

DANCE AS A TOOL TO CONVEY THE CONNECTIVITY
AND INTIMACIES PREVALENT IN
SOCIAL INTERACTIONS:
A STUDY BRIDGING THE GAP
BETWEEN CONVERSATIONS IN
LITERATURE AND MOVEMENT

by

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This study will consider the connections between the fields of literature and dance on the basis of human experience. Previous scholarship regarding the connection between dance and literature addresses the root in the everyday experience of works created in both fields, yet privileges written texts over movement texts. Through reference to works detailing previous connections drawn between literature and dance, the relationship between written word and physical relationships between bodies, the capacity of both fields in current work to be subversive and transformative, and choreographic research with a cast of dancers, this study further investigates the ways in which literature and dance are connected. The point of emphasis of this study is that the use of language and physical movement serve as the parallel mediums for literature and dance to create thought-provoking work rooted in the human experience.

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Introduction: Context

Growing up with two parents who were professional dancers and spending most of my time backstage as a young child, I continually witnessed the capacity of dance to pose and dissect questions regarding social dynamics and interactions. Additionally, my grandfather, Christopher Carroll, and my grandmother, Susan Aiken were English professors at the University of Arizona. Through their lens literature was examined and expounded upon. I grew up reading every text I could possibly get my hands on and frequently writing stories of my own. Thus, I had a foot in the world of dance and hand in the world of literature, and was continually navigating interests in both. During my time as an English major at the University of Oregon, I have spent much of my free time in the Dance Department, performing and discovering new ways that movement can be used to communicate and to depict cultural and personal experiences. Consequently, I decided to create a thesis exploring the commonalities between these two fields, which are both so crucial to the way I perceive and understand the world around me.

During the summer of 2018 I participated in Barbara Mossberg's study abroad program, The Genius of Study Abroad, and, for my final project, I created a dance film that drew from my experiences in all of the cities we visited as part of the program. With segments filmed in Dublin, Oxford, London and Paris, the film presents an interwoven representation of my time abroad within the context of spaces unique to each city. There is a section in Smithfield square outside the hostel where we stayed in Dublin, and a segment filmed on a bridge above the River Liffey that runs through the heart of the city. The Oxford section takes place on the campus of the university, tiny

cobblestone paths and alleyways along the Queen's Lane, a square framed by churches and in front of a row of pastel houses. In London, I filmed on the Millenium Bridge, in the Tube, and at Osterley Park. The film concluded with my time in Paris at the Musée d'Orsay, the Luxembourg gardens, and in front of the Louvre museum. As I created the work, I was struck not by the process of creating the film itself, but instead by the reactions of passersby. No one took notice of the fact that there was a young woman dancing in spaces that often were extremely crowded and had many bodies moving through them at a time. This realization bred curiosity regarding the influence of the external world on the creation of choreographic work, specifically in the context of human interaction.

I decided to create a choreographic thesis concerning the ways in which dance can be used as a tool to convey and challenge social dynamics and norms through its portrayal of interactions. This movement study is grounded in a comparison into the ways in which fictional literary works, including William Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, communicate the depth of characters and their social interactions through language. Ultimately, my thesis is a hybrid of the comparison of movement and language that emphasizes and recognizes the value of Dance and English (individually and in conjunction) as transformative fields of study, capable of challenging the ways individuals see and perceive the world.

Chapter 1: Existing Connection Between Two Fields

Cheryl Wilson's work *Literature and Dance in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Jane Austen to the New Woman* examines the use of dance as a vehicle for authors during the nineteenth-century to create social commentary and critiques within their written works, placing special emphasis on the influence of social norms on the structuring of dance and literature. Wilson claims that,

social dance was embedded in many of the same social, political, and national issues that engaged the writers of the period, the textual analysis serves as a starting point from which to show how dance, as both structural model and representational strategy, offered a vehicle through which writers could convey social commentary and cultural critique.¹

Although social dance as a context differs from concert dance, or as Wilson refers to it, "stage dance," she claims that "it is precisely the physicality of the material body that must be fully realized to achieve an understanding of the relationship between dance and literature that best approximates the understanding held by nineteenth-century reader and writers."² Wilson's connection between the material body, and dance and literature, pertains to the connection between literature and dance as fields.

The premise for Wilson's association between the fields of dance and literature is the role of dance in the construction of socio-cultural concerns, contexts and structuring. Wilson asserts that dance plays a crucial role in an author's ability to

¹ Wilson, Cheryl A. *Literature and Dance in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Jane Austen to the New Woman*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 2011. Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture. Web.

² See footnote 1.

“interrogate the ways in which physical bodies and physical movement can become present within a written work.”³ She states that some nineteenth-century writers

borrow the language and imagery of dance and/or depict interpersonal interactions, social constructions, and physical/geographic mobility, in ways that reflect the widespread cultural influence of dance. That is, they establish an intertextuality between the literature and the dance by treating social dances as text themselves – texts that employ particular conventions and trace distinct narratives ... which involve the structural and representational incorporation of dance into literary works, reveal how nineteenth-century readers and writers could view social dances as texts, thereby opening up sites for textual exchange.⁴

The view held by nineteenth-century authors that dance formed a text in its own right, contributed to the perpetuation of dance as a tool meant to allow authors to create work concerning social contexts and ideologies. Wilson describes literary texts as analyzed in the same fashion as dance in terms of “physicality and spatial relations,” claiming “critics and theorists frequently discuss texts and narratives in this way, adopting terms ... which promote a view of the literary text as a physical, three-dimensional object with distinct parts that exist in spatially defined relationships to one another.”⁵ Taking into account the similarities between analysis of texts in both fields, Wilson further claims that there is necessity for “a critical approach that takes account of the physicality and cultural significance of dance,” emphasizing that “different dance forms offered different sites for textual exchange.”⁶

³ Wilson, Cheryl A. *Literature and Dance in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Jane Austen to the New Woman*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 2011. Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture. Web.

⁴ See footnote 3.

⁵ See footnote 3.

⁶ See footnote 3.

Wilson emphasizes the role of dance in the everyday experience of individuals in the nineteenth-century to draw the inevitable connection between the art form and their everyday. She writes,

It is precisely because dance can be read as an agent of hegemony, reinforcing traditional gender and class ideologies, that it became so useful for nineteenth-century writers who were committed to a re-investigation of the social order. Literary representations of dance evoke complex social and cultural issues, and examining how dance could assume a subversive and culturally critical function reveals why and how this element of nineteenth-century culture was a powerful literary tool.⁷

Both literature and dance in this case provide a vehicle for the reexamination of social and cultural issues. Wilson's initial assertion that "dance was not separate from everyday life for most people," followed by her assertion that as a result "we should not separate how they danced from how they read and how they wrote ... [and] dances and literary texts are the producers of culture as well as cultural products," articulates the social prevalence of the two fields.⁸ Wilson provides a comprehensive account of the undeniable association between the fields of literature and dance, and of the reexamination of social, cultural, and political dynamics in the nineteenth century, demonstrating the prevalence of the everyday in works created in these two fields.

Amy Koritz's work *Gendering bodies/Performing Art: Dance and Literature in Early-Twentieth-Century British Culture* considers the role of dance in the development of ideology, aesthetics and norms prevalent in both literature and dance. Koritz argues

⁷ Wilson, Cheryl A. *Literature and Dance in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Jane Austen to the New Woman*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 2011. Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture. Web.

