

Resistance: in Practice, as Process, and as Metaphor

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Abstract

Resistance: in Practice, as Process, and as Metaphor is an ethnographic and a practice-based research project. Michel Foucault's theory of the docile body is firmly embedded within the dissertation's methodological framework that works toward signifying new considerations of relationships between theory and practice, and the relationships between individual dancers and their dance practices. My dissertation positions the practices that contributed to the creation and performance of the contemporary dance work *Resistance*, as the main focus of the dissertation's scholarly inquiry. This inquiry asks: given that I am a docile body, what else could I be?

In dialogue with selected theories that consider the body and individual subjectivity, the dissertation aims to address the marginalization and objectification of the dancer's body-as-object, devoid of personal experience. This absence of the dancer's personal experience permeates Western theatre dance scholarship. The dissertation serves as a form of resistance to existing theories that privilege the position and experiences of the spectator/observer of a dance performance over the creators and performers of the work. I frame my own dance practice as the primary field site for this ethnographic study that considers the body, individual subjectivity, art and the individual, choreographic processes, and agency. Positioned at the center of this practice-based research project is the creative act as a form of knowledge and scholarship.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Images.....	vi
 Introduction.....	 1
Theorizing Through the Body.....	2
Practice-Based Research.....	5
Practice-Based Research – A Canadian Context.....	8
Archiving the Embodied.....	14
Chapter One: <i>Resistance – In Practice</i>	18
To Lie on the Floor.....	19
To Self-Overcome.....	27
Enter Nietzsche.....	30
Space and Time.....	37
Agency is an Action.....	38
To Find Comfort.....	44
Chapter Two: <i>Resistance as Process – In Studio</i>	46
Docile Bodies: Kate, Nico, Jillian, Anastasia, Jess.....	52
In the Studio.....	59
The Art of Distributions.....	60
The Control of Activity.....	65
The Organization of Geneses.....	71
The Composition of Forces.....	75
<i>Resistance – In Studio Interviews</i>	76
<i>Resistance – In Studio Conclusion</i>	96
Chapter Three: <i>Resistance as Process – In Performance</i>	98
Overcoming Superstition	98
Choreographing <i>Resistance</i>	100

To Steal.....	103
The Process to Reclaim; Creating Movement.....	105
The ‘Wrist of Fury’.....	108
Choreographing an Ending to Resistance.....	114
Performing versus Performance	116
<i>Resistance</i> – Post Performance Interviews.....	117
Concluding <i>Resistance</i> – In Performance.....	137
Chapter Four: <i>Resistance</i> as Metaphor – In Context.....	142
A ‘Cell’, Counts, and Repetition.....	143
Technologies of the Self.....	152
<i>Epimelesthai Sautou</i> – To Take Care of Yourself.....	154
In the Presence of a Master.....	158
“Dancing Bodies”.....	159
“Genealogy and Dance History”.....	171
Art as an Irreality.....	180
Real <i>Resistance</i>	187
Conclusion.....	189
The Dancer and the Dance.....	189
Dancers in Time.....	191
Dance as a Way-of-Being.....	196
Cultural Knowledge – Cultural Sustainability.....	202
Follow-up Interviews.....	204
My Obeisance.....	207
Canadian Practice-Based Research.....	209
An Ending.....	211
Bibliography.....	212
Appendices.....	218

List of Images

All photos appear courtesy of David Hou.

1. <i>Resistance</i> , the York Dance Ensemble and author.....	46
2. Docile Bodies, the York Dance Ensemble.....	52
3. In Observation, Ensemble and author.....	64
4. ‘The Wrist of Fury,’ author with Ensemble.....	108
5. Dancers of <i>Resistance</i>	141
6. My Obeisance.....	209
7. Poster for <i>Tangled Dances</i>	218
8. Choreographic Notes.....	222-228
9. Docile Body, the ensemble reduced to one.....	231
10. The author.....	232

Introduction

The changing landscape of Canadian contemporary dance scholarship, in which practicing dance artists are acquiring the theoretical skills necessary to engage critically with discourse surrounding the dancing body, promotes new directions for practice-based research. In dialogue with select theories that consider the body and individual subjectivity, this dissertation aims to address the marginalization and objectification of the dancer's body-as-object, devoid of personal experience. This absence of the dancer's personal experience permeates Western theatre dance scholarship. This research serves as a form of resistance to existing theories that privilege the position and experiences of the spectator/observer of a dance performance over the creators and performers of the work.

