

March 2020

The Choreo-Story Workshops: Devising Body Narratives

Montana J. Smith

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations



Part of the [Dance Commons](#), [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Communication Commons](#), [Health Communication Commons](#), and the [Performance Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Smith, Montana J., "The Choreo-Story Workshops: Devising Body Narratives" (2020). *LSU Doctoral Dissertations*. 5186.

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/5186

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

THE CHOREO-STORY WORKSHOPS: DEVISING BODY NARRATIVES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Communication Studies

by

Montana J. Smith

B.A., University of Northern Iowa, 2014

M.A., University of Northern Iowa, 2016

May 2020

We should be creators
and we should also teach the [world] how to be creators,
how to make art,
so that we may all use that art together.

-- Augusto Boal

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hey kittiesss.

It takes a village. Dang. I am so lucky for mine.

Tracy, you are a rockstar of an advisor. You are an even better mentor and friend. Thank you for sharing my love of dance, pop culture, and karaoke. You have been instrumental in the completion of this dissertation and my time at LSU. Thank you for inspiring me, pushing me, and guiding me through this process. Your support has meant the world to me. David, thank you for embracing my creativity and passions. I have enjoyed having you as an instructor, mentor, and friend. I feel smarter just by being in a room with you. You have helped me grow as a scholar and a person and for that, I am so very thankful. Loretta, you have been instrumental in helping me explore my love for dance and health communication and how they fit together. Thank you for allowing me to bring my imagination into your classroom and for your encouragement through the very beginning stages of this project. I hope this dissertation does you all proud. *Thank You For The Music by ABBA plays in the background*

There are so many other faculty members and peers who encouraged or inspired this project. Dr. Bryan McCann, thank you for your wicked smart and humble personality. Although it may not seem like you had a hand in this project, your ability to calm my soul and provide clarity was paramount in this process. Thank you for allowing me to cry, laugh, and talk Ted Bundy with you. Dr. Suchy and Dr. Erincin, thank you for your encouragement through this process and your feedback in and out of the classroom. I appreciate you both. To Dr. Mark Walker, you embraced a project way out of your comfort zone and for that, I am thankful. I was not sure how, if at all, Sociology and Bauhaus would come together, but you helped me find a way. Thank you for your feedback on the beginning stages of this project and for attending

LOOK! to learn more about my project even though you had no idea what was going on. You are very much appreciated. To Dr. Robert Hogan, thank you for your feedback and encouragement through my general exams and this project. Your openness and responsiveness to this dissertation means a lot to me. To the countless others who have encouraged or inspired this project, from the bottom of my heart, thank you: chris collins, Raquel, Emily, Colin, Alex, Natalie, Greg, Taylor, Anna, Lexus, Gabi, Shea, Dakota, Laura O., Ethan, Patrick, Josh H., Eda, Josiah, Misty, Ariel, Nicole, Jason, Dr. Ashley Mack, Dr. Danielle McGeough, Dr. Ryan McGeough, Dr. Karen Mitchell. *Started From The Bottom by Drake plays in the background*

My parents enrolled me in dance classes at the age of four to overcome my shyness. I am sure they did not expect me to pursue a PhD in Communication and Performance Studies twenty years later. To my parents, Bryan and Julie, I am so thankful for your constant encouragement and love as I chased my dream of getting a PhD a thousand miles away from home. You handled many of my texts and phone calls where I said, “I don’t think I can do this anymore,” with comfort and inspiration. “You’ve already accomplished so much and you can accomplish anything else you set your mind to.” Thank you for being selfless and motivating throughout this process. I love you both. *Carrying Your Love With Me by George Strait plays in the background*

To my friends who endured my, at times, stressed and hard-pressed attitude with kindness and grace. In no particular order, I thank you for listening to my ideas, letting me vent, and keeping me grounded as I forged through these last four years: Ellyn, Anna H., Sophie, Taylor, Anna C., Sarah, Amanda, Megan, Greg, Shea, Hal, Evan, Josh B., Josh H., Gabi, Dakota, Ryan, Rebekah, Carter, Brian, Lauren, Tina, Janelle, Dean. *Thank You For Being A Friend by Andrew Gold plays in the background [but like, the Golden Girls version]*

At the same time this project was getting on its feet, I met my very best friend. Nate, I could not have made it through this process without you. You, quite literally, had your helping hands in every part of this project. I am thankful for your late night words of encouragement, your patience and kindness through the hard days, and for celebrating with me on every milestone of this process. Your love for me explodes through the description of this project. Know that I see this and that I love you so, so much. Thank you. *Drummer Boy by MisterWives plays in the background*

Finally, no cat mom can get through a dissertation without thanking the one that loves and supports her unconditionally. To my cat, Fallon, I thank you for our 2:00 p.m. naps when I needed just a bit more energy to make it through the day, for staring at me with intense confusion down the hallway, and for comforting me when we moved a thousand miles away from our family and friends. Sweet baby sweet baby. *Alone by Heart plays in the background*

To my village: We did it. *Break My Stride by Matthew Wilder plays in the background*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	viii
CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION	1
MyStory, Boal, and Brecht: An Introduction to Performance Methods	4
Bauhaus and Viewpoints: Movement-Based Performance Methods	10
Expanding Movement-Based Performance Methods: The <i>Choreo-Story</i>	16
Chapter Outline	24
CHAPTER TWO. THE ACT	29
Taking Form: The Incipient Act	30
LOOK!: The First Act	34
<i>Choreo-Story</i> Workshops: The Second Act	54
Patterns of Action: How to Sustain the Act	66
Final Thoughts	76
CHAPTER THREE. THE SCENE	78
Setting the Scene: The Original Bauhaus Piece	79
Expanding the Scene: LOOK! performed in the HBB versus Petit Jean	89
The Final Scene: The <i>Choreo-Story</i> Workshops	101
Final Thoughts	109
CHAPTER FOUR. AGENTS AND AGENCY	113
The Agents of Past, Present, and Future: LSU Performance Studies	114
Agents/Agency of the Original Bauhaus Piece	117
Agents/Agency of LOOK! in the HopKins Black Box and at Petit Jean	124
Agents/Agency of the <i>Choreo-Story</i> Workshops	138
Final Thoughts	153
CHAPTER FIVE. PURPOSE	157
Individual Performance Motivations	158
The <i>Choreo-Story</i> as Method: Purpose in Performance Studies	165

Personal Motivations for the <i>Choreo-Story</i> Method	170
Final Thoughts and a Future Purpose	174
CHAPTER SIX. CONCLUSION	181
Chapter Review	184
Pentadic Ratios: Highlighting Relationships	191
Implications	195
Limitations	199
Areas for Future Research	201
Final Thoughts	204
APPENDIX A. ORIGINAL BAUHAUS ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES	207
APPENDIX B. LOOK! SHOW PROPOSAL	208
APPENDIX C. <i>CHOREO-STORY</i> WORKSHOPS SHOW PROPOSAL	209
APPENDIX D. ORIGINAL BAUHAUS PIECE PEER REVIEW	210
APPENDIX E. LOOK! PEER REVIEW	211
APPENDIX F. <i>CHOREO-STORY</i> WORKSHOPS PEER REVIEW	212
APPENDIX G. IMAGES FROM LOOK!	213
APPENDIX H. IMAGE APPROVAL	214
APPENDIX I. IMAGES FROM <i>CHOREO-STORY</i> WORKSHOPS	215
APPENDIX J. IRB APPROVAL	216
REFERENCES	217
VITA.....	222

ABSTRACT

This multi-methodological project analyzes the utility of the proposed performance method, the *Choreo-Story*, within the field of Performance Studies. The *Choreo-Story* is a movement-based performance method, mode of devising, and performance product. It is a performance tool that can be used to understand how embodiment and dance help individuals make sense of the many identities they perform. This method highlights the body as both a text and tool for storytelling. To analyze the *Choreo-Story* method, I use Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Approach to examine three performance acts that occurred in the HopKins Black Box theatre between 2016 and 2018: my original Bauhaus performance assignment, LOOK!, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops.

Using thick description, I describe the scene within which these acts occurred, argue for the intrinsic relationship between agent and agency within the *Choreo-Story*, and highlight the personal and professional purposes behind creating the *Choreo-Story* method. Through this analysis, I argue for the *Choreo-Story* method's utility as a movement-based performance method and tool for performance practitioners. I also describe the method's ability to be used outside of Performance Studies, pointing to its usefulness within Health Communication, Narrative Medicine, Medical Humanities, and Psychology. I conclude this project by considering its limitations and highlighting areas for future research and ways to expand the *Choreo-Story* method.

CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION

As humans, we want to make sense of our experiences and be understood by others. Storytelling creates space for individuals to be socially and culturally reflexive about life events. Langellier and Peterson (2004) explain, “people make sense of their experiences, claim identities, interact with each other, and participate in cultural conversations through storytelling” (p. 1). Stories are cultural scripts for behavior and aesthetic expressions of reaction and feeling. Storytelling is an embodied experience and, as a performance practitioner focused primarily on the body, I see our bodies as both the text of our stories and the tool for storytelling (Ellingson, 2017).

I have found that bodies in motion often tell stories our words cannot. As a young girl, I attended the dance recitals of my neighbor’s daughter who was five years older than I. The bodies on stage mesmerized me, moving in cohesive groups telling stories of triumph, defeat, and everything in-between. When I became old enough to join the dance studio myself, I asked my mom to sign me up for every class possible. My favorite was lyrical as I found that lyrical dances always made the audience *feel* something, whether sadness, happiness, or a mixture of the two. I realized it was because the audience connected to the story being told and that we, as dancers, highlighted these emotions through our bodies, a complex territory often not explored.

Once I entered college, my first objective was to find a place to continue my dancing. I auditioned for, and joined, the University of Northern Iowa Orchesis Dance Company under the direction of Jason Schadt. The company focused on ballet and modern dance techniques and allowed student-choreographed pieces to fill our Spring Gala at the end of the year. I immersed myself in this company and the new dance

practices Jason was teaching us. During my dance studio time from elementary to high school, the purpose of performance was primarily on polishing up the dance pieces and providing a final product worthy of audience viewing. In Orchesis, however, Jason emphasized the process of creating the piece, rather than the product that would be shown at our Spring Gala. Throughout our technique classes, Jason would ask the students to devise movement with him and to create a movement piece in which all of our ideas were showcased. He pushed us to create our own movement pieces, meticulously paying attention to how the rehearsal process went, rather than the product we would perform for an audience.

Reflecting on my time with the UNI Orchesis Dance Company, I am reminded of the teachings of Ann Cooper Albright. As a Dance Studies scholar, she has been influential to the way I approach dance and embodied knowledge. Specifically, Albright's book *Engaging Bodies: The Politics and Poetics of Corporeality* (2013) has influenced my understanding of movement in relation to the cultural representations that constitute our embodied experiences. I knew watching dance performance left vague story lines for an audience to follow. I was interested in how I could explain the deep layers of meaning a dance piece has and how bodies dancing on stage embody the norms, values, and beliefs we walk around with every day. This book encouraged me to consider the politics of poetic movement in relationship to my research as both dancer and scholar. During my last year with Orchesis, I finally got the courage to choreograph my own movement piece. At the time, my parents were going through a divorce and this flooded my thoughts and creation process. I decided I wanted to choreograph a piece about my experience during this life event for another dancer to perform. At the time, I did not

realize I was using performance as a way to understand my embodied experience of being a child of divorce. Upon reflection, I realized the teachings used by Jason directly correlated with Albright's theories in that they both use dance as a way to understand embodied experiences in relation to cultural representations. In this instance, my performance helped me to understand my identity in relation to the cultural representations of "family" the world was constantly throwing at me. Through the process of teaching the other dancer the choreography, watching her perform the piece for our company, and then on stage at our Spring Gala (which my parents attended), I realized the meaningfulness of the process. It encouraged empathy and made me question how my parents must feel rather than just looking at my own experience. Embodying the experience made me process the experience differently than I would have just speaking about it and, in some form, it helped me cope and heal through the process. I knew I wanted to share this creative process with others.

Three years later, I would direct a show, LOOK!, which would allow me to share the process of choreographing movement as a group with my cast and teach them how dance can be used as a way to understand cultural experiences. The following year, I would share this creative process again with a different group of individuals in my show the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. The rehearsal process for both of these shows would lead me to develop a new movement-based performance method. Below, I trace my performance evolution and the many performance methods I was introduced to that would lead me to creating this method. Then, I introduce the method and outline how this project took form.

MyStory, Boal, and Brecht: An Introduction to Performance Methods

When I entered my Master's program at the University of Northern Iowa, I originally declared an Organizational Communication major. In my second semester, I enrolled in my first Performance Studies graduate seminar: *Performing Identity* with Dr. Karen Mitchell. With a background in dance performance, I immersed myself in the theories and concepts we were studying, connecting personally to the material Dr. Mitchell taught. She offered autoethnography as a critique to traditional, scientific research. It was in direct contrast to the research I was studying in my Organizational Communication courses. In short, autoethnography provides insight into personal experience as a way to understand the self and its connection to culture (Ellis, 2004, p. 37). This notion sounded similar to the performances I was already creating in Orchesis. All humans live in culture; therefore, to write about oneself is to write about cultural experiences. All stories have the potential to be more than just our own experience. Through autoethnography, researchers are able to highlight different, personal experiences in order to make sense of the way these experiences are shaped by, and shape, culture. My favorite type of autoethnographic method from this course was the MyStory.

MyStory

The MyStory juxtaposes fragments of personal narratives with popular and scholarly discourses. First introduced by English scholar Greg Ulmer (2004) in his book *Teletheory*, the method was shown as a hybrid form of research that results in a multi-media text, which attempts to discover or invent a story of the self in relation to other historical discourses. Ulmer wished to apply a "grammatology" to television in order to

develop new ways of learning and teaching. The method interweaves a personal narrative, a professional text, and a popular culture text in order to critique and analyze social order (Bowman & Bowman, 2002; Magolda, 1999; Ulmer, 1989; Ulmer, 1994). In essence, the method highlights the relationship between personal stories and cultural institutions. The professional text can be, but is not limited to: scientific based, education/academic based, political/law based, facts and/or statistics, and/or expert interviews. The popular culture text can be, but is not limited to: magazine or news article, song or poem, television or movie script, fiction or nonfiction book, documentary, photograph or advertisement, podcast, blog, social media post (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.), and/or a speech by celebrity or public figure. These two texts, along with your personal narrative, weave together to create a script, or story, which is then rehearsed, memorized, and performed. Ulmer (2004) proposed the MyStory as a “discovery of a direction by means of writing” (p. 113). Michael and Ruth Bowman (2002) adapted the MyStory to Performance Studies, using it to create scripts, which could be turned into oral performance. I wondered how the MyStory could be adapted to movement-based performance in an effort to tell body narratives, rather than oral stories.

The MyStory allows for patchwork writing that encourages students to self-explore through the interweaving of multiple texts. Creating MyStory scripts led me to create performances surrounding identity, family narratives, ritual, gender, race, master narratives, and storytelling as performance. The MyStory method depends on the notion that personal experiences are heavily interlaced with cultural and professional discourses and that storytelling can both reveal biases and critique social institutions. I knew I was kind of already doing this in the dances I was creating in Orchesis, but in this class I was

able to understand how using popular culture texts and professional texts allowed me to understand how my personal experience was always already infused with these. Exposing how my culture and the institutions I interact with everyday dictated my life was transformational. In short, I finally realized why my personal experiences were impacting me so much and how these experiences were most likely shared by those similar to me. After taking this course, I knew I had found my academic home. I switched my major to Communication Education with an emphasis in Performance Studies at the end of my first year.

In my last semester of my Master's degree, I enrolled in the class *Performance and Social Change*, again with Dr. Mitchell. In this course we were exposed to performance scholars whose focus was on creating performance as a form of activism in order to create change in our world. Two scholars, in particular, stood out to me throughout the semester: Augusto Boal and Bertolt Brecht. Although similar in their aims of using performance, the differences between the two are what interested me. I discuss Boal's Image Theatre practices before highlighting Brecht's Epic Theatre because I want to first illuminate the idea of movement based performance techniques and then highlight the ability for movement to induce an alienation effect.

Boal

Formed out of an intense political climate in Rio De Janeiro, Augusto Boal used his *Games for Actors and Nonactors* (1992) to expose the ways in which marginalized groups are oppressed. For example, after being exiled to Argentina for his "radical" teachings, Boal went to Peru to use his teachings in order to expose how citizens were being oppressed in the civil war and to highlight the lack of government attention to this

issue. His book highlights the notion that a person does not have to have performance experience to understand the world around them differently. Boal developed multiple techniques that any person can use in order to critique cultural and social norms and to bring a voice to those within marginalized and under-privileged groups. He highlighted the notion that, “we all are human, we all are artistic, we all are actors” (1992, p. 17). As a performance student interested in dance, I wondered if this notion could apply to performances that focus on movement. Could there be a way to use Boal’s notion of actors and nonactors in dance? What type of method could be used to showcase dancers and nondancers?

One technique lent itself nicely to the creation of movement. Image Theatre asks participants to create images with their bodies related to a certain subject or event. Boal stated that “words are only vehicles” and that creating images of words can lend itself to true emotions, memories, and ideas coming to the forefront of our conversations (Boal, 1992, p. 174). He explained that images are language and we can use constructed images on our bodies to unpack true feelings. For example, creating an image of a time someone felt small or bullied will reveal the bodies reaction to this event, which highlights a different meaning than just saying “I was bullied” would. At first, this technique only included static images, but eventually evolved to include movement. The importance of the technique is that when an image is created, it should not be able to be interpreted the same by everyone who views it. Instead, it should elicit a myriad of reactions, or else it just becomes “a mere illustration of the spoken word” (p. 175). Boal explains Image Theatre in its basic form by stating:

One after another [the volunteers] come into the middle of the playing space and use only their bodies to express the theme they have been given. Without talking,

they position their bodies in a still pose, to express their opinion or idea or experience of the theme, as it strikes them there and then; having made their image, they need offer no explanation or justification – in itself, it says everything that needs saying ... the participants who have already been into the middle go back and present exactly the same images as before, but this time all together and not in succession. What happens? The individual presentation of images gave us a ‘psychological’ representation, now we are given a ‘social’ vision; that is, we are shown how this particular theme influences or affects this particular community. (pp. 176-178)

In its most elementary form, Image Theatre asks participants to create an individual image of a given scenario that is shown first one at a time and then as a group. This process allows the participant to create their own image or expression of the event, but then to see how their experience relates to everyone else. This technique allows notions of power over marginalized groups to be exposed. I liked that this process allowed for the participants to first create images or movement on their own, but then to come together as a group to discuss similarities and differences. As a performance method focused primarily on bodily feeling rather than spoken word, I knew I could incorporate some of these techniques into my own performance devising processes.

Brecht

Both Boal and Bertolt Brecht were interested in the audience as a participant in performance. Boal referred to the audience as “spect-actors” and was invested in allowing the audience to guide the performance, specifically for Image and Forum Theatre practices. Brecht, however, eliminated the notion of an audience all together, instead making them full participants in the performance. He used *The Street Scene: A Basic Model for an Epic Theatre* (1901) as a way to explain how creating and staging texts in order to activate political and critical aims could be used to engage an audience in a meaningful way, thus making them full participants. Using a demonstrator (similar to

Boal's notion of the "joker"), the goal of Epic Theatre was to create an alienation effect among the audience participants. That is, to defamiliarize the audience with the world in order to make them question why things are the way they are.

Defamiliarize means to present art as "strange" or "unfamiliar" in order to elicit a fresh perception. The technique of defamiliarization is notoriously used in many episodes of the Twilight Zone. For example, in the episode "Eye of the Beholder," Miss Janet Tyler is undergoing treatment in an attempt to look normal, as she is referred to as a "pitiful twisted lump of flesh" by the medical team. However, it is not until the end of the episode the viewer realizes that Janet is actually an attractive woman (by western standards of beauty) and the doctors and nurses all have sunken eyes, thick eyebrows, distorted lips, and large, pig-like nostrils (Serling & Heyes, 1960). This episode uses the notion of defamiliarization within the alienation effect to critique western standards of beauty. This technique "makes strange" the beauty standards we hold for the people in our culture and makes the viewer reconsider the notion that, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder."

Boal and Brecht both focused on using performance as a way to expose how intrinsic our lived experiences are to the institutions we inhabit every day. They used live performance to elicit the same response defamiliarization got from mediums like literature or television. Boal and Brecht provided examples of how to make the world around us "strange" through live performance and full audience participation. I connected the alienation effect to how the MyStory exposes the relation between personal experience, culture, and institutional structures in order to understand the relation between the three. I wondered if there was a way to bring all of these methods together.

Bauhaus and Viewpoints: Movement-Based Performance Methods

Performance studies scholars approach performance as process, product, theory, method, and metaphor. At any given time their approach to performance may change based on their research interests. As I trace my relationship with performance I realize my interest was first in performance as product and creating a performance piece that would appeal to an audience. My interest then moved into performance as process, as I utilized the techniques of my Orchestration director to create performances that valued the process of performance as a form of knowledge creation. Now, my interests reside in performance as method, specifically movement-based performance methods. During my second semester of my doctoral studies at Louisiana State University, I enrolled in Dr. David Terry's *Performance Methods and Theories* course. In this class we covered a variety of performance methods including Stanislavski, Autoperformance, Meyerhold's Stylized Theatre, Brecht's Epic Theatre, and Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre practices. Most of these methods were focused on verbal performances, but two spoke to my movement background: The Bauhaus Stage Workshops and Bogart's Viewpoints.


Bauhaus Stage Workshops

Formed out of German art and architecture, the Bauhaus Stage Workshops were founded in 1919 and dissolved in 1933 upon the start of WWII (Lupton & Miller, 1993, p. 7). The Bauhaus school was known for its development of live performance in order to investigate the use of formal aesthetics in space. Merging traditional craftsmanship with artistic expression, the Bauhaus school aimed at creating highly functional and visually appealing works of art. One way they did this was through analyzing movement in relation to the mathematics of the human body in space (Bauhaus-Archiv, 1993, p. 17). In




a “Do It Yourself” nature, all props, costumes, and set designs were created by the students of the Bauhaus, specifically the female students. Here I provide an image to better depict the Bauhaus aesthetic.¹



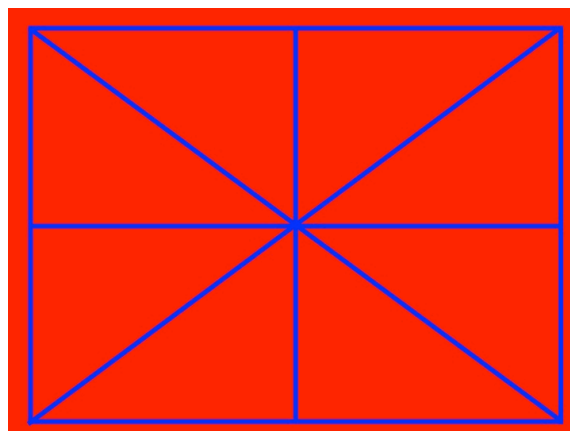
Progressive designers within the Bauhaus promoted a new way of thinking about design in a self-conscious way. They wanted to make art more accessible to the general public. Lupton and Miller (1993) are quoted as stating the Bauhaus is a, “restrictive father whose laws we long to overturn and naïve child whose utopian idealism floods us with fond nostalgia.” The Bauhaus Stage Workshops were known for their adventurous stage of experimentation and focus on lines, shapes, and colors within their dance performances. They were also known to provide constraint within their performance creation in order to make art more democratic.

The  have become a staple for modern day design and architecture and the most famous icon of the Bauhaus. The Bauhaus used the triangle, square, and circle and yellow, red, and blue colors respectively as the basis for their aesthetic creations. It became their grammar, and the, “repetition of this trio of basic [shapes] and primary

¹ SeanChron: Das Triadische Ballett (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.future-ish.com/2014/08/das-triadische-ballet.html>.

colors [showed] the school's interest in abstraction and its focus on aspects of the visual which were elementary [and] foundational" (Lupton & Miller, 1993, p. 10). The    are present within all Bauhaus performances and are most evident in their props, costuming, and stage design. These symbols have become a formal vocabulary employed by those using the Bauhaus methods. This aesthetic appealed to me both for its elementary nature and containment of aesthetic choices. What interested me the most, however, was the grid system created by the Bauhaus school within which all of the movement pieces operated.

The Bauhaus' grid can be described as a "grid of language" and a "series of vertical and horizontal relations" (Lupton & Miller, 1993, p. 33). The grid is used to organize a performance space. This grid creates a space in accordance to a pattern of juxtapositions (p. 34). The grid consists of distinct, framed sections, which frame and fragment the space. What I gathered most from the grid, however, was its ability to contain. Specifically, the grid pattern below² showcases both the square and triangle shapes present within the Bauhaus vocabulary.



² Image rendered by author.

Taking full advantage of the horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines, a performance practitioner could experiment with how multiple bodies could interact on the various lines present within the grid in order to highlight the constraining nature of both the grid and the human body. The grid highlighted a human's limited range of motion and spatial order (Hasting, 1980). It embodied the notion of experimenting with the mathematics of the human body. To me, this specific grid pattern echoed the notion, "language is a grid, and a grid is a language" (p. 34). I knew I would be able to use movement as a language to impose on the grid and that the grid would help me develop movement based on its ability to contain what could be created.

Bogart's Viewpoints

Similar to the Bauhaus Stage Workshops, Bogart's Viewpoints focused on a democratic style of performance devising. Viewpoints is, "a philosophy translated into a technique for training performers, building ensemble, and creating stage movement" (Bogart & Landau, 2005, p. xi). The viewpoints were created based on the notion that dancers wanted to liberate choreography from psychological and conventional drama. They wanted a nonhierarchical way of creating art through the use of real time. That is, to not let one element of the devising process drive the way the performance was created. They created dance performances through improvisation techniques related to time and space. This allowed for a democratic devising process, which did not favor time or space over the other, but that used the two simultaneously. The six viewpoints, as outlined by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau (2005) in their book *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition* are space, shape, time, emotion, story, and movement.

As a philosophy and technique, Viewpoints offers its six concepts under the principles of time and space. Space, as a principle, includes the shape of our bodies in space, including lines and curves. It includes gestures of the hands, arms, legs, head, mouth, eyes, and feet (Bogart & Landau, 2005, p. 9). Space also refers to the spatial relationship between things on stage, including performers and objects and the topography of the space, including floor pattern and the physical environment within which the performers are working (p. 9). Time as a principle includes the tempo, or rate, at which the dance movement occurs (i.e. how fast or how slow). It includes the impulsive reaction to movement that occurs in our bodies as well as the repetition of movements both within and outside of our bodies (p. 9). Through these principles, emotion and story can be used as a prompt to begin the devising process or can be a result of the movement created using the principles of time and space. These viewpoints later expanded to include physical and vocal viewpoints, but for the purpose of this document I will refer to the original six as proposed by Mary Overlie and Anne Bogart.

Viewpoints provided a language to talk about what was happening on stage during the improvisation and devising processes. It included an awareness of yourself as a performer and those who are performing around you (Bogart & Landau, 2005, p. 4). To me, it was a choreography process and a method of generating a movement sequence, which revealed hidden thoughts and feelings. The thing I liked about this method the most was that the creator (director) and performer (dancer) were creating movement together, rather than one dictating the other. It reminded me of my time in Orchesis when our director would ask us to choreograph movement along side him and to share our

movements with one another. I thought this performance method could serve as a template for developing choreography in the future.

Through game-like and task-oriented activities, Viewpoints experiments with devising movement-based performance through improvisation. The method's purpose is remaining democratic both among performers and through their composition process. For example, Bogart and Landau (2005) explain:

In improvisations, each participant had the same power in the creation of the event. The aesthetic thinking was also nonhierarchical. Music, for example, would not dictate choices. An object could have the same importance as a human body. The spoken word could be on equal footing with gesture. One idea could hold the same importance as another on the same stage at the same time. (p. 4)

This work correlated exactly with what I was already doing in my performance devising processes. I never wanted music to dictate what movement was being created and I wanted the performers in the piece to have the same input for performance choices as I. These Viewpoint notions would heavily influence my show the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, which is discussed at length throughout this document.

After learning about these two movement-based performance methods, I was inspired to figure out how these movement-based performance methods related to the other performance methods I already knew (i.e. the MyStory and those of Boal and Brecht). I was curious if there was a way I could use movement-based performance methods mixed with a MyStory script. I also wanted other people to participate in this type of devising process. Like Boal, I wanted dancers and nondancers alike to be able to create movement-based performances that critiqued the world they interacted in every day. Like Brecht, I wanted to make this world strange to others again and to use personal

narratives as a way to critique cultural norms and institutions. And I wanted to do this through dance.

Expanding Movement-Based Performance Methods: The *Choreo-Story*³

Performance is a way of knowing. Through embodied performance, a person gains knowledge through their whole body-self. One way to gain this knowledge is through dance and choreography. These processes allow a person to define a situation, determine identities, and begin to understand how the negotiation of these identities works within the space of the world around them.

I propose a new movement-based performance method, *Choreo-Story*, as one performance tool that can be used to understand how embodiment and dance help individuals make sense of the many identities they perform. This method highlights the physical body as both a text and tool for storytelling. The *Choreo-Story* is a movement-based performance method, mode of devising, and performance product. Performance Studies scholars, Health Communication scholars, Narrative Medicine scholars, and dancers and nondancers alike can utilize the method of the *Choreo-Story* as a tool for devising and creating performance.

The *Choreo-Story* is first, and foremost, an extension of the MyStory. The MyStory is primarily geared toward developing written scripts, which are then performed verbally and, sometimes, with use of multimedia such as sound and projection of video. Performance Studies scholars have utilized this performance method to comprehend how their own experiences allow for broader understandings of institutions and how these

³ The term *Choreo-Story* is italicized throughout this document in order to show it is a new, proposed movement-based performance method. It shows the method as an original idea, distinct from the rest of the performance methods discussed in this text.

institutions create narratives that produce and reproduce cultural beliefs, values, and norms. Although helpful for understanding our myriad of identities, this method fails to account for how the whole body serves as a personal text.

The *Choreo-Story* embraces intertextual analysis on the page, but, more importantly, *within the body*. The *Choreo-Story* draws from personal narrative and personal *movement*, professional text and professional *movement*, popular culture text and popular culture *movement*. This movement is developed through choreography, which is informed by the MyStory text. Choreography is, “a rich term for performativity: bodies in movement, bodies in social relationships, bodies performing within and against historical codes and conventions are all visible in dance” (Bell, 2008, p. 181). Through the process of choreography, individuals can reflect upon their bodies’ experiences and therefore define a given situation and their identity within that situation. Choreography serves as a map for the physical body, showing relationships between gender, sexuality, race and its relationship to space (Hamera, 2007, p. 9). Therefore, the MyStory serves as a template to discuss personal experiences and begin to hypothesize what popular and professional texts relate to their situation. From there, participants choreograph movement based off of all three of these texts in order to create a movement-based performance through the *Choreo-Story* method.

Through dance, embodied performance is heightened. Judith Hamera (2007) explains, “dance explicitly links aesthetics, affect, labor, and bodies together and insists on their centrality to a meaningful public discourse that reflects on our shared humanity and imagines alternative social alliances and arrangements” (p. xiv). In dance, the physical body is the tool for exploring and defining life. It becomes the laboratory for

“examining and revisioning the myriad of complex interrelations between gender, sexuality, race, class, and culture in urban life” (Hamera, 2007, p. 1). The work of dance exposes aesthetic spaces as a site to critique social norms, power, and space itself. Embodied performance takes into account the world around us. Ellingson (2017) states that we should see embodiment, “not as actions and practices that our bodies do and that our minds subsequently make sense of, but rather as our whole body-selves making sense of the world and producing knowledge . . . as continually in process and movement” (p. 16). Bodies in movement shape and are shaped by social norms and institutions. These understandings can, and should, inform performance research. The *Choreo-Story* method asks participants to be self-reflexive in their embodied performance, to allow a visual journal of the physical body to emerge, to embrace the “messy space” where text and body come together and where they refuse to connect (Ellingson, 2017, p. 29).

I first used the *Choreo-Story* method to create my movement-based performance LOOK!, which debuted in the HopKins Black Box theatre in April of 2017. Using personal narratives surrounding the female body in space, I was interested in critiquing the method of Bauhaus and its treatment of the women who worked at the school. I had recently come across the book *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment* (1992) by Leslie K. Weisman and was interested in the conversation this book could have with the professional text of the Bauhaus Stage Workshops created by Oskar Schlemmer, Paul Klee, and Wassily Kandinsky. The popular and professional texts outlined here both analyzed space and architecture and how individuals move throughout them. Weisman critiqued landscapes, bodyscapes, and public space as being designed for and by men, while Gropius, Klee, and Schlemmer

used architecture, primary colors, and props of geometric forms to constrain bodies to operate on a grid system (Gropius & Wensinger, 1961; Klee, 1965; Schlemmer, 1994). The contrasting way these Bauhaus scholars used space and architecture in comparison to Weisman served as an interesting intersection, to me, to understand how female bodies operate in male-dominated environments. I was intrigued by how these texts related to my own experience of being a women in a male-dominated world and how I could explore the relationship between all of these through dance. I developed the method of the *Choreo-Story* in order to find out what this complex relationship was and what I could learn from it. The results of this show are presented at length throughout this document.

The following semester I used the *Choreo-Story* method again, this time with an aim of teaching the method to others, rather than developing a large-scale performance. In November of 2018, I facilitated the *Choreo-Story* Workshops in an effort to see if the process I had used with LOOK! could be duplicated. For these workshops, the participants used personal narratives surrounding health experiences to create personal movement, popular discourses surrounding health to create popular movement, and Bogart and Landau's *Viewpoints* to create professional movement. These workshops were not so much about critiquing a movement-based performance, but about using the six viewpoints as a tool because we still needed a constraint in order to focus the devising process. Viewpoints was used as an aesthetic choice to help narrow down our performance choices while the personal and popular health related movements were put into conversation with one another to create a short, eight minute performance. These workshops took place over the course of two weeks with a one night, public showing of

the results. This rehearsal process and the results of our public showing are discussed at length in the remainder of this document.

While I was creating these shows, I was introduced to Karen Barbour's work. Similar to Ann Cooper Albright, Barbour approaches dance studies as a feminist researcher. However, Barbour focuses more on personal experience in the creation of choreography and movement pieces. She pulls on personal narratives as a way to generate knowledge through the physical body. In her book *Dancing Across the Page: Narrative and Embodied Ways of Knowing* (2011) Barbour explores feminist choreography, narrative reflexivity, movement and knowing, and identity affirmation through dance. I believe all of these notions were extended through the show LOOK! as well as my subsequent show, the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. As a unique performance method, way of knowing, and self-reflection through personal, cultural, and social narratives, I set out to understand how these two shows and the *Choreo-Story* method itself, could fill a gap within Performance Studies research and advocate for more movement-based performance methods at the same time.

This is a multi-methodological project, which uses the proposed method of the *Choreo-Story* to understand and critique other performance methods. I also want to understand, however, the way the *Choreo-Story* functions as a method of performance and its utility as a movement-based performance method. To do this, I apply a common method of performance analysis: Kenneth Burke's Dramatistic Approach. Performance scholars and practitioners have used Burke's Pentadic Analysis to analyze performance for decades. I use Burke's Pentad to analyze what happened throughout the process of

creating the *Choreo-Story* method, where and when it happened, who was present, how they interacted, and why I created the method in the first place.

Kenneth Burke proposed the Pentadic Analysis in his book *Grammar of Motives* (1969) in order to give a language for analyzing the purpose of a text. As a rhetorician, Burke was focused primarily on analyzing printed texts. He developed the terms act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose with each concept offering, “some kind of answer to: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how [they] did it (agency), and why (purpose)” (Burke, 1969, p. xv). The simplicity of these terms appealed to Burke as a way to incorporate this vocabulary for analysis into our everyday lives. Using these five terms, a person could analyze a text in order to draw conclusions on the motivations of the agent within the text.

Burke’s Pentadic Analysis has been adopted as a mode of critique by many fields within the humanities. Performance Studies is no exception. In Performance Studies, we refer to Burke’s Pentad as The Dramatistic Approach because of its association with the life/drama analogy. Most commonly associated with the phrase, “all the world is a stage,” Burke believed life was theatre and humans were constantly performing their motives for, and to, one another. As a metaphor, the life/drama analogy uses theatre vocabulary in an effort to understand human behavior. For the remainder of this document, I refer to the Pentad as Burke’s Pentadic Analysis and the Dramatistic Approach interchangeably.

The Dramatistic Approach relies on the assumption that Burke’s life/drama analogy offers a way of explaining human behavior. It also relies on the assumption that human action requires a vocabulary through which to assess. Describing life in theatrical terms, Burke provided a language to describe performance and other communicative acts

(Pelias & Shaffer, 2007, p. 61). This mode of analysis has been used in countless introductory to Performance Studies courses and has become a staple for the way performance scholars and practitioners approach analyzing performance and performance texts. Ronald Pelias and Tracy Stephenson Shaffer (2007) write that, “many performance practitioners find dramatism a particularly appealing critical method for analyzing aesthetic texts because dramatism looks at aesthetic texts with a language that is both highly familiar and easily translated into performance behaviors” (p. 62). Because I analyze a movement-based performance method, I find this vocabulary particularly useful for readers who may not be well versed in movement and dance. By analyzing the *Choreo-Story* method and my subsequent shows through this vocabulary, I open up the critique to a vast array of readers, not just those focused on movement-based performance methods.