⁸ See footnote 7.

that dance attained legitimacy in the context of other fine arts and, in turn, demonstrates the nature of the connection between the two fields. Koritz states,

One of the first imperatives of this book has been to refuse to treat dance as merely a context for literary criticism ... not, that is, to treat dance as raw material for literature, as subservient to the really important innovations in literary form and content occurring during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁹

Koritz primarily focuses on dance in terms of gendering within the art form, specifically in the context of the objectification and sexualization of the female body. She examines “the isolation of the ballerina as an idealized romantic object for a male spectator” as well as performances of female artists including Maud Allen and Isadora Duncan in the context of the regendering and reclaiming of space and gender in society in early twentieth-century Britain.¹⁰ Koritz claims that “a female dancer was transgressive in any number of ways. She used her body to perform art, and since the female body was considered closer to nature than the man’s to begin with, she dangerously blurred the difference between nature and art.”¹¹ Her specific emphasis on the role of dance as a vehicle for female performers to reclaim and explore their role in the public sphere through their performances, lends credibility to her argument that dance performances and the coupling of the structuring in literature and dance were transgressive.

The primary question asked by some authors including George Bernard Shaw and W. B. Yeats regarding performed art, was the relationship between the performer

⁹ Koritz, Amy. *Gendering Bodies/performing Art : Dance and Literature in Early-twentieth-century British Culture*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 1995. Print.

¹⁰ See footnote 9.

¹¹ See footnote 9.

and the art. Yeats implied that “an individual’s gesture becomes the abstract human agency needed to connect the deep of the mind to the world of men and women, and ... while seeming to give his art a basis in an individual’s bodily gesture, abstracts that basis from any actual person’s body.”¹² While Shaw defines a performer as not “someone ‘who successfully pretends to be someone else,’ but rather ‘one who has cultivated and intensified himself to such a degree that he can persuade audiences to pretend that they see other people embodied in him.’”¹³ And yet, Koritz challenges this assertion that there is a necessary distinction and dissociation between performer and performance: “how can a performance be at the same time an expression of the structure of a play and an expression of the actor’s self? Either that self is in fact structure like the play, or Shaw’s analysis mystifies the actual nature of the relationship.”¹⁴ Koritz associates the role of choreographer with that of author. She examines the significance of the instance in which “the maker of a dance becomes an author, and conversely, when a dance requires an author, both enter into a complex of relations that alter the social meaning of both the individual and the product.”¹⁵ Specifically comparing the term “choreographer” to that of “a writer,” she demonstrates the comparable nature of authorship and the structuring of works in both fields. Her additional description of the many conversations held among writers in the early twentieth-century regarding the

¹² Koritz, Amy. *Gendering Bodies/performing Art : Dance and Literature in Early-twentieth-century British Culture*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 1995. Print.

¹³ See footnote 12.

¹⁴ See footnote 12.

¹⁵ See footnote 12.

nature of dance as an art form, indicates the notion that “if well-known literary figures recognized their own aesthetic standards and practices in dance performances, dance stood a greater chance of being accepted into the club of elite arts.”¹⁶ The reflection of authors’ structuring and aesthetic ideologies in the sphere of dance indicates their identification of connections between the fields of literature and dance.

Koritz’s work details the many instances in which authors in the early twentieth-century debated the nature of the association between the dancer and performance, and the specific relation of dance to the status of an elite form in the context of its reference to and association with literature. However, her text was critiqued for having “a hole in the center where the choreography should be,” seeing as her text analysis extended only to literature but not to dance movement.¹⁷ Wilson cites her specific exclusion of “visually recorded performances”¹⁸ or specific choreography and was critiqued because she “privileges the meanings of the written text rather than the danced activity.”¹⁹ Despite the comprehensive nature of these two texts, representation of the connection between the fields of literature and dance in the context of choreographed material is lacking.

¹⁶ Koritz, Amy. *Gendering Bodies/performing Art : Dance and Literature in Early-twentieth-century British Culture*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 1995. Print.

¹⁷ Carter, Alexandra. *Literature and Dance in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Jane Austen to the New Woman*, by Cheryl A. Wilson. *Victorian Studies*, vol. 52, no. 3, 2010, pp. 472-474. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/vic.2010.52.3.472.

¹⁸ Wilson, Cheryl A. *Literature and Dance in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Jane Austen to the New Woman*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 2011. *Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture*. Web.

¹⁹ See footnote 17.

Chapter 2: Scholarship Regarding Human Experience Linked to Literature: Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

To assert a connection between the fields of literature and dance in terms of their roots in the everyday, it is first crucial to examine the role of everyday experience in discussions concerning the fields individually. Literature is discussed in terms of literary theory, periods in history, and as a reflection of the world in which it was created. As an English major, a continual dilemma posed during the study of texts from previous eras in time is the application of modern cultural norms onto texts of previous periods with different standards regarding what can be considered progressive or prevalent within the context of social movements or subversive subject matter in written pieces. Despite differences in language or specific social dynamics, literature across various periods has one thing in common: a portrayal of human experience in the context of, departure from, or adherence to, realism.

Ronald Miller's "A Midsummer Night's Dream: The Fairies, Bottom, and the Mystery of Things" describes the blurring of the line between fantasy in literature and reality that occurs in William Shakespeare's play. Miller claims that,

by intruding the fictive worlds of Ovid and English folklore into the doings of the nobles and the workmen of Athens, they pose open-ended questions about illusion and reality, existence and art to those willing to press beyond the older interpretation of the play as a charming theatrical fantasy.²⁰

²⁰ Miller, Ronald F. A Midsummer Night's Dream: The Fairies, Bottom, and the Mystery of Things. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1975, pp. 254-268. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2869606.

In the final scene of the play, trickster Robin Goodfellow, or Puck, finishes with the following monologue:

If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
if you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long;
Else the Puck a liar call;
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.²¹

Despite the notion that the play is a written piece of literature, the distinction between the surreal nature of the events detailed in the text, and the experience of the audience members watching the performance, is blurred and distorted. Puck's final monologue results in the notion that

the frame of dramatic illusion is irreparably compromised, and little remains besides a series of tantalizing riddles ... how can we assign precedence to the various levels of reality – including our own – under

²¹ Shakespeare, William, and Holland, Peter. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Oxford : New York: Clarendon ; Oxford UP, 1994. Print. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616. Works. 1982.

the sway of Shakespeare's art? Such doubts tease us into abstract thoughts as inescapable as their conclusions are elusive and uncertain.²²

The abstract nature of the work causes us not to leave the elements of the written work that pose transformative and subversive questions in the literature exclusively, but instead cause us to call into question how questions posed in the written sphere apply to our own lives. The play is rooted in the supernatural and,

yet beyond these formal uncertainties lie other uncertainties residing not in the world of the stage but in the world of ordinary human experience to which every dramatic representation, no matter how sophisticated, must ultimately refer. As theatrical eminences ... who secretly manipulate affections, cause transformations, and bring good luck, the fairies obliquely hint that our own offstage existence may be touched by mysteries no less genuine than those that disrupt the world of Theseus, Hermia, Bottom and the rest.²³

The subject matter and dynamics dealt with in the play become inseparable from the experience of audience members taking in the text: "Shakespeare's puzzle goes beyond the puzzles of art: the greatest mystery is not that of the fairies but of life."²⁴ The structuring of the play causes audience members to apply the events and dynamics depicted in the text to their own lives and experiences, demonstrating the prevalence of the human experience in literature.

²² Miller, Ronald F. A Midsummer Night's Dream: The Fairies, Bottom, and the Mystery of Things. *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1975, pp. 254-268. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2869606.

²³ See footnote 22.

²⁴ See footnote 22.