Michel Foucault argues that his text *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) served as a means for him to “write the history of the present.”¹ Motivated by Foucault, this doctoral dissertation is partly a history of my own present. I am a choreographer and dance artist living and working within contemporary Canadian society, who framed his own dance practice as the primary field site for an ethnographic study that considered the body, individual subjectivity, art and the individual, choreographic processes, and agency. This dissertation attempts to critique selected theoretical considerations through the lens of a dance practice. The dissertation works in dialogue with writings by Foucault and also by the philosophers Jean Paul Sartre and Friedrich Nietzsche.

¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975; repr., New York: Vintage, 1995), 31.

Locating agency in historical literature is a task rife with assumptions. What were the relationships dance practitioners had with their individual practices? What were the subjective experiences of bodies that danced? This research serves as a document that archives connections between individual dancers and their respective dance practices. With the inclusion of the perspective of dancers themselves who contribute towards the creation and performance of a contemporary dance work, historical understandings and theorizations of dancing bodies are disrupted. In this rupture a space for discussion opens, a discussion that contributes to a broadening discourse regarding the body, critical theory, art and the individual, and the embodied subjective self.

Theorizing Through the Body

I maintain that the preference for regarding the body as an object in relation only to socio-cultural elements is consistent and widespread across historical considerations of the dancing body within Western academia. Objectified as a "vessel", "a machine", "a precision instrument"², a political tool, or countless representations of some *thing*, the dancing body identifies solely as an object or a representation of a concept. Dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster's article "Dancing Bodies" (1997) and Ramsey Burt's article "Genealogy and Dance History" (2004) will be used to demonstrate how dancing bodies often become representations of some *thing* or concept. How theorists have interpreted structured movement systems and dance performances has often neglected the subjective experiences of the dancers creating the movement and/or performing. One can observe in Western theories concerning

² I am referencing here Susan Foster's article "Dance Theory?". I will further discuss this article in Chapter 4, *Resistance - In Context*. Susan Leigh Foster, "Dance Theory?," in *Teaching Dance Studies*, ed. Judith Chazin-Bennahum (New York: Routledge, 2005), 21.

dancing bodies interpretations that are based primarily upon assumptions of the dancer's experience. These assumptions inform theories that tend to instill and uphold pre-existing ideas of dance, perpetuating hegemonic understandings of dancing bodies.

Many scholars theorize upon the body, few theorize through the body. I have been a working choreographer for over eighteen years. Over these years I have collaborated on projects that cross disciplines and include various bodies and codified movement structures. These projects have been performed through mediums that include the proscenium stage, the sporting venue, film, and television. As a doctoral student, I felt strongly about keeping my creative bodily practice serving in the role of educator.³ It was my practice, loaded with history and experiences, consistently pressing itself forward as its own form-in-the-making, that governed my choice to pursue a practice-based research project. Frustrated and tired of misleading assumptions of bodies that dance, the subjective experiences of dancing bodies and the practices that supported the activity of dancing came to serve as the touchstone for my research.

Many theorists have utilized their respective bodily practices as a means to address the phenomenon of their study. This positioning of the researcher into the very phenomenon they are investigating can be observed in the work of various contemporary theorists who engage with the physical body in their respective works. In particular, my research is informed by the work of sociologist Loïc Wacquant and ethnomusicologist/dance ethnographer Tomie Hahn. In *Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer* (2006), Wacquant provides the reader with a sociological study of the sport of boxing. Wacquant classifies his research approach as “carnal sociology” with the sociologist placed *in situ* to the various phenomena s/he is

³ This desire to keep my bodily practice a focus of my research was also shared by a member of my supervising committee, Professor Holly Small.

observing. According to Wacquant, the process of grasping the sport of boxing, with one's body, requires a prolonged engagement between the researcher and the activity, moving through space/time. It was the learning and acquiring of knowledge through the act of doing that provided Wacquant with the lived experiences he employed to ground his research.

