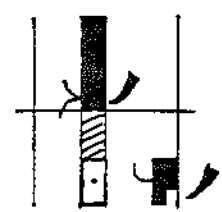
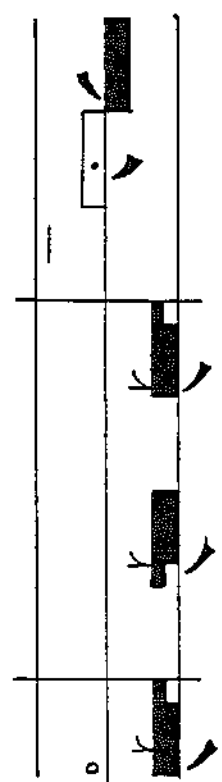
M3 Morphokines a & b



M4 Morphokines a-e



M5 Morphokines a-e



M6 Morphokines a & b

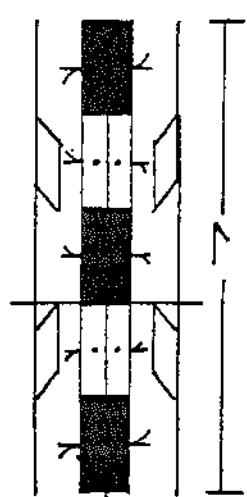


Figure 1

Summary of Morphokines

Morphokines are combinations of kinemes. The ways in which the kinemes are combined reveal certain characteristics of the idiom.

Perhaps the most noticeable characteristic of the morphokines is the activity shown in the support column on the Labanotation staff. Most of the morphokines feature one change of weight per beat. Gestures of the legs happen in relation to a step or hop. This constant moving of the support from one leg to another or up and down on one leg gives the dancing the characteristic of energy, excitement, or even 'jumpiness'.

Another noticeable characteristic is the constant change of level in the support column. The slight flexion and extension of the knee gives the dancing a nearly constant up and down motion.

A third characteristic is the wealth of accents. It has indeed been written that clogging is a dance of rhythm-making with the feet.

A fourth observation is that 23 of the 28 identified morphokines end with a step or other support column accent. This makes each morphokine a complete package in itself with a minor cadence. This promotes a certain orderliness in the dancing that complements the characteristic of energy or jumpiness.

A fifth and related observation is that it seems any kineme can follow any other kineme. There are, of course, some sequences that would be physically impossible. But aside from these there does not appear to be a set of rules for which movements must appear in which sequence. This is an accommodating feature for creativity and innovation in the idiom.

The ways or methods of combining kinemes may, in fact, be rules of structure if to combine kinemes in ignorance or violation of these methods produces morphokines which a native dancer would not identify as clogging. In summary, these rules are:

1. Kinemes must be combined in such a way as to produce a constant changing of weight or movement of the weight-bearing foot.
2. Morphokines must produce an up and down motion.
3. Morphokines must include audible rhythmic accents.

The fourth and fifth observations made above do not translate into rules of structure at this level. The first three, however, do function consistently in the structure to give the movements 'clog-meaning'.

Violations of the first rule produce morphokines in which gesture predominates the movement. It is also necessary to violate rule #2 as a side effect of violating rule #1, because there are no kinemes which provide for level change without weight change or support movement. Thus, violations of rule #1 will produce smoother, even more steps than are found in clogging. The effect would be much more like tap dancing, which can be a very smooth dance.

Violations of the second rule produce smoother results as well. While weight may change in this instance, it does so without the flexion and extension of the knees. Thus, the weight is held more evenly in a horizontal plane. Again the effect would be more like tap, or certain parts of Irish step-dance.

Violations of rule #3 produce quiet steps. These are perhaps the easiest to recognize as non-cloglike.

A survey of the morphokines identified and notated will reveal at least one violation of each rule. (M5d violates rules #1 and #2; M6a violates rule #3.) These are, of course, the exceptions that prove the rule, and will be discussed later in terms of their function in the composition.