Chapter 3: Scholarship Regarding Human Experience Linked to Dance

Movement and choreography are inseparable from the everyday experience because the dancer's medium of choice is their body. Randy Martin's "Dance as a Social Movement" articulates the belief that "a study of how a dance is made, through the explicit direction and expression of the body, can therefore serve as a map for those felt but perhaps unknown reaches of social experience."²⁵ Martin's piece illustrates the importance of the social aspect of the collective bodies within the work and, in turn, the potential for the collective to then stimulate "the kinetic life of the audience, by privileging their bodies' possibilities for action, the dance lives beyond the stage. If social movements could reembody this desire, then the political potential of dance could be realized."²⁶ He emphasizes that "in our daily lives we have one shot to deal with the problems posed by motional situations," while dance and choreographic works instead pose an intentionally constructed movement scenario in which audience members witness the motion of bodies, a sight seen every day, choreographed or directed to achieve an artistic effect.²⁷

John Blacking's piece "Movement and Meaning: Dance in Social Anthropological Perspective" places additional emphasis on the nonverbal nature of dance as a communicative tool. Blacking highlights the idea that the "evolutionary

²⁵ Martin, Randy. Dance as a Social Movement. *Social Text*, no. 12, 1985, pp. 54-70. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/466604

²⁶ See footnote 25.

²⁷ See footnote 25.

importance [of dance] as a mode of communication is borne out by the fact that it has not been superseded by verbal language, although clearly verbal language is generally more efficient for cultural adaptation.”²⁸ Blacking later asserts that “a dancer is quite right to insist that what is most important about dance, as a special kind of social activity, is what it communicates without words,” and describes dance as “a topic of scientific study ... ultimately about action and conscious human intentions. The processes of moving and giving meaning to movement are the source of dance experience, of which the dance product is but the visible sign.”²⁹ Blacking describes “dance [as] a social institution and no matter how individual the inner world of a dancer may be, feelings are culturally encoded as soon as they are brought into action as dance.”³⁰ His piece continually highlights the inevitable association between the dance and the dancer. Blacking later writes,

Even if we learn to perform dances to the satisfaction of members of an alien society, we cannot be sure that we understand them in the same way, because our bodies have been brought up in different environments, with different gestures and postures, so that we will even feel the same movements differently, and probably use slightly different muscles to achieve what appears to be the same results.³¹

²⁸ Blacking, John. "Movement and Meaning: Dance in Social Anthropological Perspective." *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 1.1 (1983): 89-99. Web.

²⁹ See footnote 28.

³⁰ See footnote 28.

³¹ See footnote 28.

Just as language patterns and dialects unique to our individual experiences are fostered during the entirety of our lives, so are our movement patterns and our understanding of physical gesturing and communication.

Dance as a field “is a special kind of social activity that cannot be reduced to anything else, and that invocation of its symbols can communicate and generate certain kinds of experience that can be had in no other way.”³² Just as literature can be used as a means to place in direct juxtaposition notions and norms that are typically considered unrelated to one another, dance is also a means of calling forth and placing emphasis on an experience and movement text that cannot be conveyed in any other way. Dance,

Can always be used to regenerate social life and to enable people to recover the ownership of their senses. If dance research can reveal the relationships between movement and meaning, and help to eliminate the artificial barriers that have been created between mind and body ... it might be able to show how changes of movement can bring about changes of feeling, and so educate the emotions more appropriately for the problems of life in the twenty-first century.³³

The physical, nonverbal and gestural influences in dance as an art form breed a multitude of expressions that allow individuals to see their own experiences, and to be challenged by choreographic works.

Through the influence of the individual, the social and the cultural in the development and perpetuation of the art form, dance is undeniably capable of inspiring

³² Blacking, John. "Movement and Meaning: Dance in Social Anthropological Perspective." *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research* 1.1 (1983): 89-99. Web.

³³ See footnote 32.

and revealing human experience while simultaneously inspiring social change. In “The Power of Dance and Its Social and Political Uses,” Anca Giurchescu asserts that,

To answer questions on the role and significance of dance, the study of dance must include both perspectives: dancing as an integral part of a network of social events, and dance as part of a system of knowledge and belief, social behaviour and aesthetic norms and values.³⁴

Giurchescu’s specific consideration of “knowledge and belief, social behaviour and aesthetic norms and values” places specific emphasis on the fact that “dance is a powerful symbol. It does not only allude to the changing world, but becomes an instrument of change.”³⁵ The statement that dance “is not reducible to any other form of human activity reveal[s] its significance and justif[ies] its existence ... [and] dance has always been an important symbolic instrument in ritual contexts, in art events, in social communication and political action,” implies its undeniable cultural and communicative prevalence.³⁶ The presence of communication and social interaction in the construction and study of choreographic movement lends credibility to the notion that “dance has a unifying power. It has the power to integrate individuals or groups of different social, political and ethnic affiliations.”³⁷ In other words, dance has the capacity to reflect, reveal and challenge the human experience.

³⁴ Giurchescu, Anca. “The Power of Dance and Its Social and Political Uses.” *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, vol. 33, 2001, pp. 109–121. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/1519635.

³⁵ See footnote 34.

³⁶ See footnote 34.

³⁷ See footnote 34.

Chapter 4: Comparison Between Representation in Text and in Dance

Written text and choreographic text can be, and have been, used to address the same narrative or to communicate the same notions. When we read literature or watch dance performances, the movement and words reflect or recreate social dynamics to portray experiences that are a part of everyday life. The patrons then see reflections of their world and, in turn, view the two mediums as capable of portraying authentic human experience. To provide examples of written and physical texts conveying the same message, the following figures depict excerpts from William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and, alongside, photos from George Balanchine's ballet adaptation.

Excerpt from the Play:

What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:

Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;

So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;

And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me

On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.³⁸

³⁸ Shakespeare, William, and Holland, Peter. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Oxford : New York: Clarendon ; Oxford UP, 1994. Print. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616. Works. 1982.



Figure 1. Fairy queen Titania and the peasant Bottom in Balanchine's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

This excerpt from both the written and physical texts is from the portion of the play in which the fairy queen Titania awakes under the influence of the love-in-idleness flower that causes her to fall in love with the first creature she sees. In this case the first person she sees once she awakes is the peasant Bottom, who has been turned into a donkey during this section of the play. There is an abandonment conveyed by the relationship between their two bodies in the photo. Titania's full weight is reliant upon her partner, Bottom's, support and there is a great deal of contact between their two bodies. Additionally her chin is cast upward, revealing the vulnerable surface area of her neck and breast to her partner, arms cast upward and out from her frame, truly surrendering to Bottom. The same infatuation is conveyed in the written excerpt as she refers to him as "angel" and her "gentle joy," and as she describes her eyes and ears as "enamour'd" and "enthralled," identifying herself as in love on the basis of "the first view."³⁹ There is a true infatuation and surrender conveyed by both the written and performed portrayals of the text.

³⁹ Shakespeare, William, and Holland, Peter. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Oxford : New York: Clarendon ; Oxford UP, 1994. Print. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616. Works. 1982.

In contrast, following the absence of the love potion in her system, Titania awakens and order is restored in the context of social hierarchy and her perceptions of Bottom.

