

Examination

Dance
Core Appreciation

Section	Part	Question Number
1		2.

Date

21/10/11

Number of booklets used for this question

1 of 2

Instructions

- Write your Centre Number and Student Number at the top of this page.
- In the boxes provided write the name and date of this examination, and the number(s) of the question(s) attempted in this booklet.
- If you have not attempted the question, you must still hand in the Writing Booklet, with the words 'NOT ATTEMPTED' written clearly on the front cover.
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Alvin Ailey's work "Cry" is a timeless piece that represents the struggle that many black women have faced throughout time due to racism and slavery. Throughout the work, Ailey has utilised various elements of dance to assist him in conveying the messages about the role and journey of women and their history in society across to his audience.

The elements of dance, being space, line, and dynamics consist of many key aspects that allow the stimulus and intent of a particular routine to be conveyed to an audience. Along with each of these elements, Ailey has uniquely incorporated a white fabric into his routine, which is performed by Judith Jamison, in order to strengthen the internal meanings of the intent of the work.

The white fabric predominately appears in the first of the three sections of the routine that conveys messages to the audience about the journey that many women have to endure as African American slaves. In the opening scenes of the slavery section, the white fabric is used by the dancer, where she appears to be scrubbing the floors with the fabric in her hands.

Not only is this action with the fabric symbolic of the hardwork and cleaning duties associated with a typical women's role in slavery, but it is also symbolic of a mother's household duty. This is an important interpretation of the use of the fabric because the routine is not only devoted to Adey's mother, but also to mothers everywhere. This is a result of the socio-cultural background of the routine and the close relationship and bond that Adey shared with his mother.

This scene is also particularly important because it is performed on the floor, utilising a variety of spatial dimensions and levels to assist in the portrayal and audience interpretation of the intent. By combining a spatial element, being the floorwork, and the prop being the fabric, two elements of slavery are tied together, prompting the audience to gain a stronger intelligence that the piece is about slavery, women and mothers. The emotion behind this intent is emphasised through stage character, facials and emotions portrayed by the dancer, along with varying dynamics, as she applies a great amount of force behind her scrubbing actions with the cloth.

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The white cloth is again used by the dancer to allow the audience to interpret that the dance is devoted to mothers, and it raises recognition and support to all the duties a mother must perform. The cloth is laid out by Jamison and stroked delicately whilst she kneels beside it, with a concerned and gentle look on her face. The accompaniment assists in creating the mood as the music slows down and the lighting assists in creating an active space in the performance space by spotlighting on the dancer whilst she strokes the cloth.

This movement phrase resembles a mother tucking her child in, and supporting and nurturing her young. The fabric assists in the interpretation of the scene as it can be associated with a child's blanket or bed sheets. This phrase is also enhanced through the different levels used by the dancer, which again is floorwork. The use of floorwork in the slavery segment can be translated into feelings of lowness, hardships and even a lower class of society. By performing this section in the centre of the stage toward the front, it also becomes a focal point to the audience.

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The white fabric is again used by the dancer as she folds it up in a bundle and then proceeds to wrap it around her head in the form of a headscarf. From her, the confidence of the dancer seems to pick up as she struts around the stage.

In this phrase, the fabric assists in bringing out elements of femininity, another intent behind the work the level immediately changes and more space of the stage is used. Through this manipulation of the strutting movement, we are given an insight into black women perhaps enjoying being female, however it may also represent their want to fit in with the upper class of society. On the other hand, it may provide insight to the audience that perhaps a sense of irony and sarcasm may develop amongst the black women stares as they imitate and mimic the upper classes. These emotions and feelings that are being portrayed through the use of the fabric and the different ways in which it has been used in the slavery section lead into the next section being anger and then later

transferring to joyfulness and triumph in the final stages.

In essence, Alvin Ailey has cleverly manipulated many movements and aspects of his routine by combining a white fabric into his ~~work~~ work to assist in ^{the} interpretations of the intent being black african - american women and the hardships of slavery they experienced in the past. The colour of the fabric being white is also a key in the meaning of the intent as the colour can be used along with the dress to represent purity and the cruelty of the white population in regards to their treatment of African American civilization.

~~The~~ Combined with various tempo's and rhythms, the creation of different shapes created by the ~~the~~ fabric, the force and weight used in the actions associated with the fabric ^{are a few of} ~~and~~ the many ways in which Ailey has manipulated his movements and phrases and incorporated the fabric into his work to aid the audience's interpretations of the intent.

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