Motivation is implicit in each term on the Pentad. The following document is the story of using the Pentadic Analysis to get to my underlying motive for creating the *Choreo-Story*. Through the “doing” of the Pentadic analysis, I discovered underlying motives in the act, scene, agents and agency, and purpose of this project. In the act, I identified six steps that became necessary for me when creating a *Choreo-Story*. These steps are finding texts, finding performers, putting the texts in your body, finding an aesthetic, performing for an audience, and repeating steps 1-5 for the next creation process. I detail in Chapter Two how these steps do not have to occur in order, but each will happen at some point during the process. In Chapter Three, I learned that the physical, social/political, and psychological/emotional scenes impacted the texts I chose to use when creating LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. I was motivated to

discuss the current political and social climate through these performances in order to discover how they impacted the cast's and my psychological and emotional well-being. I also felt a purpose to discover how these different scenes impacted specific bodies. In Chapter Four, I discovered that I wanted a variety of individuals to participate in the *Choreo-Story* process. I did not want only skilled dancers, nor did I want solely "nondancers." I found that each person impacted the process because of their different background and that this improved the way the *Choreo-Story* functioned both in the rehearsal process and onstage. Individuals who had no background in dance created a particular vulnerability throughout the process. Because the performers had no preconceived notions of how to "do" dance, they were able to engage and become vulnerable to the process of the *Choreo-Story*.

Burke wrote that *Grammar of Motives* is, "concerned with the basic forms of thought which, in accordance with the nature of the world as all [humans] necessarily experience it, are exemplified in the attributing of motive" (xv). He stated that through using the Dramatistic Approach, scholars would be able to understand the context of what people say and how they say it. After working through the findings within each chapter, I was able to understand why I felt the need to create the *Choreo-Story* method in the first place. After the Pentadic Analysis illuminated these motivations to me, I found one glaring personal motivation for creating the *Choreo-Story*: I wanted to build relationships with others and establish community through the "doing" of performance.

Creating conspicuous aesthetic movement-based performances has always motivated me. Conspicuous aesthetic performance is, "a distinct, rehearsed and staged performance, marked as art through stylist choices and set apart from everyday life by

meta-communicative frames” (Shaffer, 2020, p. 2). Through the following Pentadic Analysis, I found my underlying motivation was to create conspicuous aesthetic performances *with other people*. After a discussion regarding this motivation during my dissertation oral defense, Dr. David Terry suggested the concept *conspicuous relationality*. I wanted to create conspicuous aesthetic movement-based performances, but I wanted to do it in relationship with others. I needed other performers to be there because I wanted to build a community within the HopKins Black Box space. In essence, *Choreo-Story* is not a sole endeavor. It is a method that needs multiple individuals to devise, rehearse, perform, and share similar experiences with one another in order to form “togetherness,” or conspicuous relationality. These motivations are detailed in-depth throughout this story.

Chapter Outline

In this chapter I have provided a narrative of my evolution as a performance practitioner. This narrative offers a brief outline of the performance methods that have guided me to this project. First, I traced my journey of dance from my youth up to my time in the Orchesis Dance Company at the University of Northern Iowa. Then, I provided information about the performance methods I was studying while earning my Master’s degree at UNI: MyStory, Boal’s Image Theatre, and Brecht’s Epic Theatre. As I entered my doctoral program at Louisiana State University, I was exposed to other performance methods and found specific interest in the Bauhaus Stage Workshops and Bogart’s Viewpoints. These movement-based performance methods will aid in an understanding of how my shows LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops were created. Finally, I ended with outlining Burke’s Pentadic Analysis, the method of analysis that

serves as the basis for the remainder of the chapters, with each one corresponding to a concept in the Pentad. In the nature of storytelling, this dissertation is set up so that the same story is told in chapters two through five, but from a different lens of the Dramatistic Approach. Through this structure, I am able to highlight multiple findings that occurred by analyzing the *Choreo-Story* method from each of these perspectives.

While Chapter One briefly mentions the *Choreo-Story* method and the two shows I created using this method, Chapter Two offers an in-depth analysis of the project through a thick description of the act, or, what occurred. I begin by explaining the first Bauhaus performance I did in Dr. Terry's *Performance Methods and Theories* course as a catalyst for my show LOOK!. Through this I am able to establish the steps to creating a *Choreo-Story* performance: Step 1: Find the Performers, Step 2: Find the Texts, Step 3: Put the Texts in Your Body, Step 4: Find the Aesthetic, Step 5: Perform for an Audience, Step 6: Repeat Steps 1-5. Next, I outline the act of my shows LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops by analyzing how each of the steps to creating a *Choreo-Story* performance occurred in these specific processes. I end this chapter by highlighting five key findings that were exposed through analyzing the act of the *Choreo-Story* method: the changing order of the steps, the establishment of a guiding text, the creation of a personal aesthetic, the process of keying the audience, and the creation of a cast personality.

In Chapter Three, I provide a detailed background for all the acts by analyzing the scenes in which the *Choreo-Story* method, LOOK!, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops were created. I do this by describing the physical context, the social and political context, and the psychological and emotional context of each act. First, I explore the multiple

scenes within which the original Bauhaus performance occurred in order to establish how the *Choreo-Story* method began. Next, I examine the scenes within which LOOK! took place in order to illustrate the scene's impact on the creation of this performance. Finally, I describe the scenes within which the *Choreo-Story* Workshops took place in order to analyze how the multiple contexts impacted our devising process. I conclude this chapter by highlighting the ways in which analyzing these fragments of context allowed for a deeper understanding of how the scene influenced the act(s) that occurred.

Chapter Four builds upon this analysis, introducing the multiple agents that contributed to the creation of the *Choreo-Story* method and the subsequent performances. In this chapter, I combine the concepts of agents and agency together. I chose to analyze agents and agency together because of the entangled nature of their relationship during this project. That is, it became apparent to me that the agents drastically changed the nature of the act just by being unique individuals. Thus, their agency directly impacted the performances that were being produced. First, I trace my Performance Studies lineage through two agents that had a big impact on my ability to do this project in the first place: Dr. Mary Frances HopKins and Dr. Tracy Stephenson Shaffer. Next, I outline the agents of my original Bauhaus piece and their agency in the construction of the act. Then, I outline the agents of my show LOOK! and their agency during the devising process and the final performance. After, I outline the agents of the *Choreo-Story* Workshops and their agency during the devising process and public showing. I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the agency of the director, how the scene of the act alters the agency of the agent, and the glaring reality that the *Choreo-Story* method itself is a mode of agency throughout this process.

To end my analysis, I discuss the underlying purpose for creating the *Choreo-Story* method, LOOK!, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. First, I evaluate the specific purposes for each of the performances created using the *Choreo-Story* method including my original Bauhaus performance, LOOK!, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. Next, I analyze the motivation for creating the *Choreo-Story* method as a movement-based performance method and argue for its place within the field of Performance Studies. I end this analysis with a discussion of my personal motivations throughout this project and my need to connect with others through dance.

As a performance practitioner, I hope that the method of the *Choreo-Story* can be utilized by other performance practitioners, but I also hope it can be adapted for any person wishing to understand and make sense of their lived experiences. Therefore, dancers and nondancers alike can explore identities, cultural ideologies, and social structures through the *Choreo-Story* in order to create change within their communities and within themselves. This chapter concludes with a review of major conclusions drawn from analyzing the purpose of the *Choreo-Story* method and argues for an expansion of the method into other disciplines and outside of academia. I do this by giving a step-by-step example of how the *Choreo-Story* method could be used within the fields of Narrative Medicine and the Medical Humanities in order to understand how performance, storytelling, and the *Choreo-Story* method could improve the understanding of narrative medicine. This example helps to illuminate my future purposes for the *Choreo-Story* method.

Finally, in Chapter Six I conclude this document by reviewing the major findings that were discussed in each of the analysis chapters. Then, I analyze three major

relationships between Burke's Pentadic concepts as highlighted in this document through what Burke terms "ratios." These ratios, or relationships, include scene-act/agent, scene-agent/purpose, and agent-agency/act. By discussing these ratios, I highlight the fact that the concepts within the Pentad do not occur in isolation of one another, but in fact constantly influence and impact how the other concepts take form.

Once these ratios have been established, I discuss the implications of the *Choreo-Story* for Ulmer's MyStory and Dutta's Culture-Centered Approach to health. Next, I review the major limitations of this study, which include the method of critique, specific limitations to the *Choreo-Story* method, and the participants of the study. Then, I point to areas for future research that include expanding the *Choreo-Story* method outside of Performance Studies and academia, using alternative types of texts within the devising process, and an increase of movement-based performance methods both within our research and our Performance Studies curriculum. Through this project I am able to show that the "doing" of performance is not adequately represented in our field and that by engaging in performance we are changed in subtle, yet significant ways over time.

CHAPTER TWO. THE ACT

In the previous chapter I laid the foundation for understanding the performance method of the MyStory while proposing an extension of this method in the form of the *Choreo-Story*. The *Choreo-Story* should be seen as an important and necessary addition in the Performance Studies field, which uses the physical body as both a tool for storytelling and the text itself. To investigate this method, I analyze the use of the *Choreo-Story* using Burke's Dramatistic Approach. Specifically, I use Burke's method of analysis to highlight key findings in two separate performances that used the *Choreo-Story* for devising and creation: LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. Through this analysis, I reveal the significance of the *Choreo-Story* in the Performance Studies field and argue its benefits to past, present, and future practitioners.

To begin this inquiry, I start with answering the question: What happened? Specifically, what happened while using the *Choreo-Story* method? I explore the plot, action, and motion of the story (Burke, 1969, p. 231). Action is the heart of the Dramatistic Approach, thus all other parts of the pentad depend on an act to occur in order to be critically assessed. Burke (1969) created the term "act" for the pentad based on Aristotle's material cause wherein "a thing comes into being" through action and behavior (p. 228). Thus, the act does not simply exist, but takes form through enacted behavior. In terms of analyzing performance, Pelias and Shaffer (2007) urge the practitioner to question what the performer/s are doing with their voices, bodies, and performance choices.

In order to turn a critical eye to "the act" in this chapter I answer the questions: What initiated the formation of this project? What inspired the creation of the *Choreo-*

Story devising process? What steps did my cast and I follow for this devising process to exist? First, I discuss the inception of the *Choreo-Story* process within a graduate seminar I took at Louisiana State University. Next, I explore the action taking form through my show “LOOK!,” which debuted in the HopKins Black Box theatre in April 2018. Then, I assess the action in a set of workshops I conducted in November 2018 titled, “The *Choreo-Story* Workshops.” Finally, I conclude my analysis of “the act” by discussing the similarities and differences between each performance in order to better understand the inception of the *Choreo-Story* devising process and the repeated patterns of action that need to occur for it to be sustainable.

Taking Form: The Incipient Act

In the spring of 2017, I enrolled in Dr. David Terry’s *Performance Methods and Theories* graduate seminar. One of the assignments asked a student to research a performance method and then teach that method to a peer in class. This peer would then devise and present a performance based off of that method to the instructor and their peers two weeks later. By a serendipitous line of schedule coordinating on the first day of class, one of my peers was assigned to write and teach about the Bauhaus Stage Workshops, and I was the student who was assigned to take the prompt and create a performance using this performance method.

About a month into the course, with a detailed handout from my peer as my guide, I was tasked to develop a performance using Bauhaus as my muse (Appendix A). With an extensive dance background, I chose to develop a movement-based piece that used the “mathematics of the human body in space” (Lupton & Miller, 1993, p. 47). I also became interested in the juxtaposition of Bauhaus’ “democratic” appeal, but its lack

of women in the forefront of its methods. I created a solo performance piece that drew from the Bauhaus aesthetic, but also used this aesthetic to critique itself.

Finding the Steps

In preparation for my performance, I took time and care to find the perfect audio and costuming to accompany my piece. I wanted to embody the craftsmanship of the Bauhaus to create every part of a performance from scratch. I headed to a craft store to find materials that would enable the creation of a minimal Bauhaus costume. I purchased a yellow t-shirt, blue and red felt pieces, yellow, red, and blue pipe cleaners, an ominous and lifeless mask to shield my identity, yellow, red, and blue paper, tassels, tissue paper, and string. I relied on the use of primary colors. Using the aesthetic of the Bauhaus as my starting place, I spent four or five hours in my house crafting my costume for my performance. I created a cropped yellow t-shirt with red triangles and blue squares carefully stitched onto it with my mediocre sewing skills. I created a skirt using an old blue belt I had lying around at home. I meticulously tied many strings around the belt and then on each string I tied the pipe cleaners to the bottom, alternating between yellow, red, and blue. I wore black tights, black spandex shorts, and a black sports bra under my handcrafted pieces. After placing the lifeless mask on my face, I felt I had entered into one of the Bauhaus videos we had watched in class. I was inspired, but also agitated. I enjoyed creating my own costume and admired the dedication the students of the Bauhaus Workshops had while hiding in the shadows of the performers. I also knew that the students hidden in these shadows were women (Lupton & Miller, 1993, p. 47).

After crafting my costume, I turned my attention to the audio. I wanted the audio to be rhythmic, upbeat, hypnotic, and instrumental, mimicking the Bauhaus aesthetic I

had come to love from watching documentaries on their aesthetic and infamous dance performances (Hasting, 1980; Schliermacher, 1980). I entered a Spotify rabbit hole and after clicking through “browse,” “dance/electronic,” “genre glitch,” “space disco,” “electronic avant-garde,” “instrumental,” “stranger things,” “The Upside Down,” “Moonhood,” “U Adelle,” I clicked and I clicked and I clicked until I clicked, “Adagio for Square.” With an immediate connection to the beat, I saved it to my playlist “Potential Bauhaus Music” for safekeeping. After I found the beat, I immediately wanted to put it away. I knew I wanted to create the choreography for my piece first and then return to the music to figure out how the dance and the beat would fit together, instead of having the music influence the movement that would be created. I did not want the music to guide the way I choreographed, but instead wanted to rely on my bodily experiences to tell the story of this piece.

Finding inspiration from Bauhaus’ grid work, I wanted to use the grid as a scene of constraint to give my piece a structure for composition. Using blue tape, I outlined the grid on the HopKins Black Box floor, first starting with the outer square, then taping from corner to corner on each side, and finally finishing by taping from the top of the square to the bottom, and from the left to the right. Working from my interest in the women of the Bauhaus, I created movement that exposed the framing of women’s bodies. I realized then that I wanted to incorporate an actual frame into the performance. I headed back to the craft store to find a cheap, foam frame that could be used to accentuate my more feminine labeled body parts. With my grid and frame as a structural anchor, I began creating movement that used the Bauhaus method of straight, concise, linear bodies and mixing it with my modern/contemporary dance background. The product was a hypnotic,

intriguing, and upsetting movement piece that juxtaposed the Bauhaus aesthetic with the “democratic” methods they were said to have used. I offer a description of two moments as an illustration of this juxtaposition: (1) the use of rigid, calculated movement on an eight lined grid to highlight the Bauhaus aesthetic, contrasted with the use of squatting while framing my breasts, butt, and vagina in order to critique the constraints of femininity. A nod to the confines of the women of the Bauhaus Stage Workshops; (2) the use of a full-face mask to remove identity in order to align with the democratic notions of the Bauhaus, wherein everyone is equal. A performance choice that aligns with Bauhaus principals, but critiques these same principals as removing the identity of marginalized groups within their school by using an intentionally full-faced, masculine, white mask.

I performed this piece in Dr. Terry’s class about two weeks later. Afterwards, the class had a small talkback where classmates responded, “I’m not sure what I just watched,” and “It felt like a YouTube video I could watch for hours.” The next week, another peer’s response to my performance drove me to want to create a larger performance based on this work. My male peer, in short, described feeling like a voyeur and being able to enjoy my performance, my *body*, with no consequences. He expressed that because I appeared inhuman behind the full-face mask that he did not feel he was objectifying me by enjoying my performance. After hearing this response, I knew there was something larger than myself that this performance could expose.

In April of 2017, I submitted a proposal to the HopKins Black Box Board to direct a show for the following academic year (Appendix B). I explained that this show would be an extension of the work I was already doing with Bauhaus, but that I wanted to create a multi-methodological show which also incorporated the MyStory method. I

wrote a description, explained my past experience as a performer and choreographer, listed the shows I had already participated in, and made the case for why I would be a good fit for the 2017/2018 season. After being accepted as a part of a double bill, I knew I would have about a year of planning before LOOK! was set to open in April of 2018.

LOOK!: The First Act

After LOOK! was accepted I immediately recruited three performers based off my past work experience with them. I wanted to be on their radar of performances, especially with my show being at the end of the semester. I cast three female performers with a diverse background of experiences related to gazing practices including its impact on higher education, gender identity, and race.

In November 2017, I attended the Petit Jean Performance Festival as a performer for another show, and in some down time got some inspiration for a cultural text about cats. I was directed by a colleague to an article by Derrida about his experience of having a cat look at him naked from across the room (Derrida, 2002, p. 371). I liked the similarities I could create between cats and women: domesticated, contained, etc. I used this article as a starting point to begin compiling texts for a script for my performance.

Step 1: Find the Texts

In January I really began planning the show. I started compiling professional and popular texts⁴ for the MyStory, and planned a meeting with the cast to brainstorm some

⁴ Professional texts include psychology articles relating to looking at one's own reflection, articles on the Male Gaze, John Berger's "Ways of Seeing," "Discrimination by Design" by Leslie Weisman, YouTube videos showcasing traditional Bauhaus movement pieces, Derrida's article "The Animal that therefore I am," Scientific articles on the structure and movement of cat's eyes, and countless communication articles surrounding themes of the male gaze, feminism, empowerment and sexism, body language, and viewing others.

personal narratives that could be incorporated into the script. We all met in a classroom in Coates Hall, circling our desks for an intimate atmosphere. I asked the cast members to free write about two prompts: (1) a time you have been looked/gazed at that stands out to you and (2) a time you gazed at another woman that stands out to you. I wanted the cast to focus on using their five senses to describe these experiences, so that movement material could be produced from their narratives. I had them free write for 10 minutes total, and then they shared their experiences with one another. For example, one cast member wrote about being watched by an older man she knew while she carried groceries to a house from her car. Another cast member wrote about a peer who created a piece in one of their performance studies classes that was directly referencing her gendered body and beauty and ended in a bathtub. The other cast member shared a story of dating a woman in public for the first time and being aware of the way others were looking at them and afraid to look back.

Before I continue, I want to briefly note that although these steps are laid out in an order from one to six, they are not discrete. That is, these steps can occur in any order and often times will overlap. For example, at the same time I was compiling texts for LOOK! I had also been looking at updating the costuming from my first performance. I decided to purchase a few pairs of cat-eye sunglasses to replace the full-face mask I had used in my solo performance. I knew the cast, whoever they would be, would be dancing for a lot longer than I had, and therefore needed the ability to breathe, but I also wanted them to remain free of a specific identity. At the same time I already had an idea of who the cast

Popular texts include The #MeToo movement, a variety of slam poems discussing averting eye contact from strangers, Tina Fey's "Bossypants," YouTube videos of "cute cats," "I Could Pee on this and other Poems by Cats" (1 and 2) by Francesco Marciuliano, BuzzFeed articles, Huffington Post articles, and blogs of women sharing experiences of feeling scared in public spaces.

was going to be, before I really knew what the show was going to look like, because I knew I wanted three performers with a mixed amount of dance experience. That it to say, sometimes the steps will overlap, reverse order, or happen in an ordered sequence. It depends on the practitioner and their directing preference. The steps are more like major milestones that will happen throughout the *Choreo-Story* process, rather than a strict step-by-step process you must follow to be successful.

Step 2: Find the Performers

When completing the “Request to Direct” form submitted to the HopKins Black Box Board in 2017, I was instructed to give information regarding potential cast members. I knew I wanted a diverse, all female cast and that I wanted to keep the cast small. I chose to cast three performers due to my dance company background and the aesthetic of three performers with the potential to make a bunch of triangular formations. I also wanted the three female performers to look completely different from one another and have diverse backgrounds in dance and movement performance. Last, I wanted the three performers to be individuals I knew I worked well with in previous Black Box shows and that they would be dedicated to the short rehearsal time we would have together. Performer A was a close friend of mine, so I texted her right after I submitted my “Request to Direct” asking if she would be in my show the next academic year. She responded, “heck yeah!” Performers B and C had an office right next to mine on the third floor of Coates Hall. We all happened to be up in our offices working a couple of days after I submitted my “Request to Direct” and I went over to their office to say “good morning.” We chatted for a bit and I decided to ask them if they would be a part of a movement-based performance I was hoping to do the next school year. They both agreed.

So, my cast formed over a year before the show was set to go up and before I even knew if my proposal would be accepted.

As with any show, a year can change a lot about the performance including the cast members and their commitment. In February of 2018, two months before LOOK! premiered, Performer A informed me that she felt overworked and overcommitted with her studies and performance commitments. As a Master's student defending her comprehensive exams and getting ready to graduate, I completely understood. I set out to find another performer. I texted every female Performance Studies student I knew until I finally stumbled upon Performer D. She was a first year doctoral student who fit exactly the type of person I was looking for to be in this show. I texted her saying, "Hi! I had a performer back out of my show that is coming up in April, would you like to join? It is a movement based performance about male gazing practices" and included our rehearsal schedule to see if she would be available. She responded, "Sounds rad. I've never danced before but it sounds fun! I am available to join in." With the cast set, we were ready to begin rehearsals and put the performer's stories into images and movement.

Step 3: Put the Texts in Your Body

At the end of February, we began devising movement together in the HopKins Black Box. Because we were working with three different texts, I broke this devising process up into three days. The first day we created movement based off the personal narratives each cast member shared previously. The first thing I asked Performer D to do was share her experience of a time she felt the maze gaze being used on her, similar to what Performer's A, B, and C did in our first meeting. She shared her story of being in a professors office at another university and feeling uncomfortable around him because

they were sitting so close their knees were almost touching. Her only other memory was staring at the clock. Then, I asked the performer to read back through their narratives, finding five still or moving images and any sounds they remember hearing during the experience. The first half of the rehearsal was spent having each cast member find their own creative space in the Black Box and create movement on their own. Each would consult her journal and begin moving her physical body into shapes and forms fitting her experiences. This pattern happened again and again, with a reading of her narrative, a freeing of the physical body into the performance space, and a construction of movement. After each cast member had created five movements, we then shared these movements with one another. Each cast member would lead the group in teaching her movements until everyone knew every single move that had been imagined and created that day. Then, as a group we picked eight moves we felt most represented a universal experience and assigned the move to a line on our Bauhaus grid. We named our personal movements for clarity in rehearsal. Thus, our grid lines were known as line 1/shoulder, line 2/squat walk, line 3/confident fast, line 4/contortion, line 5/boxes, line 6/birth walk, line 7/glance backwards, line 8/cautious walk. These names allowed the cast to memorize the grid quickly and created continuity between each performer's movements.

In our next rehearsal, we focused on professional movement, which was Bauhaus. Because I had previously made my Bauhaus performance in Dr. Terry's class, I taught the cast the movement I had already developed from my previous piece. I made this decision to save rehearsal time in the long run. Had we had more time, I might have been interested in seeing what the cast would have developed for Bauhaus movement and incorporating this into the performance. Our professional movements ending up being

line 1/frame arm, line 2/frame breasts, line 3/frame face, line 4/frame leg, line 5/boxes, line 6/frame butt and vagina, line 7/look through the frame, line 8/frame stomach. The boxes line became an experiment of how we would do our movement but sitting on a black box that was provided in the space, instead of performing it standing on the grid. This made us contort our bodies in interesting and unique ways that maybe we would not have done before.

In our third rehearsal, we developed the popular culture movement based on cats, inspired by Derrida's piece and, in honesty, my own love for cats. We worked with Derrida's (2002) piece, "The Animal that therefore I am," countless YouTube videos under the "Cute Cat Video" search, and our perception of the way cats are perceived in popular culture. We followed the same sequence of creation we did for the personal movement construction. Each performer developed five still or moving images from these texts surrounding cats, most of which were YouTube videos, and we watched these together in rehearsal. We also drew from our own previous experience of being around cats and thinking about them as domesticated house pets. After each cast member went through the devising sequence (consult narrative, free body into performance space, create movement) they shared their movement with the other cast members, and we picked eight that represented a general expression of cat from the group. Our popular movements ending up being line 1/look through, line 2/recoil, line 3/pride chest, line 4/arm stroke, line 5/box play, line 6/reaching, line 7/knock knock, line 8/leg stroke.

Once our movement sequence was created, we spent a lot of time playing with how to do the movement and how to make it strange to us again. After doing the movement over and over again in rehearsal, it began to lose its luster to us and we wanted

to rediscover why we connected with the movements in the first place. We played, rehearsed, and memorized in the weeks leading up to the performance. Rehearsal included a lot of repetitive action. Come to rehearsal, review the line movements, drill the movement over and over and over and over and over again.

While our rehearsals were happening, I was simultaneously trying to create a script, which, in my mind, the cast was going to speak while they were doing the choreography. I spent hours intertwining texts together from our personal narratives, watching old instructional Bauhaus VHS tapes with a T.V. and dual VHS/DVD player hooked up on my bedroom floor, reading through technical and historical writings on the Bauhaus I found in the LSU library, skimmed Derrida's piece again, finding the "A Prayer for Owen Meany" text I had used in my *Performing Poetry* class with the highlighted quote "your mom is so hot I keep forgetting she is anybody's mother!", taking favorite quotes from Tina Fey's book "Bossypants" (a recommendation from Dr. Terry), and reading through any other text that was recommended to me from colleagues, peers, and mentors. Then, the more I looked at it, the more my concept felt cumbersome. After a meeting with Dr. Terry, my faculty advisor for the performance, I decided to ditch my entire script and develop a smaller script that would serve as an introduction and road map for viewing the movement. What remained was a 10-minute prelude that introduced our professional and popular texts to the audience, but left the interpretation of how these texts fit together up to the viewer.

Around this time I was also thinking about how I wanted the performance to conclude. From previous choreography experience, I knew I liked the aesthetic of a performance where the music ends, but the performers are still moving, and the lights

slowly fade to black as we see the performers still moving. To me, this signals that the performance does not end, but that it will continue long after the viewing of the performance is over. I decided I wanted to end the performance this way, but I wanted some sort of sound happening after the music faded out. That is when our personal soundscape came in. I assigned each cast member to find a sound from her personal narrative that could be repeated for a few minutes. One performer created an “exhausted exhale” that she could repeat (i.e. a light exhale of “Haaaahhhh”), another created a “birth breathing” sound that could be layered over top of the other (i.e. “hee hee hooo, hee hee hooo,” inhaling on the hee’s and exhaling on hooo), and finally the other cast member created a “hard to breathe” sound that was layered over the other two (i.e. a sharp inhale of “Huhhhh”). We decided to show this layering process in the performance having the soundscape start with the exhausted exhale, then layering the birth breathing, and finally using the hard to breathe sound as the exclamation point. This breathing soundscape happened as the cast continued moving throughout the space until the lights faded to black. As the lights faded, the soundscape faded.

At this point I felt something was missing. We had forgotten to create movement based off of our second writing prompt, a time we looked/gazed at other women. We spent a rehearsal developing movement based off of this personal experience, this time creating three movements instead of five. After our consult narrative, free body into performance space, and create movement sequence, we shared these movements with one another again and picked the eight we thought best worked for creating a movement sequence. Again, we named our sequence for efficiency in rehearsal, with this sequence becoming peer through X 3, puppet strings X 2, chest, peer inward, chest, peer inward,

carve stomach X 2, lay back, fall forward, hand to eyes, pull hand across eyes, slow reveal to left. This style of naming differed from our previous sequences because at this point we had “gone off grid” and performed within the Black Box, instead of adhering to our grid lines.

We wanted to go off grid as a symbolic way to show resistance to the Bauhaus rules, thus creating our own rules for the women of the Bauhaus. Instead of assigning a movement to a line, we created a choreographed movement sequence that would be performed in the middle of the grid. I also knew at this point that I wanted to show the audience that we knew they were “looking” at us while we were performing and that we were also looking at them too. I wanted one of the performers to come out into the audience and make eye contact with as many audience members as possible, while the other two performers remained on stage with an attentiveness and awareness of the way they look at their own bodies. I then wanted the performers to come together and create a statue that represents the way we look at other women.

As a group we decided the best movement sequence for the ending was to have Performers B and C remove their cat-eye sunglasses, looking at one another, while Performer D peels off, going off grid, and walks into the audience. Then, Performers B and C begin looking at and assessing their own bodies while Performer A walks through the audience and makes her way to the box on stage right. Next, Performers B and C go off grid and slowly approach Performer D and begin “molding” her into a statue. Performers B and C create a still image off of Performer D as extensions of the image and all cast members break and move to the center of the grid creating a triangle, with Performer C as the front point and Performers B and D creating the back two points. All

performers move through the second personal movement sequence together. Then, Performer D breaks away from the group and moves to the back right corner as Performers B and C walk towards the two boxes on stage left and sit. Performer C starts the breathing soundscape with the exhausted exhale sound, while Performer D begins ripping up the grid from the floor. Performer D layers into the soundscape with the birthing breath sound after 16 counts, and Performer B adds in with the hard to breathe sound 16 counts after Performer D starts. The soundscape repeats while Performer D continues to tear up the grid, the lights slowly fade, the soundscape slowly fades, blackout.

Step 4: Find the Aesthetic

During our movement rehearsals, I also worked to find music for the performance and create costumes. As with my original performance in Dr. Terry's class, finding music consisted of another Spotify rabbit hole. After sifting and sifting and sifting through instrumental music, I stumbled upon a playlist titled, "our bodies, our beats." This playlist featured, "female DJ producers, composers, and other badass women in electronica." I started at the beginning of the 51 song, 4 hour and 26 minute playlist, listening to the first 30-45 seconds of a song to see if it "spoke to me." I created my own playlist titled, "LOOK! Musiq" and added any song I liked to it. After I went through the whole playlist, I turned my attention to my own. I don't remember exactly how many songs I had added, but I believe it was between 12-15. Again, I wanted to edit it down to just four songs. The criteria for acceptance into the show playlist came down to the length of each song, how the songs flowed and worked together, if it met the Bauhaus aesthetic, and audience appeal. After hours and hours, I finally found the songs: "Heavy Handed"

by Rework, “Asphalt Kobold” by Lena Willikens, “Oblivicleas – Original Mix” by Magda, and “Fata Morgana” by Cio D’Or. I downloaded each song off iTunes and opened my Garageband app to edit and play with the music. I decided an order for the music based off of the order of our movement piece; “Heavy Handed” became the beat for our professional movement, “Asphalt Kobold” for our personal movement, “Oblivicleas” for our cat movement, and “Fata Morgana” for our second personal and ending movement. The original edit and cut of the music was 28 minutes and 40 seconds, but I kept editing and editing until I got it down to 22 minutes and 18 seconds of music. With a 10 minute prelude, 22 minutes of music with movement, and a 3-minute soundscape ending, the performance would equal 35 minutes exactly which, because of the double bill, was the time frame I desired.

As I was editing the music, my partner, Nate, was creating and piecing together the costumes for the performance. I knew for the devising process of this performance, I wanted to bring back the craftsmanship of the Bauhaus Stage Workshops. I enjoyed knowing that in my performance a man was working behind the scenes with women taking stage for the performance. Also, I was just lucky that I had a partner with a creative side who could sew, because I cannot sew to save my life. We visited craft stores together, finding material for the costumes. I knew I wanted each cast member to have a special, Bauhaus inspired piece that would accompany black leggings or tights, and fit into the yellow, red, and blue color scheme. We found a red t-shirt, yellow, red, and blue felt pieces, yellow suspenders, red tassels, blue and red rectangle plastic tablecloths, red elastic, yellow, red, and blue poster board, pipe cleaners, and red thread. I had a hot glue gun and stapler at home and Nate had sewing skills.

About two weeks before the show was set to premiere, Dr. Terry came to a rehearsal to provide feedback. After watching the performance he gave two threads of feedback that helped solidify the show. First, he suggested creating a self-made briefcase to house the texts at the beginning of the performance. This would highlight the “do it yourself” aesthetic of the Bauhaus and show a connection between the three different monologues taking place. Second, Dr. Terry encouraged us to create “discursive soup.” The cast and I spent a couple of rehearsals figuring out how we could layer more personal narrative into the prelude, thus creating a conversation between the three texts. This included short phrases that could be said during the longer monologues that explained Bauhaus, cats, and the discrimination of women’s bodies in space. During this time we also decided that Performer B would serve as the “Bauhaus Historian,” Performer D would be the “Feminist Professor,” and Performer C would be the “Cat Connoisseur.” We found certain places within each member’s monologue where the other two performers would interject with “discursive soup” phrases to emphasize what the monologue was trying to highlight. Here is an example of how the “discursive soup” added to the individual monologues. To make each text distinct from one another I have left-hand justified the professional texts,

“right-hand justified and quoted
the popular culture texts,”

*and centered and italicized the
“discursive soup” personal narratives.*

*

The “neutral” objectivity of which Bauhaus pursued can be reinterpreted as a reassertion of stable masculine ego boundaries and standards of good design in a world of rapidly changing values.⁵

She looks amazing

Function over form
Objective over subjective

Cat calling noise

Mind over body
Health over illness⁶

“Your mom is so sexy, I keep
forgetting she’s anybody’s mother!”⁷

Detachment over attachment
Masculine over feminine

And then he shut the door...

And what should we say for space and architecture?

I’d consider getting some work done...

We simply do not understand who
we are until we know where we are.⁸

And then our knees were almost touching

This understanding is
not the same for everyone.

“The surveyor and the surveyed.”⁹

⁵ (Lupton & Miller, p. 47)

⁶ (DasGupta & Hurst, 2007, p. 3)

⁷ (Irving, 1989)

⁸ (Berger, 1972)

Physical space and social space
reflect and rebound upon each other.¹⁰

She doesn't look THAT good

And according to the lexicon of the architect, the skyscraper,
the crowning jewel of modern architecture, consists of a 'base'

I was a sophomore in high school

'shaft'

"Soon after we can see, we are
aware that we can be seen."¹¹

and 'tip.'"

It just felt different

Public space has always been masculine.
Few women, whether they like it or not,
escape the silent eyes, friendly comments,

"Their eyes go dim
Their limbs go slack
Their minds go blank
While we smile like lunatics
As we take yet another selfie
And they've discovered
A camera really can steal one's soul."¹²

And obscene gestures men presume they can impose upon any woman
passing by. Contrary to popular belief, men do not [exert power in
public] because they are out of control, but as a way of maintaining it...

He watched me walk back and forth to the car

⁹ (Berger, 1972, p. 46)

¹⁰ (Weisman, 1994, p. 9)

¹¹ (Berger, 1972, p. 9)

¹² (Francesco Marciuliano, 2012)

to keep women “in their place,” “in line,”
and in a constant state of fear.¹³

It was in the middle of the day

*

By adding in the “discursive soup” text, we were able to articulate how the different texts of the MyStory method related to one another for us, but left it ambiguous enough that the audience would be able to form their own opinion on the relationship. Each piece of feedback provided by Dr. Terry gave my cast and me something to work on in the weeks leading up to our performance.

Our tech rehearsal took place two weekends before the show premiered, but we had already been using lighting and audio in our rehearsals leading up to it. So, the lighting design was already forming in my mind. I had been working with the colors yellow, red, and blue and wanted to use those primary colors as a constraint on the performance. Our Black Box manager helped me design the lights into more than I imagined. During the beginning introduction, we used white, florescent type lighting, but as the introduction continued the yellow, red, and blue lights slowly began to appear around the space. We saw this as a signal or an entry into a dreamlike space that would become the movement part of the performance. The lights slowly flooded in and once the last cast member finished speaking, and exited, the lights would go black, and then the space would be highlighted in yellow, red, and blue for the remainder of the performance, but alternating in terms of “dominant” color for each movement/text sequence. For example, the Bauhaus sequence was an even amount of yellow, red, and blue, the

¹³ (Weisman, 1994, p. 69)

personal sequence was primarily red with hints of blue, the cat sequence was primarily yellow with hints of blue, and the second personal movement/ending sequence was primarily blue with small hints of red. I theorized that these subtle aesthetic choices gave each movement sequence its own personality.

Step 5: Perform for an Audience

Days before the show, I began creating house music after Dr. Terry advised that LOOK! go first in a double bill with Gloryfire, a peer's performance. I wanted the music to compliment the show's themes. The house music playlist "HBB House Musiq" included "Somebody's Watching Me" by Rockwell, "Black Cat" by Janet Jackson, "Machine" by Misterwives, and "Let the Light In" by Misterwives. The first two songs were nostalgic and reminded me of the themes of looking and cats that were present within the show. The last two songs were songs from my favorite album, *Connect the Dots*, by my favorite band. Each song offered a take on gazing practices and the social/political institutions I was trying to criticize. For the actual performance, I assisted with lights and audio, sitting in the technical booth with our Black Box manager and observing the show the cast and I had created from above the crowd. I remember our manager whispering, "This is an amazing show" during one of the performances and feeling really proud as I watched the audience view the show.

After the show premiered in April of 2018, I submitted a proposal to travel the show to the Petit Jean Performance Festival. I contacted my show advisor Dr. Terry and my dissertation advisor Dr. Shaffer, who was in charge of the HopKins Black Box Board of directors, to alert them of my interest. This board met in May to make decisions for the

upcoming year's performance line up. The board accepted my request to travel the show to the festival in Morrilton, Arkansas in October 2018.

Step 6: Repeat Steps 1-5

After what felt like a LONG summer break, we returned to LSU's campus for the fall semester of 2018. After a few weeks of getting settled back into school, we began rehearsing for LOOK! again. However, one of our cast members had successfully graduated from our Master's program in the summer and found a job in New Orleans, which meant we were down a cast member. I thought about finding a replacement, but because we had less time to rehearse and memorize the choreography, teaching the whole show to someone in a short amount of time felt impossible. After speaking with the other two performers, I was gently nudged into performing in the piece myself.

I was surprised at how fast the choreography came to me in the rehearsals leading up to Petit Jean. I had not performed in the original version, but during our rehearsals for the initial performance, I was constantly doing the choreography with the performers, watching it, giving feedback, etc. That is to say, I spent A LOT of time with the material. And, I have had a lifetime of experience of "picking up" choreography quickly in dance classes and conventions. I remember the other two performers speaking to my ability to memorize the movement sequences quicker than they had learned the movement for the original performance. To them it was an impressive skill; to me it was second nature.

The planning for this performance was relatively simple. We did not veer much from the original version, so our biggest feat would be how to perform the piece in a different space. The space planned for the Petit Jean Performance Festival was an old theater, the Rialto Community Arts Center, rather than a black box space. A few things

would have to be adjusted: (1) the lighting design, (2) the size of the grid, (3) the visibility of the grid, (3) entrances and exits, (4) costuming for myself, and (5) audio availability. A lot of these adjustments couldn't be made until we were actually in the space for our tech rehearsal, but a few could be adjusted in our rehearsals leading up to the festival.

In the Rialto, the stage is raised and is 28 feet wide and 22 feet deep. The first thing we would have to adjust was the size of the grid. Given our privilege of having a large performance space in the Black Box, we had the ability to make the grid as large as we wanted. For this performance, we had to adjust the grid from 30 feet X 28 feet to 28 feet X 22 feet. This adjustment may seem small, but for us it meant a complete reworking of the pace of our movement. We spent our rehearsals slowing the movement down, to make sure it synced up to the music the way it did in the original version. This was mainly because the audio for the movement was 22 minutes and we wanted to make sure we were still using the same amount of time so that our fade out ending with our soundscape would still have the same affect.

I was also personally concerned if the audience would even be able to see the grid. For me, seeing the movement performed on the grid has a special effect, and the meaning (containment, constraint, structure) is significant. In our performance space in the Black Box, the audience is positioned on risers, meaning they look *slightly* down on the performers and have a perfect view of the grid. The performance space in the Rialto is the complete opposite. The audience looks up to view the performance. I thought that the grid would not be visible if an individual is sitting in the first three to four rows of the audience. How were we going to make sure the audience got the affect

of the grid? One option was to project the grid onto the background behind us. Another option was to create a handout with a brief overview of the show with a page that just had the grid printed on it. Another option was to change nothing and hope that the stage was not as raised as we thought and that the audience would see the grid just fine. This is the option we went with and it turns out, everyone saw the grid fine and my anxious feelings and alternate plans were for nothing. I include this tidbit to illustrate that every detail of a performance serves a purpose and can lead to important considerations for the practitioner. For me, it meant that the way the audience viewed the performance was an important factor both for the audience's consumption and my analysis as a researcher.

The next adjustment was the costuming. The other two performers kept their costuming the same so they had no adjustments, but I would have to figure out how to adjust the costuming for myself that was coming from our graduated performer. Her original costume was a yellow dress, black leggings, and a homemade skirt made of red elastic with alternating red and blue pieces of plastic table cloth that had been neatly cut and stapled by my partner, Nate. The elastic band was custom fitted to the physical body of the original performer, so we would have to do some tweaking to make it fit my physical body. Nate spent an afternoon undoing the elastic band and re-sewing it to the measurements of my own waist. I spent the remaining hours of the night cutting new pieces of red and blue tablecloth to match the width and length of the pieces already on the skirt and stapling them to the elastic band. I wore black dance shorts with black tights underneath. For the top, I found the original yellow tank top I had worn for the first version of this piece in Dr. Terry's class a year prior in my closet. The triangle and square pieces I had sewn onto it were coming off, but it was yellow, which kept the overall

aesthetic of the performance, and I knew I wanted to wear it. I asked Nate if he would sew the pieces back onto it and he agreed. My costume was set.

I then turned to our technical needs. I emailed Dr. Jay Allison who was the festival director and asked if he knew of the technical capabilities of the space. Dr. Allison directed me to the Rialto manager, Lindell. I called him and asked about the lighting and audio capabilities of the space. He informed me that the lights could be changed with different colored gels, which they could provide, and that the audio would be no problem with a laptop hookup or music file on a USB drive. With all my questions answered and the show memorized, we were ready to head to the festival.

Of course, performance in a new space always comes with surprises. One surprise, for us, was the lights. We knew we could change the lights to red and blue with the gels, but we did not realize we would need a giant ladder to reach the lights. This posed a problem. We were also asked by festival organizers to not change the lights above, but we were told we could change the colors of the lights that were on the back screen. These lights were preset, so we settled with a red and purple preset that approximated the original aesthetic. We also had been practicing on the 28 feet X 22 feet grid measurements provided to us, but when we got to the space we realized that curtains, props, and an old piano took some of this space up. The actual dimensions of the space that we would be performing on would be 25 feet X 18 feet. This meant we would, again, have to adjust our pacing of movement on the grid to make sure our fadeout and soundscape at the end would still sync up with the fadeout of the music. We spent a majority of our technical rehearsal working on making these adjustments. We also had to account for the entrances and exits we would be taking within the performance and given

the small off stage space, we spent what time we had left figuring out how to not be seen while waiting in the wings.

With all these changes, the biggest difference from the original version was the audience. I was excited to travel the show to the festival for this reason. The audience in the Black Box can vary from faculty and graduate students interested in performance methods to undergraduate students who are required to attend the show for a class. The thought of showing my work that critiqued a performance method to a performance savvy audience was thrilling. In addition, a Performance Studies faculty from another school would provide a response and a variety of faculty members from other schools would address the performance in a round table discussion.

During the performance, I remember being focused on my pacing. I remember the beat of the music. I remember being nervous and fumbling a few words in my beginning monologue for the introduction. And that is all I remember. This is something I like to call the performance blackout. I got so wrapped up trying to make sure everything was going the way I wanted it to that I do not actually remember performing or what was happening while the performance was going. I just remember it being over and bowing. However, the feedback, both formal and informal, was memorable.

Choreo-Story Workshops: The Second Act

At the same time I proposed to travel LOOK! to Petit Jean, I also proposed to direct a set of workshops that would test the same devising process we used to create LOOK!, but create something else (Appendix C). The board accepted these workshops, which would take place at the beginning of November, two weeks after the Petit Jean Performance Festival. The workshops consisted of a two-week rehearsal with a one night

final showing of what we had created during the two-week process. I began recruiting participants for the workshops in October, about a month before the workshops began. I composed an email to send out to our department list serve, asking for faculty and graduate students to advertise the workshop to their students and to send the workshop information to individuals in other departments who might have interest. I wanted a wide variety of “cast members” with a variety of dance backgrounds. I hoped to get about 10-12 participants. I wanted participants who did not have any performance experience, and I was interested in seeing how this devising process worked for people who do not perform as often as individuals in Performance Studies. Drawing on Augusto Boal’s (2002) notion of actors and nonactors, I wanted the participants to understand that they did not have to have a performance background to gain skills and knowledge from participating in this experience (p. 17). I wanted to show, through these workshops, that anyone could participate in performance, specifically movement-based performance, regardless of background and gain something from it. Therefore, I advertised for, “dancers and nondancers” alike.

Step 1: Find the Texts

I knew after LOOK! had concluded its first run in April that I wanted the second version of this process to include completely new texts. I had been interested in Health Communication for a while and had taken a few graduate courses in Communication and Sociology on health, illness, and medicine. I decided I wanted the *Choreo-Story* Workshops to center around personal narratives of health. I also liked this as an inspiration for devising because it would invite a more diverse set of potential performers (i.e. differences in gender identity, sexuality, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc.).

For the personal narratives, I would ask the performers to free-write about a health experience that impacted their wounded body. Drawing on Mohan Dutta's (2008) Culture-Centered Approach to Health, I informed the participants that this narrative could be positive or negative and be based in physical, mental, emotional, or social health experiences (p. 38). Dutta privileged narratives as a site of exposing the relationship between culture, structure, and agency within health experiences and I wanted to highlight this notion in my work, but through body narratives rather than verbal narratives. Thus, the stories were not just surrounding the physical body, but were used to explore how the wounded¹⁴ body might have been implicated in these experiences.

For the professional text I decided to work with the movement-based devising method of Viewpoints. Like Bauhaus, Viewpoints was another movement driven method that I was familiar with from my *Performance Methods and Theories* graduate seminar. Again, the technique breaks performance choices down into the categories of time, space, shape, emotion, movement, and story. Bogart and Landau (2005) describe Viewpoints as a method of devising in a time of terror wherein you have a time crunch, large cast, but still want to make something successful (p. xi). I felt confident that this method would allow the performers to explore their personal experiences and movements in ways that we might not have thought of before (i.e. playing with different levels, putting movement onto props such as chairs, stools, and the wall, using different time constraints such as slow, medium, fast, etc.). This method and professional text also lent itself well to my own moment of terror: a time constraint of 14 hours of rehearsal, total.

¹⁴ The concept of the "wounded body" is explored further in Chapter Four: Agents and Agency.

For the popular culture text, I compiled a bunch of “mainstream” texts on health that related specifically to the personal narratives that the performers wanted to tell. Therefore, this text actually ended up being found after the performers were recruited and had shared their personal narratives. That is to say, sometimes the steps intertwine depending on what is guiding your devising process. For me, the idea of creating a movement piece about health based on the personal narratives of the performers came first, but I found the popular culture text could not be developed until after I knew *who* I was working with and the experiences of health that they wanted to share. Some of the personal narratives shared include themes surrounding hair, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, suicide, and motherhood. Thus, some of the popular texts included images of the pain scale, dictionary definitions of OCD, motherhood and emotion, social support, and BuzzFeed articles on hair.

Step 2: Find the Performers

My search for performers stretched wide. I had a faculty member contact me and say that he had sent the information to the English and Women and Gender Studies departments. I also sent an email to the Performance Studies focused individuals in our department. I spoke to a few undergraduate and graduate performance-focused classes about the workshops to recruit students from these classes. I hung up flyers in our building, the union, and a local coffee shop. By the time I was ready to compose my email for students who were interested in participating in the workshops, I collected 30 names, more than I needed. I sent out an email asking all interested persons to email me their availability during the two-week workshop period, Monday-Friday. I also informed them of an informational meeting the Wednesday before the workshops, where they

could ask questions about the workshops and to sign informed consents for me to film the workshops and possibly interview them after the process was complete. In the week leading up to the informational meeting, the number of participants started to dwindle, not because of the filming and interviewing, but because everyone was realizing how busy their schedules actually were in the last month of the semester. November is a challenging time to produce a show. By the time the informational meeting rolled around, my list was down to 10 people, which was actually perfect because I originally wanted between 10-12 participants. However, when the informational meeting happened, five people showed up.

A month before the workshops I realized that I would want to film the workshops and possibly do follow up interviews with whomever the participants would be. I met with Dr. Shaffer in her office and we walked through the IRB process and if it would be necessary. She directed me to Dr. Pecchioni who would have more information on the current IRB practices at LSU. After speaking with Dr. Pecchioni, she informed me that I could do the Exemption from Institutional Oversight application and all I would have to do is submit a form with my title, number of participants, advisor name, etc. They actually ended up emailing me back saying I need to “submit a brief project description, interview questions, a copy of your human subject training certificate, and a signed security of data agreement from you and Dr. Shaffer.” I emailed these documents back. They emailed me again saying the security of data agreements needed to be signed. I contacted Dr. Shaffer and we planned a time to meet. We each signed the forms and I scanned them in the main office. I emailed these back to the IRB representative and after a week and a half dance with IRB, the study was approved.

On the day of our informational meeting the participants showed up at our meeting time, 4:00 p.m. Here, I had the participants ask any last questions they may have about the workshop process and we created a schedule for rehearsals. Our rehearsals would be Monday-Thursday, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. for two weeks, with a dress rehearsal the Monday before our final show from 6:00-8:00 p.m. and our public showing on Tuesday, November 13 at 7:30 p.m. After our rehearsal schedule was established, I walked the participants through the informed consent form that included the title of the workshops, the purpose, the benefits and risks of participating, the right to refuse to participate, and a privacy policy. Once they felt they had enough information to make a decision, the participants signed and dated the form and I filed them safely away.

Our workshop was similar to the process we went through for LOOK!, but just A LOT less time and using different personal narratives, professional movement, and cultural discourses. In our workshops, we used personal and cultural narratives surrounding health. Instead of using the Bauhaus Stage Workshops as a professional movement text, we used the movement method of Viewpoints developed by Anne Bogart.

Step 3: Put the Texts in Your Body

After I guided the participants in a free-write I had them develop five movements, static or moving, that stood out to them from their narrative (similar to what we did for LOOK!). Once they developed their own movement, I had them partner up into a duo and a trio and share their movements with one another (and their story, if they wanted to). Once they shared their movements with one another, I had them develop, or choreograph, a dance sequence that used all of their movements, but that wove them together (similar

to the way the MyStory weaves its texts). After the sequence was constructed, they shared it with the other group. We spent about an hour learning both groups' movements and rehearsing them over and over to get them instilled into our bodies. At the end of a two-hour rehearsal, everyone knew everyone else's movements. For LOOK!, which had three performers, this process took four hours. For our five-person ensemble, it took two.

The next day, we developed our cultural movements. Based off the stories the ensemble chose to write/devise with, I collected popular cultural texts surrounding these themes, compiled them into a word document, which I printed and brought into rehearsal. The cultural texts included BuzzFeed articles, images surrounding health, web MD, health blogs, etc. We proceeded with the same process. They started alone and selected texts that resonated with them and created static or moving images with their bodies based on these texts. Then they shared their cultural movements with another person, created a sequence, and then shared this sequence with the other group (exactly what we did the day before, but with different texts). We then rehearsed the other sequences we had developed the day before. At the end of this rehearsal, everyone knew one another's personal and cultural movement sequences.

On the third day, we experimented with Viewpoints to constrain and manipulate the movement we had already devised. This was different than the Bauhaus in LOOK!, because it was not new movement to be learned per se, but it was the same movements becoming strange and different to us. Viewpoints is a composition-based performance method that uses space, shape, time, emotion, movement, and story. With the personal and cultural movement we had devised, we used this composition tool to experiment with constraining and manipulating the movement we had developed. We played with

duration, repetition, architecture/space, objects, tempo, and levels. This rehearsal was my favorite. We spent 30 minutes just improvising with the chairs and walls, asking “I wonder what participant A’s slow walk would look like up against this wall?” and “I wonder what doing these two movements would look like on this chair?” They experimented for about an hour total with making our movements strange and the strange movements familiar. I enjoyed watching them devise, experiment, and manipulate their bodies into positions and movements they may not have otherwise tried without Viewpoints influencing the structure of our performance. And what I love is that the ending was different every. single. time.

Step 4: Find the Aesthetic

Similarly with LOOK!, I wanted the feel of this performance to be sleek, catchy, captivating, and well-rehearsed. I began with the music, sifting through my Spotify playlists for catchy and appropriate songs. I started with my playlist from LOOK! because, again, I wanted the music to be instrumental. I began to fall away from the LOOK! aesthetic, though, because I wanted the music to be a bit more lyrical to fit the graceful and slow movement we were creating, which contrasted to LOOK!’s stiff and rigid movement. I stumbled across the song “Clear Language” by Balmorhea. I recognized the band and their feel from a dance piece I had been a part of during my time with the University of Northern Iowa Orchestral Dance Company. It felt nostalgic and I knew I wanted a song that fit the calm and graceful aesthetic developing. So, I kept looking. Spotify has an “Artists like this” feature when you click on any band. I clicked on this link and was brought to a bunch of bands that had a similar feel to Balmorhea. I clicked on Ceilidh and was brought to their song “The Plains of Dover.” I enjoyed the

feel and added it to my “*Choreo-Story Musiq*” playlist to listen to later. I went back to the “Artists like this” page and found the band Kiasmos. I found the songs “Looped,” “Thrown,” and “Swept” and added them to my playlist to go back and listen to later. I went back to Balmorhea and added a couple more of their songs and began listening to the playlist I created from start to finish. I loved all the Balmorhea songs, but they felt too “happy” to have as the guiding beat for our performance. I liked “The Plains of Dover,” but it was just too short in terms of time. I started listening to all the Kiasmos songs. I fell in love with the feel of the song “Looped.” I listened to it over and over again, finding the layered beats to which we could try and sync our devised movement. But the more I listened, the more something felt off. I switched to the song “Thrown” by the same band and had the same immediate reaction. “Thrown” had a catchy beat that started off slow and added in layers of sound that built up to a climax and slowly made its way back down. I imagined the performers moving around to this piece and I could hear their stories being played in the song. A sound that mimicked a “hair cutting” loop, a beat that sounded like the swaying a mother would do while rocking their child, an obsessive beat that compels you to move your physical body in a certain way. And to seal the deal, the song was eight and a half minutes, a length that seemed appropriate for the performance.

After LOOK!, I also knew I wanted the lighting to be anything but yellow, red, and blue. I really wanted to use purple because I liked the feel it created for health narratives, even though thinking back now I am not sure how I linked purple and health stories together. I went to the HopKins Black Box an hour before rehearsal one day and just started playing around with the light board and creating a color scheme that appealed to me. I settled for a general wash that included shades of purple, blue, and green. It

reminded me of a mermaid tail or some sort of under sea world. I wanted to keep the costumes simple, given our time constraints and the fact that costumes seemed to overtake my time during the LOOK! process. On the first day of rehearsals, I told the performers to find something they felt comfortable moving in that was a solid shade of white, black, and/or grey. Lastly, for the final showing, the performance space would be a sleek aesthetic with two flats, one placed on stage left and the other stage right, with one chair and a stool placed on stage at the beginning of the performance and three more chairs that were hidden behind the flats that the performers could bring out during the improvisation section if they chose.

In the last three days of our workshop, we began devising the final piece we would perform at our public showing. Early on, I realized this movement performance was not going to be the original 20 minutes for which I planned. We only had a total of six hours of rehearsal left, two hours of which would be a dress rehearsal for the final showing. Thus, we had four hours to create a piece and it was taking about 20 minutes to come up with just one eight count of movement. I also knew with my experience in dance, I would rather have five to eight minutes of a well-rehearsed and clean performance than 20 minutes of movement that was less rehearsed and possibly sloppy. I decided to start helping the performers create movement sequences based on the sequences they had created when they originally shared their movement with the other performers in the space. I felt the piece worked well as something they devised themselves, but had an extra eye putting it all into a whole narrative that could be presented on stage. The first half of the performance was rehearsed sequences of movement created out of the original moves each performer had shared with each other

and the second half of the performance was an improvisation section using the Viewpoints method to manipulate the movement we had chosen. In total, we had about five minutes of memorized and rehearsed movement and about three minutes of Viewpoints improvisation.

As the director, I also had an idea in my head from the beginning that I wanted the piece to begin in darkness with a loud, physical body soundscape filling the space before the lights came up. We developed a physical body soundscape together of the performers heels hitting the floor to mimic a heart beat with a single light fading up to reveal one of the performers sitting in a chair, facing the back wall, in a suspended stance with their legs in front and raised up from the ground. The performer was showing the “wall fist” move where they look as if they are hitting their fists on the wall above their head. The performer’s hitting of each fist synced up with the beat of the heart that the other performers soundscape was creating. From there, the rest of the lights fade up to reveal the remaining performers swaying on the back wall. The lights fill the space with purple, blue, and green and the music fades in to provide a catchy beat with many sounds layering over one another. We perform the remaining choreographed and improvised movement. The lights and music fade while the performers are still moving as if to say, “this performance does not stop just because the music is done, but continues on with us even after this performance is over.”

As stated before, I originally proposed that this performance would be about 20 minutes long, and we definitely created enough material to make it that long, but as a dancer, I knew I valued having the aesthetic standard be high and the length of the performance be adjusted accordingly. Honestly, I learned we needed more time. With the

14 hours total that we had to devise, play, make choices, and memorize, our eight-minute piece was more than I imagined it would have been. I wanted the performers and participants of the workshop to have experience in choreographing, devising, and playing, and I believe the piece we showed at the “final performance” showcased the skills they gained in the workshop.

Step 5: Perform for an Audience

Our final showing took place on Tuesday, November 13, 2018. I knew this audience would be a bit different than LOOK! given the structure of the performance. The final showing would consist of a performance of our final movement piece, a small talk on the process of creating the performance, another showing of the movement performance, and finally a talkback led by Dr. Ruth Bowman (a retired faculty member and MyStory expert from our department). I wanted the audience to be comprised of people who would participate in a talkback post show that discussed the work I was showing as a part of my dissertation research, and I got that. The audience was comprised of the Performance Studies faculty in our department, a few other professors I had in my coursework at LSU, peers in Performance Studies, peers in Interpersonal and Rhetorical Studies in our department, and a few undergraduate students who were interested in the devising process and dance/movement focused performance. I was pleased with our performance at the final showing and enjoyed taking the time to show what we had been up to for the last two weeks.

Step 6: Repeat Steps 1-5.

Patterns of Action: How to Sustain the Act

While working through the analysis of the question “what did you do?” I found that a sustainable, repeatable pattern of acts was created. First, an idea for a performance must capture your imagination; you feel compelled to make its existence a reality. For me, the wish for a movement-based performance created from personal narratives surrounding gazing practices sparked the idea for LOOK!, while the idea for a movement-based performance created from personal health narratives created the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. After the idea had taken shape, I found myself working through these five steps in both instances: Step 1: Find the Performers, Step 2: Find the Texts¹⁵, Step 3: Put the Texts in Your Body, Step 4: Find the Aesthetic, Step 5: Perform for an Audience, Step 6: Repeat Steps 1-5. In each event, after I landed on an idea, I worked through who I wanted to perform and how many performers, the texts I wanted them to find, share, and learn, the devising process of translating these texts into movement shared with one another, the aesthetic I wanted to create with the music, costuming, performance space, etc., sharing our process with an audience, and doing the process all over again. By establishing these steps, I was able to find small acts within the bigger act of the devising process that stayed the same and other small acts that changed slightly, or took more importance, from LOOK! to the *Choreo-Story* Workshops.

The Steps

First, the steps outlined above stayed the same regardless of the performance I was creating. One thing that did change however was the amount of time I spent on each step and the time that each step occurred. For example, for LOOK! the step of finding

¹⁵ A reminder that the steps are interchangeable.

participants went a lot quicker than for the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. For LOOK! I knew the three performers I wanted to work with a year before the show even started, while for the *Choreo-Story* Workshops I knew about a week before rehearsals started who would be participating. And, the number of performers for the workshops was constantly changing until rehearsals started. The step for putting the texts in your body took more time for LOOK! than it did for the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, because of the time constraints for each. For LOOK!, I had a year to plan the show and about two months of rehearsal time. I could spend four hours just working on creating and memorizing personal movement with the cast, while the *Choreo-Story* Workshops had about an hour to develop movement and an hour to teach it to everyone in the room. Time constraints can make the steps go a lot quicker and it might cause overlap of the steps as well. Through this experience, I found that with more time, I was able to see my ideas come to fruition with time to rehearse and make the show ready for audience viewing (i.e. LOOK!). I also found that with the shortened time constraint, as with the workshops, ideas for movement devising came more rapidly, but also created movements I would have never thought of creating. With limited time to work, I was actually open to more ideas and I edited the choreography less because we had a short amount of time to fill an 8-minute dance piece. Because of the time constraint the cast was also able to create movement without overthinking it, which allowed them to be vulnerable with the creation process, instead of allowing their minds to dictate which movements they chose.

When using the *Choreo-Story* devising method, the steps may overlap or occur in a completely different order. For instance, in LOOK! and the workshops, there was a lot of overlap with finding the texts and finding the aesthetic. I spent a lot of my evenings

after rehearsals finding music for the final performances, thinking about what costumes I wanted, and how I wanted the lights to fade in and out, etc. Often, the steps will be performed in conjunction with one another because that is the nature of creating performance. The steps are not meant to be performed in the order they appear here, but are more of a guideline or map into accomplishing all of what needs to be done to create a *Choreo-Story*.

Changing Order of the Steps

Along with the order or sequence of the steps, the importance of each step for a certain performance will most likely change. For example, for LOOK! the aesthetic feel and devising process seemed most important. I wanted to adhere to the do it yourself (DIY) nature of the Bauhaus Stage Workshops and really embrace the color and shape scheme associated with this method of devising. Therefore, we spent extra time finding and creating the aesthetic which includes developing a grid to move on, handcrafting costume pieces, spending hours finding the right music, and spending countless hours rehearsing the movement to appear geometric and mathematic in nature.

For the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, the recruiting and devising processes seemed most important. These steps took precedence for me during this performance process because I was really in a time crunch to find performers and develop a final performance of which we could be proud. I spent a month before the rehearsals advertising for performers, emailing potentially interested persons, following up with questions they had on the workshop process, creating informed consent forms, talking through the process, and getting performers to commit. I also spent a lot of time trying to recruit people from outside of Communication Studies because I wanted to show that an individual did not

have to be a dancer or even have dance experience to participate and learn from the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. We also spent the majority of our time devising the performance because of our short rehearsal time, which meant we would be spending less time performing for an audience (we had one final showing), finding the texts, or finding an aesthetic. Therefore, the steps will stay the same, but the importance of each one may shift given initial performance interests, exposure to texts, time constraints, bureaucratic constraints (such as IRB), etc.

A Guiding Text

Another constant for me is finding an initial text that guides the creation, or need, for the other two texts. For *Choreo-Story*, this guiding text is the personal story, which tends to influence the initial devising process. I always ask the performers to first write about a personal experience related to a theme I wish to explore, such as gazing practices or health experiences. These stories always end up guiding what the popular culture text(s) will be. It is also important to me that the performers, regardless of their experience with movement, have a connection to the material. If the narratives are something they have personally experienced or witnessed, they are more likely to genuinely engage with the texts and find images and movements within them.

The importance of a guiding personal narrative might not be the same in every cast, however. For example, you may find a professional text that informs the personal narratives of your cast and the popular culture texts you choose. During LOOK! I believe the Bauhaus Stage Workshops influenced my interest in wanting to explore the personal narratives of women experiencing the male gaze because of the Bauhaus' treatment of women upon its inception as a performance method. The women were constantly in the

background, crafting costumes and stage sets, while the male members would be the ones to do the performances. This knowledge of the method's history drove me to want to explore women's experiences, which then led to the popular culture texts of cats as domesticated, and often trapped, animals. The guiding text may change, but there will always be a guiding text that influences the other texts that will become a part of the *Choreo-Story* devising process.

Personal Aesthetics and Experience

My experience as a conditioned dance company choreographer and student had a massive impact on the rehearsal process and aesthetic of my *Choreo-Stories*. For the last 10 years, I have been taught to consider how music, costuming, hair, makeup, and stage set up will influence the perception of the performance for you, your performers, and your audience. Each detail must be considered and choices made based off of the story you want to tell and the aesthetic you want to create. Because of my experience, my personal aesthetic will always be different from others. Any director of a *Choreo-Story* should find their aesthetic in some way, to consider the atmosphere and the space they will be creating.

A director's experience and aesthetic will also influence the way the devising and rehearsal process will go. Maybe you will be a more hands-on director, using the performers' movement to develop movement sequences on your own. Maybe you will leave the devising process completely up to the performers, therefore acting as more of a facilitator. Maybe you will be in the middle of these two poles, like I was. During the first few rehearsals for LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, I really left the devising process up to the performers because I wanted them to experience what it was like to be a

choreographer. I thought that if I guided them too much, they wouldn't learn the skills of how to make movement-based performance on their own, but instead would rely on my expertise. As we got closer to performing for an audience, however, my dance company instincts took over and I found myself making choices on behalf of the whole group instead of considering the performers' opinions. This was because (1) I wanted to have a sleek and well-rehearsed final performance to show the audience and (2) it was easier to keep a group on pace towards a completed piece if there was one person guiding the conversation rather than four or six.

Directors will find past experiences and aesthetic tastes influencing their work. Embrace it and know that no two *Choreo-Stories* will ever be the same, nor should they be.

Keying in the Audience

As a personal act during both of my *Choreo-Story* experiences, I felt that a small explanation was owed to the audience regarding what they were watching during our final performances. Upon reflection, I believe this is based on my belief that audiences are not used to watching primarily movement-based performance. During LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, I found places where I could briefly lay down a foundation or guiding lens for how to view and make sense of the movement the casts were performing.

For LOOK!, this guiding lens came at the beginning of the performance in the form of a 10 minute introduction of each text. I had one cast member perform "Bauhaus Historian," one perform "Feminist Professor," and one perform "Cat Enthusiast." Each cast member took turns introducing the audience to our professional, personal, and popular culture texts while the other two performers constructed the Bauhaus grid that we

would be operating on, and within, for the remainder of the performance. After the introduction was over, the cast member exited, put on her cat-eye sunglasses, and entered into movement mode.

For the *Choreo-Story* Workshops the guiding lens came in the middle of the performance, but it also took up a majority of the final performance unlike LOOK!. To start the final performance, the cast performed the eight-minute final performance we had devised during our workshop rehearsals. After, I rose from the audience, stood at the podium and took on the “Graduate Student” performance, informing the audience what texts we used to create this movement and how it was a part of my large research project for my dissertation. After I finished informing the audience on how the movement got created, the performance ended by the cast re-showing the final performance again. Now armed with the information on how to interpret this movement, the audience shared during the talkback that it was easier to make sense of the second time they experienced it.

Because my performances are usually movement driven, a short oral explanation seems necessary, but is not the most important part of the performance. If you are using the *Choreo-Story* as a way to develop movement that will accompany a dialogue driven performance, keying the audience may not be important for you. For example, in October 2018 the HopKins Black Box hosted guest artists from Xavier University in New Orleans who were traveling their show “Institutionally Aggravated” (Flanagan & Moore, 2018). I thoroughly enjoyed this show and was intrigued because although the show was primarily dialogue driven, it was heavy with movement that I could tell was devised by the cast and rehearsed extensively. I was lucky enough to encounter a talkback after this show where

we were able to ask questions and hear from the performers and directors of this show. With my interests, I promptly raised my hand and asked about their devising process and creation of the movement that was incorporated into their performance. Dr. Lisa Flanagan, Brian Moore, and the two student cast members shared that the movement was, indeed, devised by the ensemble. Brian Moore, who has extensive training in ensemble based physical theatre¹⁶, worked alongside the two cast members, “train[ing] physically towards full body dilation and into improvisation” (B. Moore, personal communication, November 19, 2019). Through this, their movement vocabulary was established and movements were named in order to memorize the sequences. The script was partially done when the movement was created, and then revised once the movement sequence was established. In the talkback, none of them could really pinpoint how the movements got created, just that it “kind of came to them” in a variety of ways. They mentioned that movements were sparked from past experiences, but were not related to the stories they were telling on stage. To me, this meant that the movement was not the guiding factor of the performance as it was with the *Choreo-Story* method. Therefore, I believe that if I had not asked, I do not think they would have found it necessary to disclose how and why the movement was made. Thus, depending on your own use for the *Choreo-Story* method, you may find it necessary to disclose how the movement was created as I did. In contrast, you may find this disclosure unnecessary if you wish to keep the movement ambiguous, as dialogue provides some context that allows specific interpretations of the movement to occur.

¹⁶ In our interview, Brian credited the movement traditions of Lume, Double-Edge Theater, Viewpoints, clown, and Chinese opera as inspiration for the method he developed during his time at Hinterlands. Hinterlands is a laboratory theatre company based in Detroit, Michigan that he co-founded.

Cast Personality

Finally, I argue that this method often creates a cast personality and “bond” between performers. This occurred both in LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, but I have also found that any show I am a part of that uses movement as devising or warming up always creates a close-knit community among the performers. Judith Hamera (2011) refers to this notion in her book *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference, and Connection in the Global City*. She argues that dance and choreography, “include repeated contact [and] the slow experience of working, being, and living with others” (p. 149). Countless rehearsals and repeated contact (physically through touch as well as being in the same space) require being and, at times, living together. This time spent with a cast creates relationships, build bonds, and inherently forms a personality within the cast. This personality, I argue, is dependent on the performance the cast is experiencing together.

For LOOK!, the personality was one of strong, independent women who shared past experiences of feeling “used and abused” by the gaze of their male counterparts. This personality and bond was definitely led by the nature of the texts we were using to create movement together. It also left the performers and myself feeling empowered by one another that we had created a piece we were proud to share with others and one another. For example, Performer C and Performer D commented on becoming close friends as a result of this show and were proud to show it to the audience both at LSU and Petit Jean Performance Festival because it was work they had never seen in those spaces before. They also commented that they never left rehearsals for either show exhausted, annoyed, or overwhelmed, but were instead peaceful and rejuvenated.

For the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, the personality was one of empathy and respect. Again, this atmosphere was driven by the nature of texts surrounding health and illness. The cast shared intimate and personal stories with one another. Also when embodying another person's story and experiences, you empathize with them in a deeper way. Ann Cooper Albright (1997) highlights this empathic notion within her work stating, "dance foregrounds a responsive dancing body, one that engages with and challenges static representations of gender, race, sexuality, and physical ability, all the while acknowledging how deeply these ideologies influence our daily experiences (p. xiii). By the end of our time together, the cast would arrive early to rehearsals, stretch and share stories about their day, and I found myself being proud that they had created space with one another where they were excited to spend those two hours together. In both cases, this personality created during the rehearsal process makes its way to the stage when the casts perform for their audience. For LOOK! there was a feel of the performance being empowering; whereas, for the workshops, the feel of the performance created empathy not only among the performers, but also with the audience.

This leads me to believe that, regardless of how you create or use it, movement-based devising and warm ups lead to a group personality that is highlighted during the "perform for an audience" step of movement-focused performance. This personality is imprinted into the performers even after they leave and is something they carry with them through the rest of their life. This makes movement devising unique because the group personality is developed through bodies, allowing performers to explore one another's experiences and ways of being, relating without words.

Final Thoughts

In this chapter, I have analyzed the act that is the *Choreo-Story* method. I have done so through investigating the behaviors and patterns found in both LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. Six major patterns were highlighted through the identification of “steps,” or milestones, you will encounter while using the *Choreo-Story* method. These steps include finding texts, finding performers, putting the texts in your body, finding an aesthetic, performing for an audience, and repeating steps 1-5. Throughout the *Choreo-Story* process, I argue that practitioners will find that the steps will change order, overlap, or even reverse order given their directing preference. I contend that a guiding text will emerge as a basis to structure the devising of movement around, whether it is the personal, professional, or popular text. Each director will find a personal aesthetic emerge through the continued use of the *Choreo-Story* and other movement-based performance methods and through the use of these methods, a unique cast personality will develop.

For me, realizing that I wanted to constantly key the audience into what was happening during each dance performance through the use of short verbal anecdotes seems important. For LOOK! the prelude served as an ambiguous map for viewing the movement our cast created and for the workshops it was the short explanation of how and why we created the movement we did after the audience saw the movement for the first time and before they viewed it again. Although these verbal anecdotes became a pattern for me as a practitioner, I do not believe this is a pattern all directors need to use, nor should they. I believe I hold on to these verbal anecdotes as a way to help the audience connect to the movement, when in reality maybe I should put a bit more trust in them to draw their own conclusions on what the movement means.

In the next chapter, I discuss the multiple scenes within which the *Choreo-Story* method took place. By first analyzing the act, it is clear that where and when an act takes place is an important factor in investigating how the *Choreo-Story* method and its subsequent performances took form. Chapter Three analyzes the macro and micro level scenes inhabited during this process in order to better understand the physical, psychological, and emotional context within which the *Choreo-Story* method, LOOK!, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops took place.

CHAPTER THREE. THE SCENE

In chapter two, I discussed in detail the act of the *Choreo-Story* method that developed through the production of both LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. Through the process, we learned that the scene, where the cast was performing and for whom, changed the way we devised *Choreo-Story*. To explore this discovery further, I analyze the scene(s) for both LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops in this chapter. Through this analysis I hope to highlight the ways in which scene a/effects the act that occurs.

To understand the scene within which my act occurs, I start with four questions: Where did the act take place? When did the act occur? To whom were we performing? Within what context were we devising and performing? The scene includes historical context, space, physical dimension, and time (Pelias & Shaffer, 2007, p. 63). To explore the scene in its entirety, I examine the physical, psychological, emotional, and social/political contexts. Scene includes the total context of the situation, but is limited by the boundaries of what lies outside of itself (Burke, 1969, p. 143). That is to say, to analyze a scene one must realize the scene operates within constraints. The difficulty of analyzing the scene is one must explore all parts of the scene, but realize it lies within a certain context. Thus, while my interrogation of the scenes is thorough, I cannot explain all parts in their entirety. Therefore, I focus on the parts of the scene I believe had the most influence on the act of the *Choreo-Story* method. This includes physical locations, large institutions, social and political events from 2016-2018, the cast's and my psychological and emotional contexts, rehearsals for LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, and the final performances for LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops.

To begin this analysis I first explore the multiple scenes within which the original Bauhaus performance occurred, then examine the scenes within which LOOK! occurred, and finally analyze the scenes within which the *Choreo-Story* Workshops occurred. I begin each section by describing the physical context of where the act took place, then the social/political context within which each act operated, and conclude with the psychological/emotional context of each act. After I establish these detailed descriptions of each context, I conclude by sharing what analyzing these fragments of the scene does in an effort to understand the ways in which scene a/effected the act(s) that occurred.

Setting the Scene: The Original Bauhaus Piece

Before I begin an analysis of the larger performances of LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, I find it imperative to discuss the scene within which my original Bauhaus piece was created. In this section I discuss the physical locations of Louisiana State University's campus, Coates Hall, and the HopKins Black Box theatre, the social and political context I was experiencing in 2016-2017, and my own psychological and emotional contexts I was operating in while creating and performing my original Bauhaus piece.

Physical

Louisiana State University (LSU) is a campus filled with Italian Renaissance buildings that gently hugs the banks of the Mississippi river. The university is known for its tan stucco walls, red rooftops, and the live oak and magnolia trees that shade the sidewalks occupied by over 30,000 students. I was one of the over 5,000 postgraduate students calling LSU and its Death Valley "home" when I walked on campus in fall of 2016. I had visited LSU the November prior when I was considering it for graduate

school, but walking on campus on the first day of school has its own kind of energy. I was electrified and ready to tackle my first year of my doctoral program.

LSU is one of over 5,300 universities and colleges that reside in the United States. It also has over 120 higher education programs (LSU Graduate School, 2020). Unlike undergraduate programs, graduate programs are more research intensive, often involving a research project as a requirement for graduation in the form of general exams, thesis, or dissertation. As research expectations increase, the expectation of the audience for that research increases. This audience is often well educated, specialized in a certain field, and contained within a bubble of their own discipline. My bubble was Coates Hall.

Coates Hall is one of the many tan stucco, red rooftop buildings that shape the landscape of LSU's campus. It is centrally located between the Student Union and The quad. The quad is a centralized location on campus surrounded by beautiful buildings on all four sides. This leaves a shaded courtyard area where students spend time between classes studying, chatting, playing music, Frisbee, and any other stereotypical college scenes you could paint in your head. Entering Coates Hall from the quad side is so utterly gorgeous that, unless you are a student here, you would never know the horror that lurks in its hallways. Coates Hall is, literally, falling apart from the inside out. The building has not had renovations (other than the basement occupied by offices) in decades. The classrooms that fill Coates Hall are painted an institutional shade of off-white and are usually accompanied by one wall that is painted a depressed shade of purple or green. Students entering and exiting the classrooms have chipped the paint on the walls away from years of wear and tear and half the time the technology in this building (i.e. overhead projectors, projector screens, desktop computers) does not work properly.

The building is three stories tall. The first floor houses the Department of Communication Studies main office, the Philosophy and Religion main office, the HopKins Black Box theatre, the Matchbox Lab, various instructor offices, and many classrooms. The second floor holds more instructor offices and many more classrooms. The third floor holds all of the graduate student instructor offices for Communication Studies and Philosophy and Religion and the HopKins Black Box prop room. Coates Hall does have an elevator, but it only goes to the second floor. So, imagine trying to navigate to the third floor as a physically disabled person.

If you can make it to the third floor, a 10-degree heat increase and stale yellow walls will meet you with immediate forehead sweat. Also, the ceiling is slowly crumbling and the pieces reside in all the corners and crevices like concrete dust bunnies. I have walked the stairs up to the third floor more times than I can count. My office was Coates 327, two doors down on the right hand side if you take the stairs by the Communication Studies main office. As much as I give Coates Hall and its third floor horror a bad reputation, it was my home and I loved it so much.

I spent the last three years of my life within the walls of Coates Hall because, as I mentioned, it houses the Department of Communication Studies. I taught classes, took classes, rehearsed for shows, attended meetings and colloquies, held office hours, studied, laughed, cried, and slept in Coates Hall. The Department of Communication Studies houses Interpersonal, Rhetoric, and Performance Studies faculty and graduate students. I chose LSU for a variety of reasons. I had an interest in all three of their interest areas, my Master's thesis and teaching advisors both graduated with their PhDs from the same program, and it was the only program, of two that I applied, that accepted me.

The Performance Studies faculty and students of all levels spend a majority of their time in the HopKins Black Box (HBB) theatre. Some refer to it as a classroom, others as a performance space. If you find people who are really into Performance Studies they will refer to the space as an experimental lab, but if you find the right people you will hear them call it their sanctuary. The HopKins Black Box is painted black from floor to ceiling, literally. The floor is painted matted black, as are the brick walls. The ceiling is even painted black, including what were once sky light windows. The space includes a tech booth, a two-story crows nest that holds the audio technology in the bottom and the lighting and projector technology in the top. The lighting system is newly updated thanks to a grant written by Dr. Terry. A metal grid to hold the lights hangs from the ceiling on some, at times, questionable metal bars. The space has a large projector screen on the far wall that takes up the whole wall when it is down.

A smaller “green room” is connected, housing props, cleaning supplies, extra lights and other technology. It also serves as a hangout space for the cast before each performance. The HBB contains more comfortable fold out chairs that replace the day-to-day desks during each performance run and various props and platforms, which are also painted black. Depending on the show that is rehearsing in the space, the risers can be set up in a variety of ways in the middle of the HBB. Usually, the risers are “proscenium,” facing the back wall that holds the projector screen. The risers are set up in groups of three, providing three levels of height. This is how they were set up for both LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops.

Social/Political

I moved to Baton Rouge in August of 2016 and three months later Donald Trump was elected the President of the United States. Between the months of August and November, there was a lot of talk, joking actually, about how absurd it would be to have a reality television star in the White House. Scandal after scandal leaked to the news concerning Trump's treatment of and language surrounding women (Shear & Sullivan, 2018). At the same time Trump was also campaigning on a commitment to end illegal immigration at the Mexican border.

Not only was I experiencing this overload of sexism, racism, and homophobia from Trump as a woman, but I was also experiencing it as a woman residing in the South. Louisiana and its southern counterparts tend to lean red, so as a Democrat from Iowa I was surrounded by Trump's influence in Baton Rouge, on campus, and even within the classrooms I occupied (French, 2019). It had found its way into every facet of my life and dictated most of my thinking even outside of school.

At the same time the United States was experiencing political turmoil, The "me too" Movement was gaining momentum with its creation of the viral hashtag, #metoo. The "me too" Movement was founded to help victims of sexual assault speak their stories and connect with community advocates and other survivors of sexual violence. It is a movement to hold the perpetrator of sexually violent crimes accountable for their actions to create long-term, systemic change (History and vision, 2018). I saw #metoo flooding my Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram feeds consistently. I was overwhelmed by the amount of women in my life that had been victims of sexual assault. I was also outraged

that over twenty different women had accused a man running for President of this same crime.

Donald Trump was elected President of the United States in November of 2016 and was inaugurated in January of 2017. During this time I was filled with anger and resentment towards a political system I felt had failed me.¹⁷ Conversations surrounding women's bodies and the spaces they occupy were at the forefront of my life and my research. The Bauhaus piece I created, in retrospect, was my way to speak about how I was feeling towards the political climate and my frustration with the world. Moving forward, the events surrounding this election and moving forward would propel my work for this piece and its successor, LOOK!.

Psychological/Emotional

I have performed, taken classes, and taught my own classes in the HBB. I took Dr. Terry's *Performance Methods and Theories* course in the Black Box in the spring of 2017. It was my second semester at LSU, so I felt relatively acclimated to campus, Coates Hall, the department, and the HBB at that point. The first week of our *Performance Methods and Theories* class we sat in the round going over the syllabus and schedule for the class. Dr. Terry presented an assignment where one student would lead a demonstration and discussion of one of the performance methods we would be discussing over the semester. Then, this student would assign one of their peers to construct a small performance using this method and present it to the class two weeks after it was assigned. Everyone shuffled through their planners, trying to decide which week would be best for

¹⁷ Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by over 1 million people, but Donald Trump was still elected as our President.

them to lead a discussion as well as which week would be best to create a performance. My peers started calling “I’ll do the Meyerhold discussion for week three,” “I’ll perform Brecht in week eight,” “I’ll lead the warm-up for week five” as Dr. Terry scribbled down their names in his notes to create a master schedule. I was not in a dire position to have to do the discussion or performance assignment during a certain week, but I was interested in discussing Boal because I had previous experience with his methods in my Master’s degree. I felt if I could do Boal at least for one assignment I would loosely sound like I knew something. I said I would take whatever is left over for the performance assignment. Once everyone had decided on their schedule, Dr. Terry told me I would lead a discussion for Boal and would do the performance for the Bauhaus Stage Workshops. Prior to this course, I was not aware of the Bauhaus, a prolific art movement, but that chance occurrence in class that day would pave the way for multiple class discussions, an array of small performances, and two large scale performances in the Black Box as well as a dissertation topic.

The day my peer led a demonstration and discussion for Bauhaus he gave me a handout he had created that detailed guidelines for creating a Bauhaus performance. These guidelines included (1) choreograph a dance, (2) base the work in primary colors (red, yellow, and blue) and primary shapes (circle, triangle, and square), (3) construct and perform on a grid, (4) base the work in feminist performance ethics, and (5) eliminate human sound. Grasping his guidelines in hand, I knew I had two weeks to create a performance that I would present to Dr. Terry and the graduate students in the class, including individuals from Communication Studies, Theatre, and English.

That night I sat on the floor in my house with my laptop on the coffee table and starting googling “Bauhaus” to learn about the movement. Browsing through links, I was excited to find a YouTube clip, as I have always been more of a visual learner. To my delight, the video began to play precarious music and then three creatures appeared and started doing mechanical like movement along some lines on the floor. It was different than any movement performance I had every seen and, honestly, at first I was nervous to create a performance piece using this dance style. It was not what I liked choreographing and I could tell the mechanical nature of the movement was going to feel weird on my physical body.

A couple of days later I sat in the quad before class reading the book *The ABC's of Triangle Square Circle: The Bauhaus and Design Theory*. I was particularly struck by the information on pages 52-53. I was shocked to find a small excerpt on the treatment of women within the Bauhaus school. Women were removed of identity and hidden in the shadows, creating the costumes and scenes for the performances that would be done by the male students (Lupton & Miller, 1999, p. 53). The headspace I was in, given the political climate at this time, created a passionate response. Not only were women in the current climate being mistreated, sexually assaulted, and judged for coming forward, but now I was reading of the mistreatment of the women of the Bauhaus. Sitting in the quad under the hot Louisiana sun, I found motivation to create a piece for the women of the Bauhaus.

The next day I began constructing the grid on the floor. I started by creating a giant yellow square on the floor, approximately 30 feet X 28 feet. Then, I decided to create a line down the middle on all four sides, thus creating four smaller squares within

one large square. Last, I chose to tape a line down from each corner to its opposite corner, creating two diagonal lines. The final product was a giant square split into eight triangles. I loved this idea because it adhered to the Bauhaus shapes (circle, triangle, square) and the yellow tape visually exploded out from the black floor. After the grid was complete, I put in my headphones and listened to “Adagio for Square” while walking the yellow lines I had taped down. I rehearsed my movement for my performance for the two days leading up to class while my nerves began to set in.

On the day of my performance I was so nervous I am almost certain I spaced out the entirety of the first half of class, going over my movements in my head over and over again. As mentioned previously, my audience for this piece was a handful of graduate students from a variety of disciplines, most of which were older than me. I was in my first year of my doctoral program and a majority of my peers were in their second or third year. As a new graduate student, I was intimidated to perform solo in front of them, especially for a new method with which I was a novice. I did not know what they were expecting from my performance, and I did not want to disappoint them. I was also performing for Dr. Terry, a professor whom I admired and wanted to impress. It was my first class with him and I wanted to appear capable of a thoughtful and rehearsed performance, mainly because I knew I might eventually want to work with him as a part of my dissertation committee.

The first half of class ended and I could feel the energy in the Black Box shift as the florescent lights came off and the black box was lit with red and blue lighting. I tested my music over the loud speakers to make sure it worked. Hearing the rhythmic beat over the sound system in the HBB gave me goose bumps. I realized this would be my first

performance assignment of my doctoral degree and would pave the way for the rest of time here at LSU. I did not want to disappoint. As my classmates and professor sat in their seats, I took my place behind the platforms I had set up to create a “backstage,” nervously shaking to begin. One of my peers pressed play on my laptop and the rhythmic beat of “Adagio for Square” began playing loudly in the HBB. I gave myself thirty seconds at the beginning of the song to wait to come out. This was to get the audience used to the beat and to let myself have one last breath before I entered the stage. I entered the upstage left corner like I had previously rehearsed and began dancing through my rehearsed performance. A peer reviewed my performance as follows:

The music is loud, exciting, almost anthem, like something that would be played at a rave or a dance floor. The audience see[s] a vaguely humanoid creature step from behind the flat and begin moving among the grid-like pattern on the floor. The female creature ... has no face. Rather, she is wearing an opaque white featureless mask ... that has a jarring effect on her appearance ... although some of her movements seem to coincide with certain beats of the music, others are disparate, indicating no intentional connection between her body and the music. The frame guides the audience’s eyes, as she centers the frame on various parts of her body ... the female creature continues her movements until the music ceases at which point she [exits] backwards offstage behind the flat, with the frame clasped to her chest the entire time. (Appendix D)

This description of the scene highlights the physical scene created in this performance by showcasing the music, costuming, props, and grid. It also hints at the themes used to create this performance, by referring to me, the performer, as a “female creature.” Thus, a description of the psychological and emotional scene is shown through the eyes of a male audience member. I reflected on my peer’s feedback for weeks after my original Bauhaus performance in Dr. Terry’s class. I knew there was more to this performance and I wanted to explore the relationship between space and women’s bodies more. His description highlighted the voyeuristic nature of the audience, briefly mentioned in

chapter two, and I was intrigued by the relationship between performer and audience.

This post show self-reflection would eventually lead to the creation of my show LOOK!.

Expanding the Scene: LOOK! performed in the HBB versus Petit Jean

Many scenes within LOOK! are worth noting. In this section, I detail the physical, social/political, and psychological/emotional contexts of LOOK! as performed in the HopKins Black Box theatre and as performed at the Petit Jean Performance Festival. I end this section by highlighting the differences between performing the same show at two differing physical locations and its impact on the act.

HopKins Black Box Physical

At the end of spring semester 2017, I submitted my Request to Direct to the HBB Board of Directors and LOOK! got accepted to debut in April 2018. Over the summer I moved back to Iowa to work, so my performance took a backseat. When I returned to Baton Rouge in August 2017 I began meeting with cast members once a month to journal and share stories related to the show. Most of the work for LOOK! began in February 2018, two months before the show was set to debut. Between August and February I began compiling the professional, popular, and personal texts and brainstorming for staging ideas. Nate moved to Baton Rouge from Dubuque, Iowa at the beginning of February 2018 and was a critical asset in the creation of the DIY costumes for the show. At the same time Nate and I were crafting costume pieces, I was spending late nights at rehearsals with the cast. I would come into rehearsals at the HopKins Black Box fifteen minutes before the cast because I wanted to be able to set up the space before they got there. The following is a ritual of how I set the physical scene of rehearsal.

Rehearsal Space. I enter the HBB and turn on the florescent lights. I head to the green room where our breakers are located and turn on the ones for lighting and audio. I walk to the opposite side of the HBB and climb up the side of the technology booth. I uncover the light board and turn it on, which turns on the board and two computer monitors. I set the lights for each rehearsal to mimic what I can remember of the red and blue general wash I used for my original Bauhaus piece a year prior. I climb back down the technology booth and walk to the front of it. Lifting the curtain, I turn on the audio box. First I find the button on the way back of the board, then I turn on each of the speaker boxes one at a time. After that I hook my laptop up to the audio jack connected to the box and make sure it is turned to “aux.” This allows my Bauhaus music to play through the loud speakers as it did for my original performance.

Setting the scene for rehearsal was important to me. I always liked to have music playing for my cast as they entered the space for rehearsal. I thought this would put their mind into performance mode after a long day of teaching, classes, and homework. I also thought it might relax them as it did me. As they entered the space they would begin chatting with one another as I taped down our grid. We used the same grid I created for my original Bauhaus performance, but a bit larger scale so three people could operate comfortably on it at the same time. I would give them about ten minutes at the beginning of rehearsal to stretch their bodies, and I usually stretched with them. We would swap stories of our days, but eventually I moved to my director persona and asked them to begin reviewing what movement sequences we had created the rehearsal prior.

I value the entrance into a rehearsal space as a way to create expectations. In a sense, I was setting the stage for the way our rehearsals would run. Having the Bauhaus

aesthetic already splashed against the HBB canvas, the cast knows when they enter the space that they are entering a different world for a couple of hours. In one way, it allowed us to escape the reality and stress of graduate school. In another way, it allowed us to create a space that was just for us. Through establishing an aesthetic for rehearsals, I was able to create an environment that promoted creativity and intimacy. In this world I had created, we were able to share deep, personal stories of experiences of being a woman in a male-dominated world. This ritual of creating the physical scene allowed us to share personal, shared experiences and to bond as a cast. It made rehearsals something we all wanted to come to, rather than something we felt obligated to attend.

Rehearsals, to me, are the most important part of a performance because I deeply value the process of creating performance. The rehearsals for LOOK! created a scene that included creativity, passion, and interdependency. We relied on one another to take care of the stories we were sharing and be mindful when we put another cast member's story onto our own physical body. Through these intimate rehearsals, the scene for our final performance was created. This performance scene showed commitment to one another and commitment to the themes of the performance. Rehearsals created a cohesion that exploded on the stage.

Performance Space. The double bill show week consisted of four days with 7:30 p.m. shows Wednesday, April 18 through Saturday April 21, 2018. Each night the casts would be called at 6:30 p.m. The hour before the show started would consist of cast members changing into costumes with a group warm up at 7:00 p.m. After our warm up the cast would have about 15 minutes to run through lines and movement sequences to get themselves ready for the performance. Each night around 7:30 p.m. the doors would

open and the audience would trickle in while the “House Musiq” playlist I created would play in the background. Because LOOK! was the first show of the double bill, I wanted to pick music that set the audience up for how to view the show and hints about how the texts spoke to one another. The house music songs included, “Black Cat” by Janet Jackson, “Somebody’s Watching Me” by Rockwell and the songs “Machine” and “Let the Light In” off Misterwives album *Connect the Dots*. Lyrics such as “who’s watching me,” “I have no privacy,” “the man has come looking for you,” “don’t dare tell me what I should and shouldn’t do,” “told to look and act a certain way as if I’m just a ball of clay,” “the things worth while you can’t see them with your eyes,” and “release all the weight on burdened chests. A foreign state to feel weightless” flood the Black Box as the audience enters and finds a seat. As the cast waits behind the two platforms upstage, I sit with the technical producer in the technology booth. I observed every single run of LOOK! from this spot, cueing music with a bird’s eye view of the show.

“Let the Light In” was the last song to play before the lights dimmed, signaling to the audience that the show was about to begin. The whispers of the crowd died down and a stale, white light filled the stage, as Performer C would enter with the homemade briefcase suggested by Dr. Terry during his viewing of a rehearsal.

I offer a description of the actual performance of LOOK! given by a peer during a talkback which occurred the Monday after the show run. These talkbacks occur after each student created performance in the Black Box and serve as a starting point to create discussion and feedback about the piece:

I remember saying to myself, in the middle of this show, I’ve been to this rave before. Devo meets four square meets the colors of a Hot Dog on a Stick meets how many triangles are contained in this shape meets staying on beat meets walking late at night on and off the streets meets that self-defense cat keychain “I

don't even wait. And when you're a stray, they let you do it. You can do anything... Grab 'em by the – public space ... over time, bodies became slightly freer, at times flopping on a box, but never so free that they were able to completely color outside the lines. Until one performer removed their glasses, approach the audience enveloped in darkness, and through their gaze let us know that they know we know they see us seeing them. (Appendix E)

I valued this description of the scene because it highlighted, for me, what I hoped the audience would experience. There was enough text to create a dialogue, but not too much to where they were getting fed a specific story. The viewer was able to draw their own conclusions about how the pieces of this performance fit together and I hope it created an inner dialogue that would continue with them even after they saw the show. This description also spoke to the Bauhaus aesthetic I sought to create in this performance scene and described it in a way that anyone reading this can get a sense of the energy that was created in the HBB each night.

HopKins Black Box Social/Political

The social and political contexts of LOOK! as performed in the HopKins Black Box overlap significantly with the contexts discussed in my description of the scene for my original Bauhaus piece. To reiterate, the themes include a Trump presidency and the escalation of The #metoo Movement as a reaction to the sexual assault claims against him.

HopKins Black Box Psychological/Emotional

The psychological and emotional contexts of LOOK! as performed in the HBB also overlap significantly with the contexts discussed in my description of the scene for my original Bauhaus piece. These themes include graduate school intimidation, wanting to create a performance for the women of the Bauhaus, nerves surrounding the final performance, and a visceral reaction to my male peer's response.

When reflecting on his response, I was drawn to theory surrounding surveillance. I consulted John Berger's (1972) book *Ways of Seeing* and began drawing connections between women's experience in a male-dominated world to that of cats. One particular Sunday, I was binging Grey's Anatomy at home in my bedroom and my cat, Fallon, was staring at me from 15 feet away. My roommate walked into my room and I said, "Look at her! She is always staring at me from down the hallway. It creeps me out!" He turned to look out the door, chuckled, turned back to me and said, "maybe she thinks you are the one looking at her." Wow. I had been so focused on the way she was making me feel that I never stopped to consider that maybe I was the one creeping her out. I had all these thoughts racing through my mind at once. "I'm the voyeur," "Objectified," "I trap her in this house," "I dictate where she does and doesn't go," "She feels exactly like I do." My roommate's comment, meant to be a joke, drastically changed the way I thought of the idea of using cats as a popular text. Cats are not only easy for an audience to make a connection, but our treatment of them, both in person and on the internet, is strangely similar to the way women experience their everyday lives. This concept worked and I was excited to get to work on figuring out the intricate and precise ways all of these texts would work together to create a show. I also decided my show title this same day.

Petit Jean Performance Festival Physical

There are a couple of physical scenes within the Petit Jean Performance Festival worth noting. Here, I highlight the physical location of the mountain where we stay during the festival and the location of the performance space itself. Analyzing the location of the mountain where we all stay helps portray the intimacy of the festival and the closeness of the participants while investigating the performance space itself

showcases the ways in which LOOK! was adapted from its original version that was performed in the HopKins Black Box theatre.

The Mountain. Ask anyone who has been to Petit Jean Performance Festival and they will tell you it changes their outlook on performance, school, and life. Many people I have traveled to Petit Jean with describe time on the mountain as rejuvenation in the middle of the semester that gives you inspiration to finish out the semester. To me this rejuvenation feels like stepping out of a hot shower or a really nice facemask. It revitalizes my body in the middle of the semester and restores my love of performance. The festival inspires many to create performances of their own and most leave with a handful of new friends who travel back to their home state with the same feelings in their chest. Petit Jean is a religious experience. Every time we enter Morrilton, my heart rate begins to speed up as we make our way out to the long curvy road that will lead our caravan of cars up to the top of the mountain. The winding road comes with an increase in air pressure causing my ears to pop a few times as we make our way to the cabins. If we are able to catch this trek up the mountain at the right time of day, we are greeted by one of the most beautiful sunsets I have ever seen. As we work our way up the trail, we eventually get to a right-hand turn that takes us into the cabin area. We drive the car down the road until we see our cabin number. We pull into a parking spot and are welcomed by our friends from other schools. We are greeted with hellos and hugs and find that a door inside and on the back patio connects our cabin to Southern Illinois University's.

The Performance Space. On the first day of the festival, the faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students make their way down the mountain for the first set

of performances and workshops. We enter the performance space and each student finds a seat. Each school sits with the members of their university in a cluster, as the roll call is the first performance of the weekend. Most schools practice roll call beforehand and many are quite elaborate. The roll call begins with the host, Dr. Jay Allison of University of North Texas, welcoming all of the participants to Morrilton. He introduces the space and its manager and thanks him for letting us use the space each year. After these initial housekeeping notes, Dr. Allison begins listing off each school. He reads the names in alphabetical order, so we know that LSU will fall somewhere in the middle. Each school's roll call response usually surrounds a phrase or sound from the show they will be performing this year. Because the show was LOOK!, my cast and I became the unofficial leaders of the roll call. We went back through all of the catchy lines in the prelude asking, "what about this" and inserting the line we thought was best. We decided on, "Hey kittiesss" in the humorous, but sensual tone our "cat connoisseur" uses in the prelude script. Our presence at the festival is announced with an identity that will be reflected in our show and I become nervous.

This specific year, the usual performing area, "the away space," was under construction, so our scene for the performances and workshop time got moved to the Rialto Community Arts Center in town. The day we were performing LOOK!, I remember driving the twenty minutes back down the mountain to go to the Rialto and feeling an overwhelming sense of nervousness. We pulled down the road that the arts center sits on and parked our car on the right-hand side of the road. Graduate students from SIU who were smoking outside, awaiting the arrival of the rest of their performance clan, welcomed us. I went inside to make sure the stage was ready for our performance.

The previous day I had met my advisor, Dr. Tracy Stephenson Shaffer, and unloaded a few of the props for the show from her car. We carried them in the backdoor and set them safely to the side of the stage for safekeeping. I started taking the props from the side and setting them up on the stage.

The stage itself, as mentioned previously, is elevated above the crowd in the Rialto. The sides of the stage are cluttered with old props, an old piano, and a bunch of random cords. It is almost impossible to find a way to walk around, but the cast and I practiced the night before in our technical rehearsal. The back of the stage is filled from ceiling to floor with a large, white cloth and at the bottom a few LED lights reflect and change the color of the white cloth. In our technical rehearsal, my technical advisor and I had decided to have the cloth lit red and purple, as the space did not offer blue. I taped our blue grid on the floor and set the three black boxes we brought from the HBB. I made sure everyone had their costume pieces, Performer C and D with their original designs, and me in a resized skirt previously worn by Performer B. As we waited backstage, we could hear the audience begin to trickle into the theatre. My heart started racing and the other cast members reassured me everything would turn out great. I knew I had friends both on stage and off stage supporting me, but being a performer and director of the same show was intimidating. I realized in the moment I would not want to do this again. Dr. Allison began the roll call and we heard the schools in attendance. He called, “LSU” and our peers in the audience shouted, “LOOK!” and pointed towards the stage and the three of us wave our hands from under the white cloth and shouted, “Hey kittiesssss!” Once roll call was over, we were ready to begin the performance.

Petit Jean Performance Festival Social/Political

At the same time we were rehearsing for the Petit Jean Performance Festival, the news was filled with stories surrounding President Trump's nominee for the Supreme Court, Judge Brett Kavanaugh. Rumors had surfaced alleging Judge Kavanaugh sexually assaulted Dr. Christine Blasey Ford when they were in high school together (Edwards, 2018). The themes surrounding LOOK! were more prevalent than ever, with The #metoo Movement gaining viral traction and a senate judicial hearing surrounding the allegations against Judge Kavanaugh filling every news station story beginning on September 16, 2018 and continuing until Kavanaugh's eventual swearing-in on October 8, three days before we left for Petit Jean (Tatum, 2018). At the same time, I shared my #metoo story for the first time to show support for Dr. Blasey Ford and her testimony. It was the first time most of my friends and family had heard of my sexual assault, and I was connecting with the material in LOOK! more than ever.

Petit Jean Performance Festival Psychological/Emotional

The scene at Petit Jean is special. Regardless of what the performance is, the audience is motivating and engaged, and provides constructive criticism during the talkback at the end. Throughout this section I have mentioned Southern Illinois University and University of North Texas as integral parts of the Petit Jean scene. This is because LSU, SIU, and UNT have created a sort of small performance family that one can always count on to show up. These schools often share students. Some UNT undergraduates and Master's students will decide to pursue a higher degree at LSU or SIU. I love knowing that no matter what year it is, I can count on friends from these schools being there to provide support and laughs the whole weekend. This year,

however, I was nervous. Sitting in the crowd the first day of the festival I survey the audience. My dissertation advisor is sitting by her colleague Dr. Craig Gingrich-Philbrook from SIU a few rows behind me. Dr. Holly Vaughn and Dr. Rebecca Walker sit in the back left-hand corner, catching up because although they went to graduate school together, they teach at UNT and SIU, respectively. Dr. Andrea Baldwin from SIU, who I have admired since my first Petit Jean two years ago, is the festival leader. That is to say, this audience is filled with people who support me, but also with people I have a desire to impress. I hope they do not see my show as “unworthy” of being a Petit Jean performance.

When our performance began, I was the first performer to walk out on stage as I had taken over Performer B’s monologue and she was the “Bauhaus Historian” of the prelude. I walked out with the hand-made briefcase from the original performance and pulled out my red square, which held my script. I set it on the podium downstage left and began speaking. My nerves had taken over at this point and I stuttered over a few of my lines as my right leg shook from apprehension. I worked my way through my monologue and Performer D replaced me, set to begin her “Feminist Professor” monologue. From this point on my muscle memory kicks in. So much so, in fact, I do not remember performing the rest of this piece.

HopKins Black Box versus Petit Jean Performance Festival

Although the themes of LOOK! stayed the same, the way it was performed in the HopKins Black Box versus at the Petit Jean Performance Festival is drastically different. Here, I highlight three discrepancies in the scene that affected the way the act of LOOK! occurred.

First, the physical scene dictated how the act occurred. When performed in the HBB, LOOK! was staged in an all black space, making the primary colors burst from the stage. The lighting was much more intricate given our light grid, which allowed the lights to sync up with different movements in the performance or parts of the soundtrack. The floor led into the audience, allowing for an intimate and up-close viewing. In contrast, the “away space” we performed at during the Petit Jean Performance Festival felt more like a traditional theatre space. The raised stage created a distance between audience and performer, which changed the way they interacted with one another. The lighting was much more minimal, which created a lighter aesthetic than LOOK! had when it performed in the HBB. This made the primary colors lackluster, thus the aesthetic of the performance changed. These changes to the physical scene changed the way the performance was viewed, thus leading the act to occur in a drastically different way than it had occurred in the HopKins Black Box.

Second, the change in audience changed the psychological and emotional context of the act. When the cast performed LOOK! in the HBB, we knew a majority of the audience would have minimal knowledge of Bauhaus and performance methods in general. This allowed the cast not to overthink the performance, therefore subduing nerves. In essence, we performed LOOK! more for ourselves than for anyone else during its first run in the HBB. In contrast, the well-educated and performance literate audience of the Petit Jean Performance Festival incited a feeling of nervousness and inadequacy. We felt we were performing more for the audience than for ourselves, because we wanted to impress the faculty and graduate students of the other schools who were watching. This caused us to overthink the performance, which caused minor mishaps in the

performance. As stated previously, I remember being so nervous I began fumbling over my words at the beginning of the performance and I remember my legs shaking while we performed the movement portion of LOOK!. We had a need to please our audience. This altered not only how we performed the act, but also why we were performing it.

Finally, the political and social context of the scene changed how the act of LOOK! occurred. During LOOK! as performed in the HopKins Black Box, we were primarily influenced by the election and the virality of The #metoo Movement. The stories the cast shared during our initial rehearsals were devised based off of this context, which in turn influenced the movement created for the final performance. As we began rehearsing for LOOK! at the Petit Jean Performance Festival, a new social and political context was occurring, which therefore changed the stories we wanted to tell. The Kavanaugh vs. Blasey Ford hearings altered the popular texts we chose to include in the performance, which altered how the act of LOOK! occurred when it was performed at Petit Jean. This also transformed the cast's emotional and psychological context within the Petit Jean scene.

The Final Scene: The *Choreo-Story* Workshops

At the same time we were preparing LOOK! to travel to the Petit Jean Performance Festival, I was also preparing for the *Choreo-Story* Workshops to start the first week of November, with the final showing on November 13. While we were rehearsing for Petit Jean, I was recruiting heavily for participants for the workshops. I was also working my way through the bureaucratic scene of completing IRB to get the workshops approved as research for my dissertation. As previously mentioned, I wanted the personal stories of this workshop to surround health narratives, and I had to explain to

the IRB Board that the participants would face no physical or psychological threats. I got an exemption and had participants sign an informed consent form saying they were not paid or bribed to participate in the workshops. After Petit Jean was over, I had about two weeks to fully prepare for the workshops while the show *Housekeeping* by Dr. Suchy finished its run in the HBB.

Physical

The rehearsals and performance for the *Choreo-Story* Workshops also took place in the HopKins Black Box theatre. In this section I briefly discuss the physical scene within our rehearsal process and during our final public showing.

Rehearsal Space. On our first rehearsal day, I entered the space early, as usual, to set up before the performers got there. I turned on the audio technology, hooked my laptop up, and played some instrumental music that could be used as “white noise” in the background of our rehearsal. I did not want to pick music for our final performance yet, because I did not know what the movement we were creating would look like. I decided to wait until we had our personal, professional, and popular movements created and shared with one another. I chose to use purple, green, and blue for our aesthetic for this performance and adjusted the lighting in the HBB accordingly. The performers arrived one at a time before our rehearsal was set to begin. The cast, besides one performer, was comprised of Master’s and first year doctoral students, so I knew they had experienced a long day on campus as I had in the past. I empathized with that and made each of our rehearsals two hours long as a result. This limitation meant that we had six hours to create movement for our final showing and six hours to choreograph a final performance

together and rehearse it. We were in for a quick two weeks. On the first night we began the way LOOK! did, with a 10 minute free-write of a personal health experience.

The process of devising movement for the *Choreo-Story* Workshops was, obviously, similar to that of LOOK!. The scene, however, was quite different. Although we still rehearsed in the Black Box, the fact that there were different bodies in the space made the act different. Each person brought in their own experiences and the way we shared these stories changed. This change in scene will be discussed further in Chapter Four: Agents & Agency because the agents of this act greatly influenced the scene.

Because we used Viewpoints as our professional text for this performance, our rehearsals scene varied greatly from that of LOOK!. We were not constrained to operate on a grid as the cast of LOOK! was. The cast explored the totality of the HBB, moving their bodies from one end of the floor to the other, experimenting with movement on the walls, and playing around with various props in the space. The use of Viewpoints as a professional text allowed the physical space of the performance to expand greatly, and we took advantage of every facet of the HopKins Black Box in our rehearsals and the subsequent final performance. The addition of two more bodies in the space brought more energy into the room. As a result of rehearsal process being similar to LOOK!, this cast was also able to establish a scene which invited creativity, intimacy, and interdependency. This again, allowed the rehearsal scene to be showcased during the final public performance.

Performance Space. To describe the scene of the public showing, I consult the response written by Dr. Raquel Polanco that was shared the following Monday at our talkback regarding the performance:

Audience members entered the space and observed an eight-minute movement piece performed by five ensemble members. The ensemble began in the dark. A spot light comes up on a single performer as a rhythmic ethereal music fades in. The lights come up to reveal the other four performers moving in synchronized rhythm, back and forth across the back wall of the space. We hear their bodies slide left to right against the brick. As the performers move from the back wall to occupy an otherwise empty scene, we encounter a range of hyper stylized movements: sharp angles, slow, elongated steps, repetitive gestures, contorted facial expressions, occasionally the faintly audible breath, moments of synchronized movements where we encounter one of the most audible expressions of the piece...1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8...The piece ends with what we later learn is an improvised sequence in which ensemble members free-style or improvise ... Montana stands at a podium and presents us with a description of the process .. and in so doing provided a caption for the performance we just witnessed ... The structure of performance, explanation, performance, response is really ingenious, both in terms of a research process but also pedagogically. On the aesthetic level, I was stunned by the level of and attention to craft and the repetition of the piece for the second time really highlighted the discipline both [the director] and the ensemble dedicated to this short, tightly rehearsed piece. (Appendix F)

I appreciated Dr. Polanco's description of the scene because it highlighted a lot of important factors about the piece for me. One, even though the audience did not have a map with which to view the first showing of the piece, they could pick up on small details and try to piece together a story to which they related. Two, it showcases the structure of the piece as unique and one with which I believe the Black Box as a laboratory could use more often for its graduate students. This structure could also be used by those using the *Choreo-Story* method as a way to share their devising process. Lastly, this response highlighted, for me, a feeling of confidence in myself. When I had to speak during the prelude of LOOK! at Petit Jean, I was shaking and terrified. During this talk, however, I remember feeling calm, collected, and intelligent. I believe it was because I had become comfortable with explaining my research. I was able to articulate the method's use of performance and movement and the importance of storytelling as research. At this point, I felt like a colleague to my professors rather than an advisee.

Social/Political

The year prior to the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, I was diving head first into research surrounding health, communication, and identity. I was interested in health narratives because of my increase in anxiety when I started graduate school and moved across the country. I wanted to learn more about why I was experiencing the feelings and emotions that I was. I enrolled in Dr. Mark Walker's *Sociology of Mental Health* course fall 2017. During this class, I learned that mental health is a social construction and I resonated with this idea having learned about the social construction of reality in my communication courses. That is, "mental health does not exist in a material way, but only as an abstraction inferred on the basis of subjective standards" (Aneshensel, Phelan, & Bierman, 2013, p. 4). Mental health only gets meaning by the meaning our culture assigns to it and I knew the general public labeled mental health as a stigma. That is, deviant or "taboo." I learned more about mental health being impacted by gender, race and ethnicity, location, and socioeconomic status (Aneshensel et al., 2013). During this course I was able to see how my gender, change in location, and social scene of graduate school was affecting my anxiety and the anxiety of my peers. We constantly discussed how much graduate school affected our mental health and it made me realize that we were openly discussing something labeled as taboo by others. Although the stigma against mental health and illness has not necessarily decreased, there has been a rise in the public's willingness to openly communicate about it (Schnittker, 2013, p. 84). I wondered if the public was ready for a performance that discussed mental health along with other facets of health.

This same semester I was also enrolled in Dr. Loretta Pecchioni's *Health Communication* course. Here I learned that health is not just physical health, but also includes social, emotional, and mental health as well (du Pre, 2016). When it came time to share stories during our workshops a year later, I knew I wanted the cast to explore an aspect of health that resonated with them. Yes, we would be exploring physical health through creating movement, but I wanted them to explore other facets of health too. Health is influenced by a variety of social factors including culture, structure, and agency (Dutta, 2008). That is, the culture one is surrounded by, the structures and institutions that enable and constrain them, and their capacity to enact choices based off of these constraints (p. 7). These three concepts allowed me to draw connections to the MyStory method we discussed in Dr. Terry's *Performance Methods and Theories* course, and I began to realize how storytelling impacted the way we view health and various health meanings. I learned to privilege narratives as a way to discuss shared health experiences in an effort to understand how health affects, and is affected by, identity, relationships, social norms, and structures. This social scene I was exposed to a year prior to the workshops greatly impacted the way I viewed health and how I wanted to explore it during the *Choreo-Story* Workshops.

Psychological/Emotional

During our first informational meeting, the participants were primarily concerned with my expectation of dance experience. They had varying degrees of dance backgrounds with one participant having life long experience to one who had little to no dance experience. This was the exact group I wanted. I reassured them that they did not need dance experience to participate in the *Choreo-Story*. I informed them that one of the

reasons I want to have these workshops is to show others who are nervous about using dance in performance that anyone can use these tools to create performance and feel comfortable with it. We ended the meeting by sharing a bit about the health experiences they were bringing with them into the space. Hesitant, they shared vague details, but I knew once we were dancing in the HBB together that these stories would become ones they were not ashamed to tell.

During our two-week rehearsal process, we shared stories of varying health experiences with one another. These stories were based off of the cast's previous experiences, and included themes such as motherhood, relationships to hair, OCD, and suicide. Sharing these experiences with the others in the cast was hard for the performers at first, but led to a shared respect for one another that transformed into care when performing one another's stories. The cast shared that sharing these stories and embodying their cast mate's stories allowed them to both cope with their own experiences and understand their peer's experiences in a new way.

During our rehearsal process we also had a few audience members. In October, Dr. Suchy informed me that Dr. Ruth Bowman and Dr. Michael Bowman, former professors in our department, wanted to observe the process of creating a *Choreo-Story* as well as the final showing. I was excited to have them as observers because, although I had never previously worked with them, I knew their reputation as being "founders" of the MyStory performance method within Performance Studies. I emailed Ruth and informed her of our rehearsal schedule for the two-weeks we would be working. She picked a couple of dates that they both could make and I told her I looked forward to their visits.

One night when they were observing, one of the cast members was arriving late to rehearsal because he was a part of a class group that had an installation art assignment due that night. His partner and he had set up an installation on the side wall of the Student Union, so we all decided that we would walk over and observe the installation during our ten-minute break. I believe this was the first night the Bowmans had come to observe and I appreciated that they also came to support this cast member, and in conjunction, our department. I believe this scene spoke to the unity that the Performance Studies family at LSU has as well as the support they provide to one another.

Another evening when the Bowmans were observing rehearsal, my advisor, Dr. Shaffer, came to observe as well. This was one of the rehearsals towards the end of our two-week process, so by this time we had started choreographing a final piece to show. During our two-week rehearsal I had been keeping notes of the movements the cast had been creating in a blue notebook. It was filled with scribbles of names I had created for the moves and I used this as a refresher for when we began choreographing.

After Dr. Shaffer observed rehearsal, her comments helped us decide on a structure for the public showing. We wanted to show the performance piece first so the audience could view the piece without us telling them how to interpret it. Then, I would take the podium out to center stage and describe the process. After my description, we would show the performance again and the audience would, hopefully, have a slightly different reading of the piece than they did before. After this, Dr. Ruth Bowman would lead the audience, the cast, and myself in a talkback surrounding the performance and the methods used to create it.

Final Thoughts

By analyzing the scene, I have shown the way that context a/effects what act occurs, where it occurs, and how it occurs. Scene includes the physical, psychological, and emotional context within the performers as well as the social and political context they occupy at a certain time. Several findings can be drawn from analyzing the scene. These include how the social/political scene a/effects the psychological/emotional context within which the act occurs, how the physical scene places constraints on where and how the act occurs, how the physical scene a/effects the psychological/emotional context, and how all of these contexts influence what texts are used to created a *Choreo-Story* and the movements within it.

First, through the analysis of the scene I have discovered that the social/political scene affected the psychological/emotional scene, which influenced the acts that took place. This is shown first in my discussion of the scene during the original Bauhaus performance. The social and political climate of the Trump presidency and The #metoo Movement greatly affected my psychological and emotional context, which therefore altered the act that I created for my class performance. This same social political scene altered the act of LOOK! and how it would be performed in the HopKins Black Box. As we began rehearsing LOOK! as it was performed at the Petit Jean Performance Festival, the context of the Kavanaugh Vs. Blasey Ford hearings changed the way LOOK! would be performed there because it changed the texts we used as well as the cast's psychological context. During the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, the social context I experienced a year prior altered the way I viewed health and helped me to understand my own health experiences. Because of the social context I was exposed to, I was able to

learn more about health from a culture-centered approach, which enhanced my passion of storytelling as a tool for creating performance. It made me view health as more than physical, which influenced the stories that were brought into the rehearsal and the final public showing.

Second, the physical scene placed constraints on where and how the acts occurred. This is most clearly shown in the difference between how LOOK! was performed in the HopKins Black Box versus at the Petit Jean Performance Festival. To reiterate, the physical space discrepancies between each scene altered the lighting, the aesthetic, and relationship between the audience and the performers. During the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, however, the physical space of the HBB was explored more in depth because of our use of the Viewpoints devising method. This allowed the performance to differ greatly from LOOK!, because the physical space of the HBB was used in a completely different way, thus altering the act that occurred within it.

Next, the physical scene affected the psychological scene, which influenced the act that took place. This is most clearly represented in my original Bauhaus performance and LOOK!. The scenes of LSU's campus, our department, and the HopKins Black Box theatre all influenced my psychological context of being a graduate student. I was in a new space and intimidated by the people with whom I interacted. This greatly impacted how the act of my original Bauhaus performance occurred and therefore how LOOK! took form.

The physical scene also affected how the rehearsal process of LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops took form. I created a ritual of staging the HBB space for our rehearsal, which influenced both my psychological and emotional context as well as the

cast member's for each show. As mentioned, creating this physical space during rehearsals produced an environment for creativity, intimacy, and interdependency. Both rehearsal spaces fostered a bond among each cast evident on the stage during our final performance. The physical scene of rehearsals greatly influenced the final performances that occurred and how they were performed.

Finally, I argue that the physical, social/political, and psychological/emotional scenes all influenced the texts that were used during the devising process for LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops and therefore dictated what acts occurred for each and how they occurred. The personal, popular, and professional texts were a driving force in the *Choreo-Story* process and these texts were constrained by the scene within which the cast and I were operating in. Our psychological/emotional scene dictated the personal stories that the cast and I shared with one another. The social/political scene dictated both the popular texts we used and our personal stories because it affected what we consumed and altered our mental states. The physical scene influenced how the professional texts were used. Specifically, in LOOK! the Bauhaus grid dictated our movement within the physical scene of the HopKins Black Box and constrained us to create certain movement within this context. With the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, however, the ability to interact with the entire physical space of the HBB via Viewpoints allowed the cast to create an entirely different performance than LOOK!. This finding speaks to the utility of the *Choreo-Story* method and its ability to shape-shift when given a different context to operate within.

So far, I have highlighted that the scene greatly impacts the act(s) that get created. In the next chapter, I analyze how the agents involved, and their agency, impact the scene

and the act(s). Burke (1969) stated that, “the nature of scene is derived from who the agent is [and the] motivation within the individual person” (p. 128). In chapters two and three I have briefly introduced the agents within the act and scene of the performances mentioned. Agents are the essence of the scene and are intrinsic to the act within which they perform. In chapter four, I detail the agents performing in each of the movement-based performance pieces discussed in this chapter and their agency, which influences the act of each performance and the scene within which they occur.

CHAPTER FOUR. AGENTS AND AGENCY

In the previous chapters, I discussed in detail the act of the *Choreo-Story* taking form and the multiple scenes it operated within. I briefly mentioned the performers and audience present within these acts and scenes and argued that as the scene of the act changed, the act itself changed. Relying on this logic, it can be said that the agents can also drastically alter how the act occurs and the impacts on to whom it occurs. As the agents alter the scene and act they subsequently alter the agency of how the act is performed. In addition, each agent inflects the agency, or the how, of the performance.

In this chapter, I describe the agents acting in these performances. In short, I answer: who was there? What are their attitudes, values, and perceptions (Pelias & Shaffer, 2007, p. 62)? This includes not only the individual agents previously mentioned, but also the larger agents and institutions. Burke (1969) explained that the act could only come to fruition through “its derivation from the attitudes of human agents” (p. 175). I argue that agents not only include the human agents described by Burke, but also the larger institutions that are sustained through human agents (i.e. corporations, universities, etc.). Agents operate within a scene of constraint by performing an act. Below I discuss the agents, both human and institutional, that enabled my original Bauhaus piece, LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. For each section, I detail demographic information of each agent at the beginning of the section and follow with a narrative description of personality, psychology, and attitudes.

After an introduction to the agents within each performance, I analyze the agency of each of them, including the audience and cast members. To do this, I answer the questions: How is the speaker speaking? In what style are they speaking? In what

structure are they speaking? In what rhythm are they speaking (Pelias & Shaffer, 2007, p. 63)? I have chosen to address agents and agency together because the agents influence the agency greatly with this specific project. Agency not only includes the above-mentioned questions, but also speaks to others' attitudes and perceptions towards the project (Burke, 1969, p. 276). Thus, I discuss in what ways the general scene of each performance altered the agency of the cast members, the audience, and myself. Through this analysis I highlight how intrinsic the performers, audience, and larger institutions are to how the *Choreo-Story* method takes form.

The Agents of Past, Present, and Future: LSU Performance Studies

Previously, I have described the scene within which my original Bauhaus piece and LOOK!'s first showing were performed. The HopKins Black Box theatre has served many agents of Performance Studies since its inception in 1992, the same year I was born. Because of this, I wish to trace the lineage of my academic family tree through this space in order for the reader to better understand how the scene and its previous agents have impacted me as an agent of the *Choreo-Story* within the HopKins Black Box theatre.

Dr. Mary Frances HopKins established the HopKins Black Box theatre as a space for students and faculty to conduct research by way of practicing live performance ("About the HopKins," 2019). Dr. HopKins viewed oral interpretation and performance studies as, "both a critical discipline and a performing art" ("Mary Frances HopKins," 2020). Dr. HopKins (2016) believed in using art, specifically novels, as slant discourse. That is, creating art, "to see the glare of truth without becoming blinded by it" (HopKins, 2016, p. 7). Thus, slant discourse is an empathic and emotive discourse that encourages

audiences to identify with the performers, rather than sympathize for them. For example, *The Namesake*, by Jhumpa Lahiri, is considered a slant discourse, in Dr. HopKins terms, because it is realistic, contemporary, literary, elicits appropriate emotions, and the author is qualified to discuss the topics present within the text. She informed that the text is:

about a Bengali family who has come to America so that the father can earn a Ph.D. in electrical engineering at MIT. The novel follows them as they start a family, move from Boston to a nearby university town where the father teaches, return to India to visit, and continue their lives in America as they struggle to appreciate and be loyal to two cultures. (HopKins, 2016, p. 10)

We can trust the author's description of the world in the text based off the qualifications of the main characters and the realistic and contemporary nature of the text. Dr. HopKins viewed slant discourse and live performance as a way for humans to connect and learn with one another. Therefore, "telling it slant" could be viewed as a form of agency through which an agent performs an act.

I am two degrees of separation away from Dr. HopKins with our link being my current doctoral advisor and Dr. HopKins pupil, Dr. Tracy Stephenson Shaffer. Dr. Shaffer received her Bachelors of Arts (1990) and Masters of Arts (1992) from LSU while Dr. HopKins was teaching in the department. Dr. HopKins was her undergraduate advisor and remained an important mentor until her death.

I met Dr. Shaffer in November of 2015, a couple of months before I was deciding to apply to doctoral programs. We immediately connected on our previous dance experience and in her small, welcoming office on the first floor of Coates Hall she shared a video of her show *Rollerland* with me, which had premiered a month prior in the HopKins Black Box. We talked of our love of popular culture and incorporating it into the research we create through performance. She was warm, vibrant, and exceptionally

smart. I knew she would be an excellent advisor for the research I was interested in pursuing during my doctoral program as well as a great mentor through the program.

In 2016 Dr. Shaffer was the editor of a special issue of *Text and Performance Quarterly*. The issue centered on the theme of “tell it slant” with Dr. HopKins’ 2005 Giles Wilkeson Gray Lecture as the opening piece (Shaffer, 2016). Dr. Shaffer explained the value of *doing* performance and expanding what type of texts we study as well as how we study them. Dr. Shaffer cited Dr. HopKins’ lecture on telling it slant and added, “performance often tells the truth, but tells it slant” (Shaffer, 2016, p. 3). This special issue helped to expand upon Dr. HopKins notion of telling it slant because it opened up the possibility of multiple types of performances that tell it slant, rather than just literary works. I could see this way of conducting research thriving in the HopKins Black Box theatre when I entered my doctoral program the same year this special issue was published. The legacy of past and present performance studies and the agency of telling it slant created a pathway for me as a future Performance Studies scholar to find my own craft and way of telling it slant.

In Chapter One, I traced my path to finding my way into Performance Studies and desire to propose a movement-based performance method that used storytelling as its main source of creation. The *Choreo-Story* is a multi-methodological guide to devising, but its focus is on using dance as a way to “tell it slant.” If we believe that performance promotes identification and emotional reaction, then we must recognize dance as a means of storytelling, which uses body narratives as a way to evoke emotional response and identification with an audience (HopKins, 2016, p. 7). As the agent writing this dissertation, I find it imperative to share my perceptions of how the *Choreo-Story* method

developed. I view “telling it slant” as a form of agency that allowed the agents of each show to perform the act of the show in a specific way. To do this, I first discuss the agents of my original Bauhaus piece, LOOK!, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops.

Agents/Agency of the Original Bauhaus Piece

Dr. Terry: 36¹⁸, white, male, visibly able-bodied¹⁹

Audience: 21-36, varied race/ethnicity/sex/gender, visible able-bodiedness

Montana J Smith (me): 24, white, female, visibly able-bodied

Agents

The agents of importance during the devising and performance of my original Bauhaus piece in Dr. Terry’s *Performance Methods and Theories* course highlight the relationship between agent(s) and act. I begin with discussing Dr. Terry as an agent that impacted my perception of what the act I devised should be. Then, I detail the audience as a collective agent that influenced the way the act was performed during my class performance. Finally, I detail myself again, briefly, as the agent that led to the act of LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops taking form. In this section, I focus on my body as physical and gendered. The physical body is shown through the creation of the performance, which uses my physical body to develop choreography for my class performance. The gendered body “maintains rigid binary norms through gendered performance” (Defrancisco, Palczewski, & McGeough, 2014, p. 82). Throughout the act

¹⁸ These ages are at the time of the performance, not currently.

¹⁹ I feel compelled to highlight the lack of visibly disabled persons within my study. Margaret Quinlan and Benjamin Bates (2008) informed, “literature on dance and performance generally presumes that the dancers are abled-bodied ... disabled people are often dismissed, if not excluded, by arts training” (p. 67). It was not my intention to have a solely visibly able-bodied cast and audience. This is discussed further in the limitations of my study in Chapter Six.

of creating this performance and performing it in class, I was constantly aware of my body as gendered, disciplined, and objectified. This is shown through the performance themes and audience response detailed below.

Dr. Terry was an assistant professor at LSU during this time and has since been promoted to associate professor. He received his Bachelors of Science from Northwestern, his Masters of Arts from LSU, and his Doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I list these universities because the scholars of his academic family tree associated with these universities are of importance to my perception of Dr. Terry. I mentioned my two degrees of separation to Dr. HopKins only to parallel my two degrees of separation from Dwight Conquergood via Dr. Terry. Dr. Terry worked with Conquergood during his undergraduate studies at Northwestern. Conquergood paved the way for performance ethnography and qualitative research as it is studied at LSU and many other universities (1985; 1988; 1992). One of his pupils was Della Pollock, who would become Dr. Terry's advisor during his time at Chapel Hill. That is to say, from his studies I knew Dr. Terry was prolific in his own right in the field of Performance Studies and the practice of live performance.

The most vivid memory I have of Dr. Terry is seeing him walk the halls of Coates in tan corduroy pants, a plaid button up shirt, a navy blue dress coat, and a Chicago Cubs baseball cap. His demeanor is laid back, but if you know his academic family tree he might be considered intimidating, especially if you have no previous experience with him, as was the case when I entered his *Performance Methods and Theories* class. I was nervous to take the class and perform in front of him, but I admired him as a person and knew even sitting in a room with him would help me become more knowledgeable.

The audience of this performance would be filled with Dr. Terry as well as the other graduate students taking class. Comprised of Performance Studies, Communication Studies, Theatre, and English graduate students, I was, again, nervous to perform in front of them as a first year doctoral student who was still getting acclimated to the department and LSU in general. I would also like to point out that the peer respondent for my piece was a white, male, second year quantitative scholar with no previous performance experience. I believe this detail was crucial in his perception of my piece and highlighting the differences between our perceptions of the world.

As an anxious first year doctoral student, I sought approval from my professor and peers (I am sure other graduate students can relate). I was entering my first performance-focused course at LSU since my enrollment, and I knew this would be my time to show my professor and my peers my skillset as a performance practitioner. As previously mentioned, I have extensive dance experience so knowing I could create a movement-focused performance relieved my nerves somewhat. My background is in contemporary, modern, and ballet styles of dance, so creating a performance using the Bauhaus techniques would serve as a challenge for me, but I was excited to learn something new. I am somewhat of a perfectionist, so I spent hours creating my costume and stage ideas for the performance. I am also somewhat of a procrastinator, so I waited until about two days before the performance to begin choreographing and rehearsing my piece. I have always thrived under pressure.

After reading through *The ABC's of Triangle Square Circle: The Bauhaus and Design Theory* (1993), I clung to the image of the women of the Bauhaus working behind the scenes (Lupton & Miller). Given the current political climate, my mind was already

overwhelmed with issues of women's rights and sexism, and I resisted leaving that out of the work. As a feminist, I knew I wanted to choreograph a piece using Bauhaus techniques and aesthetics that critiqued itself in a subtle way, telling a combined story of the Bauhaus women and women of the present through dance. I believe my performance told this story slant and lent itself to a larger project exploring the same relationship.

Agency

First, I address the agency of the audience. My peers served as a catalyst for my own agency when I began constructing this piece. I knew they, as well as Dr. Terry, would be my audience for my class performance. Because of this, my perception of the way they would consume the performance influenced and shaped the way I devised, thus altering my own agency. I found myself taking their agency as audience into account constantly while choreographing. For example, while devising choreography for the performance, I created two movements that brought attention to my buttocks and vaginal regions. I contemplated cutting these movements, because I did not know how my peers would react to these images. But, in the end, I decided to keep them as a part of the performance.

I also knew there would be a talkback after the performance where Dr. Terry and my peers would offer feedback and constructive criticism. Their agency during this talkback also affected the way I devised. I wanted to make sure I was doing the Bauhaus Stage Workshops technique justice, while contributing something fruitful to the class. I wanted us to discuss the influence and outcome of Bauhaus on the women who worked on their shows and I used the audience's agency as consumer as a way to figure out how I could tell this story in a scholarly way.

The unique aspect of this performance, as well as the performances in the rest of this chapter, is that the primary agency of the act is dance. This performance is not written or recited orally, but instead relies on the movement and images created with the performer's choreographed body. The style of this performance is highlighted through the Bauhaus Stage Workshops. As previously mentioned, without this class I do not think I would have considered Bauhaus as a mode of devising, but the style of Bauhaus performance influenced and shaped both the devising process and the narrative behind the performance.

As previously mentioned, my dance training is traditional, so using Bauhaus as a mode of devising challenged me. Instead of my usual, flowy nature of movement, Bauhaus made my movement mechanical and robotic. As mentioned in Chapter One, the Bauhaus technique explores the capability of the geometric body in space. The movements are quite mechanized and I needed to figure out how to use this technique, but make it my own. During my rehearsals, I began experimenting with precise and mechanical movements that could be repeated over and over. I started with a walk, which consisted of starting in a standing position with my legs together, moving my right leg out while moving into a squatted position at the same time, and then moving my left leg back to my right and ending in the standing position that I started in. I could repeat this movement multiple times while walking a line on my grid; therefore this movement became the basis of my piece. I created another movement that consisted of a ballet "tip toe" in which I would lift off both heels, with both of them touching, and tip toe on the balls of my feet sideways across a line on the grid. I liked the contrast between these two movements, with one having a down motion and the other having an up motion. I also

created a neutral walk, which I considered my everyday walk, but became mechanical with a movement that would be added onto it. For example, on one line of the grid I had a “waving hand” motion where I would walk neutral, but raised my arm straight out from chest and performed a robotic wave which created the Bauhaus aesthetic. This is when I decided I wanted to frame a different part of my gendered, physical body for each line of the grid and use my three different walks to get from one line to another.²⁰

After the movement was created, I found the song “Adagio for Square” by Worakls that was introduced in Chapter Two. Using this rhythmic style of music, I began syncing the movement I had created with certain moments in the song to create punctuation. For example, the song slowly introduced different instruments through the course of five minutes. Each time a new instrument was introduced, I would introduce a new mechanical movement or walk into the piece. It was my hope that the timing of a new instrument with a new movement would punctuate this movement and make the audience pay attention to it more. I did this methodically throughout the piece, except for the end, which I improvised. I thought improvising the ending would make the music and movement potentially clash with one another, which I believed would add an interesting layer of how the movement and music worked together.

Along with the mechanical movement, the DIY nature of Bauhaus also contributed to the agency of how this performance was executed. The combination of the grid layout, the mask, the frame, the red paper lanterns, and my DIY costume contributed to an otherworldly feeling, as described by my peers in Chapters Two and Three. Bauhaus itself is a mode of exposing otherworldly feelings, as I found watching their

²⁰ These line descriptions are prioritized in Chapter Two.

videos (Hasting, 1980; Schliermacher, 1980). As my peer respondent pointed out, Bauhaus creates an allusion of asexuality for its performers, which can lead to the performers feeling nonhuman. The agency of the mask to remove my identity contributed to the aesthetic and perception of the meaning of the performance. Using the mask exposed the democratic approach of the Bauhaus, but framing my female body parts contrasted the treatment of the women of the Bauhaus with the democratic notions they taught. The agency of Bauhaus devised in this performance created a certain aesthetic that continued into my work for LOOK!.

Another major contribution to the agency of this piece was my attitude towards the performance. As previously addressed in Chapter Three, the general scene during this time heavily impacted my perception and the story I wanted to tell. I enjoyed the aesthetic that Bauhaus presented, but as I read more about the women of this school, it became evident that their story paralleled the political climate I was experiencing in my present day life. I used my feelings towards Trump's election and allegations of sexual assault to critique the way the Bauhaus treated their female students. I saw their story as a literary work that I could use to create slant discourse. I used my readings from class and my own experiences as a woman in a male-dominated world to elicit emotive response from my audience. I told my truth, and the truth of the Bauhaus women simultaneously, thus creating a slant discourse that my peers could discuss and that would eventually lead to a bigger conversation during the devising process and performance of LOOK!.

Therefore, the scene of this time influenced and shaped my attitude towards Bauhaus, and I drew on personal narratives to devise this piece, thus altering the agency of the performance and contributing to the agency of my future show.

Agents/Agency of LOOK! in the HopKins Black Box and at Petit Jean

Director (me): 25, white, female, visibly able-bodied

Performer A: 24, white, female, visibly able-bodied

Performer B: 25, black, female, visibly able-bodied

Performer C: 22, other²¹, female, visibly able-bodied

Performer D: 25, white, female, visibly able-bodied

HBB audience: 18-80, varied race/ethnicity/sex/gender, visible able-bodiedness

Agents

When I proposed a show to the HBB Board of Directors, I was enrolled in Dr. Terry's *Performance Methods and Theories* course, his *Performing Poetry* course, and Dr. Pecchioni's *Health Communication* course. I was learning about performance methods, testing them, and figuring out how performance and health related to one another. When I proposed to direct a show for the next academic year, I was certain I wanted my show to center around Bauhaus, women's experiences in public space, the emotional and psychological effects of these experiences, and cats. Because of this, the bodies within this section are seen as physical, gendered, and geometric. First, the bodies are physical because of the choreography created throughout the process. Second, the bodies are gendered through discipline and objectification. John Berger (1972) wrote, "Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. Women turn themselves into an object of vision; a site" (p. 47). The cast and I explored this notion through the personal and popular culture texts used to create the show, which highlight the female body in physical and social space, the objectification

²¹ Performer C wished to be described as other because, "there's a lot else in there too."

and commodification of female bodies through voyeurism, and the domestic nature of the house cat. Finally, the bodies are seen as geometric through the use of the Bauhaus Stage Workshops as a professional, which explored the mathematics of the human body in space.

At the same time I proposed my show, I had come across the book *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment* (1994) by Leslie Weisman. I became interested in how her theories regarding the private use of public space and architecture as social status critiqued Bauhaus techniques and highlighted the male-gaze in public spaces. Also I am a cat mom and known for being a “cat lady” in the department, so each of the three texts that created LOOK! come from a personal perspective. LOOK! was a performance of my experiences and interests, but I believed that a cast and audience could relate to these in an empathic way or share similar experiences and interests.

I employ a primarily democratic directing style. Because of my time with the Orchesis Dance Company at UNI, I value collaborative choreography as a means of creating a performance and use collaboration as a way to make the cast invested in the performance and to see their own story or experiences within it. During our initial rehearsing process, we collaborated as a team to create the movements for LOOK!, but when show week was a couple of weeks out, I became more authoritarian. I provided productive criticism and critiques to the cast members, asking them to clean up certain movements and to stick with the aesthetic envisioned for the show.

I began recruiting performers immediately after submitting my Request to Direct. While I provided a preliminary introduction to some of the performers, this chapter

provides further details that impact those agents and their agency. I contacted Performer A first, because I knew she had a background in dance. She attended the first meeting for LOOK! and provided insight into her own experiences as a women occupying public space. She eventually withdrew herself because of other academic concerns.

Performer B was in her second year of her MA when she performed in LOOK!. She was in the same boat as Performer A, wrapping up classes, taking general exams, and getting ready to graduate. I had many classes with Performer B during the first two years of my doctoral studies and got to know her well as a performer, cast member, and peer. I knew I wanted to work with her on this piece. I remember in February of 2018 we were traveling to Georgia together to the Patti Pace Performance Festival to perform in a show we had been in together in Fall 2017. We were sitting next to one another when another university was performing a Bauhaus inspired piece. I was excited to see someone else use these methods in a performance, but the only thing I remember about it is Performer B's comments during the piece. As a black woman, she pointed out the constraining nature of the Bauhaus on identity. To me, Bauhaus was a democratic method meant to create all performers who used the method equal. Performer B noted that one of the student performers was a young black woman who had a large, red hat on to conceal her hair. However, the hat did not conceal her hair because we could both hear the beads at the end of her braids hitting one another while she danced on stage. This sound made an association with black women and it made us uncomfortable because we drew parallels with the old, white men of the Bauhaus attempting to conceal a young black women's hair, which to some black women is a defining factor in their identity (Oliver, 2018).

Revealing the concealment of marginalized identities seemed important in the work I was creating for LOOK!. As a young, white woman I appreciated her perception of the method and took this into account when creating movements during LOOK!. It also led me to assign her the role of Bauhaus Historian during the prelude of LOOK!. I knew she resented the method in some capacity, and I relished the irony of a black woman assuming the position of the creator of the Bauhaus and, perhaps, telling Bauhaus' story slant.

Performer C entered her Master's program the year LOOK! premiered. I knew her from previous shows in the Black Box as an undergraduate student, her curly black hair, and her lively personality. She had little to no previous dance experience, which I found important when considering who could use a method like the *Choreo-Story*. I wanted to show that anyone could use this method and Performer C could testify to others after the process was over to encourage them to try it. Her personality and humor also served the prelude for LOOK!, as she was the trickster Cat Connoisseur who pointed to the similarities between women and domestic cats. She is also allergic to cats, which again provided a humorous irony.

After Performer A informed me she was withdrawing from the show I set out to find another cast member. Performer D was a first year doctoral student interested in dipping her toes further into the performances in the HBB. She identifies openly as queer and bisexual, thus contributing similar, but unique and profound experiences to the creation of LOOK!. As a heterosexual woman, I never considered what being a queer woman in public space felt like. I thought her insights contributed significantly to the texts that would be used to create the movement for LOOK! and would give the show

more nuance. I decided to assign her the role of Feminist Professor in the LOOK! prelude because the role was serious, but Performer D's demeanor and humor again, contributed to the irony of the role and the show as a whole. In all three, then, I drew on these agent's subject positions and personalities to work against the texts they performed. I hoped this would frame LOOK! as not simply a reperformance of the Bauhaus, but as a dialogic engagement with the Bauhaus.

The final agent of LOOK! as performed in the HBB is the audience. Comprised of a variety of Communication Studies undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff the composition of the audience would change each night during our four-night run. One thing would remain the same however; the audience would engage in the performance by looking at the others in the audience. They would watch one another watch the performance and look for other audience reactions/behaviors on how to look and react to the performance.

Now that the agents have been introduced, I explore the agency of each cast member, or, how they performed. First, I detail their varied physical body sizes and physical abilities to highlight how each individual contributed different movements to the act of LOOK!. Next, I explain how the audience as agent impacted the agency of LOOK! through becoming the fourth performer. Last, I explain how the use of personal narratives, professional texts, and popular texts through the method of the *Choreo-Story* (by way of LOOK!) allow for performance, specifically dance, to "tell it slant."

Agency

I felt using varying physical body sizes and physical appearances an important aspect of LOOK! for many reasons. One of these reasons is that each cast member

brought a different way of being in the world, physically, that allowed for movement to be created and performed differently from the director. I valued that each cast member was different from me and could bring a diverse way of moving to the piece. The cast and I experimented with how we could use each person's physical body to speak more to the themes of the performance. The following illustrates this part of agency.

During our creation of the popular culture cat movement, we experimented with popular perceptions of cats. One is that cats enjoy attempting to squeeze into tiny spaces, such as a small box. We took two of the medium sized black boxes (approximately 2 feet X 2 feet) that are used for props within the HBB and put them close enough together to create a tight space that we could attempt to squeeze our own bodies into. Performer B stated that her physical body would not allow her to contort between the boxes.

Performer C was more petite and could squeeze into the space, but the choice did not feel forced, like we were attempting to show. Performer D is almost six feet tall and thin. We kept the boxes the same amount of space apart as we did for Performer C, who is about five feet tall. As Performer D contorted her physical body into the small space between the boxes, the rest of us began to cringe and laugh. It hurt just to watch her try and fit into the space. Eventually she fit, with her buttocks on the ground between the boxes, her legs and torso folded towards one another, and her arms left flopped on top of her knees. She looked similar to a cat that was attempting to fit into a small space. Performer D's gendered body doing this movement showcased the idea that women are constantly attempting to squeeze and fit into garments and spaces every day of their lives. We felt this image to showcased the narrative that we had all experienced. If a different gendered

body would have done this movement during the performance, I do not think the audience would have accurately read the theme we were trying to express.

In contrast, when developing the “birth walk” during rehearsals, it became interesting to see how the different bodies performed this movement at the same time. Performer B was the one who developed this movement originally, but when she showed it to the rest of the cast, I had them all try doing the movement at the same time. With their hands pressed to their hips and knees bent, each chose a line to perform the “birth walk” on simultaneously. I noticed the contrasting ways this movement was being done and found it intriguing to consider the ways in which women’s bodies are consumed. In this instance, each performer’s physical body being different helped aesthetically to consider how women’s bodies are viewed in our every day lives. I decided to add this sequence to the final version of LOOK! and this movement in particular got many comments during our talkback following the show.

The cast also brought their own personalities and past experiences into the devising process and performance, which contributed to the agency of LOOK!. As previously mentioned, each cast member wrote about their experiences as a woman in public spaces as well as times they had objectified women themselves. The cast not only brought their own experiences into the performance, but also made these experiences the driving force of the piece. Using their personal narratives, as well as my own, meant that the agency of LOOK! emerged from our lived experience. If a different person had joined our cast, LOOK! would have completely changed. For example, when Performer A was first a part of LOOK!, she brought her own narrative of a classmate performing a piece about her in class. Although she did not get to create movement about this piece, I believe

she would have created images that would have altered the way LOOK! was performed and perceived. Similarly, when Performer D entered as a cast member, she brought a different narrative and experience into the devising process. She shared a story of being in a professor's office and feeling uncomfortable that their knees were almost touching. We used this image of knees almost touching to create a lot of the box movement used in the performance. Without Performer D's story, the agency of how this movement was done during the performance would have been different, or it would not have been there at all.

Also, the agency of LOOK! is not the same without the live audience. At the talkback following LOOK!, audience members admitted they would catch themselves watching other members of the audience watch the performance. For example, one of my professors mentioned how she became hyper-aware of her own gazing practices while watching the audience members in front and beside her watch the performers. She explained that this made her experience the show completely differently once she realized she was watching other audience members, because it exacerbated the critique of gazing practices that she was already comprehending by watching the cast members perform. I enjoyed this comment from her as it made me realize that even during my original Bauhaus piece in Dr. Terry's class, the audience became a fourth performer by watching me perform my piece. Although they were not interacting with me, they were forming their own opinions of what was happening and what the piece would be about. It reminded me of Brecht's (1901) alienation effect, in which those watching the performance leave realizing that the performance they saw was not strange, but that the

world they occupy every day is strange (p. 2). I wanted this to become a leading form of agency for the *Choreo-Story* method moving forward.

As an expansion of my original Bauhaus piece, it is no surprise that the main force of agency present within LOOK! is the emotive discourse of “telling it slant.” Not only were we exposing the literary narrative of the treatment of the Bauhaus women, but we were connecting our own experiences of being women in public spaces as a way to relate to them. We were also using the popular culture text of cats to highlight the absurdity that women experience in their lives (i.e. attempting to squeeze into small spaces and garments, being domesticated, etc.). I believe the *Choreo-Story* method allows for a distinct mode of telling it slant, because it creates stories with bodies. It also interweaves multiple narratives together, creating a special emotive discourse that the audience can experience. Similar to Brecht’s (1901) alienation effect, *Choreo-Story* uses slant discourse to show the audience that the performance is not strange, but our world is strange for its treatment of women in public (p. 2).

Now that the agents and agency of LOOK!’s first performance have been addressed, I introduce the additional agents and agency of LOOK!’s performance at the Petit Jean Performance Festival. These additional agents influence the agency of LOOK!, thus making this performance different from the original one. Through introducing these additional components, I argue that the agents who perform will inherently change the agency of the act. In this case the act is LOOK!, but broadly this applies to the *Choreo-Story* generally.

Performer E (me): 26, white, female, visibly able-bodied

Petit Jean audience: 18-80, varied race/ethnicity/sex/gender, visible able-bodiedness

Agents

In October of 2018 LOOK! traveled to the Petit Jean Performance Festival. With one original cast member having graduated from our program, I stepped in as the third performer, thus becoming Performer E. I found the role of director and performer to be quite different. As a performer, I did not get the critical eye of watching the performance and giving feedback during rehearsals. I was more worried about if I was getting the movements right instead of watching the other cast members. Thus, my agency in this performance of LOOK! changed drastically. I became the Bauhaus Historian, taking over for Performer B, and the way this character was performed changed as well. The way I performed the entire performance, as compared to Performer B, changed the way the performance was interpreted and read. It also changed the way the other cast members and myself interacted with one another during rehearsals and on stage. Thus, it becomes important to introduce myself as a performer during the Petit Jean performance, because it was drastically different from the original performance.

The audience as agent also changed the performance. As mentioned previously, Petit Jean is a performance festival where a variety of undergraduate and graduate students and faculty come to watch and do performances. This audience feels more welcoming, but is also more nerve-racking to perform for because the performers know a majority of their audience is invested in performance, and most likely has been studying it for years. Yet, they seem more friendly and supportive because the group spends an

entire weekend together. The audience contributes to the energy on stage as well as the nerves the performers experience before and during the performance.

Now that I have introduced the additional agents for LOOK!'s performance at Petit Jean, I will speak about the agency of each. Through this analysis I point out that new agents change how the performance occurs, thus changing the agency. I also expose how a change in scene alters the agency of how the cast members perform the act and that audience members can make the agency of a performance live on, which was the case for LOOK! at the Petit Jean Performance Festival.

Agency

When we performed LOOK! at the Petit Jean Performance Festival, the agency of LOOK! altered. One reason is because the cast changed. Performer B graduated from the program, and I stepped in to fill the spot due to time constraints. When I became a performer and director in the same performance, I brought my own experiences into the performance. As mentioned earlier, I was thinking about the Kavanaugh vs. Blasey Ford hearings and how much I felt that trial spoke to the themes present within LOOK!. I was struck by Dr. Blasey Ford's courage during her testimony and how she seemingly defied the way women are meant to behave in public. I wanted to add this narrative to the Petit Jean version of LOOK!.

At the end of the performance, a soundscape fills the empty space where the music used to play. Cast members created their own sound for the original version of LOOK! in the HBB. As previously mentioned, Performer B's soundscape was a "hard to breathe" sound layered over the other two (i.e. a sharp inhale of "Huhhhh"). At first I attempted to recreate this soundscape, but I could not get my sharp exhale to be as quick

as Performer B's and, as director, I did not like the way it sounded. I thought of what I could replace Performer B's sound with, to make a new narrative shine through the piece. I thought about the Kavanaugh vs. Blasey Ford case and remembered my social media being flooded with the short phrase, "I believe her." I liked this phrase as a way to add in a current narrative to the performance, but wanted to make it more general. I informed the other cast members of my idea and they agreed it was an important narrative to add, so we attempted to layer it into the soundscape. Performer C did her "exhausted exhale" that she could repeat (i.e. a light exhale of "Haaaahhhh"), Performer D layered in her "birth breathing" sound (i.e. "hee hee hooo, hee hee hooo," inhaling on the hee's and exhaling on hooo), and Performer E (me) layered in a soft, "I believe you" over top. This tiny change to the soundscape dramatically altered the performance for its showing at Petit Jean, and this phrase was immediately picked up by the audience as a dialogue on the Kavanaugh vs. Blasey Ford hearing, which was used to discuss the experiences of the Bauhaus women.

The scene of the performance also contributed to change in agency for LOOK!. As mentioned in Chapter Two, we performed in a completely different space from the HBB. Set in the Rialto Community Arts Center, we reworked the lighting design, costuming, and the grid to fit the stage. The grid ended up being much smaller than it had been in the HBB, which meant we had to perform our movements slower to keep tempo with the music. Of course, the tempo of movement altered the agency of the performance. Also, the change in lighting and costume design dramatically altered the agency of LOOK!.

Finally, the change in audience inherently changed our fourth performer, thus contributing to a change in agency for LOOK! at Petit Jean. This audience brought in their own perceptions and past experiences to the space when viewing our performance. I also hypothesize that the more seasoned Performance Studies graduate students and faculty viewed the performance more in terms of method, rather than narrative. I can imagine that those with less performance (i.e. the undergraduate students) viewed the performance searching for the “right” meaning. I believe this because after the performance was over, I was walking in the audience when an undergraduate student stopped me and exclaimed, “I think your performance is about how women think they need to portray themselves on social media, am I right!?!” She was attempting to draw meaning from the performance, but she was more concerned about getting the *right meaning* than understanding that in reality, there is *no* right meaning. Before I walked away I informed her, “If that is what you got from the performance, then you are right.”

At this performance of LOOK! I also found that the agency of the piece lived on long after we performed. At night, students have time off from workshops and rehearsals where they get to mingle and interact with one another at each school’s cabin. I found conversations about LOOK! following me into the night and students eager to talk to me about it. I even had one student ask for my email to provide feedback and their “read” of the show. In this email they explained:

I am curious to know what the process was like for choreographing this performance. Why did ya'll choose the movements that you did? For me, I interpreted the use of the frame as a representation of personal space (maybe?) and how at times when the cast would use the movement of shifting their hands side to side with their arm extended out (sometimes in the frame and sometimes without) as a way of communicating a violation of space or setting a boundary perhaps. I also think of [Performer D's] body draped across the box and other

movements she did as symbolic of a cat. (Personal communication, May 22, 2018)

At this moment, I realized the life of LOOK! lived on beyond the performance. If slant discourse is affective, the agency of the piece lives on in the minds and conversations of those who witnessed the performance. They hypothesize, critique, and form opinions on the performance, which in essence makes the life of the performance live on, just as it does in this dissertation.

Varying physical body sizes, physical appearances, and experiences contribute to the agency of any performance. For LOOK!, different physical bodies exposed the notion of the Bauhaus' democratic aesthetic of a "neutral" identity. Instead, LOOK! highlighted that all bodies are different and identity is important, thus showing that LOOK! argues for and against the Bauhaus method and aesthetic. The show uses Bauhaus as an aesthetic, adhering to the primary shapes and colors, the grid, and the DIY nature of the costumes and props. It also creates a dialogue with itself in the form of the personal, popular, and professional texts used to create the movement, which criticize the treatment of women in public spaces. LOOK! also used the *Choreo-Story* method as agency to construct a performance that was devised by multiple cast members, instead of a sole choreographer or director. This mixture of unique movement creation allowed multiple agents to influence and be observed by the audience. I enjoyed this method of devising and the performance it created. I was curious if I could use the *Choreo-Story* method to develop another performance that would elicit a similar effect on an audience, but using different texts. I got my chance when the *Choreo-Story* Workshops were approved by the HBB Board of Directors for a two-week rehearsal and public showing in November of 2018.

Agents/Agency of the *Choreo-Story* Workshops

Director (me): 26, white, female, visibly able-bodied

Performer 1: 28, white, male, visibly able-bodied

Performer 2: 28, white, female, visibly able-bodied

Performer 3: 28, white, male, visibly able-bodied

Performer 4²²: white, female, visibly able-bodied

Performer 5²³

Agents

In the section, the bodies of the agents are seen as physical and wounded. Again, the bodies are seen as physical because of the choreography developed to create the final performance. The bodies are seen as wounded because they participate in a shared experience where empathic bonds are created. In his book, *The Wounded Storyteller* (2013), Arthur Frank described:

As wounded, people may be cared for, but as storytellers, they care for others. The ill, and all those who suffer, can also be healers. Their injuries become the source of the potency of their stories. Through their stories, the ill create empathic bonds between themselves and their listeners. These bonds expand as the stories are retold. (pp. 21-22)

Injuries can be physical, emotional, psychological, or social. Throughout our process, the wounded bodies of the cast and myself explored many facets of what being “wounded” actually means. We did this through a shared experience, which created empathy and respect. This experience is detailed below.

²² Performer 4 wished not to disclose her age in this document.

²³ Performer 5 wished not to disclose their demographic information in this analysis.

My directing style for the *Choreo-Story* Workshops was a bit different than my style for LOOK!. During LOOK!, I was more interested in exploring the relationship between the texts than with the process of devising movement for the performance. For the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, however, I was more concerned with seeing if the method we used to devise LOOK! could be replicated using different texts. Thus, the purpose for this performance altered my directing style. I was still democratic, but I was more invested in teaching the method than I was with creating a final performance. Because of this, I leaned more on the performers to choreograph our piece than I did on the cast for LOOK!. Although they went through the same process, the cast of the *Choreo-Story* Workshops got more attention from me in terms of learning and using the method.

Performer 1 joined the doctoral program as a Performance Studies student the same year as I. He also had an extensive background in dance, although his training was different. I had performed in his show the previous year, which also used movement. At this point he was working on his dissertation for graduation in May 2019. With a hectic schedule I was not sure if he would be able to participate in the workshops. He had been a big supporter of my work since my original Bauhaus performance in Dr. Terry's class. After seeing LOOK!, he encouraged me to travel the show and was looking forward to participating in the workshops to get a chance to dance in the HBB space again.

Performer 2 was a first year Masters student in our Rhetoric program, but was interested in performance and the Black Box space. She was the first person to respond to my email when I recruited participants and was looking forward to her first opportunity to perform in the space since she entered the program. She had little to no dance experience, but was excited about the opportunity to learn about performance and

methods of devising. Like Performer B from LOOK!, she commuted back and forth from New Orleans, so I valued her time at the end of the day to commit to rehearsals for our two-week process.

Performer 3 was also a first year Masters student. With an emphasis in Performance Studies, I remembered seeing him perform in the Bauhaus piece at the Patti Pace Performance Festival in Georgia mentioned earlier. I was excited he signed up to participate in the workshops because I knew he had previous movement experience, thus creating a spectrum of dance experience within the cast. He had a night class on Wednesdays and mentioned he might have to miss a rehearsal to attend an assignment for another class. I knew scheduling conflicts were bound to arise, so I said it was no problem and he was excited to start rehearsing.

Performer 4 was a first year doctoral student in Performance Studies. I saw her perform at the Graduate Student and Faculty Showcase in August and knew she had an interest in prison studies, specifically incarcerated women. I also knew she was married and had a daughter. With no dance experience, she was nervous to participate in the workshops, but wanted experience performing in the space of the HBB to get more comfortable within her program.

Performer 5 is an instructor in the department who wanted to participate in the workshops and public showing, but asked not to be a part of the analysis of this dissertation. To respect their wishes, I will not specifically be addressing Performer 5 in the remainder of this chapter, but will speak of them generally in relation to the cast.

Now that the core five agents have been introduced, I address the agency of each of them. Here I want to highlight the impact of the personal narratives and experiences

brought into the performance space. Through the workshops, I learned that the narratives contribute tremendously to the movement created. Each participant brought their own story, but they also brought their own way of interpreting that narrative through their wounded body. These differing narratives and ways of devising led to a unique performance with multiple, contrasting ways of moving that showcased the ability of the *Choreo-Story* method to create entertaining and engaging slant discourse.

Agency

To reiterate, the very nature of having different cast members will alter the agency of any performance. The workshops offered a way for me to expose this idea by having five new individuals with different stories and past experiences. My agency throughout these workshops began with the ability to decide what texts would guide the performance. With an interest in the intersection of Performance Studies and Health Communication, I wanted to explore how the cast could use a movement-based performance method to understand and share their own health related experiences. I asked the participants to bring in a health related experience that they thought lent itself well to devising movement. I also decided that I wanted to use a new movement-based performance method as the professional text. I turned to Viewpoints because it was another method discussed in Dr. Terry's class that I knew lent itself well to devising group performance. Because we were in a time crunch with rehearsals, I also provided the popular culture texts based off of the personal narratives the cast contributed. However, the cast did get a chance to experiment with how these texts were going to come together in the final performance for our public showing.

Performer 1 used his experience with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) to create personal movement. With the nature of OCD, the movement that Performer 1 devised was rigid, mechanical, and based in a standard eight count. This eight count was also expressed verbally. For example, he created a movement based in his personal experience as well as texts from WebMD that described OCD to create a movement that weaved these texts together. He held both of his arms above his head and began flicking both of his wrists outward in a quick thrash. He would do this eight times while swiveling on his feet to the right and then repeating the motion while swiveling back to the left. He eventually decided that swiveling two times to the right and two times to the left would elicit the feeling he has when experiencing OCD symptoms. After practicing this movement a few times, he began counting the wrist flicks while he was dancing. His tone while counting echoed the thrashing, rigid nature of his movements. As he taught this move to everyone else during our sharing portion of the rehearsal, the other cast members pointed out feeling anxious while doing the movement. I believe this experience of embodying Performer 1's movement helped us better understand what he feels when experiencing OCD symptoms.

Performer 2 shared personal narratives of experiencing trauma as a child. Focusing more on emotional and psychological health, her story contributed movement that, in contrast to Performer 1, felt soft and child-like. She created a movement based on her personal narrative where she lifted her arms high above her head and moved both her hands as if she was reaching for something. She also increased a need for "wanting" something by standing on her tiptoes as she reached high above her head grabbing for something. She also developed another movement in which she sat on the ground with

both of her hands by her side and then covering her eyes quickly with her right hand and then her left. When the rest of the cast learned her movements, they created a feeling of being scared, but also longing for something that was just out of reach.

Performer 3 contributed movement to the final performance by devising images from his personal experience with his hair. Performer 3's hair is shoulder-length and curly. His movements, consequently, were all hand movements performed close to his head. For one of these movements, he began in a squatting position with his right hand on his head. As he slowly rose to a standing position, his right hand mimicked an electric shaver that slowly went from the front of his hair to the back as if he was shaving it off. Once he raised fully to a standing position he lifted his left hand and traced his pointer finger from the front of his hair to the back, tracing the mark of the buzz cutter, but on the opposite side of his head. He also developed a movement that mimicked ripping out his hair. He slightly bent over from the waist, with his head at knee height and slowly began performing ripping his hair out, first with the right hand and then with the left, alternating until each hand had pulled four times. This contrast of low movement to the high movement developed by Performers 1 and 2 added an interesting layer to the final performance when we began making the public showing performance choices.

Performer 4 developed movement based off her personal experience as a mother. A lot of her movement had to do with being a mother to a baby. A lot of her movements had to do with nurturing and caring positions, but also with happiness versus sadness. For example, one of her movements was a simple mimicking of rocking a baby to sleep, but another movement dealt with faking happiness when the performer actually felt sad. To show this, she began with her face in an overexaggerated smile and standing on her

tiptoes with her right foot slightly extended out front and slightly facing the right side of the stage. She then slid to the left, switching her feet so her left foot was in front and she was facing the left side of the stage. While this slide took place, she lifted her right hand to her face with her palm facing out towards the audience. She slid her hand from the top of her head to the bottom. Once her hand passed her eyes, nose, and mouth, a sad facial expression was revealed. When the rest of the participants embodied this movement, they said it reminded them of hiding behind a mask and creating a façade of happiness. One participant even drew connections to the feelings associated with postpartum depression.

Once each cast member had developed their movements and shared them with the other performers, we began using the professional text *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition* (2005) by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau to experiment with how we could use these movements in different ways. As mentioned in Chapters One and Two, Viewpoints uses space, shape, time, emotion, movement, and story to devise group movement (p. 5). We experimented with the pace of each movement, the levels of each movement, and even tried some with props that were available in the Black Box to create different stories. A lot of the movements worked well while attempting them either on or with a chair or stool, so this became our main prop of experimentation. For example, with Performer 4's rocking the baby motion, she actually picked up a small stool and began rocking it as if it were her own child. The tenderness she provided to the inanimate object made the feelings seem real. I was amazed at the emotion she elicited from me while I watched her rock the stool before setting it on the floor in front of her. To me, using this prop increased the emotion and story she was already trying to elicit with her original movement.

In contrast, Performer 2 used a chair to create a feeling that was opposite of what I felt towards her original movement. Her movement in which she reached high above her head while tiptoeing made me feel empathetic, as if I needed to help her get what she wanted. When she did this movement while standing on a chair, however, my emotions became those of terror. I was nervous about her tiptoeing on top of a chair and the height that the chair added to her movement made me anxious. All I could do was watch from afar. I liked that adding a prop could alter the nature of the emotion associated with the movements the cast had created and that it could, in turn, elicit multiple emotions from an audience.

Another Viewpoints concept we experimented with a lot was the tempo of the movements. Specifically, for Performer 1's movements we used tempo as a way to increase the anxiousness that comes with OCD. We sped up his movement by increasing how fast we said the eight count associated with the movement. As the words increased in tempo the movement increased in intensity. We started with the movement at a steady, neutral pace and each time we swiveled to another side, we could increase the tempo of our count. By the end of the movement, the performers would be moving so fast it made me anxious to watch them.

Another example comes from Performer 3's hair related movement. We used tempo and pace to create a beautiful round, cascade in which each performer would start Performer 3's buzz cutting movement together, but would end at different times given the tempo they had been assigned. For example, Performer 3 would perform the movement at his original tempo (neutral), Performers 5 and 2 would perform the movement at a tempo slower than neutral, and Performers 1 and 4 would perform the movement at a tempo

faster than neutral. Thus, each performer would start at the same time, but Performers 1 and 4 would end first, Performer 3 would end next, and Performers 5 and 2 would end last. This use of Viewpoints created layers in the movement for the public showing, which contributed to the agency and aesthetic of the piece.

Now that the core agents of the *Choreo-Story* Workshops and their agency have been introduced, I introduce additional agents present through the rehearsal process. These agents contributed to the agency of how the participants performed during the rehearsal process as well as the public showing. Each of these agents also contributes their own agency to the rehearsal process and public showing.

Dr. Ruth Bowman: 60+, white, female, visibly able-bodied

Dr. Michael Bowman: 60+, white, male, visibly able-bodied

Dr. Tracy Stephenson Shaffer: 50, white, female, visibly able-bodied

Agents

A month before the *Choreo-Story* Workshops were set to begin, I was contacted by a professor in the department saying a retired professor from the department, Dr. Ruth Bowman, wanted to attend the rehearsal process of the workshops. Dr. Bowman, as mentioned in Chapter One, was one of the scholars who introduced the MyStory method to performance studies. She had also been Dr. Danielle McGeough's advisor during her doctoral degree at LSU. Dr. McGeough was my Masters advisor during my program at UNI. For me, there were a lot of layers in Dr. Bowman's presence at these rehearsals. I was excited to hear her feedback in my revised version of the MyStory, but I was also nervous for her to observe a method I was still in the process of testing. Dr. Bowman also led a talkback with the audience at the public showing after the performance was over.

Accompanying Dr. Ruth Bowman to a couple of these rehearsals was her husband, Dr. Michael Bowman. As stated in Chapter One, the Bowmans worked together to develop and test the method of the MyStory in performance studies. Dr. Michael Bowman had also been Dr. Terry's thesis advisor during his M.A. at LSU, thus contributing not only Dr. Terry's academic family tree, but my own. The fact that at one point both of them were watching the cast and me use their method to develop our own was intimidating. I believe both of their presence at these rehearsals contributed enormously to the cast's and my agency at these rehearsals as well as the public showing.

Dr. Shaffer attended a rehearsal for the *Choreo-Story* Workshops towards the end of the process to give feedback before the public showing. She gave critiques on the structure of the performance, which led to the refined structure of the public showing being *dance, inform, and dance again*. She attended a rehearsal the same night as the Bowmans and together they all offered valuable feedback that changed the agency of the public showing as well as a presence that elicited a desire for perfection from the cast members.

Agency

I address the Bowmans and Dr. Shaffer separately from the cast because I believe their agency influenced the agency of the cast members. As previously mentioned, the Bowmans introduced a version of the MyStory method to performance studies. Because the cast and myself created an extension of the MyStory by using the *Choreo-Story* method, their presence during rehearsals made the cast, and myself, want to create a performance "worthy" of their viewing. Dr. Ruth Bowman also had the agency, by way of her relationship to the department, to contact one of my professors asking her if they

could attend a couple of rehearsals and also lead a talkback after the public showing. Because the Bowmans are alumni of the department, and respected in Performance Studies, it was highly unlikely that any of their requests would have been denied. Thus, their presence at our rehearsals influenced the agency of the cast members. They wanted to perform at a high caliber as a way to impress these two respected scholars. At one point, when we were memorizing the performance for the public showing, the cast members even started developing counts for the movements to make sure they were together when they needed to be.

The Bowmans did not say a lot during the rehearsals they attended, which, honestly, kind of made them more intimidating. Neither the cast, nor myself, never really knew what they were thinking about what we were creating. Every once in a while they would give minimal, verbal feedback such as an “ahhhh” or a chuckle, but their nonverbals were nearly impossible to read. Sometimes, they would even leave rehearsals early, which would leave the cast, and myself, wondering if we did something wrong or if we were boring to watch. I wonder if the attendance of the Bowmans at our rehearsals influenced the movements that were made and how they were experimented with during the Viewpoints phase. It would be interesting to speculate if these movements would have been different had they not been there, which in turn, would have changed the agency of the public showing.

Towards the end of our workshop process, Dr. Shaffer attended a rehearsal to offer feedback on the performance before the public showing. As my mentor and dissertation advisor, she had agency to offer feedback that would in turn alter the agency of the performers and, thus, the performance. This actually did occur when Dr. Shaffer

offered feedback on the structure of how the public showing would go. Originally, I planned on the cast members performing the final piece we had created for the public showing, having them sit down, and then standing up myself to deliver a talk on the workshop process and how we devised the piece the audience just witnessed. I wanted the audience to see the dance piece first so my talk did not influence the way they perceived it. I informed Dr. Shaffer of this during the rehearsal she attended, and her agency as my advisor and mentor led to her disclosing she did not think that would be the best structure for the performance. She stated, “What if the performers do the dance, you discuss the rehearsal process, and then they do the dance again? Then the talkback with Ruth can follow.” I valued this feedback and thought this structure would be a lot more constructive than my original plan. I would get what I wanted, which was to have the audience see the dance with no previous knowledge of the devising process, but I would also get to see if their perception changed, or if they were similar, when they saw it again after they knew the devising process. I would get to compare perceptions of the piece before and after and the audience would get a chance to see our actual intention with the movements the cast members had created. From this rehearsal, the agency of the public showing changed as a result of Dr. Shaffer’s agency to offer constructive criticism to her advisee.

Now that these additional agents have been addressed, I want to introduce the final two agents of the *Choreo-Story* Workshops: Performer 6 and the audience. Again, my roles as director and performer are drastically different and my performance in this public showing is dramatically different than my performance in LOOK!. I also want to reiterate the audience as performer, because their presence determines the agency of the

cast members who perform and also allows the agency of the performance to live on far after the aesthetic event is over.

Performer 6 (me): 26, white, female, visibly able-bodied

Audience: 20-80, varied race/ethnicity/sex/gender, visible able-bodiedness

Agents

During the public showing, I became the sixth performer of the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. With the structure of the performance being *dance, inform, and dance again* my performance took place as the scholar/researcher/practitioner during the *inform* section. Once the performance began with the movement piece we had devised during the rehearsal process, I performed as a speaker to explain our process to the audience before they saw the piece again. This performance provided an explanation of my research interests, how I came to this method, and what I hoped for its future. After this explanation, I returned to my seat as an audience member for the final performance of the dance piece.

The audience for our public showing consisted of graduate students and faculty of the Communication Studies Department. I asked for this show not be publicized as an event our undergraduates could attend for class assignments or extra credit. I was more interested in getting feedback on my dissertation topic than filling the space with bodies. A couple of undergraduate students came because of their interest in dance and movement creation, but the majority of this audience was filled with people who valued performance as a method of research, therefore contributing to the conversation during our talkback led by Dr. Ruth Bowman.

Agency

As the sixth performer in the public showing, I did not participate in the movement portion, but instead served as the speaker that informed the audience on the workshop process and the method that led our experimentation. My performance was more formal than the dance portion. I wore heels, dark jeans, a nice blouse, and my glasses. This outfit was specifically picked out as a performance choice. I knew my fellow graduate students, professors, and faculty would be in attendance, and I wanted to seem as professional as possible. As I stood at the podium, I discussed our rehearsal process and my proposed method of the *Choreo-Story* as if I was speaking at our National Communication Association convention. I even addressed the event as the Black Box's first colloquy, which is an event we have in our department where individuals lead a formal discussion of their research topics, usually held in a classroom. I was discussing my research, after all, but I was discussing it in my lab and showing, as well as telling, the audience how I conducted my experiment.

The audience's agency during the public showing contributed to the agency of the performance and allowed the talkback afterwards to take place. As with any performance, the audience will influence the attitude and perceptions before and during the performance. Of course, the audience may create nerves and/or contribute to the adrenalin of the performers. For example, the cast members discussed, post performance, their nerves of performing in front of their peers and professors, especially Performer 2 who had no previous experience performing in the Black Box and was actually a rhetoric student in the department. These nerves contribute to the energy during the performance, which alters the agency of how the performance is executed and witnessed.

The audience also served as a performer during the talkback, addressing highlight moments from the performance and offering constructive feedback. This feedback is addressed specifically in a peer response that was given to me. It stated:

I want to congratulate Montana and the ensemble as researchers. If, as we believe in performance studies, performance is epistemic, a method for understanding and knowing, and if The Black Box is indeed a laboratory space, then putting your process on display like this is an effective strategy for investigating your object of study and for developing and refining a method for approaching the body, narratives (particularly health narratives) and the methodological approaches you are building as part of your inquiry. The structure of performance, explanation, performance, response is really ingenious, both in terms of a research process but also pedagogically. On the aesthetic level, I was stunned by the level of and attention to craft and the repetition of the piece for the second time really highlighted the discipline both [the director] and the ensemble dedicated to this short, tightly rehearsed piece (especially in such a short amount of time).
(Appendix F)

Through this response, the agency of the performance is highlighted through feedback concerning the rehearsal process, the structure of the public showing, and movement-based performance methods as a mode of research. It highlights the *Choreo-Story* method as the main form of agency through which LOOK! and the workshops were able to take form.

The audience also addressed their associations with the movements created for the dance piece to personal experiences in their own lives. They connected to the movements even before they knew what they meant, thus making emotive connections to the dance movements in order to empathize with the performers. This notion speaks to the agency of the *Choreo-Story* Workshops to tell health experiences slant. The cast told their true narratives of their health experiences, but told them slant through dance. Thus, the audience could draw their own perceptions of what story was being told and connect to the performers through their own experiences. The audience as performer (agent)

provided feedback about the workshops that highlighted the notion that telling it slant is a primary form of agency for the *Choreo-Story* method.

Final Thoughts

Throughout this chapter, I have argued for the intrinsic relationship of agents and agency by way of Burke's Dramatistic Approach. Specifically for the act of the *Choreo-Story* method, the agents inherently alter the agency of each performance by simply being different from one another. The agents who participate in the devising process of the *Choreo-Story* method determine the personal narratives that are used to create movement and, in turn, influence the popular culture text and its relation to their narrative. The performers' stories, bodies, and relationships impacted the agency (how, and by what power(s), the performance is executed) of the *Choreo-Story* method and its subsequent performance. If another individual enters the devising process and performance, such as Performer D in LOOK!, the agency of the performance will automatically change.

Because the demographic makeup of the cast changes and new experiences are introduced to the group, new movement is created. This can be seen through the discussion of the different physical body types altering movement in LOOK! and through the multiple stories in the *Choreo-Story* Workshops that inspired contrasting types of movement to develop.

Also directors have their own agency within the devising process. Because I wanted the cast to be more involved with the devising process, I believe their agency over the projects was more impactful than my own. I was not only directing, but was also teaching. To introduce the *Choreo-Story* method as a legitimate mode of devising, I had to teach this method to multiple people in hopes they would use some of the techniques in

the future. My directing style was mostly democratic, except for when I decided to collect the popular culture texts for the *Choreo-Story* Workshops or when time constraints forced a more authoritative style. Had we not been in a time crunch for this rehearsal process, I would have been interested in seeing the popular culture texts the participants would have brought in and how these texts would have altered the agency of our public showing.

The scene of the act, which inherently alters the agency of the devising process and subsequent performances, also determines agents. LOOK!'s original devising process and performance in the HopKins Black Box versus its traveling performance at the Petit Jean Performance Festival reveals differing agencies. The cast of the performance changed, which intrinsically changed the agency because of the varying bodies, physical abilities, and background experiences. A change in scene also changed the audience who served as the fourth agent, or performer, which alters the energy and perception of the performance.

I want to highlight a glaring weakness of this study: all of the participants and audience members, from my knowledge, were able-bodied individuals. In the future, I hope to study and understand how the *Choreo-Story* method works for agents who identify as disabled. It is not only important to understand the ways in which disabled persons would work through the devising process and subsequent performance, but it is also a reiteration that the agents who participate in the *Choreo-Story* method will change the agency of the devising process and performance.

Along with the agent's ability to drastically alter the act performed, a discovery in this analysis is that the *Choreo-Story* method, itself, is a form of agency through which all of the previously mentioned performances (acts) occurred. When referring to agency,

Burke (1969) states you must find the instrument through which the act takes form (p. 279). If, as scholars, we believe an instrument is our method of study, then we must recognize the *Choreo-Story* as a method through which this study finds its agency. Through his Dramatistic Approach of analysis, I argue the *Choreo-Story* method is not only the act of study, but is also the method through which to study itself.

The *Choreo-Story* method as act is also performed through the agency of telling it slant. Telling it slant, as mentioned previously, creates an emotive discourse that allows an audience to empathize and identify with the performers. This discourse occurs using the *Choreo-Story* method as a result of the agents who contribute their personal narratives, which become intertwined with the professional and popular culture texts. As these texts are weaved together, the truth expressed by each performer is present, but it is not glaring. Thus, the audience can identify with the broad themes of the performance and find their own relation to them, which in turns makes them relate to the performers. This notion was argued throughout the chapter, but is most clearly seen through the performance of LOOK! both in the HopKins Black Box and at the Petit Jean Performance Festival. Telling it slant has, in the past, been used to describe literary works or oral based performances. In this chapter, I argue that if we believe performance in its oral form elicits identification and emotional reaction, then we must recognize dance as an alternate means of storytelling that uses body narratives to evoke emotional response and identification from an audience.

At the beginning of this chapter, I traced my academic lineage as a way to highlight the agency of the Performance Studies agents who came before me. Dr. HopKins and Dr. Shaffer have carved space both within Communication Studies at large

and Performance Studies specifically. They argue for Performance Studies as a valuable mode of research and inquiry and called for the practitioners of performance to use these methods to create slant discourse. Through their work, I am able to offer my extension of what it means to “tell it slant.” Burke (1969) stated that how you go about performing an act (agency) becomes the agent’s purpose (p. 283). Through the analysis of the agents and agency of the *Choreo-Story* method, it is apparent that the purpose of this method and study is to contribute to the map set before me by forging my own path. In the next chapter, I explain the multiple purposes of the *Choreo-Story* method, the devising processes, and the performances that took place throughout this study.

CHAPTER FIVE. PURPOSE

So far, I have analyzed how the act of the *Choreo-Story* takes form, within what scenes it operates, who performs and participates in the act, and how the performers perform the act within scenes of constraint. Through this analysis I have learned that the relationships between the Pentadic concepts influences each part, so much so, that it becomes difficult to isolate each for analysis. To conclude my inquiry of this project and the overlapping relationships between each Pentadic concept, I answer the question: Why does this matter?

The purpose of the *Choreo-Story* seems most significant for a performance practitioner. Why am I doing what I am doing? What motivates me to use this method? What cultural values and ethical concerns do I have while devising with this method? What is my purpose in creating the *Choreo-Story* method (Pelias and Shaffer, 2007, p. 63)? Purpose revolves around desire, interest, and expectation. Burke (1969) explained that the principle of purpose is drive and motivation (p. 284). So, in this chapter, I explain what motivated me to develop the method of the *Choreo-Story*, why I chose the themes for my initial devising process, LOOK!, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, and the desired outcomes of this project. I conclude by arguing for the *Choreo-Story* method's place in Performance Studies, Communication Studies, and its use outside of academia.

First, I list specific purposes for each of the performances discussed in this project including my original Bauhaus piece, LOOK! as performed in the HopKins Black Box theatre, LOOK! as performed at the Petit Jean Performance Festival, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. Then, I discuss the purpose of the *Choreo-Story* as a movement-based performance method and its place within Performance Studies. Finally, I end my analysis

with an explanation of my personal purpose for creating this project and my wish for more storytelling in Performance Studies by way of body narratives.

Individual Performance Motivations

In this section, I address the motivations behind each of the performance pieces discussed throughout this dissertation. First, I address the purpose of the original Bauhaus piece that was presented in my *Performance Methods and Theories* course with Dr. Terry. Then, I discuss my desire to create LOOK! as an extension of this piece and how the purpose changed when it traveled to the Petit Jean Performance Festival. Finally, I discuss the purpose of the *Choreo-Story* Workshops and my expectations of its function.

The Original Bauhaus Performance

As I have written throughout this dissertation, my original Bauhaus piece stemmed from my *Performance Methods and Theories* course with Dr. Terry. After an in-depth analysis of the act, scene, agents, and agency, the purposes of this performance became apparent to me. First, I simply wanted to receive a passing grade in the class. More specifically, I wanted to receive a good grade on the assignment and I wanted to show I had adhered to the guided class assignment provided to me by my peer. Not only did I want to pass the class, but I also wanted to appear intelligent to my professor and peers. I constantly analyzed their perception of me before, during, and after the performance occurred. I not only wanted them to think I was intelligent, but I also wanted them to think I was capable of putting together a well-thought out and entertaining performance. In retrospect, the purpose of creating the performance was less important than the actual act of performing it in front of my class. The performance was meant to highlight the experiences of the women of the Bauhaus Stage Workshops by using

Bauhaus methods. Although this was an intended purpose that I believe was successful, I also think this performance was more about proving myself as worthy of being in my doctoral program.

LOOK! in the HopKins Black Box

At the time of my original Bauhaus performance, I did not realize the significance of using the Bauhaus aesthetic to critique itself. When I began developing LOOK! as an extension of my class performance, I realized this juxtaposition was a leading variable in how the professional, popular, and personal texts came together. I wanted to show that the MyStory method I had been taught for years could be adapted into a movement-based performance and I wanted this performance to expose the Bauhaus notions with which I so strongly disagreed. By using the MyStory method as a way to find texts, I was able to expose this storyline better, by contrasting the notions of the Bauhaus with the every day lived experiences of the cast of LOOK!. By comparing the personal narratives to the popular perceptions of cats, we were able to successfully highlight the experiences of the Bauhaus women, which was the original purpose of LOOK!. Showing the connection between women's experiences in public spaces and the constraining nature of the Bauhaus is apparent in the script that was discussed in Chapter Two. Another purpose, however, was to use these narratives as a way to appeal to a wide variety of audience members.

Using the cast's personal narratives allowed us to create a storyline that could be generalized and applied to many women's experiences of being in public spaces, not just the Bauhaus women. This generalizing of narratives I believe, at times, made the show "hard to get." I heard many faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate student

reviews that mentioned they did not really know what was happening, only that they were entertained. In retrospect, I did not necessarily need the audience to “get it,” as much as I wanted them to see the world they occupy a little more strangely than they did before. I believe LOOK! did that for many of its viewers. One thing I do believe was missing from the viewing of this performance was the hints of Boal technique I wanted sprinkled throughout. I enjoyed that LOOK! accomplished the objective of relying on images rather than words and used Invisible Theatre techniques where, “the public as participants is [involved] in the action without their knowing it” (p. xxiii). However, I wanted the audience to be more involved in the creation of the movement and the themes of the show. I believe I could have used more Forum Theatre practices, in which, “the audience, again spect-actors, is invited to suggest and enact solutions” (p. xxiv). Referring to these techniques loosely, I wanted the audience to realize that anyone could create a movement-based performance like LOOK! regardless of being a dancer or “nondancer.” I hoped they would have seen the show and thought, “Wow, I could do something like this to understand my own identities better.” Although that purpose was not fulfilled in this performance, it would be fulfilled in the *Choreo-Story* Workshops rehearsal process and public showing.

As a director, I also had the purpose of creating a certain aesthetic for the performance of LOOK!. I wanted the public performances to show that the cast was well rehearsed, memorized, and purposeful in their movements. During our rehearsal process, we devised for many days, but two weeks before the public performances we began memorizing specific movement sequences and creating a show that we would replicate for our four-night showing. There was a motivation, on my part, to create a certain

aesthetic. I made purposeful choices to have the stage as minimalistic as possible in terms of prop use. To me, the aesthetic came from the costuming, the music, the lights, and the movement we had created. We did not need a bunch of clutter on stage. I wanted the viewers to focus on what we had created with our bodies, rather than filling the space with a bunch of unnecessary material that could camouflage the lack of rehearsal or mislead the audience. I also wanted the aesthetic to adhere to the Bauhaus Stage Workshops. I purposefully made myself stick to the color pallet of yellow, red, blue, and black when choosing lights, costumes, and props.

One underlying purpose of this performance comes in retrospection. When I created my original Bauhaus performance in my *Performance Methods and Theories* course, I know I was more concerned with what everyone else thought of the performance rather than what I thought. While creating LOOK!, I wanted to show that I could make performance choices and be confident about them. As mentioned in Chapter Two, halfway through our rehearsal process, I threw out the script I had spent a month devising. I was also testing lights during our rehearsal process to figure out what I liked and did not like. I was playing with different music to see what worked better. I was choosing costumes and deciding which cast member would look better in certain pieces. I was giving feedback during rehearsals to create the well-rehearsed and polished performance I wanted an audience to see. I was learning how to be a performance practitioner through the doing. An underlying purpose of LOOK! is me accepting that I did belong in a Performance Studies doctoral program and that I could contribute something significant by engaging in the process. I was showing I had the capability to create a large, staged production not only to my professors and peers, but also to myself.

LOOK! at the Petit Jean Performance Festival

This purpose of learning and building confidence was also shown through the performance of LOOK! at the Petit Jean Performance Festival. The purpose of this performance was similar to that of LOOK! performed in the HBB: to show the extension of the MyStory method in a movement-based performance, to show my aesthetic choices, and to have the audience connect to the material in their own way. The main purpose, however, was to establish myself as a credible artist/scholar in the Performance Studies world. Traveling LOOK! to the Petit Jean Performance Festival gave me an opportunity to show my skills and interests to potential employers and coworkers. It also allowed me to show that I was dedicated to the field, by traveling to a performance festival to show my work. Performing LOOK! in the HBB was about proving to myself that I could create something of which I was proud. Performing LOOK! at the Petit Jean Performance Festival was about proving to others that I could create something worthwhile, which would contribute to our field. Similar to my original Bauhaus performance in my *Performance Methods and Theories* course, I wanted to be accepted by my peers and taken seriously.

The *Choreo-Story* Workshops

The main purpose of the *Choreo-Story* Workshops was to see if the devising process developed during LOOK! could be duplicated using different texts. I chose to do health-related personal narratives because I have an interest in the intersection of Health Communication and Performance Studies. I wanted to see if the cast could tell health narratives through their wounded bodies, with the physical body being both the site of inquiry and method of research. I also wanted to use a new professional text, because I

was ready to move beyond the Bauhaus, but still wanted to draw from movement-based performance methods as a form of devising. I chose Viewpoints because it was the other movement-based performance method discussed in my *Performance Methods and Theories* course. Viewpoints also allowed for a different type of improvising based on the six Viewpoints the authors describe in their text. I thought the method would be conducive to the cast members and their performance choices. For the popular texts, we used a variety of health-related popular culture artifacts, rather than the singular artifact (cats) that was used in LOOK!. With new texts in hand, we were ready to see if we could duplicate the devising process and create another movement-based performance with those same techniques.

At the time of the Workshops, I was not only looking to recreate the devising process of LOOK!, but I was seeking to refine and claim the process as my own. I started calling this process of devising the *Choreo-Story* method, thus giving birth to the method. Now that I had labeled it as a movement-based performance method, I needed to make sure I could back up this claim. The *Choreo-Story* Workshops public showing allowed me to show my professors and peers that I had created a method and project with merit and that I was contributing something significant to the field of Performance Studies. The motivation behind this public showing was to also show that I could talk about my project as a practitioner. The experience reminded me of the comprehensive exam process, wherein you write and defend your exams to show you can talk intelligently about what you have learned in your program and back up your arguments in an elegant manner. The middle section (my speech) of our public showing was similar to this, except I was defending what I had learned and arguing for it in front of my entire

department, rather than just my committee of four professors. These Workshops and the subsequent public showing functioned as also an additional case study.

Along with replicating the devising process of LOOK! and laying claim to my dissertation project, the *Choreo-Story* Workshops allowed me to show others that they could use this method as a mode of devising and creating movement-based performance. Drawing from Boal's concept of actors and nonactors, I wanted to show dancers and "nondancers" alike that they could use this method effectively to create movement-based performances or to add movement to other types of performances. By using stories and texts as a way to create moving images, anyone could use these techniques to bolster performances in a variety of settings. I was able to prove this by having a variety of cast members with differing levels of dance background. Throughout the rehearsal process, I was able to show them the techniques they would need to create something like LOOK! or the Workshops.

Through the public showing of the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, we were also able to show those in the audience how we created our group performance and the techniques used to do so. By having the structure of *dance, talk, dance again*, the "magic" surrounding performance was stripped away and individuals in the audience got a glimpse into how to create something like this on their own. It would be my desire to do workshops like this in a variety of settings, academic and nonacademic, in the future. By sharing the *Choreo-Story* method with others, I could show people that you do not need a dance background to use your physical body in an effort to understand personal experiences and/or communication phenomenon creatively or "slant." I expand on this more in the Personal Purposes section at the end of this chapter.

The *Choreo-Story* as Method: Purpose in Performance Studies

Now that each performance outlined in this document has been addressed in terms of its purpose, I explain the expectations of the *Choreo-Story* as a method, which led to the creation of all of these pieces. First, I explain the need for more movement-based performance methods within graduate level Performance Studies courses. Next, I unpack the need for bodies to be seen as tools for storytelling and knowledge construction. Finally, I revisit the motivation of the *Choreo-Story* to elicit empathy and understanding through the agency of “slant” discourse.

Desire to Expand Dance in Performance Studies Courses

One of my main motivations for doing a movement-based performance method project is to bring awareness to the need for more movement-based performance and devising methods within the Performance Studies courses we teach, specifically at the graduate level. After a review of eight other performance studies focused departmental websites, I did not find any that teach movement-based performance methods courses at the graduate level. At Northwestern, the course *Movement Based Performance* was offered at the undergraduate level in Spring 2019 by a graduate student in the department (Northwestern School of Communication, 2020). At Arizona State University, communication graduate students can pursue a degree in Performance Studies, which focuses on performance as an aesthetic, social, and cultural act (The Hugh Downs School, 2020). But, they must go outside the department to seek movement specific courses. Louisiana State University, Southern Illinois University, University of North Texas, University of South Florida, New York University, and California State LA all offer performance methods and theories courses, but none specifically mention

movement-based performance methods as a focus of study (LSU Department of Communication Studies, 2020; SIU Department of Communication Studies, 2020; UNT Department of Communication Studies, 2020; USF Department of Communication, 2020; Tisch School of the Arts NYU, 2020; Department of Communication Studies Cal State LA, 2020). The University of Northern Iowa has no performance methods focused courses in their degree of study, but they do offer *Qualitative Methods* (UNI Department of Communication Studies, 2020). I took this course during my time at UNI and my professor, Dr. Danielle McGeough, let me use dance as a qualitative research method in the course.

This lack of movement-based performance theory and practice taught in Performance Studies classrooms may not necessarily be the case for every Performance Studies department, but I believe there could be more courses focused on movement-based performance methods taught at the graduate level. Although I learned about the Bauhaus Stage Workshops and Viewpoints in Dr. Terry's *Performance Methods and Theories* course, the rest of my performance classes had little to no information on movement-based methods within Performance Studies. The only time dance ever came up again was in Dr. Serap Erincin's *Performing Protest* seminar where we read *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement* by Andre Lepecki (2006) in an effort to understand movement as a site for activism. Could we get to a place where every Performance Studies department had a movement-based performance methods course?

I also wonder if Performance Studies instructors could encourage more assignments geared towards movement-based performance in their other courses, or have

a section of their course be focused on dance within Performance Studies. Specifically for performance methods courses, more than two types of movement-based performance methods should be discussed. We should also encourage students who do not focus on movement-based performance to create performances with these methods. For instance, what would it have been like for a student who did not have dance experience to be assigned the Bauhaus Stage Workshops instead of me? What would they have produced? What knowledge would they have gained from the experience of choreographing and devising movement-based performance? An increase of movement-based performance methods in our graduate level courses could help us answer these questions.

Interest in Advocating for Dance as a Research Method

If more movement-based performance methods and modes of devising were taught within our classes, the legitimacy of dance as a tool for storytelling and knowledge construction would grow in tandem with it. This is another driving purpose of this study. Tami Spry (2001) stated that, “when the body is erased in the process(ing) of scholarship, knowledge situated within the body is unavailable. Enfleshed knowledge is restricted by linguistic patterns of positivist dualism – mind/body, objective/subjective – that fix the body as incapable of literacy” (p. 724). As a qualitative, interpretive scholar, I see embodied knowledge as a legitimate form of knowledge construction. Our bodies help us feel, think, and experience sensory information differently than our minds do. Our minds elicit rationale thought processes via oral language (Ellingson, 2017, p. 18). Our bodies help us to understand human behavior and communication holistically through embodiment.

Dance as a site for study has been thoroughly explored within the field of Performance Studies. Dance as a tool for research, however, has not. In her book *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference, and Connection in the Global City*, Judith Hamera (2007) explores dance as a site of study in order to highlight how movement and aesthetic practices are created in tandem with social and cultural discourses. She informed that her book, “argues that both concert dance and amateur practice are laboratories for examining and revisioning the myriad complex interrelations between gender, sexuality, race, class, and culture in urban life” (p. 1). Through ethnographic means, Hamera details a variety of dance spaces as sites for understanding identity and its relation to culture, but does not actively engage in the process herself. Although she thoroughly analyzes dance as a site of study, it scantily scratches the surface of exploring dance as a tool for research on behalf of the practitioner.

Greg Langner uses the method of autoethnography to explore his experience directing a dance performance at a distance in his article “Cast harmony and performance through uncertainty: Learning to achieve dance at a distance” (2019). He describes his long distance rehearsals with his cast for the performance *Mighty Montage*, citing successes and pitfalls throughout the process. While describing the movements of the performers during the rehearsal process, Langner points out a particular solo at the end of the performance stating, “palms facing out and the body tense, the solo impresses that the performer is attempting, with great effort, to push through a heavy obstacle in order to reach the others” (p. 145). Although this dance performance does not explicitly label itself as a research tool, it can be inferred that the cast and director could have used these dance movements to understand their own rehearsal process at that moment. Thus, we get

a brief glimpse as to how dance can be used as a research tool within Performance Studies.

With the addition of the *Choreo-Story* method proposed in this dissertation, and the two projects described above, the act of using dance as a research tool in Performance Studies can be amplified. One way of making the *Choreo-Story* method a legitimate mode of research within Performance Studies is to highlight how it extends Greg Ulmer's MyStory method that was introduced to performance studies via Ruth and Michael Bowman. If Performance Studies scholars consider the MyStory method as a critical way to understand human experiences, then we should consider the *Choreo-Story* method as an expansion of this method, using body narratives instead of oral stories to understand human behavior and various communication phenomena. I hope that my work through this project can fulfill this purpose.

Motivation to Expand What It Means to "Tell it Slant"

In Chapter Four I argued that the *Choreo-Story* method gets its agency by way of "telling it slant." Slant discourse, in turn, becomes a purpose of the method as well. I outlined my academic family tree in an effort to highlight the path that has been carved out for me. Again, slant discourse is an effort to tell true stories that elicit identification and emotional response from an audience (HopKins, 2016, p. 7). Dr. Mary Frances HopKin's argued for the use of literary art as slant discourse. Dr. Shaffer (2016) argued that performance, in general, is a slant discourse because it, "allows each practitioner to make certain claims about life as they have come to understand it through the process of production" (p. 4). Continuing on this path, I argue that dance, specifically the *Choreo-Story* method, can be seen as slant discourse, which uses body narratives as a way to

evoke emotional response and identification with an audience while also allowing practitioners to understand a bit more about their own lives.

Throughout this project, I have shown that the *Choreo-Story* method has been used to create movement sequences that can be generalized within a cast and, thus, to an audience. This was shown best with the examples of LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. Through these examples the audience interpreted the movement connected to the stories concerning women's experiences in public spaces as well as with a variety of health-related experiences. My purpose for this method was just that: to make the audience, and the cast, *feel something* and draw their own useful conclusions.

Personal Motivations for the *Choreo-Story* Method

Thus far, I have explained the purpose of each individual performance discussed in this document, and the motivation behind creating the method of the *Choreo-Story*. To conclude my analysis of the purpose for this project, I discuss my personal motivations and what drove me, as an individual, to create a method of devising which uses dance to foster relationships between performer and audience, performer and performer, and performer and self. I begin by analyzing my purpose behind using dance as an outlet for self-expression and self-care during my undergraduate and graduate career. Then, I look deeper into using dance as a form of storytelling in an effort to share my experiences. Finally, I examine my use of telling stories through dance in an effort to connect and form relationships with others.

A Way of Being in the World

I have been dancing since the age of four. My parents enrolled me in dance classes as a way to break me out of my “shy” phase and to get me to connect with other

children. It was not the first language I learned, but it was the one that made the most sense to me when I learned it. At first, dance was a way to have fun and interact with other kids, but as I got older my relationship with dance began to change. As mentioned in Chapter One, I began using dance as a coping mechanism, purposefully, in my undergraduate time at UNI. I am sure, on some level, I have always used dance as an outlet to reduce stress and anxiety, but it became a conscious effort in my early twenties.

As a coping strategy, the use of movement and dance can be used for a variety of reasons. I remember reading a study by Johanna Leseho and Lisa Maxwell (2010) where they used dance and creative movement, “to better understand how dance/creative movement supports women during difficult life struggles such as trauma from abuse, relationship breakups, community violence and loss of self, and how it acts as a connection to the sacred” (p. 17). By using dance as a method and means of coping, I found that the “unconscious, spontaneous reaction to how the person perceives [their] environment,” became an effective way to find the true meaning behind the visceral experiences I was feeling when choreographing past stress-filled events (Bernstein, 1975, p. 1).

I have always used dance as a way to get through life. It is a language I can use to connect with others and myself. It is how I cope, communicate, and think. Therefore, one of the main personal motivations of this project is that dance is my outlet. As mentioned previously, entering a doctoral program and moving a thousand miles away from home induced a stressful time in my life. I used dance as a way to cope through these major life experiences. I am sure dance will aid me through other life events in the future.

A Way of Sharing my Experiences

My personal purpose for this project is more than that, though. Dance has become a way I share my stories. As humans, we want to be understood by others and to make sense of our experiences. Storytelling creates space for individuals to be socially and culturally reflexive about life events. Narratives allow for sense making and sense destroying through, “evocation, image, and [what is left] unsaid” (Mattingly, 1998, p. 8). Stories are cultural scripts for behavior and aesthetic expressions of reaction and feeling. Storytelling is an embodied experience and, as a life long dancer, I see my physical body as both the text of my story and my tool for storytelling (Ellingson, 2017).

As mentioned in Chapter One, I used my time with UNI’s Orchesis Dance Company to choreograph personal stories that I not only got to share with myself during the rehearsal process, but that I got to share with others in the audience during our annual Spring Gala as well as my fellow performers. For example, I choreographed my experience of going through my parents’ divorce and asked another dancer to perform the piece instead of myself. This allowed me to not only dance my past experience, but to see this experience performed on another person’s physical body. Sharing this stressful event through dance became a different kind of connection with the performer, the audience, and myself.

In my Master’s degree, I had a similar experience when I staged/choreographed my experience of being an adoptee and my connection with my biological mother and adoptive parents. In this instance, I was embodying my own experience of the event and embodying, what I thought was, the experience of my biological and adoptive parents. By dancing through this experience I began to understand the multiple parties involved in the

experience, and how each one experienced it, differently. I also had the opportunity to share this story with professors, peers, and other audience members during a showcase in our department.

Another personal motivation for me, then, is to continue this act of sharing my stories and experiences with others. I was able to do this through my original Bauhaus piece, LOOK!, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. Although I was not a dancer in all of these performances, I was the director for all of them. Being the director allowed me to share my stories with the cast members, who were then able to develop their own stories and ways of dancing them. Through this experience, we got to share our stories with one another and the many audiences for whom we performed.

A Way of Connecting with Others

My personal purpose for this project is still more than that, though. By sharing my experiences and stories with others through dance, I am also forming relationships and connections. I remember reading that, “aesthetics are inherently social” in Judith Hamera’s (2007) book *Dancing Communities: Performance, Difference, and Connection in the Global City*. Performance is a social force and it allows for creating identity, forming solidarity, and making memories sharable (p. 1). Through the *Choreo-Story* method, I was able to build relationships with the cast members by sharing stories with one another, which created empathy and compassion amongst the group. It also allowed for us to share memories with one another and to trust each other with taking care of these memories. The process of sharing our personal narratives, putting them into our bodies, and then putting one another’s stories on our own bodies allowed a shared

experience to be created, which formed a special relationship between the cast members and myself.

Moving together in the same space and performing one another's personal narratives builds connections that other types of performance cannot. Our community was not just formed through performing together, but was also formed through the daily labors we performed in the HBB and through the communication we had onstage, backstage, and off stage (Hamera, 2007, p. 1). Our bonds within rehearsals made us want to continue communicating outside of the rehearsal space and eventually, we became close. The *Choreo-Story* enabled me to create friendships and make bonds with other people in my graduate program. Dance has always been that way for me, though. It is how I broke out my shell. It is how I have, and continue to, cope. It is how I communicate and build relationships. It is who I am.

Final Thoughts and a Future Purpose

Throughout this chapter, I have discussed three major motivations that drove this project. I outlined the motivations behind each of the performances discussed throughout this document, the motivations behind creating the *Choreo-Story* method in general, and my personal desires for using dance within academic and nonacademic settings. In this section, I review the major conclusions drawn from each of these purposes and propose future expectations and directions to expand the *Choreo-Story* method beyond the Performance Studies field.

Review of Major Conclusions

The individual motivations for each performance discussed in this document hint to the purposes for the performances I created. These interests include proving my place

in my doctoral program, as seen with my original Bauhaus piece, LOOK! as performed at Petit Jean, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, and to expose my experience as a women in a male-dominated world, as seen in LOOK! as performed in the HopKins Black Box theatre. Through analyzing the motivations behind each of these performances, I believe I have reiterated the impact the *Choreo-Story* method has to be seen as a “slant” discourse that communicates various meanings by promoting empathy and identification from the audience. For LOOK!, the use of personal narratives based on the experience of women in public space evokes emotion on part of the audience. It may also elicit feelings of identification on part of female viewers, while evoking feelings of guilt on part of male viewers. LOOK! also allowed the cast and myself to learn more about our own lived experiences and to empathize with one another through the embodying of one another’s stories. For the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, the use of personal health narratives elicits identification with an audience because everyone has had their own health experiences. In this instance, viewing this performance may elicit feelings of wonder on part of viewers, having them hypothesize on how they would put their own health stories into a dance. Again, the process of the *Choreo-Story* method allowed the cast and myself to learn more about our lived health experiences and to empathize with one another through the process of embodying each other’s stories.

I have also shown the *Choreo-Story* method’s purpose for promoting more movement-based performance methods within undergraduate and graduate level Performance Studies courses and within the field of Performance Studies as a whole. Through the inclusion of the *Choreo-Story* as a movement-based performance method and tool for devising, I can not only promote my purpose for more dance within

Performance Studies, but can also show my motivation to elicit “slant” discourse by way of movement, rather than just oral performance. It is clear that dance can be used as a storytelling tool that evokes audience empathy. In the future, I would like to expand these body narratives and the *Choreo-Story* method to be used in a variety of settings outside of Performance Studies.

Future Expectations for the *Choreo-Story*

The *Choreo-Story* method could be used within the disciplines of Narrative Medicine and the Medical Humanities because storytelling impacts our health experiences. In the following, I created a MyStory script to illustrate the link between storytelling and health. With a personal narrative and professional text, and popular culture text, I outlined how an individual could use the *Choreo-Story* method to develop movement that would turn into a body narrative of the health experience.

In the book *Stories of Illness and Healing: Women Write Their Bodies* (2007), Sayantani DasGupta and Martha Hurst offer a glimpse into how the MyStory and *Choreo-Story* can be used across disciplines. DasGupta and Hurst note that to read narratives, specifically women’s narrative, as relational, is to see the familial, social, and cultural/political implications of these stories (p. 12). This quote notes the implications of women’s stories as a way to help us understand how culture, structure, and agency impact women’s experiences of health and illness. Therefore, the MyStory method can be used to expose these relationships through professional, popular, and personal discourses. Specifically, I use the narrative “Sometimes Cancer Just Happens,” by Judith Nadell to provide an explicit example of professional and popular texts woven into her personal narrative.

First, Nadell states, “I came across articles, books, and TV shows on the mind-body (or holistic) models of illness ... [with] titles like ‘Let Your Mind Heal Your Body’ and ‘Think Your Way to Health’” (p. 247). If an individual were to create a MyStory based on Nadell’s personal narrative, they could include these popular culture lines to show how Nadell views her illness versus how those who practice holistic medicine view her illness. Therefore, the MyStory script could start:

Sometimes cancer just happens

“Let your mind heal your body!”

There’s no guarantee that transformation will bring health

“Think your way to health!”

Next, Nadell goes on to list some books written by healthcare experts on cancer, self-healing, coping, and transformation. Instead of picking just one expert opinion, an individual could pull pieces from multiple books listed in this narrative to show a professional look into self-healing. Thus, the MyStory script could continue:

“Think your way to health!”

Sometimes cancer just happens

The simple truth is, happy people generally don’t get sick.²⁴

We don’t get ill because there is something inside that needs fixing

Attitude is the single most important factor.²⁵

²⁴ (p. 247)

“Let your mind heal your body!”

There’s no guarantee that transformation will bring health

There are no incurable illnesses
only incurable people.²⁶

The MyStory script clearly depicts the dichotomy that Nadell experiences with having cancer and not wanting to participate in the self-healing and self-transformation narratives she sees in professional and cultural contexts. Then, a person could take this script and begin crafting movement from it to create a *Choreo-Story*.

First, for Nadell’s personal narrative, a person could think about ways that their physical body becomes implicated in the narrative of “maintain a positive attitude.” What does it feel like to make their body fake happiness? It could be something such as (1) moving their hands up towards their mouth to create a fake smile and (2) creating a fake, confident posture with their body (chest out, stand straight, etc.). Now, what does it feel like to release all that tension? Their last personal movement could be something as simple as (3) releasing all the built up tension of fake happiness with an upper body fold down with their head touching their knees and an audible exhale.

Next, for the professional movement, an individual could develop movement based on the way healthcare professionals might approach their patients. If they approach this relationship from a biomedical perspective, the movements could be more mechanical. So, they could (1) use their left arm to mechanically lift their right hand up to

²⁵ (p. 249)

²⁶ (p. 249)

their head, placing the pointer finger to the brain, mimicking a “think positive” mentality. If they approach this relationship from a culture-centered approach, they could (2) offer a consoling pat on the back, and (3) offer a hand out to hold. Ideally, more than one person would be participating in this *Choreo-Story* so these professional movements could be offered to another person who is performing the personal narrative movements. If only one person is participating, then adjustments would be made so the images still resonate.

Finally, for the popular culture movement, a person could develop movement based on the notion of “thinking your way to health.” Thus, the movements could be (1) pointing at their brain, (2) moving their arms up and down while taking deep breathes (similar to yoga), and (3) sitting on the ground, legs crossed, with their arms on each leg, mimicking a meditation pose. Again, if there is more than one person participating in the *Choreo-Story*, they could consider doing moves 1 and 2 to another person, highlighting how these ideas are being imposed on them from other people.

Once each text has three movements, the individual could begin to play around with what order they would want to perform the movements in. In the example of LOOK!, we decided to perform the professional movement first, then personal, then popular culture, ending with personal again, but the person could go in any order they want. For example, going in an order that is aesthetically pleasing for others to watch or makes the viewer begin to critique and question the cultural and political implications of the story. That way, a dialogue is started and a potential for change could occur. The person could perform each movement sequence separate or mix the movements from each text together. The goal is to create a sequence of movements that serves as choreography they can share with others. The individual could even perform the *Choreo-*

Story two different ways and have a discussion on how changing the movement sequence allowed them to learn something new about the experience being performed.

I share this example because my motivation for the *Choreo-Story* method moving forward is to create more conversations about the purpose of Performance Studies and dance outside of Communication Studies. My values and ways of seeing the world are dance-based and I wish to tell body narratives of marginalized groups in order to create relationships and understanding. I am interested in connecting with scholars from Theatre, Psychology, and Sociology. I am also interested in expanding this method to reach people outside of academia. Burke (1969) stated, “the principle of purpose [is] in the form of the desired” (p. 284). It is my desire and interest to see how practitioners of creative movement and art therapy could use the *Choreo-Story* method to help their clients work through past stressful experiences and trauma. Creating movement has always helped me work through hard experiences, and I believe dance is a universal language. Therefore, it could help a lot more people than just my Performance Studies community and myself.

CHAPTER SIX. CONCLUSION

To conclude the analysis of this project, I begin by examining the purpose for using Burke's Pentadic Analysis as a method for critique. I start by highlighting three commonly used texts within Introduction to Performance Studies courses, which use Burke's Pentadic Analysis to teach students how to analyze performance and performance texts. Through this process, I point out the glaring reality that these analyses are, admittedly, a surface level critique of performance and performance texts. I suggest that this project can, and should, be used as an example of an in-depth Pentadic Analysis within the field of Performance Studies, specifically in introductory Performance Studies courses.

The three texts I have chosen to review are used in multiple performance classes and closely align with my academic family tree mentioned in Chapter Four. They are: *Performing Literature: An Introduction* (1997) by Beverly Whitaker Long and Mary Frances HopKins, *Performance Studies: The Interpretation of Aesthetic Texts* (2007) by Ronald Pelias and Tracy Stephenson Shaffer, and *Theories of Performance* (2008) by Elizabeth Bell. Each text takes time to introduce Burke's Dramatistic Approach as a method of analyzing performance and performance texts. Below I highlight similarities and differences between each of them in order to summarize the use of the Pentad within introductory level Performance Studies courses.

Each book introduces Burke's Pentad as an approach for analyzing human interaction within texts and performance. Pelias and Shaffer (2007) use the Pentad for, "analyzing the aesthetic communication of others" (p. 61) while Bell (2008) states the Pentad, "mandates an awareness of ourselves as actors speaking in specific situations

with specific purpose” (p. 95). All the texts refer to the Pentad as a way to understand and explain human behavior. They suggest the explanation is easy to do given a specific vocabulary to work with. All of the texts introduce the five different parts of the Pentad that create its vocabulary: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. Pelias and Shaffer refer to the parts as “concepts” while Bell refers to them as “questions.” Whitaker and HopKins (1997) break down each part of the Pentad into completely different sections. In their book, they describe analyzing the “Dramatic Speaker” and “The Speaker’s Drama” separately. The agent and the scene are used to analyze the “Dramatic Speaker,” while act, agency, and purpose are used to analyze “The Speaker’s Drama” (pp. 64-65). They do, however, point out that each “category” is not discrete, and that each part of the Pentad will affect the other. Each text suggests questions to answer under each part of the Pentad in order to conduct an analysis and admits the information provided for the Pentad is not exhaustive, using about two to three pages to discuss it.

Other than an introduction to the different parts of the Pentad and a brief description of questions to ask under each in order to complete a critique, the texts do not suggest ways to relate each part of the pentad to one another in order to study the relationships between each of them. Most also fail to give an example of how a student could use the Pentadic Analysis to analyze live performance. Pelias and Shaffer do suggest that practitioners of performance would find the Pentad particularly useful because of the language provided to describe human behavior, but only provide an example of how to use the Dramatistic Approach for a written text (p. 62). This leads me to question if instructors are going beyond the text in their own classrooms and providing examples to illustrate the use of the Pentad for live performance to their students. Are

there examples of how to use the Pentad to analyze dance or particular methods of performance? Are there examples to give of people who have done in-depth Pentadic Analysis of live performance at all?

Each text outlines what the parts of the Pentadic Analysis are and hints to the intertwined nature of their relationships, but really does not go in depth to describe the ratios/relationships Burke alludes to in his book *Grammar of Motives*. The three texts outlined above give general descriptions of the Pentadic Analysis, which leads me to believe there could be more use of the method in these classes to understand the relationships of each Pentadic concept and how these relationships contribute to performances as a whole. The project I have outlined in this document does that, and further investigates the relationship between each part of the pentad in the remainder of this concluding chapter.

Based on the short summary provided above, a lack of information on how to do an in-depth Pentadic Analysis of performance and performance texts in introductory Performance Studies courses exists. My analysis of my original Bauhaus piece, LOOK! in the HBB and at the Petit Jean Performance Festival, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops as a way to analyze the *Choreo-Story* method can provide insight into the in-depth nature of the Pentad and its ability to highlight the relationships between each part of the Pentad. My project also details how doing this analysis made me understand each of my performances in a new way and, therefore, understand my purpose for creating the *Choreo-Story* method in a way I had not thought of before. Using the Pentadic Analysis also helped me to expose new findings about my project I would have not otherwise thought of had I not taken the time to analyze the *Choreo-Story* method through this

mode of analysis. I believe my project could be used to help other performance scholars and practitioners, as well as their students, understand the in-depth nature of the Dramatistic Approach and its ability to highlight glaring and important pieces of information that would not otherwise be found.

I employed Burke's Dramatistic Approach throughout this document to delve into my experience developing the *Choreo-Story*. Based on working with this approach, I feel it can be used beyond the surface level descriptions we provide in our Introduction to Performance Studies textbooks. By showing an in-depth analysis using the five concepts from Burke's approach I have exposed the nuances of each part and the relationships between them. In the future, this project could be used as an example in these courses as a way to elaborate upon the method as a tool for analysis

Chapter Review

When I began this project, I was interested in discovering how my years of dance experience intersected with my decision to pursue a doctorate in Performance Studies. I delved into performance courses with a curiosity for storytelling and its impact on my communication with others. I wanted to investigate the relationship between dance and storytelling more. Throughout my graduate coursework, I was able to gather the tools that would aid me in creating a project, which would help me, explore all of this. Here, I recap that journey.

In Chapter One, I detailed my path to this project through my extensive background in dance. I started dancing at the age of four as a way to socialize with other children. I fell in love with its ability to connect me with others and followed that passion to college. During my time at the University of Northern Iowa, I became a member of the

Orchesis Dance Company. In this company, I was exposed to the point of view that dance was more about the process of creating, rather than the final product an audience would see. I was able to choreograph two dance pieces during this time that helped me to understand how the process of creating dance performances was just as important, if not more important, as the product. I continued to develop my language of dance in my Master's degree at UNI, using dance as a mode of research as well as a way to share my research with my peers and professors in my department. Once I entered my doctoral program at Louisiana State University, I was exposed to movement-based performance methods that made my interest shift from performance as process to performance as method. This is when the *Choreo-Story* method began to form in my mind.

I also highlighted the different tools I had acquired that aided me in creating and critiquing this project. In my Masters degree I was introduced to the MyStory, Boal's Image Theatre, and Brecht's Epic Theatre. These methods pointed out the importance of storytelling as a mode of inquiry and highlighted the audience as performer. The MyStory allowed me to understand how personal narratives are created in relation to cultural narratives and institutions and how all of these concepts influence one another. Boal and Brecht highlighted the need to hear marginalized group's stories and exposed techniques for critiquing cultural and social norms. Brecht, specifically, argued for an alienation effect, which would expose how the world we occupy, is a bit stranger than we have noticed.

After introducing these methods, I spoke specifically about the movement-based performance methods of the Bauhaus Stage Workshops and Bogart's Viewpoints. These methods are important for understanding how my shows LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story*

Workshops began to take form and the type of aesthetic that was achieved within each. Bauhaus was used as a method of movement creation, but was also critiqued through the show LOOK! which pointed out the hypocrisy of the founders. Viewpoints was used as a devising tool in order to create movement for the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. This method allowed us to experiment with the six different Viewpoints outlined by Mary Overlie before we began making strict performance choices that would lead to our performance for the public showing. These two movement-based performance methods, in conjunction with MyStory, Boal, and Brecht led to the creation of the *Choreo-Story* method, which was discussed in-depth throughout this document.

I concluded Chapter One by informing the reader of Kenneth Burke's Pentadic Analysis, the method of analysis I would be using to understand the method of the *Choreo-Story* and its subsequent performance better. Burke's Pentad provides a vocabulary with which to assess performance, including its five concepts of act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. By exposing the multi-methodological nature of this project, Burke's Pentad allows the reader to follow along using language that is both familiar and theatrical in nature.

In Chapter Two, I introduced the overarching project through an analysis of the act. Through a detailed description, I highlighted my initial class project in Dr. Terry's *Performance Methods and Theories* course as the incipient act for the creation of the *Choreo-Story* method. While exploring my performances LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, I introduced the steps a practitioner would have to take in order to create a *Choreo-Story*. These steps include finding texts, finding performers, putting the texts in the casts' bodies, finding an aesthetic to guide your creation, performing, and repeat steps

one through five. It is important to remember that these steps do not have to occur in a particular order, but, at some point, they will all take form.

By analyzing the steps that created the performances I devised, some important findings came to light. First, I found that I had created a sustainable, repeatable pattern of acts, which could be used as a devising process. This gave me the need to create a set of workshops that could showcase this process. Thus, the *Choreo-Story* Workshops occurred. Second, the amount of time spent on each step of devising a *Choreo-Story* will change depending on the number of performers, the time allowed to devise, and the aesthetic preferences of the director. Third, I found that a guiding text would lead to the need for the other two texts present in the *Choreo-Story*. For example, my need to discuss personal narratives concerning male gazing practices led to finding the professional and popular culture texts for LOOK!. This guiding text will change and I encourage practitioners to try starting with a popular or professional text and seeing what personal narratives emerge from them. Fourth, I found that I wanted to key the audience into what the dance was “portraying” by including a short oral explanation somewhere in the performance. I would encourage practitioners to do this if they know their audience is inexperienced in watching movement-based performance. I would also encourage them not to key the audience if they know they are a bit more experienced. Finally, I found that a cast personality began to emerge. This comes with the intimacy of sharing personal experiences with one another and sharing these experiences with the other members of the performance. Through sharing and devising movement together, a bond is created and a personality begins to emerge. This can last long after the performance is over.

In Chapter Three, I detailed the multiple scenes in which the act of the *Choreo-Story* method came to fruition. Observing the micro and macro level scenes, I discussed the general scene of LSU's campus, the legacy of the Bauhaus, and my graduate school environment. I also explained how the texts for the *Choreo-Story* method would be a product of the scene in which the devising was taking place. For example, I showed how the political scene of Donald Trump's election and the Kavanaugh vs. Blasey Ford hearings led me to want to find texts surrounding women's experiences in public spaces and living in a male-dominated environment. Then, I took a step back and explained the micro level scenes of the LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops devising processes and performances.

Through analyzing the various scenes present throughout my project, I found that the scene affects what act will occur, where it will occur, and how it will occur. If it had not been for the looming political climate at the time I entered graduate school, I do not think LOOK! would have been created, because the scene in my head would not have been the same. It took a specific atmosphere to make all of the texts in this show come together the way they did. Had even the slightest change in our macro level scene occurred, it would have impacted the micro level scenes in our rehearsals and performances. The broad scene you encounter every day impacts your performance choices. By using Burke's Pentadic Analysis, I discovered the many macro level scenes that impacted my devising process at the micro level scene. I believe this insight can be used to show the extent to which the Dramatistic Approach can be used to expose relationships between the Pentadic concepts in the creation of performance.

In Chapter Four, I introduced the various agents that had been briefly mentioned during the analysis of the act and scene. Not only did I introduce the individuals, but I discussed how their agency impacted the very nature of each *Choreo-Story* we produced. I began by describing the agents of my Performance Studies family tree that had led to my interest in performance, dance, and working with movement-based performance methods to produce slant discourse. This path set out for me by Dr. HopKins and Dr. Shaffer led to the agency I had to create a movement-based method that highlighted dance as a mode of storytelling. The *Choreo-Story* method elicits empathy and truth seeking within an audience and illustrates the notion of “dance tells it slant.”

I also explored the various agents and their agency in each of the performances discussed in this document, including my original Bauhaus performance in Dr. Terry’s course, LOOK!, LOOK! at the Petit Jean Performance Festival, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. First introducing the agents, I explained how each person brought their own perspectives to the experience, which impacted how the performance took form. This is true for both performers and audience members. I also discussed how my agency as director changed from performance to performance based on the narratives and texts used. Through this analysis, I argued for the intrinsic relationship between agent and agency. It is clear that whatever agents participate in the devising process of any *Choreo-Story*, their very being influences the agency of the act. This was shown through the different physical body types, which altered the movement created in LOOK! and through the multiple stories in the *Choreo-Story* Workshops which highlighted contrasting types of movement that were developed and used for our public performance.

By investigating the agents and their agency, I also came to the realization that the *Choreo-Story* method, itself, is a form of agency, which was used throughout this project.

In Chapter Five, I concluded my analysis by investigating the many purposes for the *Choreo-Story* method and this project. First, I explained the performance motivations for my original Bauhaus piece, LOOK!, and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, hinting at a need to prove myself in my doctoral program and develop an aesthetic that was unique. Second, I explained the purpose of the *Choreo-Story* method and its place in Performance Studies. I argued for the expansion of dance and movement-based performance methods in our field and the classes that we teach. I advocated for amplifying dance as a legitimate form of research in the Communication Studies field through its relationship to the MyStory method, which has gained traction as a legitimate research method in Performance Studies. Finally, I ended my analysis with an exploration of my personal motivations for the *Choreo-Story* method. I explained myself as a dancer and how dance has helped me decompress in times of stress, share my experiences, and connect with others. It only makes sense dance would become my mode of research.

I also revealed my motivation to expand the method of the *Choreo-Story* outside of Performance Studies and Communication Studies. I exposed how the disciplines of Narrative Medicine and Medical Humanities could use this method to investigate health narratives, similar to what the cast had created in the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. I worked through the step-by-step process I wrote in an article, which detailed how scholars in Narrative Medicine and Medical Humanities could create a *Choreo-Story* from personal, professional, and popular medical stories. My purpose moving forward is to expand the

Choreo-Story method further, reaching outside of academia and into practice based professions such as art and creative movement therapy.

Using Burke's Pentadic Analysis has led to many findings throughout this document. At this point, however, each concept in the Pentad has been discussed independently of one another, with the exception of agent and agency. In the next section, I highlight important ratios, or relationships, between multiple concepts that expose the ways in which these concepts influence and impact one another. I end this chapter with a discussion of the implications and limitations of this study and point to areas for future research in reference to movement-based performance methods and the *Choreo-Story* method, specifically.

Pentadic Ratios: Highlighting Relationships

A ratio is a comparison between two concepts within the Pentad. Burke (1969) referred to this relationship as "container" and "thing contained" (p. 3). I refer to the ratio as a relationship between two concepts that show the impact each has on the other. In his book *Grammar of Motives*, Burke discusses two common ratios: scene-act and scene-agent. He states, "the scene-act ratio either calls for acts in keeping with scenes or scenes in keeping with acts – and similarly with the scene-agent ratio" (p. 9). That is, scene impacts the act and agents, but the act and agent also influence the scene. If we look around us, we can find examples of these two ratios everywhere. The development of the *Choreo-Story* method is no exception. However, in this analysis, I take Burke's ratio analysis a step further, looking at the relationship between three concepts, rather than two. That is, I discuss a "container" and a "thing contained," but add an analysis of how the relationship between the first two terms, in essence, allows a third term to take form.

In this section I first detail the ratio, or relationship, of scene-act and its impact on the agent, which in this instance I am referring to myself as the sole agent of the creation of the *Choreo-Story*. Then, I analyze the scene-agent ratio and its impact on the purpose, which again is personal in nature as I refer to myself as the sole agent. Finally, I investigate the agent-agency ratio and its influence on the creation of the act. Through these analyses, I hope to expand understanding of how Burke's Pentad functions as a critique of performance and to expose new understandings of my study.

Scene-Act / Agent

In Chapter Three I argued that the scene affects the act that will occur. Burke (1969) stated that, "it is principle of drama that the nature of acts and agents should be consistent with the nature of the scene" (p. 3). It is clear that the macro level scene occurring during the first two years of my doctoral program had a profound affect on the act that occurred. The political climate lent itself to discussions of sexual assault and women's rights, which inevitably made its way into the act of our devising and rehearsal process for LOOK!. In this instance, the scene is the container for the act. I argue, however, that the relationship between the two influenced the agent of the *Choreo-Story* method. Here, I am referring to myself as the sole agent/creator of the method.

This macro level scene not only influenced the micro level scenes of our devising, rehearsal, and performances processes, but it also consumed the scene within my mind. Throughout my time creating my original Bauhaus piece and LOOK!, the political climate consumed me. As I argued earlier, I created these performances, and subsequently the *Choreo-Story* method, as a way to engage in dialogue with the macro level scene. But, on some level, I believe the creation of the act of the *Choreo-Story*

method led the agent, me, to find a way to cope within the scene. I used movement as a way to work through personal stressors related to the scene, which in turn, created the act that is discussed in this document. Using dance as a way to cope and relate to others was a personal purpose of mine, discussed in Chapter Five. So, it is easy to argue that the scene contained the act, which influenced the agent, their agency, and their purpose.

Scene-Agent / Purpose

As I mentioned, containing an agent within a scene lends itself well to the study of purpose and motivation. Burke illuminated that purpose, “serves as an element common to both scene and agent [because of its] extreme impression of consistency between the two” (p. 9). As I contend above, the scene greatly impacts the agent, which in turn affects their purpose. Here, I am referring to the purpose of creating the act of the *Choreo-Story* method.

Because I am referring to myself as the sole creator of the *Choreo-Story* method, the purpose, in this instance, is deeply personal. As mentioned in Chapter Five, I not only wanted to create this method as a way to prove my place in the discipline, but, subconsciously, chose to create this method as a way to cope with my scene. My purpose then, was influenced by the relationship between scene and agent. I had recently moved across the country, started a doctoral program, was consumed by our looming political climate, and looking for a way to connect with others. Creating the *Choreo-Story* method allowed me to produce two performances and to travel to a performance festival, which led to the creation of relationships and close friendships. Through the process of creating this act, my personal motivations were being fulfilled, both personally and professionally.

Not only did the scene-agent ratio affect my personal purpose, but it also affected the purpose of each performance we created using the *Choreo-Story* method. This influence is most clearly illustrated in the show LOOK!. We were constantly finding texts related to the political climate and how it was impacting us. When we traveled the show to the Petit Jean Performance Festival, we added in text and movement that alluded to our feelings surrounding the Kavanaugh vs. Blasey Ford hearings which had occurred just a week before the festival. The scene not only affected myself as an agent in this instance, but the cast as a whole and, most likely, the audience who viewed it.

Agent-Agency / Act

Although not a ratio discussed by Burke, I believe the most impactful ratio in this document is that of agent and agency. I have argued for this relationship at length in Chapter Four, stating that, in the instance of this act, you cannot have agent without agency. The agents in LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops inherently altered how the devising, rehearsals, and performances would go solely by bringing their unique perspectives, abilities, and relationships to the process. The cast members brought their own personal experiences, amount of dance background, and willingness to engage in the method. The stories shared were personal, which impacted the movement that was created for each performance. Had one cast member been removed from either show and another added, the agency of the devising, rehearsals, and performances would have totally changed. This was shown through the change of agents from LOOK!'s original performance in the HBB to the performance at Petit Jean. Even though the show was the same, the cast changed by one member, which meant the agency of show was altered as a result.

Burke (1969) contended that act and agent require the scene to “contain” them (p. 15). It is no surprise, then, that the ratio between agent and act is a strong one. Burke continued to say that, “the agent and act ratio strongly suggests a temporal or sequential relationship rather than a purely positional or geometric one” (p. 16). That is, the agent is the author of the act, but the act makes and remakes the agent through this relationship. I argue that the temporal space between agent and act can be found in the agency. Agents, by nature, have a unique agency that influences their behaviors and decisions. Thus, agent and agency were intrinsic to how the act would take form.

As mentioned above, the agents within LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops influenced the act of the devising process, rehearsals, and the performances. This is because of their agency as unique individuals. It also impacted which agents could perform in which shows. For example, in LOOK! I was interested in an all female cast given the themes of the show. Had a male performer been in that performance, the act would have completely changed because of their agency. Clearly, a male performer did not have agency to discuss or perform a female’s experience in a male-dominated environment. For the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, however, the demographic information about the cast members was not a determining factor in who could participate. I wanted an array of health experiences and perspectives. It is clear, then, that the relationship between agents, their agency, and the act dictates who can, and should, be in certain acts or performances and who should not.

Implications

With a clear understanding of how the five concepts of Burke’s Pentad impact and influence one another, I now turn to a discussion of the implications of this study and

the *Choreo-Story* method. Through this discussion I point to the projects limitations and areas of future research. The *Choreo-Story* method has implications for how scholars understand and use Greg Ulmer's MyStory method and Mohan Dutta's Culture-Centered Approach to health. Here, I discuss how the *Choreo-Story* allowed me to map the MyStory and the Culture-Centered Approach to health onto one another. This allowed me to show how each uses similar concepts in order to understand how personal experiences help us understand broader, cultural phenomena. Then, I focus specifically on how the *Choreo-Story* and MyStory differ in order to highlight the *Choreo-Story's* motivation of conspicuous relationality and group vulnerability.

MyStory and the Culture-Centered Approach

Through this project, I found that Ulmer's MyStory method closely aligned with Dutta's Culture-Centered Approach to health. The MyStory, again, interweaves a personal story, a popular culture text, and a professional text. It highlights how these three texts speak to one another in order to expose power relations within our everyday lives. Similarly, Dutta's Culture-Centered Approach uses the terms agency, culture, and structure to highlight the, "culturally situated nature of health communication processes and meanings" (Dutta, 2008, p.1). The *Choreo-Story*, specifically as used in the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, allowed me to see how Ulmer's method and Dutta's approach overlapped.

Privileging the use of narrative to explain health experiences, Dutta's (2008) term agency refers to, "the active processes through which individuals, groups, and communities participate in [finding health options]" (p. 7). Ulmer's use of personal narrative within the MyStory not only overlaps with Dutta's term, but also helps expose

why personal narratives should be used to explain health's connection to culture. Each concept exposes the capacity for an individual to enact choices and reflect on their experiences.

Culture, within Dutta's approach, refers to how health meanings are created and negotiated and how these meanings continually shift (p. 7). I found Ulmer's use of popular culture texts to closely align with the way Dutta speaks about culture. Focusing on community meaning making, the use of a popular culture text about health, such as a buzzfeed article or commercial, can expose how health is talked about within in our everyday lives and how large groups of people are influenced by these notions.

Dutta's term structure refers to the way social organizations enable and constrain individuals choices related to health, specifically healthcare organizations and how they function (p. 6). Ulmer's use of professional texts can be used to illuminate how healthcare organizations communicate to the general public. Take, for instance, a WebMD article or Psychology journal. These texts can illuminate how a structure, such as a health organization, creates meanings surrounding health by the professional texts they publish. These texts enable and constrain individuals to make certain health related choices based off of what they think is "good" or "bad."

Ulmer's MyStory method and Dutta's Culture-Centered Approach to health can be used to inform one another. In fact, they did inform one another during the creation of the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. In the future, more research should be done to understand this overlap and how it connects Health Communication and Performance Studies.

Conspicuous Relationality and Vulnerability

The *Choreo-Story* is an extension of the MyStory method outlined by Greg Ulmer. Both methods highlight the relationship between personal stories and cultural institutions. The *Choreo-Story* extends the MyStory by focusing on body narratives and movement-based performance. This was highlighted through the in-depth descriptions of both LOOK! and the *Choreo-Story* Workshops throughout this document.

However, the *Choreo-Story* also challenges the MyStory because it seeks to create a group story, rather than a sole narrative. MyStorys are often written by a sole author with the intention of highlighting how a personal experience can help scholars understand broader, cultural phenomena. Unlike the method of autoethnography, the MyStory weaves other texts into personal stories to resist featuring a performer's vulnerability. Autoethnography, as a method, places the vulnerability of the author in the hands of the reader or audience in order for the reader/audience to make sense of the story being told.

The *Choreo-Story*, in contrast to both of these, cannot be done alone. It requires a group of performers who engage in conspicuous relationality. Again, conspicuous relationality is conspicuous aesthetic performance created through embodied relationships. The group must be comprised of dancers and nondancers. Through this project, I found that having individuals who had no background in dance created a particular vulnerability throughout the process. The performers had no preconceived notions of how to "do" dance. Therefore, they were able to engage and become vulnerable to the process of the *Choreo-Story*. This vulnerable engagement, in process rather than in product, bound the groups together and created a community. Instead of placing this vulnerability in the hands of the audience, however, the *Choreo-Story* created

a vulnerability that was just for the casts. That is, the audience never sees the vulnerability because it occurs in the rehearsal process of the *Choreo-Story*, specifically among the cast members. The method highlights how conspicuous relationality allows a group of performers to share personal experiences and also embody them together in rehearsals and on stage.

Limitations

The use of Burke's Dramatistic Approach as a method of critique produces both eye-opening findings and limitations in scope. Because the Pentad focuses on five main areas of analysis, it closes the door to the possibility of other types of findings. For example, I could have interviewed my casts to discover their experiences with the method I have created. However, at this preliminary stage of method building, the focus of the Pentad increased my understanding of the entire process.

The *Choreo-Story* method itself has limitations. First, in its current state, you are limited to three different types of texts: personal, popular, and professional. However, a practitioner's perception of how to use these texts can lead to unlimited possibility. Do not limit yourself to just three texts. Find multiple texts under each type and explore alternative modes of text. For example, in the talkback for the *Choreo-Story* Workshops public showing, Dr. Ruth Bowman posed the question: What would starting with a popular dance text, such as Cupid Shuffle, do for the creation of a personal narrative and professional text? I had considered using professional movement-based methods as a text, but had never thought of using popular dance crazes at the starting point for creating a *Choreo-Story*. In the future, practitioners should explore various types of personal,

popular, and professional texts in order to push the boundaries of the method already proposed in this document.

Directors and practitioners should also consider devising a “theme” for the *Choreo-Story* with their cast, rather than providing their cast the materials. In my experience, I had limited time to plan and execute a performance, so I came prepared with popular texts for the cast. If allotted more time, I would have loved to see what the cast would have brought into rehearsals for texts. I urge practitioners to experiment with this in the future.

Finally, this study was limited by the amount of participants as well as their experience. Because my eight participants were either graduate students or instructors in higher education, I was not able to see how the *Choreo-Story* method would work with individuals who do not have dance or performance experience. In the future, I would like the *Choreo-Story* to be used with dancers and nondancers alike using the method to understand their place in the world differently than they did before they used the method. I also noted in Chapter Four, that all of the agents in this project were seemingly able-bodied individuals. It is imperative, moving forward, that those who use the *Choreo-Story* method engage with participants with disabilities and share their stories of their experience using the method.

Now that the limitations of this study have been discussed, I conclude this chapter with a discussion of areas for future research concerning the *Choreo-Story* method. These areas include using the method outside of Performance Studies and academia, including disabled persons in the devising and creation process, and introducing more movement-

based performance methods in introductory and novice level performance courses and highlighting dance in the Performance Studies graduate curriculum.

Areas for Future Research

Because the movement-based performance method I am proposing is new, areas for future research are abundant. I hope more performance scholars engage with the *Choreo-Story* method in their devising and creative processes. For practitioners, this could mean creating a performance that is solely a *Choreo-Story*, using the method to devise movement for a scene in an oral based performance, or just using the method for cast warm ups during rehearsals, and/or performance class warm ups. By more practitioners experimenting with the method, new findings may arise to the functions of the *Choreo-Story* method and its effectiveness as a method of movement-based performance devising.

Although I am excited for other performance scholars to begin experimenting with the *Choreo-Story* method, I am more interested in how the *Choreo-Story* can be used outside of academia. For example, at the end of Chapter Five I gave the example of how scholars in Narrative Medicine and the Medical Humanities could use the MyStory and *Choreo-Story* to develop performances about health experiences. With an emphasis on narrative and storytelling, this method lends itself perfectly to this discipline and would allow for new findings in this area that may not have been discussed before. I would be interested to see how those in Theatre, Music, Sociology, and/or Psychology departments could use this method to build upon studies focused on movement, the physical body, and/or identity.

Along with expanding the *Choreo-Story* method to different fields of study, I would be interested to see how the *Choreo-Story* could function in a practical manner. That is, could the method be used outside of academia? Those with a career in art and creative movement therapy may find the *Choreo-Story* of use to their patients. The method could be used to expose the patient's personal relation with the world around them. What impacts their mind culturally and structurally? Referring to Dutta's (2008) Culture-Centered Approach to Health, I believe the *Choreo-Story* could be used to investigate the relationship between agent, culture, and structures in an effort to unpack how the world is affecting an individual's cognitive behaviors.

Scholars should also consider how the *Choreo-Story* method would function for visibly disabled persons. As mentioned, a big limitation of this study is that all of its participants were seemingly able-bodied individuals. Albright (2013) brings to light the idea of physical mindfulness and considers the negotiation of the disabled body in dance. These notions have helped me become self aware of my physicality in relation to those around me and to consider how different bodies will operate within the structure of movement-based performance methods such as the *Choreo-Story*. Would the method function the same for disabled persons? How would it work differently? What changes and adaptations would need to be made? Would it create a better version of the *Choreo-Story* than is laid out in this document? It is clear that agents impact the way a *Choreo-Story* is created. Therefore, future studies need to focus on a variety of agents, both able-bodied and disabled.

In terms of using the *Choreo-Story* method, Performance Studies practitioners should experiment with different types of personal, professional, and popular texts. In

this project, I let the themes and personal narratives guide the professional and popular texts. It would be interesting to experiment by starting with a professional or popular text and seeing what personal narratives arise from them. Also consider alternative types of texts, like the example of starting with the Cupid Shuffle that Dr. Ruth Bowman provided in the talkback of the *Choreo-Story* Workshops. Last, one could allow the cast to be more hands on with choosing the texts. I dictated the texts that were used by creating themes for my shows as the director/facilitator (i.e. gazing practices and health experiences) because of time constraints. If practitioners have enough time, one could experiment with the cast bringing in texts that interest them, whether personal, professional, or popular. Then, the cast could figure out how their texts relate to one another, rather than using a theme chosen by a director.

Finally, research on movement-based performance methods in Performance Studies courses and curriculum is necessary. This project is just one example of how movement can be used to devise performances, which are meaningful and produce important knowledge we did not have before. This is but one example of how we could begin to introduce movement-based performance to undergraduate students at the introductory and novice level. What are other ways we would include movement-based performance in these courses? Again, one way might be just using the *Choreo-Story* as a warm up tool or as an assignment in a performance-focused course. I have used the MyStory and *Choreo-Story* method in a variety of undergraduate courses including *Public Speaking*, *Fundamentals of Communication*, *Performance of Everyday Life*, and *Oral Interpretation*. Performance scholars and practitioners should be more mindful to include movement-based performance in their curriculum.

Final Thoughts

Throughout this project, I have explored various types of bodies. I realized the type of body I was interested in exploring changed depending on the theme of the *Choreo-Story* for each performance. In my Original Bauhaus Piece and LOOK!, I was interested in bodies as physical, gendered, and geometric. I used choreography as a way to explore how physical bodies could be used to tell stories, the personal and popular culture texts as a way to understand female bodies as objectified and disciplined, and the professional text of the Bauhaus Stage Workshops to investigate the geometric body in a constrained space. I found the simultaneous use of the gendered body and geometric body perplexing. The geometric body, as outlined by the Bauhaus Stage Workshops, constrained the casts bodies to operate in a certain way and the gendered bodies of the cast pushed against this constraint. After consulting Leslie Weisman's book *Discrimination by Design: A Feminist Critique of the Man-Made Environment* (2004), I realized female bodies, in particular, are constantly constrained by male dominated spaces. The personal and professional texts used in these instances allowed for a deeper understanding of this push back through the process of creating these performances.

In the *Choreo-Story* Workshops, I was interested in bodies as physical and wounded. Again, I used choreography as a way to explore how physical bodies could be used to tell stories through the professional text of Viewpoints. Turning to Arthur Frank's *The Wounded Storyteller* (2013), I used the personal narratives and popular culture texts surrounding health to understand bodies as a ground for illness narratives. Frank described the wounded body as both personal and social. By using the personal and popular culture texts described in this document, I have found that wounded bodies serve

as storytellers and healers. Through the *Choreo-Story* method, the cast and I were able to experience the shared, empathic bond Frank mentioned in his text.

This project began as a small idea in a performance course in the HopKins Black Box on LSU's campus. Dr. Mary Frances HopKins secured the HBB as an experimental laboratory for performance in 1992. For performance folk, we get to experiment and dream up projects that may not come to fruition by just sitting in a classroom. Utilizing this space as an experimental lab, I was able to develop a method based off of personal interests and a desire for movement-based performance and dance in the HBB space. When I began my classes, I was scared to fail. I thought every performance I created had to be perfect. When I began focusing on this experiment, this passion project, however, something changed. I really took on the mentality that I was conducting an experiment and if it failed, that did not mean it was not still successful. I still learned something. I produced two unique movement-based performances in my time at LSU. Through my experiences it is clear to me that, as performance scholars and practitioners, we produce valuable research. We share the insights we gain through production. In some instances, production work may be more meaningful than writing an article or book. Creating performances in the Black Box allows us to gain a deeper understanding of communication phenomena, but it also allows us to share experiences with the other members of the cast and crew. Production work creates community in profound ways and we carry this community with us long after the performances are over. At least I felt that way when I was conducting the experiment of the *Choreo-Story* method between 2016-2018 (my first three years of my doctoral program). In the future, I hope the students who step foot in the HopKins Black Box, or any other experimental performance space, feel

the same freedom I did. To create without worry. To experiment without fear of failure.
To produce something that is professional, valuable, artistic, and personally fulfilling.

APPENDIX A. ORIGINAL BAUHAUS ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

Bauhaus is an art institution, aesthetic practice, and visual narrative. Reflecting upon the sexist nature of the school, use Elizabeth Bell's (1993) essay "Performance Studies as Women's Work" and use the aesthetics of Bauhaus against itself.

In this performance assignment you should:

1. Choreograph a dance
2. Base your work in the three primary colors (red blue and yellow) and the three primary shapes (circle square and triangle)
3. Construct and perform on a grid
4. Base the performance in feminist performance ethics as articulated by Bell
5. Not use any human sound

APPENDIX B. LOOK! SHOW PROPOSAL

Description:

This show will be an expanded MyStory (of stories from the director and the performers) which mixes the popular discourse surrounding cats, cat moms, the crazy cat lady, cat memes, etc., the personal discourse of gazing practices that the director and performers have participated in, seen as a third party or bystander, or experienced happened to them, and the professional discourse of the male gaze, the human gaze, and feminist critique of such.

With the method of the MyStory in mind, the director would also like to pull on many performance methods within this show including Bauhaus, Viewpoints, and other movement related methods.

The director has started work on these concepts in the spring of 2017 in Dr. David Terry's Poetry and Performance course as well as Dr. Terry's Graduate Performance Methods Seminar. Because of this, the director would like to request Dr. Terry as their advisor for this show based on the direct communication with Dr. Terry regarding show concepts, methods, and ideas surrounding the show.

Possible Source Material:

"I could pee on this and other poems by cats" by Francesco Marciuliano

"I could pee on this *too*: And more poems by more cats" by Francesco Marciuliano

"Cats" a poem by Sarah Arvio

"The Armadillo" a chapter from the book *A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving

Other cat-related texts

Personal narratives of the director and performers

Peer-reviewed literature concerning the concepts of the male gaze, the tourist gaze, gazing practices, and feminist critique

Technical Requirements:

Possible round set up of risers (to enforce the watching of others from the audience), possible cloth or some form of textile from the ceiling (similar to that used in Naomi and Trish's shows from the 2016-2017 season), regular lights with varying colors, and some sort of audio involvement.

Estimated Cast Size:

3-4 people

APPENDIX C. *CHOREO-STORY* WORKSHOPS SHOW PROPOSAL

Description:

The Choreo-Story is first, and foremost, a blending and extension of previous performance methods already in place; the MyStory (Denzin, 2014) and Visual Journaling (Ellingson, 2017).

The MyStory is, “simultaneously a personal mythology, a public story, a personal narrative, and a performance that critiques ... a montage text filled with sounds, music, poetry, and images taken from the writer’s personal history” (Denzin, 2014). The method interweaves a personal narrative, a professional text, and a popular culture text in order to critique and analyze social order. This method is specifically geared toward developing written scripts, which are then performed verbally and, sometimes, with use of multi media such as sound and projection of video. Although helpful for understanding our myriad of identities, *this method fails to account for how the body serves as a personal text*.

Visual Journaling is a reflexive process that involves a/r/tography. A/r/tography “embraces messy spaces where text and images come together (or refuse to connect)” (Ellingson, 2017). Through the intersection of image and text, participants create meaning from fragmented sources such as images off the Internet, magazine clippings, flyers, books, etc. Again this process is specifically focused on creating performance on the page, *thus eliminating the body*.

By combining the MyStory and Visual Journaling, I propose a new method called the *Choreo-Story*. This method embraces intertextual analysis on the page, but, more importantly, *within the body*. The *Choreo-Story* uses personal narrative and personal *movement*. Professional text and professional *movement*. Popular culture text and popular culture *movement*. The *Choreo-Story* also asks the participants to be self-reflexive. To allow a visual journal *of the body* to emerge. To embrace the “messy space” where text and body come together and where they refuse to connect (Ellingson, 2017, p. 29).

A previous version of this method was shown in my show “LOOK!” which premiered in the HopKins Black Box theatre during the 2017-2018 academic years. The *Choreo-Story* workshops will be an extension of this, employing the same method of creation, but is open to anyone willing to participate in the workshop and the one-day showing at the conclusion of the workshops. These workshops will inform my dissertation research and the employment of the *Choreo-Story* as a unique performance method for other Performance Studies practitioners.

Possible Source Material:

Personal Narratives of participants
Professional texts and popular texts found by the participants that inform their own, unique personal narratives.

Technical Requirements:

General lighting and minimal use of sound.

Estimated Cast Size:

Maximum of 10 people

APPENDIX D. ORIGINAL BAUHAUS PIECE PEER REVIEW

The performance begins with the audience facing a small stage. A flat has been erected, with a grid-like pattern made of tape designed on the floor in front of it, giving the impression of a condensed stage even though the room itself is very large. The music is loud, exciting, almost anthem, like something that would be played at a rave or a dance floor. The audience see[s] a vaguely humanoid creature step from behind the flat and begin moving among the grid-like pattern on the floor. The female creature before us appears to be mostly humanoid, but has no face. Rather, she is wearing an opaque white featureless mask that hides her features. The mask has a jarring effect on her appearance, making her seem very non-human. She wears a dress made of pipe cleaners, all of the three primary colors (red, yellow, blue). She holds a picture frame without anything inside.

The female creature moves among the grid while only ever stepping on the lines. Her movements are almost robotic. She moves in measured, calculated lines, frequently stopping to bend her body or tilt her head in odd ways. Her movements seem to coincide with certain beats of the music while others are disparate, indicating no intentional connection between her body and the music.

While she moves, she uses the picture frame to interact with the audience. The frame guides the audience's eyes, as she centers the frame on various parts of her body. She moves the frame frequently to her face, to her chest, to her crotch, and even to her buttocks. The audience finds humor in this situation. Periodically, she reaches through the picture frame and wags her hand back and forth slowly, methodically, before returning it through the frame.

The female creature continues her movements until the music ceases at which point she shuffles backwards offstage behind the flat, with the frame clasped to her chest the entire time. At this point, the performance has ended.

APPENDIX E. LOOK! PEER REVIEW

I attended a rehearsal to observe process, and I have also had the opportunity to be present for various originations and inspirations of this show through classes and performance experiments. As Karen Mitchell once wrote; "Through rehearsal, you embody; through embodiment, you learn; through performance, you share what you've learned."

What was shared with me? Broadly, well, I'm not sure my voice is the one that needs to be heard after a show that reflects on the public impacts of the cis-het-male gaze, so I'll keep it kind of brief in order to let others speak.

First, I remember saying to myself, in the middle of this show, I've been to this rave before. Devo meets four square meets the colors of Hot Dog on a Stick meets how many triangles are contained in this shape meets staying on beat meets walking late at night on and off the streets meets that self-defense cat keychain meets "I don't even wait. And when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything... Grab 'em by the—" public space.

The first act of this show was constructed through an amplified explanation of Bauhausian design, function over form through primary colors and the privileging of a presupposed masculine rationality, disaffected interjections of the male gaze and phallocentrism, and the DGAF-nature of the domesticated cat. Out of a bright Barney bag briefcase came shapes and text that transferred to the black podium to the gaze of the performer to their voice to the audience and then back onto busy performers taping out a squared stage.

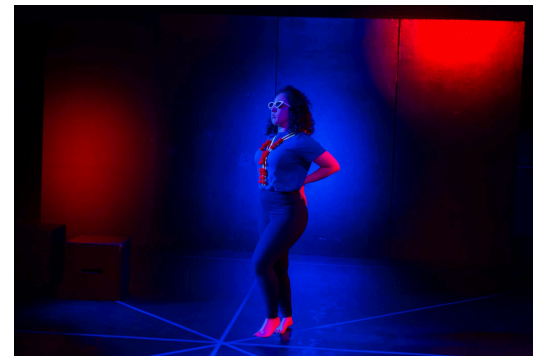
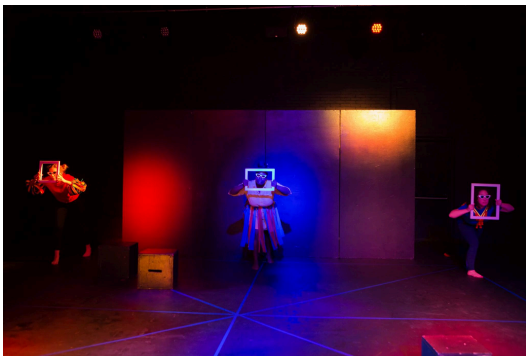
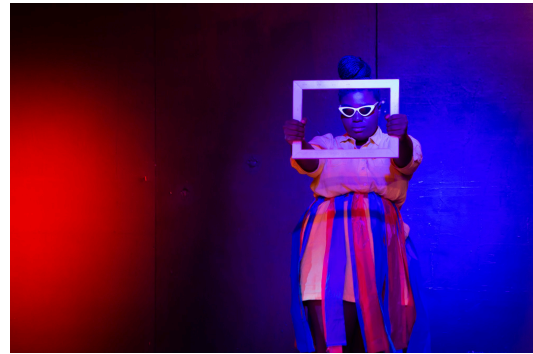
The second act hushed voices in order to allow bodies to rhythmically speak, seldom breaking the grid or the beat—even when tearing it apart. Throughout, a desensitized, nay, hypnotized, deliberate pacing, pulsing, continued—making me question what is this specific pre-recorded music doing to the movement, what is the darkness doing to the audience, and what are the glasses doing for the performers. Over time, bodies became slightly freer, at times flopping on a box, but never so free that they were able to completely color outside the lines. Until one performer removed their glasses, approached the audience enveloped in darkness, and through their gaze let us know that they know we know they see us seeing them.

APPENDIX F. *CHOREO-STORY* WORKSHOPS PEER REVIEW

Earlier this week The Black Box hosted *Choreo-Story* for one night performance workshop event. Audience members entered the space and observed an eight-minute movement piece performed by five ensemble members. The ensemble began in the dark. A spot light comes up on a single performer as a rhythmic ethereal music fades in. The lights come up to reveal the other four performers moving in synchronized rhythm, back and forth across the back wall of the space. We hear their bodies slide left to right against the brick. As the performers move from the back wall to occupy an otherwise empty scene, we encounter a range of hyper stylized movements: sharp angles, slow, elongated steps, repetitive gestures, contorted facial expressions, occasionally the faintly audible breath, moments of synchronized movements where we encounter one of the most audible expressions of the piece... 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8... The piece ends with what we later learn is an improvised sequence in which ensemble members free-style or improvise. I fixated on Emily sliding across the ground. When the sequence is complete, the lights come up. Montana stands at a podium and presents us with a description of the process (how she recruited participants, the prompts she provided the ensemble, the texts they drew upon) the theoretical and methodological aims of the piece (view-points, the MyStory) and in so doing provided as someone said, (I believe it was Ruth) a caption for the performance we just witnessed. We learn that the movements derive from health narratives and broader health discourses such as WebMD texts. We learn from the cast that movements represent past experiences of their bodies, (Ethan shaving his head, Greg's repetitive turning of the key) Then, we are presented with the same piece a second time after which, Ruth Bowman, one of the primary theorists of the MyStory, lead the audience in a discussion of the piece.


I am compelled to respond to this work on a couple of levels. On the first level, I want to congratulate Montana and the ensemble as researchers. If, as we believe in performance studies, performance is epistemic, a method for understanding and knowing, and if The Black Box is indeed a laboratory space, than putting your process on display like this is an effective strategy for investigating your object of study and for developing and refining a method for approaching the body, narratives (particularly health narratives) and the methodological approaches you are building as part of your inquiry--particularly since I know this is part of your dissertation research. The structure of performance, explanation, performance, response is really ingenious, both in terms of a research process but also pedagogically. On the aesthetic level, I was stunned by the level of and attention to craft and the repetition of the piece for the second time really highlighted the discipline both you and the ensemble dedicated to this short, tightly rehearsed piece (especially in such a short amount of time.)


APPENDIX G. IMAGES FROM LOOK!








Images rendered by Dr. Ashley Mack and permission granted to display them here.

APPENDIX H. IMAGE APPROVAL


LOOK! Photos Permission




Ashley N Mack
Fri 1/31/2020 11:11 AM
Montana J Smith ✓








Absolutely!





Montana J Smith
Fri 1/31/2020 10:52 AM
Ashley N Mack ✓



Hi Dr. Mack,

I am finishing up my dissertation and would like to include some of the photos from LOOK! that you took in an appendix. Is it okay if I use 8-10 photos of the show that you took?

Thanks in advance!

Montana Jean Smith | ABD
Instructor of Record & Doctoral Candidate
Department of Communication Studies | Performance Studies
Louisiana State University
Office | Coates 327

APPENDIX I. IMAGES FROM *CHOREO-STORY* WORKSHOPS



Images rendered by author

APPENDIX J. IRB APPROVAL

ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST



TO: Tracy Shaffer
Communication Studies

FROM: Dennis Landin
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: October 22, 2018

RE: IRB# E11278

TITLE: The Choreo-Story Workshops: Devising Body Narratives

Institutional Review Board
Dr. Dennis Landin, Chair
130 David Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
P: 225.578.8692
F: 225.578.5983
irb@lsu.edu
lsu.edu/research

New Protocol/Modification/Continuation: New Protocol

Review Date: 10/22/2018

Approved X

Disapproved _____

Approval Date: 10/22/2018

Approval Expiration Date: 10/21/2021

Exemption Category/Paragraph: 2b

Signed Consent Waived?: No

Re-review frequency: (three years unless otherwise stated)

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable):

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Landin", is written over a horizontal line.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –

Continuing approval is **CONDITIONAL** on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure.
8. **SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.**

* All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at <http://www.lsu.edu/irb>

REFERENCES

- About the HopKins black box theatre, (2019). Retrieved from https://www.lsu.edu/hss/cmst/hopkins_black_box_theater/about.php
- Albright, A. C. (1997). *Choreographing difference: The body and identity in contemporary dance*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Albright, A. C. (2013). *Engaging bodies: The politics and poetics of corporeality*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Aneshensel, C. S., Phelan, J. C., & Bierman, A. (2013). The sociology of mental health: Surveying the field. In C. Aneshensel, J. Phelan, & A. Bierman (Eds), *Handbook of the sociology of mental health* (pp. 1-19). New York, NY: Springer.
- Barbour, K. N. (2011). *Dancing across the page: Narrative and embodied ways of knowing*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bauhaus-Archiv Museum fur Gestaltung (1993). *Text panels of the permanent exhibition*. The Bauhaus: Weimar - Dessau - Berlin 1919-1933. Berlin.
- Bell, E. (2008). *Theories of performance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of seeing*. London: Penguin Books.
- Bernstein, P. L. (1975). *Theory and methods in dance-movement therapy*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- Boal, A. (1992). *Games for actors and nonactors*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bogart, A., & Landau, T. (2005). *The viewpoints book: A practical guide to viewpoints and composition*. New York, NY: Theatre Communications Group, Inc.
- Bowman, M. S., & Bowman, R. L. (2002). Performing the mystory: A textshop in autopformance. *Teaching performance studies*, 161-74.
- Brecht, B. (1901). The street scene a basic model for an epic theatre. *Breakout!*, 39-49. Retrieved from <https://search-ebscohostcom.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=egr&AN=527458510&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Burke, K. (1969). *A grammar of motives*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.
- Conquergood, D. (1985). Performing as a moral act: Ethical dimensions of the ethnography of performance. *Literature in performance*, 5(2), 1. <https://doi-org.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/10.1080/10462938509391578>

- . (1988). Health theatre in a Hmong refugee camp: Performance, communication, and culture. *The drama review* (1988-), 32(3), 174. <https://doiorg.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/10.2307/1145914>
- . (1992). Ethnography, rhetoric, and performance. *Quarterly journal of speech*, 78(1), 80. Retrieved from <https://search-ebshost-com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sih&AN=9207270301&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- DasGupta, S., & Hurst, M. (2007). *Stories of illness and healing: Women write their bodies*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press.
- Defrancisco, V. P., Palczewski, C. H., & McGeough D. D. (2014). *Gender in communication: A critical introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Denzin, N. K. (2014). *Interpretive autoethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Department of Communication Studies Cal State LA (2020). Required core seminars. Retrieved from http://www.calstatela.edu/sites/default/files/users/u98316/coms_required_core_elective_seminars.pdf
- Derrida, J. (2002). The animal that therefore I am (more to follow). *Critical inquiry*, 28(2), 369–418.
- du Pre, A. (2016). *Communicating about health: Current issues and perspectives, 5th edition*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Dutta, M. J. (2008). *Communicating health: A culture-centered approach*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Edwards, H. S. (2018, Oct 4). *How Christine Blasey Ford's testimony changed America*. Retrieved from <https://time.com/5415027/christine-blasey-ford-testimony/>
- Ellingson, L. (2017). *Embodiment in qualitative research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography* (1sted., Vol. 13). Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- “Fiery debate about LSU” (2019). Retrieved from https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/sports/lsu/article_116f4336-acd2-11e9-9b43-43677be4c82c.html
- Flanagan, L., & Moore, B. (Directors). (2018, Aug 31). *Institutionally aggravated*. Live performance at the LSU HopKins Black Box theatre. Baton Rouge, LA.
- Frank, A. W. (2013). *The wounded storyteller*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, Ltd.

- French, D. (2019, July 26). *What democrats don't understand about the south*. Retrieved from <https://time.com/5349531/democrats-dont-get-the-south/>
- Gropius, W., and Wensinger, A. (1961). *The theater of the Bauhaus*. Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hamera, J. (2007). *Dancing communities: Performance, difference, and connection in the global city*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press LLC.
- Hasting, M. (Director). (1980). *Man and mask: Oskar Schlemmer and the "Bauhaus" stage* [Motion picture]. England: The Roland Collection.
- "History and vision" (2018). Retrieved from <https://metoomvmt.org/about/>
- HopKins, M. F. (2016). Tell it slant. *Text and performance quarterly*, 36(1), 6-17.
- Irving, J. (1989). *A prayer for Owen Meany: A novel*. New York, NY: Morrow.
- Klee, P. (1965). *Pedagogical sketchbook*. New York, NY: Mainz and Berlin.
- Langellier, K. M., & Peterson, E. E. (2004). *Storytelling in daily life: Performing narrative*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Langner, G. J. (2019). Cast harmony and performance through uncertainty: Learning to achieve dance at a distance. *Text and performance quarterly*, 39(2), 135-52, doi: 10.1080/10462937.2019.1595119
- Lepeckie, A. (2006). *Exhausting dance: Performance and the politics of movement*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Leseho, J., & Maxwell, L. R. (2010). Coming alive: Creative movement as a personal coping strategy on the path to healing and growth. *British journal of guidance & counseling*, 38, 17-30. doi:10.1080/03069880903411301
- Long, B. W., & HopKins, M. F. (1997). *Performing literature: An introduction*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- LSU Graduate School (2020). Retrieved from <https://www.lsu.edu/graduateschool/>
- Lupton, E. & Miller, J. A. (1993). *The ABCs of triangle, circle, square: The Bauhaus and design theory*. New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, Inc.
- Northwestern School of Communication (2020). Course offerings 2018-2019. Retrieved from https://www.communication.northwestern.edu/f/performance_studies/CourseOfferings2018-19.pdf

- Magolda, P. M. (1999). Mystories about alternative discourses in a qualitative inquiry seminar. *Qualitative inquiry*, 5(2), 208.
- Marciuliano, F. (2012). *I could pee on this: And other poems by cats*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books.
- Mary Francis HopKins (2020). Retrieved from https://www.lsu.edu/hss/cmst/hopkins_black_box_theater/mfh.php
- Mattingly, C. (1998). *Healing dramas and clinical jobs: The narrative structure of experience*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Oliver, L. (director) (2018). NAPPY hairstories. HopKins Black Box theatre: Baton Rouge, LA.
- Pelias, R. & Shaffer, T. S. (2007). The dramatistic approach. In *Performance studies: The interpretation of aesthetic texts* (pp. 62-63). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company
- Quinlan, M. M., & Bates, B. R. (2008). Dances and discourses of (dis)ability: Heather Mills's embodiment of disability on "Dancing with the Stars." *Text and performance quarterly*, 28(2), 64-80.
- SeanChron: Das Triadische Ballett (2014). Retrieved from <http://www.future-ish.com/2014/08/das-triadische-ballet.html>.
- Serling, R. (Writer), & Heyes, D. (Director). (1960, Nov 11). Eye of the beholder [Television series episode]. In B. Houghton (Producer), *The Twilight Zone*. Los Angeles, CA: Columbia Broadcasting System.
- Schliermacher, D. (Director). (1980). *The Bauhaus: Its impact on the world of design* [Motion picture]. England: The Roland Collection.
- Schlemmer, O. (1994). *Tanz, theater, buhne*. Dusseldorf: Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen.
- Schnittker, J. (2013). Public beliefs about mental illness. In C. Aneshensel, J. Phelan, & A. Bierman (Eds), *Handbook of the sociology of mental health* (pp. 75-93). New York, NY: Springer.
- Shaffer, T. S. (2016). Performance tells it slant. *Text and performance quarterly*, 36(1), 1-5.
- . (2020). The place of performance in performance studies. *Text and performance quarterly*, doi: 10.1080/10462937.2020.1709742

- Shear, M. D., & Sullivan, E. (2018, Oct 16). *'Horseface,' 'lowlife,' 'fat, ugly': How the President demeans women*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/16/us/politics/trump-women-insults.html>
- SIU Department of Communication Studies (2020). Course catalog 2019-2020. Retrieved from https://gradschool.siu.edu/_common/documents/catalog/catalog_19-20/Chapter-2/communication-studies.pdf
- Spry, T. (2001). Performing autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative inquiry*, 7, 706-732. doi: 10.1177/107780040100700606
- Tatum, S. (2018). *Brett Kavanaugh's nomination: A timeline*. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2018/10/politics/timeline-kavanaugh/>
- The Hugh Downs School (2020). Retrieved from <https://humancommunication.asu.edu/node/203>
- Tisch School of the Arts NYU (2020). Graduate course descriptions. Retrieved from <https://tisch.nyu.edu/performance-studies/courses/graduate-course-descriptions>
- Ulmer, G. L. (2004). *Teletheory*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- . (1994). *Heuretics: The logic of invention*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- UNI Department of Communication Studies (2020). Performance studies. Retrieved from <https://commstudies.uni.edu/performance-studies>
- UNT Department of Communication Studies (2020). Graduate course inventory. Retrieved from <https://communication.unt.edu/graduate/courses>
- USF Department of Communication (2020). Current Courses. Retrieved from <https://www.usf.edu/arts-sciences/departments/communication/graduate/course-offerings.aspx>
- Weisman, L. K. (1992). *Discrimination by design: A feminist critique of the man-made environment*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

VITA

Montana was born in Charleston, South Carolina and grew up in Panora, Iowa. In 2010, she graduated from the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) with a Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies. In 2016, she graduated from UNI with a Master's degree in Communication Education. Montana's doctoral work is in the discipline of Communication Studies with an emphasis in Performance Studies and Dance. She anticipates graduating in May 2020 and pursuing a career in the cultural sector at the intersection of Communication and the arts.