Excerpt from the Play:

My Oberon what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.
How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!
Come, my lord, and in our flight
Tell me how it came this night
That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground.⁴⁰



Figure 2. Fairy king Oberon peering over sleeping fairy queen Titania and peasant Bottom in Balanchine's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

In this image, the level of intimacy between Titania and Bottom has been reduced by the introduction of a third body, Oberon, the fairy king, into the frame. Titania is additionally resituated above Bottom despite their proximity and contact, suggesting that the formerly forgotten hierarchical relationship between the two characters has in

⁴⁰ Shakespeare, William, and Holland, Peter. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Oxford : New York: Clarendon ; Oxford UP, 1994. Print. Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616. Works. 1982.

fact been restored. Her verbiage concerning Bottom changes in the written work as well, as she now states that she loathes what she formerly was enthralled by, and her tone is incredulous as she asks “tell me how it came this night/ That I sleeping here was found/ With these mortals on the ground.”⁴¹ Her emphasis on the other characters’ mortality reveals the reestablishment of their supernatural hierarchy following the absence of the influence of the love potion, which is also emphasized by the choreography in the ballet.

Physical patterns and cues in both written and danced material allow observers to recognize and insinuate relationships or social dynamics between individuals. Here are some examples more representative of physical and written relationships in the everyday:



Figure 3. Olivia Oxholm and Amelia Carroll in Gerlinger Annex.

⁴¹ See footnote 40.

Despite their proximity, the two women did not know each other. Their absent minded stances and outward gazes convey their dissociation.



Figure 4. Olivia Oxholm and Amelia Carroll in Gerlinger Annex.

The two women clasp each other's hands firmly and directly. Their upright posture and direct eye contact show the professional nature of their exchange.



Figure 5. Olivia Oxholm and Amelia Carroll in Gerlinger Annex.

As one woman flings herself over the other with abandon, it is not obvious where one body ends and the other begins. One gives the other her full weight and both faces are directed inward toward their points of contact, demonstrating the intimate, personal nature of their exchange.

Both written and choreographic works can convey the same messages via the observed linguistic and movement patterning of everyday experience. In every moment of every day, we recognize and assign meaning to the conversations and physical interactions we witness, unknowingly validating and acknowledging the capability of the fields of dance and literature to reflect and challenge the human experience.

Chapter 5: Current Examples of Literary Work in the Context of Human Experience

Literature continually reflects and challenges the world and context in which it is published. Author Angie Thomas began writing her novel *The Hate U Give*, published in 2017, with the intention of examining the experience of a black teenager attending a primarily white prep school and navigating her identity in both worlds. The aspiring author turned to film for inspiration and “struggled to find a single film about a black girl coming of age under similar circumstances,” and instead “pulled from her own experiences as a creative writing student at Belhaven University, a private college in Mississippi.”⁴² The emphasis on difference that formed the narrative of Thomas’ experience “runs throughout the book,” as the main character Starr constantly “code switches between her true self and ‘Starr, Version 2,’ her “approachable,” nonslang-speaking, never angry alter ego.”⁴³ Thomas’ choice to write a story that reflects her experience differs from when she first began writing, when she “was whitewashing [her] own stories” and later realized “wow, I could use my art as my activism.”⁴⁴ The application of her individual everyday experience to her writing then resulted in her identification of her written work as transformative and capable of revealing truths about the world outside of the text.

⁴² Ito, Robert. Microaggressions at School? The 'Hate U Give' Team Has Been There. *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 17 Oct. 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/10/17/movies/microaggressions-hate-u-give.html.

⁴³ See footnote 42.

⁴⁴ See footnote 42.

Poet and educator Sarah Kay's work delves into verbiage that explores social, political and personal dynamics and, in turn, employs literature as a tool to reveal and provoke questions regarding the world. First published in 2014, Kay's debut collection of poetry *No Matter the Wreckage* contains a number of poems specifically concerning perception and human experience. Her poem titled "Hands" delves into the significance of different types of contact and interactions in the context of hands. Kay writes,

Hands learn. More than minds do.

Hands learn how to hold other hands.

How to grip pencils and mold poetry.

How to memorize computer keys

And telephone buttons in the dark.

...

I love hands like I love people. They are the maps and compasses with which we navigate our way through life, feeling our way over mountains passed and valleys crossed; they are our histories.⁴⁵

She establishes a premise for hands that exists in the everyday; gestures inseparable from the human experience. She then provides another context for hands:

Now, I watch Middle Eastern hands

clenched in Middle Eastern fists.

Pounding against each other like drums,

each country sees their fists as warriors,

and others as enemies, even if fists alone are only hands.

⁴⁵ Kay, Sarah, and Sophia Janowitz. *No Matter the Wreckage: Poems*. Write Bloody Publishing, Americas Independent Press, 2014.

But this is not a poem about politics; hands are not about politics.

This is a poem about love.⁴⁶

She provides a political context for the same entity she considers in the context of love; hands. The fists specifically are referenced as political and warriors, contributing to the notion that the different physicality and contexts suggest different perspectives and concepts concerning the human experience in the context of hands. Kay's poem additionally places emphasis on the intelligence of the words and the physical body to convey information regarding the human experience. Hands learn how to interact with those around them, and words are capable of conveying a shift from topics of war and conflict to that of love and intimacy among individuals. Kay's work is rooted in the human, and the inseparable from the everyday.

⁴⁶ Kay, Sarah, and Sophia Janowitz. *No Matter the Wreckage: Poems*. Write Bloody Publishing, Americas Independent Press, 2014.

Chapter 6: Current Examples of Choreographic Work in the Context of Human Experience

Choreographic work from Brooklyn based dance company Urban Bush Women specifically links everyday human experience to the field of dance. Founded in 1984, UBW is described as, “promoting artistic legacies; projecting the voices of the underheard and people of color; bringing attention to and addressing issues of equity in the dance field and throughout the United States.”⁴⁷ The company employs dance “as both the message and the medium to bring together diverse audiences through innovative choreography, community collaboration and artistic leadership development,” resulting in a socially prevalent, subversive, thought provoking body of work.⁴⁸ The company’s recently touring show “Hair & Other Stories” is based on the premise that,

in living rooms, beauty salons, community centers ... people have been talking about hair. Not just hair, but also race, economic and social status, education, and employment – and not just talking, but also dancing and telling stories. These hair stories about whether to straighten, curl, color, press, or tease are providing a creative avenue to dialogue about the broader social and political issues that surround hair, particularly natural African American hair.⁴⁹

The emphasis on conversation in the creation of work that is personally, socially and politically relevant drove the company’s project that “uses public dialogue to stimulate

⁴⁷ Mission and Core Values. *Urban Bush Women*, www.urbanbushwomen.org/about-ubw.

⁴⁸ See footnote 47.

⁴⁹ Atlas, Caron. The Hair Parties Project Case Study: Urban Bush Women. *Animating Democracy*, Animating Democracy, animatingdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/documents/labs/urban_bush_women_case_study.pdf.

artistic ideas, and artistic work to stimulate dialogue,” to “practice UBW’s belief that dance is ‘a celebration, a solution, and a necessity,’ and that art is a catalyst for social change.”⁵⁰ UBW as a company places dance in the context of dialogues about dynamics and methods of transforming and recognizing the world around us.

Questions UBW and contributors considered as they developed material for the show included,

How does embodying dialogue within dance deepen the dialogue? Can a party format encourage candid, from-the-heart “kitchen talk”? What is the role of conflict, passion, and point of view in these exchanges? How does the seemingly personal topic of hair lead to critical thinking about challenging societal issues, and how can this dialogue further social justice?⁵¹

These questions formed the premise for their “hair parties” held between January 2002 and March 2003. Parties consisted of attendees sharing their own experiences and acting out scenarios in the context of hair. The gatherings began with an agreement, “that participants would be open and receptive to each other’s experiences.”⁵² The established necessity of receptivity “allowed for multiple characters to represent different points of view, and offered participants more of a common experience. The performance framework helped people become less self-conscious, more open, and able

⁵⁰ Atlas, Caron. The Hair Parties Project Case Study: Urban Bush Women. *Animating Democracy*, Animating Democracy, animatingdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/documents/labs/urban_bush_women_case_study.pdf.

⁵¹ See footnote 50.

⁵² See footnote 50.

to speak from the heart.”⁵³ The safe nature of the space established by UBW provided a premise for honest, authentic communication to drive the creation of their show.

It is not uncommon for dancers and choreographers to reference the inevitable, direct link between their bodies/experiences and their art. In a conversation titled “Our Own AIDS Time: Keith Hennessy and Ishmael Houston-Jones in Conversation” dancers/choreographers discuss the inseparable nature of their work from their experiences. Hennessy states,

I have never really separated artistic practice from activist work. I can see the difference between, say a protest, and a performance that starts at eight o'clock but my work has always been talking to and talking with and talking from the social movements of the era that the work is being made in.⁵⁴

Houston-Jones additionally states,

my work comes out of my biography, who I am and what my concerns are in the context of the real world. That is always where the works are starting, with my body and that context, in that world, in that time space. I wouldn't even know how to separate my activism from my aesthetics.⁵⁵

The texts that construct their experiences as activists and individuals, are inseparable from the work that they create. David Ebershoff's piece “How a Group of Gay Male Ballet Dancers is Rethinking Masculinity” describes the desire of young dancers who

⁵³ Atlas, Caron. The Hair Parties Project Case Study: Urban Bush Women. *Animating Democracy*, Animating Democracy, animatingdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/documents/labs/urban_bush_women_case_study.pdf.

⁵⁴ Our Own AIDS Time: Keith Hennessy and Ishmael Houston-Jones in Conversation. *Open Space*, openspace.sfmoma.org/2017/02/our-own-aids-time-keith-hennessy-and-ishmael-houston-jones-in-conversation/.

⁵⁵ See footnote 54.

“hope to be part of a generation that can change the boundaries of what ballet can do, a generation that says we’re going to represent everyone, not just the stories that have been told before.”⁵⁶ The piece additionally considers a romantic pas de deux (dance of two) choreographed by Lauren Lovette titled “Not Our Fate” that “depicts a love story between two men of color not as subtext but as central narrative.”⁵⁷ Ebershoff places emphasis on the notion that “it’s one of ballet’s ironies – the outside world has long viewed the male dancer as the antithesis of conventional masculinity, yet the culture inside ballet can still be somewhat bro-y,” before later stating “ballet isn’t really about how high your legs can go or how many turns you can do, but what you’re trying to say about yourself and the world. Every step has to have intention.”⁵⁸ The influence of social and everyday experience on the world of dance does not just apply to the field of modern dance, but additionally to the classical world of ballet. Works created in the field of dance are inevitably addressing social dynamics and issues of representation that define the everyday human experience.

⁵⁶ Ebershoff, David. How a Group of Gay Male Ballet Dancers Is Rethinking Masculinity. *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 5 Nov. 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/11/05/t-magazine/gay-male-ballet-dancers.html?action=click&module=RelatedCoverage&pgtype=Article&ion=Footer

⁵⁷ See footnote 56.

⁵⁸ See footnote 56.

Chapter 7: Choreographic Process

Methodology in Terms of Dancers

I sought out to discover if it was possible to create a choreographic piece of movement and text that were solely based in a specific cast of dancers' individual experiences. I decided to create a series of research questions meant to provoke them to think about their everyday experiences. Their answers, both written and physical, would demonstrate their individual experiences in the context of material in literature and dance. I was interested in drawing parallels and emphasizing the differences between the dancers' responses. Drawing from their responses, I was able to create choreography while maintaining their individual voices and fostering a social, communal vocabulary rooted in the research questions.

Dancers were first provided with informed consent forms approved by Research Compliance Services regarding the premise of my research and expectations of participants preceding their participation. They were then asked to answer four research questions in written words, and in terms of movement to generate texts unique to each of them and their experiences. The approved research questions are as follows:

- 1.) How do you recognize cues of intimacy or familiarity in everyday interactions?
- 2.) What are some spaces or objects that come to mind that automatically define the space you're in with others (elevators, staircases, electronic devices etc.)?
- 3.) What are circumstances that can alter your relationships to other people?
- 4.) What are codes of conduct that define social interactions and spaces?

Dancers provided written responses to the questions. Then their initial movement responses were recorded individually during the end of March and beginning

of April 2019. During the rehearsal process, tools and prompts including the combination of their movement responses paired with those of other dancers, teaching someone else their movement, blending movement sequences together, and improvising with other members of the cast with both their eyes closed and open provided the context for the creation of the final choreographic work. The resulting movement and the recording of their written prompts for the sound comprise the methodology used in the creation of my choreographic work.

Similarities and Differences in Dancers' Written and Movement Responses

In the movement responses to the first research question, “how do you recognize cues of intimacy or familiarity in everyday interactions?” the dancers placed a great deal of emphasis on their faces and hands, sometimes stressing the contact between the two or the extreme separation. Motions that specifically illustrated the opening and closing off of their faces, and points of contact between the hands and other parts of the body were recurring in all of the dancers' responses. All of their written responses to this question referenced eye contact, physical proximity and comfort. Dancers emphasized the importance of body language with statements including “a lot of the way I communicate comfort is with body language, so for me, intimacy isn't just about touching someone I'm comfortable with, but also the act of letting myself be touched.”⁵⁹ Dancer 5 states, “the first image that came to mind when considering this question is of students walking around on campus. Most, often, you see heads down, either looking at phones in hand or feet/the ground” and later when they

⁵⁹ See appendix 1.

witness others encountering someone they are familiar with they “associate[s] heads lifting, shoulders dropping and eyes meeting.”⁶⁰

In movement response to the second research question; “what are some spaces or objects that come to mind that automatically define the space you’re in with others (elevators, staircases, electronic devices etc.)?” dancers tended to reach beyond their frames. They demonstrated walls or constraints outside themselves in the context of outstretched limbs that encountered constraints of some kind, whether it be the dance floor or an imaginary barrier of some kind in their standing space. The dancers’ written responses placed specific emphasis on spaces and objects that necessitate or control elements of movement or interaction. Dancer 2 wrote “I love doorways, but sometimes I think I love them for the wrong reasons, as in they give me too much freedom to distance myself from the people in the space with me.”⁶¹ Seating additionally came up in statements including, “what seating and how much seating is available/being used,” and “chairs, couches, really any sort of seating is really impactful ... I feel like I never sit within social situations that are super professional or unfamiliar/lacking in familiarity, unless I’m told it’s acceptable.”⁶² Additionally, the context of Marley and the dance studio was posed in multiple responses. Dancer 1 wrote “it’s easily the marley on the floor. The way it connects every person in the room together and is a safety net for anyone who falls or needs to be more grounded that day.”⁶³ Dancer 5 also stated

⁶⁰ See appendix 1.

⁶¹ See appendix 1.

⁶² See appendix 1.

⁶³ See appendix 1.

“the most familiar object or space that I associate with a specific group of people is the marley floor of a dance studio. I recognize the feel, look and smell of it and immediately equate that to the sense of being in class with other dancers.”⁶⁴

The dancers’ movement responses to the third research question; “what are circumstances that can alter your relationships to other people?” depicted a focus downward and an increased intensity in focus. Dancers moved in a larger fashion than their responses to the first two questions and with a greater level of aggression; their movements were sharper and their hands often had their fingers fully pressed together to form bladelike gestures or were clenched into fists that they moved sharply through the air or toward their own frames. Their written responses contained many references to emotional support or comfort in the context of their relationships to other individuals. Dancer 4 wrote “when other people are going through life changes and can no longer provide you with the support in a relationship that you need, whether or not it is fair or reasonable,” and later “when other people are making life choices and changes that do not line up with your morals or desires.”⁶⁵ Dancer 2 referenced “when I can honestly laugh with the other person, and an overwhelming show of sadness or anger often changes that original dynamic, sometimes strengthening the relationship, sometimes causing it to fall apart.”⁶⁶ Dancer 1 referenced the manner in which other individuals deal with hardship as influential in their level of comfort, writing, “I want to always have positive relationships with others and I find it challenging to do so with people

⁶⁴ See appendix 1.

⁶⁵ See appendix 1.

⁶⁶ See appendix 1.

who aren't willing to find the positivity in negative circumstances."⁶⁷ And other responses included references to "the lack and abundance of communication," and "shared interest and experience."⁶⁸ The underlying theme consistent in all of the dancers' responses was mutual experience on the basis of emotions or support of some kind that shifts or is distorted in some way. The sharper nature of their movements demonstrated an isolation or aggressive separation from what once was known in the context of relationships.

Their movement responses to the fourth and final research question; "what are codes of conduct that define social interactions and spaces?" contained parallels as well. Many of the dancers' responses depicted body language including leaning, slouching their shoulders, hiding their faces, and reaching or gesturing assertively. Their movement responses to this particular question proved to be the most pedestrian and reminiscent of everyday interactions. Their written responses primarily concerned the juxtaposition of expectation vs. individual experience in the world around them. Words including "respectful," "humanity," "formality," "accepted," "intention," "freedom," and "positive" punctuated the dancers' responses.⁶⁹ They discussed the significance of existing in the public sphere, how it can be limiting or restricting. Dancer 2 wrote, "I've found the best way to describe it is like, how much humanity you are allowed to show. Like, being out in public is the most restricting. You are allowed to exist in that space,

⁶⁷ See appendix 1.

⁶⁸ See appendix 1.

⁶⁹ See appendix 1.

but only so long as you are as minimal as possible.”⁷⁰ And other responses included reference to “context ... such as ... formality of interactions, intention in interactions with others, accepted noise levels, freedom to move around as you please,” and “good posture and body language.”⁷¹ Dancer 1 posed questions in response to the final research question, asking “why isn’t it socially acceptable to dance in the grocery store” and “why are the things that define people, their passions, socially unaccepted?”⁷² Some responses described confusion regarding why there is such a distinction between passions/artistic identity, and the everyday. Responses placed emphasis on the limitations and minimizing nature of the public sphere and the inevitable relationship between their individual experience and their relationships to art, and the individuals and spaces surrounding them.

Process Creating Choreographic Movement

During the rehearsal process the creation of movement was rooted in the vocabularies the dancers developed in response to the research questions posed. I began first by having them all perform their movement responses in close proximity to one another. Patterns in terms of gestures, size, and dynamics of movement emerged in the collective dancers’ responses to each of the respective questions. We then began to address the questions in terms of their unique individual movement responses to the research questions. In the beginning image in the piece, when they are all standing in a

⁷⁰ See appendix 1.

⁷¹ See appendix 1.

⁷² See appendix 1.

straight line facing forward, they are each doing a small, stationary version of their responses to the first research question.



Figure 6. Excerpt from choreographic piece.

While dancers perform this action in the same spatial orientation as one another, their individual movement vocabularies are preserved and emphasized. Three of the dancers then begin to dance their original, larger movement responses to the first question in relationship to one another. The similarities in the use of their arms and their movement begin to build a familiarity and relationship based on their shared experience. This same premise for the establishment of comfort forms the premise for the other two dancers to begin relating to each other. Their movement is rooted in their responses to the second question, as each forms the constraints or external definition of space for the other.



Figure 7. Excerpt from choreographic piece.

They then progress into exploration of their answers to the third question regarding redefinition of relationships. Dancers shift and change their existing relationships to each other and the objects in the space; the two chairs. As their movement grows in intensity and amount of the space it consumes, they navigate what it means to move through the space with others, some of whom they've interacted with and established a basis for familiarity, and others who they are just encountering.



Figure 8. Excerpt from choreographic piece.

They move into an orientation where one of the dancers performs all four of her movement responses consecutively, and the others are separated spatially and in terms of their movement, from her. The two standing dancers place the two seated dancers in positions that they feel represent the expectations of those who surround them in the public sphere. The positions they exact demonstrate ways they should sit, act and behave according to the codes of conduct they recognize in the world around them. The demonstration of this expectation, correlated with the performance of the four movement responses as one phrase is meant to demonstrate the basis of their experience in their movement vocabulary. The final portion of the choreographic movement is rooted in movement created during improvisation sessions with the entire cast. Once individual dancers established their own movement vocabulary in the context of their movement responses to the research questions, they then were asked to improvise together each using their individual experiences to relate to those around them.



Figure 9. Excerpt from choreographic piece.

The dancers begin to interact with each other on the basis of their greater level of familiarity and exposure to one another, dancing together while also witnessing the movements of others as they exercise stillness. In the beginning of the piece they are all face forward, and as the piece progresses they begin to acknowledge the experiences of each other and build relationships and support bearing instances that demonstrate a melding or understanding of the experiences of others vs. exclusively the experience of oneself as an individual.

The piece as a whole is meant to demonstrate the building and defining of connections among individuals on the basis of both words and movement. The dancers were each asked to establish their own individual sense of movement and identity in terms of their written and movement responses to demonstrate the role of individual experience in the creation of works in both literature and dance. Each of the dancers' individual vocabularies are preserved in the context of the research process, and yet

they are able to take part in a collective experience on the basis of words and movement.

Creation of Sound

The piece of sound choreography is set to is formed by recordings of dancers reading their written responses to questions in their original raw form, followed by a piece comprised of key words from each of their responses read and created by myself. The soundtrack is meant to reflect the research process in addition to the choreographic process.

The responses used in the sound are ordered as follows:

Responses to the first question as follows:⁷³

Dancer 2:

“I think there are certain little cues in the way people communicate. A lot of the way I communicate comfort is with body language, so for me, intimacy isn’t just about touching someone I’m comfortable with, but also the act of letting myself be touched. I’m also really affected by eye contact, both as a receiver and a giver. Maybe “sharer” is better.”

Dancer 1:

“My experience with intimacy is an interesting one to say the least. I grew up with a close knit intimate family, it’s safe to say there was no privacy. But I learned to like it this way. My upbringing has shifted my whole experience on intimacy in everyday life. I have become so fond and familiar with intimacy to the point where I do not even notice it. For instance, I kiss my friends hello and goodbye and I hardly notice PDA. Everyday reactions of intimacy come easily to me and without judgment.”

Dancer 5:

“I recognize cues of intimacy and familiarity in everyday interactions through the presence/absence of eye contact as well as people’s body language.

⁷³ See appendix 1.

The first image that came to mind when considering this question is of students walking around on campus. Most often, you see heads down, either looking at phones in hand or feet/the ground. When I encounter someone I am familiar with or witness other people have the same experience I associate heads lifting, shoulders dropping and eyes meeting. It is interesting to consider the varying degrees of familiarity or intimacy in this interaction as well, because I think it increases accordingly. The more comfortable you are with someone the more you may open up or lean in towards them when you witness their presence. Also a sense of relaxation when you encounter someone you know.”

Responses to the second question as follows:⁷⁴

Dancer 2:

“I think doorways are super powerful in terms of defining space. I love doorways, but sometimes I think I love them for the wrong reasons, as in they give me too much freedom to distance myself from the people in the space with me. I’m also not quite sure if doorways themselves would be spaces, or objects? Chairs, couches, really any sort of seating is really impactful as well. I feel like I never sit within social situations that are super professional or unfamiliar/ lacking in familiarity, unless I’m told it’s acceptable.”

Dancer 1:

“During the school day it's easily the marley on the floor. The way it connects every person in the room together and is a safety net for anyone who falls or needs to be more grounded that day. At home my phone defines the space that I am in. My long distance relationship has created this sense of home when I am next to my phone, or really any electronic device that can connect me to the person I love the most.”

Responses to the third question as follows:⁷⁵

Dancer 4:

“When other people are going through life changes and can no longer provide you with the support in a relationship that you need, whether or not it is fair or reasonable. Another example is when the other people are making life choices and changes that do not line up with your morals or desires. Both of these apply in reversed roles as well.”

⁷⁴ See appendix 1.

⁷⁵ See appendix 1.

Dancer 3:

“The first thing I think of is the context of the situation as a whole, rather than the people involved ... I suppose this comes down to shared interest and experience ... Another circumstance that comes to mind is the people around you that you already have established relationships with.”

Dancer 5:

“Both the lack and abundance of communication can alter my relationships to other people. The first thing that comes to mind is when communication needs to take place and doesn’t. Without communication, misunderstandings take place or even worse, emotions and words build up until they explode, which can seriously alter relationships.

Too much communication, or oversharing can also hinder relationships.

Communication can also lead to strengthening relationships and bringing people closer.”

And finally, responses to the fourth question as follows:⁷⁶

Dancer 3:

“This varies greatly based on context. Being in a classroom vs a bar vs a hospital waiting room vs a park would completely change social norms based on common knowledge and as you said, codes of conduct. Context greatly impacts established social norms such as how formality of interactions, intention in interactions with others, accepted noise levels, freedom to move around as you please, amount of time spent on phones, etc.”

Dancer 5:

“In a public space, the first code of conduct I consider for creating positive interactions specifically is good posture and body language. Sitting up straight, eyes up, shoulders back, and a smile on your face. Being open and willing.

In the dance world, I imagine standing at the ballet barre. Feet turned out in first position, hand placed on the bar, presence open, alert and prepared.

Interestingly this presence I talk about in the end of my dance space version is the same kind of presence I stated as a standard or code of conduct for interacting with everyday people in the public space.”

⁷⁶ See appendix 1.

Dancer 1:

“Social norms can completely change how a person acts versus how they actually want to act. Society as a whole has that impact on people. Why isn't it socially acceptable to dance in the grocery store? Why are the things that define people, their passions, socially unaccepted. Some codes of conduct could be greeting others by saying hello, walking in the streets without making eye contact, etc.”

The use of these responses first in the sound followed by an adaptation or piece based in the dancers' written responses is representative of the same method employed during the choreographic process. The sound first begins with the dancers' individual movement vocabularies, and then transitions to a text comprised of through lines or parallels in the content of their responses.⁷⁷ The progression of the sound follows the progression of the choreography, demonstrating the consideration and digestion of their individual responses and the application of their individual vocabularies to construct a piece rooted in their experiences. Both the aural and the physical elements of the performed piece illustrate the structure of the research process to place emphasis on the influence and role of the dancers' individual experiences in the construction of a work rooted in both literature and dance.

⁷⁷ See appendix 2.

Conclusion Regarding the Connection Between the Two Fields

The fields of literature and dance inform the way I see the world, growing up surrounded by dancers and writers it became clear to me how works created in both mediums are connected structurally to the everyday. In every exchange between individuals; whether it be verbal or written, communication is shared. Words form the fundamental fabric of literature. Movement and gesture form the fundamental fabric of dance. Just as language is inseparable from the human experience, movement is inseparable from the human experience. Every gesture, every facial expression, every movement performed by a body, informs this vocabulary. Dancers, choreographers and authors alike are adamant about the role of their personal experiences to inform their art, reinforcing the prevalence of the everyday in the creation of works in these two fields.

Appendix 1: Dancers' Written Responses to Research Questions

Dancer 1:

1.) How do you recognize cues of intimacy or familiarity in everyday interactions?

My experience with intimacy is an interesting one to say the least. I grew up with a close knit intimate family, it's safe to say there was no privacy. But I learned to like it this way. My upbringing has shifted my whole experience on intimacy in everyday life. I have become so fond and familiar with intimacy to the point where I do not even notice it. For instance, I kiss my friends hello and goodbye and I hardly notice PDA. Everyday reactions of intimacy come easily to me and without judgment.

2.) What are some spaces or objects that come to mind that automatically define the space you're in with others (elevators, staircases, electronic devices etc.)?

During the school day it's easily the marley on the floor. The way it connects every person in the room together and is a safety net for anyone who falls or needs to be more grounded that day. At home my phone defines the space that I am in. My long distance relationship has created this sense of home when I am next to my phone, or really any electronic device that can connect me to the person i love the most.

3.) What are circumstances that can alter your relationships to other people?

The effort and way people handle tough situations is something that can easily alter my relationships with other people. I want to always have positive relationships with others and I find it challenging to do so with people who aren't willing to find the positivity in negative circumstances. On a more positive note, the moment when a crush becomes a lover is a huge circumstance that has altered my relationships with other people. That moment when subtle flirtation becomes intense passion, a dying urge to be with that person for the rest of your life.

4.)What are codes of conduct that define social interactions and spaces?

Social norms can completely change how a person acts versus how they actually want to act. Society as a whole has that impact on people. Why isn't it socially acceptable to dance in the grocery store? Why are the things that define people, their passions, socially unaccepted. Some codes of conduct could be greeting others by saying hello, walking in the streets without making eye contact, etc.

Dancer 2:

1.) How do you recognize cues of intimacy or familiarity in everyday interactions?

I think there are certain little cues in the way people communicate. A lot of the way I communicate comfort is with body language, so for me, intimacy isn't just about touching someone I'm comfortable with, but also the act of letting myself be touched. I'm also really affected by eye contact, both as a receiver and a giver. Maybe "sharer" is better.

2.) What are some spaces or objects that come to mind that automatically define the space you're in with others (elevators, staircases, electronic devices etc.)?

I think doorways are super powerful in terms of defining space. I love doorways, but sometimes I think I love them for the wrong reasons, as in they give me too much freedom to distance myself from the people in the space with me. I'm also not quite sure if doorways themselves would be spaces, or objects? Chairs, couches, really any sort of seating is really impactful as well. I feel like I never sit within social situations that are super professional or unfamiliar/ lacking in familiarity, unless I'm told it's acceptable.

3.) What are circumstances that can alter your relationships to other people?

A lot of my relationships have changed after either I've shown an uninhibited display of emotion. Friendships often form when I can honestly laugh with the other person, and an overwhelming show of sadness or anger often changes that original dynamic, sometimes strengthening the relationship, sometimes causing it to fall apart. These are mostly my circumstances as I recognize them.

4.) What are codes of conduct that define social interactions and spaces?

I've been thinking about this question a lot, and I've found the best way to describe it is like, how much humanity you are allowed to show. Like, being out in public is the most restricting. You are allowed to exist in that space, but only so long as you are as minimal as possible (i.e. no loud talking/ being loud in general; minimal physicality, like one cough or sneeze is fine/acceptable but have a fit and you become an object of attention; etc.). As you move further along the scale of intimacy as you could call it, the more these natural responses are acceptable. Example: I would never talk about being violently sick with my coworkers, but would feel fine talking about it with family.

Dancer 3:

1.) How do you recognize cues of intimacy or familiarity in everyday interactions?

I recognize cues of intimacy or familiarity in factors such as amount of eye contact utilized, physical proximity (such as choosing to stand or sit close to somebody,

not so much in sitting at a desk that happens to be near another person), physical contact, and perceived comfortability given context. For example, in the context of my dance classes, signs of comfortability may be found in who you interact with in between combinations and physical playfulness throughout class. Contrasting this, signs of comfortability and intimacy in the context of my group of friends that hangs out on the weekends is mostly found in poking fun at each other, the more often someone pokes fun at you specifically, the more comfortable/familiar you probably are with them. In the context of everyday interactions outside of my friend groups or established classes, I recognize cues of intimacy and familiarity in eye contact, attentiveness in interactions (how interested the person seems in the interaction, how responsive they are, etc.) and who you go out of your way to say hello to, and probably many more things that I can't think of at the moment.

2.) What are some spaces or objects that come to mind that automatically define the space you're in with others (elevators, staircases, electronic devices etc.)?

Along with everything you mentioned, the spacing of others in the room (all spread out vs in clumps vs all in one group, etc.), what seating and how much seating is available/being utilized, defined walking paths, comfortability/familiarity with the space I'm in, what time of day it is (this also ties into your next question) in that if I'm walking alone at night, I am so much more aware of the people around me.

3.) What are circumstances that can alter your relationships to other people?

The first thing I think of is the context of the situation as a whole, rather than the people involved. Standing in line at a grocery store tends to facilitate more of an individualistic mindset. Contrasting this, standing in line at concerts almost always results in vibrant and thorough conversation with the strangers around me. I suppose this comes down to shared interest and experience. Similarly, walking on campus in the midst of my peers on a normal day doesn't usually result in much personal interaction but walking on campus after a major snowstorm when there is a throughline of everybody taking on this new factor, I find myself interacting with more people. Another circumstance that comes to mind is the people around you that you already have established relationships with. If I am attending a concert with a friend rather than by myself, I am less likely to interact with those around me. Similarly, if I am taking a class with a friend, I am less likely to seek out interactions beyond those with that friend. One more component that I can think of is authority, both in the sense of interactions with authority figures (or being the authority figure) and how the presence of an authority figure might change the dynamic in a room.

4.) What are codes of conduct that define social interactions and spaces?

This varies greatly based on context. Being in a classroom vs a bar vs a hospital waiting room vs a park would completely change social norms based on common knowledge and as you said, codes of conduct. Context greatly impacts established social norms such as how formality of interactions, intention in interactions with others, accepted noise levels, freedom to move around as you please, amount of time spent on phones, etc.

Dancer 4:

1.) How do you recognize cues of intimacy or familiarity in everyday interactions?

I recognize cues of intimacy or familiarity by observing the body language and eye contact between two people. This applies whether it is comfortable or awkward.

2.) What are some spaces or objects that come to mind that automatically define the space you're in with others (elevators, staircases, electronic devices etc.)?

What comes to mind are dance studios, hallways, doorways, sidewalks, and bars.

3.) What are circumstances that can alter your relationships to other people?

When other people are going through life changes and can no longer provide you with the support in a relationship that you need, whether or not it is fair or reasonable. Another example is when the other people are making life choices and changes that do not line up with your morals or desires. Both of these apply in reversed roles as well.

4.) What are codes of conduct that define social interactions and spaces?

Being respectful to personal space and property, and not being on your phone when someone is talking to you.

Dancer 5:

1.) How do you recognize cues of intimacy or familiarity in everyday interactions?

I recognize cues of intimacy and familiarity in everyday interactions through the presence/absence of eye contact as well as people's body language.

The first image that came to mind when considering this question is of students walking around on campus. Most often, you see heads down, either looking at phones in hand or feet/the ground. When I encounter someone I am familiar with or witness other people have the same experience I associate heads lifting, shoulders dropping and eyes meeting. It is interesting to consider the varying degrees of familiarity or intimacy in

this interaction as well, because I think it increases accordingly. The more comfortable you are with someone the more you may open up or lean in towards them when you witness their presence. Also a sense of relaxation when you encounter someone you know.

2.) What are some spaces or objects that come to mind that automatically define the space you're in with others (elevators, staircases, electronic devices etc.)?

The most familiar object or space that I associate with a specific group of people is the marley floor of a dance studio. I recognize the feel, look and smell of it and immediately equate that to the sense of being in class with other dancers.

Another, more obvious one is my home, which automatically creates the pleasant, comfortable sense of being in my own space as well as the notion of being around my roommates.

Cell phones / electronic devices bring the sense of being in a public place, surrounded by people but wanting to avoid interaction with them.

3.) What are some circumstances that can alter your relationships to other people?

Communication, communication, communication. Both the lack and abundance of communication can alter my relationships to other people. The first thing that comes to mind is when communication needs to take place and doesn't. Without communication, misunderstandings take place or even worse, emotions and words build up until they explode, which can seriously alter relationships.

Too much communication, or oversharing can also hinder relationships. Communication can also lead to strengthening relationships and bringing people closer.

4.) What are codes of conduct that define social interactions and spaces?

In a public space, the first code of conduct I consider for creating positive interactions specifically is good posture and body language. Sitting up straight, eyes up, shoulders back, and a smile on your face. Being open and willing.

In the dance world, I imagine standing at the ballet barre. Feet turned out in first position, hand placed on the bar, presence open, alert and prepared.

Interestingly this presence I talk about in the end of my dance space version is the same kind of presence I stated as a standard or code of conduct for interacting with everyday people in the public space.

Appendix 2: Written Piece Compiled of Excerpts from Dancers'

Written Responses Used in Sound

1.)

Body language.

Eye contact.

Between.

Comfortability.

Awkward.

Little cues.

Body language.

Intimacy isn't just about touching someone I'm comfortable with, but also the act of letting myself be touched.

Eye contact, as a giver and receiver.

Amount of eye contact.

Physical proximity, contact and perceived comfortability.

Spacing of those around me.

I grew up with a close knit, intimate family, it's safe to say there was no privacy.

Everyday reactions of intimacy come easily to me and without judgement.

When I encounter someone I am familiar with I witness heads lifting, shoulders dropping and eyes meeting.

Increased comfort causes you to lean into someone.

2.)

Dance studios.

Hallways.

Doorways.

Sidewalks.

Bars.

Sometimes I think I love doorways for the wrong reasons, as in they give me too much freedom to distance myself from the people in the space with me.

Defined walking paths.

Electronic devices bring the sense of being in a public place, surrounded by people but wanting to avoid interaction with them.

The way marley connects every person in the room together and is a safety net for anyone who falls or needs to be more grounded that day.

3.)

People's lives are changing.

They can no longer support you.

Life choices that contradict your own.

When I can honestly laugh.

Overwhelming displays of sadness.

Anger.

The whole rather than the individual people.

Shared interests and experience.

Authority.

The effort and way people handle tough situations.

Positive relationships are difficult with those who only see the negative.

The lack and abundance of communication.

Emotions and words build up, until they explode.

4.)

Respect.

Personal space and property.

How much humanity are you allowed to show?

Public spaces minimize you, you can exist, but you often cannot take up space.

Formal intentions, accepted noise levels, freedom to move.

Ownership of space.

Social norms change how a person acts versus how they actually want to act.

Why are the things that define people, their passions, socially unacceptable?

Good posture.

Body language.

Being open.

Willing.

Alert and prepared.

Interestingly, this presence I talk about in the end of my dance space version is the same kind of presence I use as a standard for interacting in the public space.

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