Improvisation

Before establishing the next level of structure of the two dances, we will consider a basic question: What is improvisation? This is a very complex question when considered in a cross-cultural context. Western music and dance have generally separated improvisation from composition and, as Nettl has written, "singled out improvisation as a separate, minor art, the sphere of the comparatively few musicians competent to engage in it." (Nettl, 1974:19) In non-Western music and dance there exist genres in which this distinction becomes less and less possible.⁸ However, in treating improvisation and 'fixed' dancing as two ends of the compositional continuum rather than a dichotomy, the possibility of a cross-cultural definition is enhanced.

Two criteria may be considered in determining to which end of the continuum a performance tends: first, the extent to which the performer is creatively involved, and second, the intent of the performer.

In the first instance, the buckdancer, Lotus Dickey, is interviewed immediately following his performance. When asked if he plans out what he is going to do in a dance, he replies, ". . . Well, I guess you work out the sounds in your mind, but I never did set down and do it. I'm just sort of a natural timer. I have a little flare for time." (Roska, 1983) It is obvious from his statement that there is a compositional process involved, but the tone of his answer indicates that he has not fixed the dance in terms of structure and sequence of steps. Dickey was asked to do "some flatfooting", so his intention may have been to render a flatfoot dance, but every indication is that a specific sequence of steps was not required or intended.

Because Dickey's dance is a solo dance there are no external restraints upon the structure of his performance. He was free to organize his movements as he wished. So his performance would tend toward the improvisation end of the compositional continuum.

In contrast, the duet consists of a prescribed set of steps and sequence. The amount of creative input allowed the performers is limited to interpretation of the steps, facial expression and incidental body

movement (a turn of the head, the bounce of an arm) not integral to the choreography. The nature of the duet, both performers executing the same steps at the same time, requires a fixed composition. It can be assumed that their intention was to perform this fixed composition as accurately as possible for the talent show.

Now the question, 'How is an improvised piece similar, and how different, from a fixed piece in clogging?' can be considered in a comparison and contrast of the two dances on the next level of structure; the whole dance. Two structural elements mentioned earlier, motif and phrase, are used within this third level of structure. The following Tables 1 and 2 represent the sequence of morphokines in each dance.

TABLE I SOLO

Phrase	Bars	Tune Part	Morphokine Sequence
1	16	A	M1e, M1a, 4(M1e), M1a, M1e, M1a, 5(M1e), M1e, L1
2	16	B	M1f, M1a, M1f, M1a, 3(M1f), M1a, 2(M1f), M1a, 3(M1f), M1a
3	16	B	2(M1e), M1a, M1e, M1a, 4(M1e), M1a, 4(M1e), M1a, L1
4	16	A	M1e, M1a, 4(M1e), M1a, M1e, M1a, 5(M1e), M1a, M1e
5	16	A	M1a, 5(M1e), M1a, M1e, M1a, 5(M1e), M1a, L1
6	16	B	L1, M1f, M1a, M1f, M1a, 2(M1f), M1a, 3(M1f), M1a, 2(M1f), M1a
7	16	B	M1e, M1a, 2(M1e), M1a, 3(M1e), M1a, 5(M1e, M1a), L1
8	16	A	3(M1e), M1a, 2(M1e), M1a, M1e, M1a, M1e, M1a, 3(M1e), M1a
9	16	A	2(M1e), M1a, 3(M1e), M1a, M1e, M1a, 5(M1e), M1a, L1
10	16	B	M1f, M1a, M1f, M1a, 3(M1f), M1a, 6(M1f), M1a, L1
11	16	B	M1f, M1a, M1e, M1a, 2(M1e), M1a, 3(M1e), M1a, 3(M1e), M1a
12	16	A	M1e, M1a, M1e, M1a, 2(M1e), M1a, L1, 6(M1e), M1a, L1

TABLE II DUET

Phrase	Bars	Tune Part	Morphokine Sequence
1	16	A	4(M6aR), 4(M6aL), 4(M6aR), 4(M6aL)*
2	16	A	8(M3a), M2f, M1d, 4(M1c)
3	16	A	4(2(M1c), 2(M1b), M5e, M1a)
4	16	A	4(M1g, M4c, M1a), 4(M1c), M6b, M1a
5	16	A	4(M1g, M4c, M1a), 4(M1c), M6b, M1a
6	16	B	4(M1c), 2(3(M1b), 2(M2b½), M1a, 3(M1c))
7	16	B	2(3(M1b), 2(M2b½), M1a, 3(M1c)), 4(M1c)
8	16	A	2(M5a, 2(M2a½), M4c, 2(M1c)), 2(2(M1b), M4b, 2(M1c))
9	16	A	4(2(M1c), 2(M1b), M5e, M2a)
10	16	B	M2c½, 3(M1c), 2(M1b, 2(M5b), M5c, M4d, 3(M4e)), 2(M2c½), 2(M1)
11	16	B	2(M1b, 2(M5b), M5c, M4d, 3(M4e)), M2c½, 7(M1c)
12	16	A	M5d, 2(M1c), 2(M1c), 2(M1b, M2f½, M1a) (Dancer A) 2(M1c), M5d, 2(M1c), 2(M1b, M2f½, M1a) (Dancer B)
13	16	A	2(M1c), M5d, 2(M1c), 2(M1b, M2f½, M1a)
14	16	B	4(2(M1c), M2c½, M1c)
15	8	B	6(M1c), M3b, M4a
16	16	A	4(M1c), 2(3(M1b), 2(M2b½), M1a, 3(M1c)) (Phrase 5 repeat)
17	16	A	Repeat ½ of Phrase 7 and exit

It is immediately striking that Dickey makes use of only three morphokines, and one kineme by itself, which, with a pause, can be considered a fourth morphokine.⁹ All of these are M1 or basic steps, of the 'holding pattern' variety. The variation that he accomplishes in the performance is in the placement of the M1a cadences against the otherwise steady stream of shuffles and swing shuffles. If the groupings of M1e's and M1f's with their concluding M1a's are considered as motifs and numbered according to the number of M1e or M1f morphokines preceding the M1a, a phrase by phrase motif structure looks like this:

<u>Phrase</u>	<u>Motif Sequence</u>					
1	1	4	1	5	L1	
2	1	1	3	2	3	L1 (M1f's)
3	2	1	4	4	L1	
4	1	4	1	5	$\frac{1}{2}$	
5	$\frac{1}{2}$	5	1	5	L1	
6	L1	1	1	2	3	2 L1 (M1f's)
7	1	2	3	5	L1	
8	3	2	1	1	3	L1
9	2	3	1	5	L1	
10	1	1	3	6	L1	(M1f's)
11	1	1	2	3	3	L1 (1M1f, rest M1e's)
12	1	1	2	L1	6	L1

It is easy to see from this chart that, although Dickey makes use of a very limited repertoire of morphokines, he never repeats himself in the structural treatment of a musical phrase. Each phrase has a unique structure, defined by the placement of the M1a, rock step. He also produces variety by switching several times to the M1f basic step. Otherwise the performance is almost entirely M1e morphokines.

It is also easy to see that all but one phrase end with a punctuation, the L1 kineme/morphokine. The exception to this at the end of phrase #4 may be viewed as analogousto enjambment in prosody. In clog dance forms this is the kind of violation of an aesthetic one might make as a variation or a mistake in the process of thinking on one's feet. Ending the phrase with a punctuation is a feature of both dances, which makes the phrase an integral unit. This becomes another rule of grammar in the idiom. Lotus' exception in phrases #4 and #5 is matched by an exception in the duet in phrases #10 and #11.

There is freedom of choice for the dancer in the combination of kinemes into morphokines as long as the rules of weight change, level change, and audible accents are maintained. There is a similar freedom of choice in the structural ordering of morphokines peculiar to these dance forms. It is interesting to consider then, that with the freedom of vocabulary available to Dickey in the taped performance, he chose to use only four steps. This focuses attention on the structure of the phrases. It could not be argued that Dickey knows only those four steps, because he demonstrated at least one other later on in the same videotape. It could be argued that the steps he used were those more familiar to him, and he used them out of habit. The result is that his composition appears to be a masterful manipulation of the structural potential of the idiom, rather than a quantitative presentation of many steps.

In contrast to Dickey's limited vocabulary of steps, the girls performing the duet make use of some 25 morphokines in their composition. Five of the morphokines used in the duet are M1 or basic steps, and these are used for some 60% of the dance. The rest of the dance features turns, slides, sidesteps, brushes and kicks, against the background of basic steps. These variations in movement are the focal point of the performance. The basic steps frame these variations, providing links and 'holding patterns' between them.

The structure of the phrases varies also in the duet, as it must to feature a variety of steps. Yet there are repeats of entire phrases (#'s 5, 16, 17). There is also symmetry or balance within a phrase (#'s 1, 3, 8, 9, 14), or between phrases (#'s 6 & 7, 12 & 13, 16 & 17). This balance and symmetry is a pleasing complimentary feature to the variety in steps. But without that step variety, the balance and symmetry might be downright boring.

Some of the morphokines in the duet broke the rules of grammar in the idiom as outlined. M5d breaks rules #1 and #2. M6a breaks rule #3, and the whole of phrases #14 and #15 violate the aesthetic of the idiom by conscious movement of the arms. It is clear that in the duet the compositional intent is innovation as well as variation in the movement vocabulary.

Is this possible in an improvised composition? Certainly, variation in vocabulary is possible, as is demonstrated by Dickey's use of the M1f as well as the M1e in various phrases. But could he have made up new movements, innovative steps while dancing? Perhaps this is where a limitation in compositional options presents itself for the improviser. In composing a fixed piece the time and rehearsal possibilities enhance exploration of movement possibilities and innovation of this sort.

Looking only at the exceptions to the rules, it is clear that innovations in movement vocabulary are present in the fixed composition and absent in the improvised composition. It is impossible to tell from the performance which morphokines in the duet were previously known to the dancers and which learned for this piece. But a fixed composition provides the vehicle for developing new movement, while improvisation relies to a greater extent on an already familiar repertoire of movement.

Conclusions

Comparison of the two dances clearly shows the role of grammar in the idiom. In many ways the two dances are quite different. Despite differences in external appearance (music, costume, gender difference, and age) there is morphological evidence that they are doing the same kind of dance. It is their adherence to the structural grammar of clogging that brings these two performances together. This grammar can be summed up by these four rules:

1. Clogging movement requires constant changing of weight or movement of the weight-bearing foot.
2. Clogging movement requires a constant up and down movement, or flexion and extension of the weight-bearing legs.

3. Clogging movement requires audible rhythmic accents.
4. Clogging movement combinations are ordered and punctuated with the cadence of the musical accompaniment.

The main morphological differences in the two performances are the ways in which the dancers achieved variation in their composition. The improvised variations were mainly structural ones. The fixed composition achieved variety through step vocabulary and innovative movement for the idiom.

We must also conclude that the improviser tended to compose mainly through the ordering of an already developed repertoire of movement, and that the tendency in the composition of the fixed piece was to innovate in movement combinations, perhaps even through controlled violation of the rules of the idiom.

Frank Hall

NOTES

1. Anyone familiar with the idiom of clogging will, I believe, grant the existence of improvisation in the idiom.
2. I am aware that there is controversy in the field of linguistics as to the precise meaning of the term 'morpheme'. Following Kaeppler, I use the term to indicate a structural combination of elements roughly on the level of 'word' or 'meaningful syllable'.
3. Kaeppler refers the reader for a further discussion of this differentiation to Sturtevant, 1964, pp. 101-103 (*American Anthropologist*, 66(3), part 2, 99-131).
4. Excluded from this discussion and analysis are tap dancing, and forms of step-dancing from other countries such as English Clog, French Canadian and Irish step-dancing.
5. There are, of course, variations in style from individual to individual. This kind of variation in style is ignored in this discussion, as are geographic or regional variations in style.
6. This performance was given by Lotus Dickey, a 74-year old musician, dancer and songwriter from Paoli, Indiana. The performance was recorded on videotape (Roska, 1983). He dances to the accompaniment of a solo fiddle. The videotape includes an interview with Mr. Dickey.

7. This performance was given by two teenage girls for their junior high school talent show. The performance was recorded on videotape (Gemmecke, 1984). They dance to a recording of a popular song, "She Works Hard For the Money" by recording artist, Donna Summer.
8. The reader is referred to the entire Nettl article (1974) for a treatment of this complex topic.
9. This 'morphokine + pause' is roughly similar to the "supplementing kinetic element" in the structural analytic system of Martin and Pesovar (1961).

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