Similarly, Hahn's ethnography of the traditional Japanese dance form *nihon buyo* focuses on the process of dance transmission and the embodiment of cultural knowledge by drawing from her own long engagement with this particular art form. Hahn's introduction to the art form *nihon buyo* occurred when she was six years old. Hahn's engagement with the form exceeds the three years that Wacquant committed towards the sport of boxing. Even with this long engagement, Hahn recognizes inherent difficulties of this particular kind of embodied research:

The study of ephemeral process challenges a participant-observer, for as the practice unfolds a myriad of cultural patterns, these very patterns become physically internalized and often seem less accessible on a conscious level. Sensational knowledge moves the dancer. It is the art, indistinguishable from the practice.⁴

Witnessed in both the work of Wacquant and Hahn is the concept of a practice. Wacquant's and Hahn's works are powerful models for conducting research on a dancing phenomenon, a phenomenon that presents challenges due to residing simultaneously in both the social and physical realms of being. Building on recent scholarship on the body such as those previously mentioned, this dissertation foregrounds a bodily practice and the subjective lived experiences of the researcher within the methodological approach of an ethnographic study that considers individual subjectivity, agency, temporality, and relations of power.

⁴ Tomie Hahn, *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture through Japanese Dance* (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 2007), 59.

Practice-Based Research

If the significance of an area is measured by the strength of debate generated in its direction then the relatively new (or newly articulated) field of practice as research is among the most pressing and fast-moving concerns in early twenty-first-century thinking about performance.⁵

The above quote by British contemporary performance scholar John Freeman recognizes the pace and prominence of practice-based research within the context of British academe. Freeman comments in his book *Blood, Sweat, and Theory: Research Through Practice in Performance* (2010) that “practice as research has become something of a methodological law unto itself; an activity that in its subversion of traditional research protocols is becoming creative arts researcher’s new tradition of choice.”⁶ The emergence of practice-based research as a means to critically engage with contemporary understandings and theorizations on performance can also be observed throughout areas of Europe and Australia. Australian dancer, choreographer, and theorist Kim Vincs comments:

The debate about the relationship between practice and theory in dance research has been played out largely through the development of practice-based postgraduate programs, and this has taken place mainly in the UK and Australia. This direction has been driven by many factors, not least of which has been a migration of mid-career dance artists to the academy.⁷

The mid-career artist has arguably already developed an art practice that can support, nurture, and hopefully sustain their career in art. These individuals pursuing postgraduate education

⁵ John Freeman, *Blood, Sweat, and Theory: Research Through Practice in Performance* (London; Libri Publishing, 2010), 2.

⁶ In my estimation this claim is not accurate of my experience conducting practice-based research at the doctoral level at York University. The creative arts researcher conducting practice-based research within Canadian academe is not as common as in Europe or Australia. *Ibid.*, 35.

⁷ Kim Vincs, “Rhizome/Myzone: A Case Study In Studio-Based Dance Research,” in *Practice As Research: Approaches To Creative Arts Enquiry*, eds. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 99.

have challenged and continue to challenge existing traditions and expectations of what postgraduate scholarship can/should be. In the form of debate or within methodological approaches, a central and consistent theme that surfaces when considering practice-based research is the relationship between practice and theory. Borrowing heavily from various philosophical considerations my research provides an example of an interdisciplinary approach to practice-based research that demonstrates its own mitigation of the relationship between practice and theory in a localized Canadian context.

A long time supporter and advocate of practice-based research is Australian scholar Estelle Barrett. Barrett claims that, “The emergence of the discipline of practice-based research highlights the crucial interrelationship that exists between theory and practice and the relevance of theoretical and philosophical paradigms for the contemporary art practitioner.”⁸ For Barrett the work of the artist could be considered as a production of knowledge. “We propose that artistic practice be viewed as the production of knowledge or philosophy in action.”⁹ A common viewpoint regarding the contemporary art practitioner is that their respective art practice is no longer bound to strict disciplinary confines. The movement towards interdisciplinary scholarship and the development of practice-based research has forged new pathways for the contemporary art practitioner that did not exist mere decades ago. Author Graeme Sullivan states, “Contemporary artists are not bound by disciplinary distinctions, nor the physical and cultural locations that can limit the perspective of what can be seen anew. Artists function within cultural discourse as creators, critics, theorists, teachers,

⁸ Estelle Barrett, “Introduction,” in *Practice As Research: Approaches To Creative Arts Enquiry*, eds. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 1.

⁹ Ibid.

activists, and archivists.”¹⁰ Within the pages of this dissertation I occupy the multiple roles of creator, critic, theorist, teacher, activist, and archivist as I unite select theory with my art practice.

The decision to pursue a practice-based doctoral research project was oftentimes met with criticism by some members of York University, the institution I chose to pursue my doctoral studies.¹¹ The criticism was primarily grounded in the idea that this type of research is less than rigorous. However, the criticism of practice-based research extends beyond the question of rigor and the borders of York University. Consider the following statement by Jeroen Boomgard, a professor of art at the University of Amsterdam.

Research in the arts is making great strides and seems to be heading towards a glittering future. Nevertheless there is still enough opposition from those who believe that art ought to maintain a healthy distance from the formalization that is typical of the path to a doctorate, as well as from skeptics who think that artists have always carried out research, thus making a PhD a meaningless endeavor. To a large extent these skeptics and objectors are correct: the combination of art and formal research is troublesome and perhaps superfluous. It is therefore worth considering what is feasible and whether this involves a new manner of research that actually yields something meaningful.¹²

Meaningless and meaningful, two words that can be detrimental to the practice-based researcher. Who should/does decide whether an artist’s pursuit of a PhD is a meaningless endeavor? How do we measure/decide research that is meaningful, and meaningful to whom and for what purpose? These questions illustrate the political nature and reality of research in the arts. Whether in the United Kingdom, Australia or Canada these questions can inform the

¹⁰ Graeme Sullivan, “The Artist As Researcher: New Roles for New Realities,” in *See It Again. Say It Again: The Artist As Researcher*, ed. Janneke Wesseling (Amsterdam: Valiz Publishing, 2011), 96.

¹¹ I received considerable support for my practice-based research from professors Patrick Alcedo, Norma Sue Fisher-Stitt and Holly Small. Each of these professors utilizes their dance practices to inform their scholarship.

¹² Jeroen Boomgaard, “The Chimera Of Method,” in *See It Again. Say It Again: The Artist As Researcher*, ed. Janneke Wesseling (Amsterdam: Valiz Publishing, 2011), 58.

artist who pursues practice-based research. Perhaps the combination of art and formal research is “troublesome”, but “superfluous”? Declarative statements that impose an essentialist value upon something systematically create an “other” in those who do not share the same perspective. It is this space of the “other” that I often felt I occupied as a researcher. This positioning encouraged a re-evaluation of my own values. From this informed space I could accept the political nature of my work and the criticism directed toward it.

Practice-Based Research – A Canadian Context

Although practice-based research in Canada is not as prolific as previously stated in the United Kingdom, throughout Europe, and Australia, there are Canadian scholars pursuing this type of research. The work of choreographer Henry Daniel, in particular the research network Transnet, based in the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University, is an example of Canadian practice-based research.¹³ Transnet’s stated aim is “to explore creative and innovative ways of investigating issues surrounding the production, structuring, mobilization, and integration of cultural knowledge within society through dance and other performance activities.”¹⁴ Surfacing in the work of Daniel are the concepts of cultural knowledge, cultural vitality and cultural sustainability.

Researchers in the arts often look to other scholars from different disciplines in order to elaborate upon the concept of cultural knowledge. In her introduction to the book *Practice*

¹³ Having acquired an MFA in Interdisciplinary Studies from Simon Fraser, I had many opportunities to acquaint myself with the work of Henry Daniel. Serving as a teaching assistant under Daniel allowed me to observe details of his work that are not documented or archived.

¹⁴ Henry Daniel, “TRANSNET: A Canadian-Based Case Study on Practice-As-Research, or Rethinking Dance in a Knowledge-Based Society,” in *Practice-as-Research: In Performance and Screen*, ed. Ludivine Allegue et al. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 149.

As Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry (2010), Barrett draws upon Louise Johnson's investigation of the impact of the arts in so-called rust belt cities, which was influenced by New Zealand economist Anne De Bruin's notion of embodied cultural capital.

Johnson suggests that the value of cultural capital is not only dependent on the field in which it is *produced*, but also through the institutional and social contexts in which it is *received* and *circulated*. She identifies several categories of cultural capital: objectified cultural capital, which refers to artifacts or products such as paintings, books, performances, films and other community events; institutionalized cultural capital which refers to those artifacts and activities that are published, funded, commissioned, endorsed and deployed by government and other institutions and the final category, embodied cultural capital, described as the creative abilities, talents, styles, and values and dispositions of individuals and communities that emerge from, and relate to artistic production and employment.¹⁵

Barrett makes use of this succinct articulation of cultural capital in order to further her discussion of the “features and approaches of artistic research”¹⁶ discussed in her book.

Following Barrett's lead, I work to incorporate the terms “objectified,” “institutionalized,” and “embodied” cultural capital as presented above, in relation to Daniel's practice-based research.

The three notions of cultural capital: “objectified,” “institutionalized,” and “embodied,” do not exist independently from one another. In considering Daniel's research, one can observe the interplay, and inter-relationship between these various modes of cultural capital. As part of his research Daniel choreographed a forty-five minute contemporary dance work titled *Skin*. Daniel states that the creation of *Skin* was “in keeping with the practical performance-based exploration of issues that is central to practice-as-research.”¹⁷ *Skin* developed from the creation and performance of a work-in-progress titled *Colored Bodies*.

¹⁵ Barrett, “Introduction,” 8.

¹⁶ Ibid., 8.

¹⁷ Daniel, “TRANSNET: A Canadian-Based Case Study on Practice-As-Research, or Rethinking Dance in a Knowledge-Based Society,” 151.

The multiple performances of these works and the various publications related to these performances serve as examples of objectified cultural capital.¹⁸ However, captured within these examples of objectified cultural capital are examples of embodied cultural capital. Embodied cultural capital can be witnessed in the creative processes of choreographing and performing these works, and also in the art practices and lifestyles of the various artists that contributed to the creation and performance of the work of art. Daniel's research project, housed within Simon Fraser University and funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), also represents institutionalized cultural capital.

In the introduction to a case study for his research, Daniel makes reference to the historic shift of SSHRC from being a granting council to becoming a knowledge council. He writes, "Transnet's award provided a framework for rethinking dance and other performance activities as unique contributors to cultural knowledge within the knowledge-based society that Canada was intent on becoming."¹⁹ This shift toward a knowledge-based society did not only affect SSHRC but also other Canadian funding agencies, and as Daniel claims, resulted in the emergence of various organizational themes including those of transdisciplinarity and sustainability within Canadian government agencies. Daniel writes:

At the beginning of the new millennium there appeared to be a few organizing themes occupying the minds of policy-makers in most developed countries. These themes can be found in documentation disseminated by Canadian government funding agencies including SSHRC, CIHR (Canadian Institute for Health Research), NSERC (National Science and Engineering Research Council), and the Canada Council for the Arts. Two of these were transdisciplinarity and sustainability. The former emphasizes the forming of cross-disciplinary teams in an attempt to solve complex problems, and the latter

¹⁸ I propose that historically, it is objectified cultural capital that serves as the overwhelming source of analysis for Western theatre dance scholarship.

¹⁹ Daniel, "TRANSNET: A Canadian-Based Case Study on Practice-As-Research, or Rethinking Dance in a Knowledge-Based Society," 149.

emphasizes aligning human, ecological, environmental, and cultural issues in an effort to maximize available resources... Even as the notion of ‘cultural knowledge’ came into increasingly widespread use, few seemed interested in making a consistent and/or coherent case for supporting the notion of ‘cultural vitality’ as a sustainable resource.²⁰

One can observe in the various strategic choices made by Daniel and his research team an attempt to fulfill funding criteria and secure financial support. These choices have a direct impact on the nature of the research conducted. Daniel explains:

My decision to underplay the production of *Skin* within the framework of a SSHRC RDI strategy was a strategic move, because none of these awards had previously been given to a choreographer. A combination of being new to the system...and the lack of a tried framework for assessing what constitutes research/creation in the performing arts in Canada, made it clear to me that the avenues for someone working between the traditional boundaries of intellectual/scholarly work and artistic practice would have to be mapped more carefully...²¹

Daniel’s pursuit of practice-based research that blurred established boundaries between “intellectual/scholarly work and artistic practice” within a Canadian context was met with certain challenges. These challenges partially stem from a lack of such research in Canada and a lack of ability to assess this type of research. An approach taken by Daniel to mitigate this reality was to include international scholars and invited scientists to participate in Transnet’s research.

Transnet’s research was therefore heavily influenced by the need to create a critical mass of researchers on the local scene interested in developing practice-as-research as a valid methodological approach to investigating knowledge within a performance context, and to co-ordinate these efforts with researchers who were pursuing similar ideas on the international scene. It was felt that inviting scientists to participate could strengthen our case.²²

²⁰ Daniel, “TRANSNET: A Canadian-Based Case Study on Practice-As-Research, or Rethinking Dance in a Knowledge-Based Society,” 152.

²¹ Ibid., 161.

²² Daniel, “TRANSNET: A Canadian-Based Case Study on Practice-As-Research, or Rethinking Dance in a Knowledge-Based Society,” 150.

In addition to securing a critical mass of local and international researchers that included scientists, Daniel also incorporated new technologies within the creative work.

Skin contributed to Transnet's search for new frameworks that could support practice-as-research. It was extremely important that the methods employed in the studio-based experimentation would begin to define new directions and/or possibilities for incorporating technology in the performer's training.²³

These strategic choices illustrate how institutionalized cultural capital can be heavily influenced by where the research is being conducted and by established policies that inform funding institutions. These choices can also serve as an example of one of the many criticisms directed toward artists pursuing practice-based research.

Critics of practice-based research within the arts at the Doctoral level often voice a desire for the artist to remain at a critical distance from the ever-growing policy driven realm of institutional learning. As previously mentioned, Boomgard claims that, "There is still enough opposition from those who believe art ought to maintain a healthy distance from the formalization that is typical of the path to a doctorate."²⁴ One of the concerns is that the work of the artist within the formalized structure of academe will become an instrument for public policy. This instrumentalization of art is in direct contrast to art that functions in subversion to public policy and existent power structures. In his article "The Use and Abuse Of Research For Art and Vice Versa" (2010), artist Jeremiah Day states the following in regard to the function of artistic research:

The new field of 'artistic research' hinges paradoxically on the question of function. (...) the focus on research could itself be a way of bringing cultural practice more in line

²³ Daniel, "TRANSNET: A Canadian-Based Case Study on Practice-As-Research, or Rethinking Dance in a Knowledge-Based Society," 158.

²⁴ Boomgard, "The Chimera Of Method," 58.

with current public policy focus on ‘creative industry’ and the ‘knowledge economy’, thus paving the way for an even more radical instrumentalization.²⁵

An underlying premise for Day is the role of art itself. In both Boomgard and Day’s comments what is over-looked is the role art plays for the artists themselves. What *value* does the art practice hold for the art practitioner? What is the *function* of the art *practice* that informs artistic research? Within an art practice, can an attempt be made to subvert existing power structures within the formalized institution of academe? Like Daniel, I suggest that it is the choice of the artists to decide the direction of their practice and their attendant research. Daniel demonstrates the ability to be mindful of the impact of public policy upon one’s work and openly addresses how public policy affects the research.

The concept of cultural vitality as a sustainable resource emerges as a prominent aspect of Daniel’s research. To further develop this concept, Daniel turns to the work of Australian cultural scholar Jon Hawkes.

In *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture’s Essential Role in Public Planning*, Jon Hawkes (2003) claims that, along with social justice, economic development, and ecological responsibility, there should be a fourth pillar of sustainable development, namely, culture. He defines culture as the way of life of any group, community, or people, and what they do in their desire to create meaning within a larger system of values.²⁶

Borrowing Hawkes’ definition of culture, Daniel positions Transnet research as being directly concerned with cultural sustainability, writing “Transnet’s research is more concerned with the fourth possibility, namely, generating cultural vitality through dance and other

²⁵ Jeremiah Day, “The Use and Abuse Of Research For Arts and Vice Versa,” in *See It Again. Say It Again: The Artist As Researcher*, ed. Janneke Wesseling (Amsterdam: Valiz Publishing, 2011), 19.

²⁶ Daniel, “TRANSNET: A Canadian-Based Case Study on Practice-As-Research, or Rethinking Dance in a Knowledge-Based Society,” 152.

performance activities.”²⁷ The themes of cultural vitality and cultural sustainability proposed by Daniel in many ways are in direct dialogue with public policy and SSHRC’s granting procedures. Daniel challenges what constitutes cultural knowledge and proposes a critical reflection upon the established theme of sustainability.

If SSHRC’s contribution to the establishment of a knowledge society in Canada is to reframe its granting procedures to more adequately generate, mobilize, and integrate different forms of knowledge in society in a sustainable manner, they too need to address the issue of sustainability in a much more rigorous, comprehensive, and coordinated manner.²⁸

As an example of Canadian practice-based research led by a choreographer, Daniel’s work provides inspiration and forges a direction for my own research.

Archiving the Embodied

Although my research is in dialogue with themes presented by Daniel, it takes a different approach. My research predominantly emphasizes embodied cultural capital, yet acknowledges the inter-relationship that this form of cultural capital has with both objectified and institutionalized cultural capital. Embodied cultural capital is described as “the creative abilities, talents, styles, values and dispositions of individuals and communities that emerge from, and relate to artistic production and employment.”²⁹ My research positions the practices that contribute to the creation and performance of a dance work as the main focus of my dissertation’s scholarly inquiry. The values associated with these practices promote a more robust consideration and analysis of the complexities of embodying a culture, whether

²⁷ Daniel, “TRANSNET: A Canadian-Based Case Study on Practice-As-Research, or Rethinking Dance in a Knowledge-Based Society,” 152.

²⁸ Ibid., 156.

²⁹ Barrett, “Introduction,” 8.

manifested at a public venue, at a religious site, in the confines of the everyday, or in the case of my research, on the performance stage and accompanying spaces.

My approach toward dance scholarship makes a decisive shift away from the product of the art practice (objectified cultural capital). What will develop within this dissertation is an appreciation for the historical role that the dance performance has served within Western dance academe. This research, like many practice-based research projects conducted by dance artists from different geographical regions, forces a reconsideration of embodied cultural capital from a localized context. Like many practice-based research projects this dissertation contributes to the expanding literature provided by dance practitioners utilizing dance as a means for investigation.

Dance research has always and inevitably involved a relationship with practice, but the traditional structure of dances as objects to be investigated, usually by someone other than the artist who made the work, is being deconstructed by dance practitioners undertaking practice-led research. This is producing a shift from dance as an object of investigation to dance as a means of investigation.³⁰

My own bodily practice will be further detailed in the next chapter, providing a context for the concept of a bodily practice as well as an illustration of how a bodily practice comes to be and evolves. My bodily practice, as well as the many practices that contributed toward the creation and performance of the contemporary dance work *Resistance*, inform an ethnographic research project that challenges Foucault's concept of a docile body. Appended to this dissertation is a video of a performance of *Resistance* and rehearsal notes from the choreographic process for *Resistance*. These appendices serve to add depth and potency to this practice-based research project. *Resistance*, then, serves to reposition the art practice in relation to the work of art itself, providing a commentary to Sartre's idea, proposed in his

³⁰ Vincs, "Rhizome/Myzone: A Case Study In Studio-Based Dance Research," 99.

work *The Imaginary* (1940) that, “The work of art is an irreality.”³¹ These considerations inform my own contributions to the concepts of cultural knowledge, cultural vitality, and cultural sustainability.

As a researcher I choose to speak from a subjective voice in my use of dance and bodily practices as a means for investigation. I promote an argument for the subjective: the individualist, the existentialist, the choreographer, the teacher, the activist, the student, the marginalized and the objectified, are all facets of my subjective ‘I’. I promote this argument from an embraced personal and emotional motivation, a motivation that is consistent with other examples of practice-based research.

Because creative arts research is often motivated by emotional, personal, and subjective concerns, it operates not only on the basis of explicit and exact knowledge, but also on that of tacit knowledge. An innovative dimension of this subjective approach to research lies in its capacity to bring into view, particularities of lived experience that reflect alternative realities that are either marginalized or not yet recognized in established theory and practice.³²

Although rare within Canadian dance scholarship, I find support for this practice-based research from dance practitioners who have already chosen their own path of dance scholarship.

North American dance scholars Jill Sweet, Linda J. Tomko, and Sally Ann Ness have called for new directions in dance scholarship that integrate the subjective experience and personal agency of the dancer. In writing my own “history of the present,”³³ this practice-based research addresses their call and serves to challenge the lack of presence of the dance artist, potentially creating what James Clifford would recognize as a “counter-knowledge” to

³¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary* (1940; repr., New York: Routledge, 2004), 188.

³² Estelle Barrett, “Foucault’s ‘What is an Author’: Towards a Critical Discourse of Practice as Research,” in *Practice As Research: Approaches To Creative Arts Enquiry*, ed. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 143.

³³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 31.

that knowledge which has become “institutionalized, culturally accumulated, and overly restrictive in its definitions.”³⁴ This commitment to archive subjective experiences lived by dancers broadens the discourse regarding the body, art and the individual, and critical theory regarding the embodied subjective self. Simultaneously it provides *Resistance* against the objectification of the dancer’s body-as-object, devoid of personal experience, which permeates Western theatre dance scholarship.

³⁴ James Clifford, “On Orientalism,” in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 256.

Chapter 1 *In Practice*

There have been many educators in my life, