formers selected recordings of rock music as accompaniment to their performances, yet rather than the all-out transcendence typical of rock dancing at parties and concerts in the early 1970s, they performed a low-key, minimalist version. Using far less effort and a smaller range of movement, they parodied the invigorated obviousness of rock dancing. They similarly satirized dramatic action by underplaying gesture. For example, rather than the bold thrusting of the noose into the victim's face, the hangman might offer the rope casually, a kind of choreographic proposition.

Consistently ironizing the expressive self, the Grand Union reveled in the contrast between the dramatic and the banal in speech and in action. As a result, Grand Union members conveyed a sense of their own subjectivities as dedicated to the physical facts of bodily action but also capable of trying out multiple contrasting identities. Undercutting speech with movement, and vice versa, they gestured towards a persona only to distance themselves from any stable subjectivity. What remained constant was the process of fabricating and then evaluating any and all identities, rendered vividly through the multiple relationships between words and movement that the company conjectured.

Trisha Brown's *Accumulation* (1971) *with Talking* (1973) *Plus Watermotor* (1977)

While performing as a member of the Grand Union, Trisha Brown began to pursue an alternative vision of the relationship between talking and dancing, most clearly set forth in her signature work *Accumulation* (1971) *with Talking* (1973) *Plus Watermotor* (1977).[18] Whereas the Grand Union tried on distinctive personas, some histrionic and others more reserved, Brown staged a straightforward and consistently neutral speaker combined with two radically contrasting movement phrases. The first phrase, *Accumulation*, expands slowly by accreting refinements and additions to a reiterated phrase. Beginning with a simple rotation of the lower arm, the thumb protruding from a loose fist, Brown adds a complexly coordinated sequence of arm and hand articulations, subtle weight shifts and swivels, and changes of focus. The second phrase, *Watermotor*, throws the body into space with loose-limbed abandon, its silky slippage of motion across the air providing a wild contrast with the vertical precision of the gestural sequences that compose

Accumulation (1971) *with Talking* (1973) *Plus Watermotor* (1977) (1978). Trisha Brown. Photographer: Babette Mangolte.

the other phrase. Whereas *Watermotor* propels Brown through and around the stagespace, *Accumulation* centers in a stationary, vertical location, yet neither phrase contains any identifiable references to familiar activities or to other movement or dance practices.

As she deftly tacks back and forth between the phrases, Brown launches into the telling of two stories, interrupting one for the other as she recounts each a segment at a time. Neither story refers to the movement being performed, nor do they describe Brown's thoughts or feelings while dancing or about dance. Instead each recounts an autobiographical anecdote, one about being met at an airport where she will perform, and the other about accepting an award from her high school in Aberdeen, Washington. Although the spliced stories give a clue about the structure of the choreography, Brown does not switch stories when she changes from one phrase to the other. Instead, the talking, frequently suspended by silences of differing durations, interfaces unpredictably with each phrase. The matter-of-factness of Brown's narration differs markedly from the ebullient physicality of *Watermotor*, and the progression, even though interrupted, through each of the stories

contrasts the accumulating embellishments of *Accumulation*. The absence in both of the phrases of any references to daily movement patterns also works to estrange the speaking from the moving.

In one of the only direct references to the movement she is doing, Brown, in some versions of the piece, begins by reminiscing that the first time she performed the dance it lasted only a few minutes and the second time it continued for almost an hour. This observation, indicative of the extemporaneous possibilities for the performance, alerts the viewer to some of the parameters that guide the improvised performance of the piece. *Accumulation* (1971) *with Talking* (1973) *Plus Watermotor* (1977) is structured around the alternation between two phrases and two stories, yet both movement and stories are crafted differently in each performance, with some material added or deleted at whim. Furthermore, although the movement is continuous, transiting seamlessly from one phrase to the other, the commencement and duration of each story segment is improvised. Thinking fast on her feet, Brown works to remember both the sequence of the stories as a whole and the places where she has interrupted one narrative in order to continue the other, all the while expanding the two phrases, and resisting changing phrases and stories at the same time.

Like the Grand Union performances, *Accumulation* (1971) *with Talking* (1973) *Plus Watermotor* (1977) summons up an expression-filled self, only to direct its expressivity into the resolute matter-of-factness of moving and speaking. The movement's difficultness, daunting in its complexity, is downplayed by Brown's economical and relaxed execution, thus alluding to virtuosity but refusing to deliver it. Nor does the performance convey deep inner motivations and feelings. Its nonorganic sequencing of space-holds and peripheral joint articulations obliterates any origin for movement impulses, especially from the center body. Unlike the Grand Union, however, Brown's vocabulary shuns referentiality to other movement activities. Whereas the Grand Union members perform rock dancing with minimal effort, parodying its effusiveness, Brown undertakes demanding patternings of unrelated body parts with concentrated calm.

Because the talking and dancing never interact, never reference one another except as activities being accomplished, Brown creates the impression of two selves cohabiting at the site of one

body. Whereas the Grand Union performers consistently formulate speech that describes or comments on the dancing, and choreograph movement that expands or contextualizes the talking, *Accumulation* (1971) *with Talking* (1973) *Plus Watermotor* (1977) isolates the two forms of discourse. Brown's resolute commitment to each focuses attention on differentials between their sequence, quality, articulation, and energy, rendering each activity all the more vivid. The talking makes the dancing all the more opaque, impermeable, and inaccessible to language, and the dancing reflects the talking as more conversational and quotidian. Unlike the Grand Union members who try on and cast off contrasting projects and personas, Brown's performance sustains a single attentiveness to two incommensurate activities.

Bill T. Jones's *Floating the Tongue* and *21*

In contrast to the Grand Union's switching of roles, Bill T. Jones's early solos *Floating the Tongue* (1979) and *21* (1981) develop a single yet complex persona. Unlike Brown's treatment of talking and dancing as autonomous and separate activities, Jones's speech and movement reference and mutually define one another. Neither as open-ended as the Grand Union's sprawling sagas nor as specified and contained as Brown's solo, these two works revel in the alternation between the established and the extemporized, as realized in both movement and speech. Through this alternation they generate a perspective from which to view the activity of dance-making.

Floating the Tongue, a work that Jones describes as a process, begins with Jones improvising a phrase of movement.[19] He sketches out a sequence of moves that begins with him standing in place, then takes the body traveling through space, finally to return to the opening stance. Jones repeats the phrase several times, focusing his attention on the details of gestural articulation or the rhythmic transfer of weight across the body, adding an inflection or emphasis, altering slightly a stance or direction, until satisfied with the phrase and his knowledge of it. Having established the phrase, Jones begins to describe his actions, using the kind of informal terminology that a choreographer or teacher might invoke in demonstrating a movement sequence: "standing on two feet," "shoulders square," "curl fingers of left hand," "release arm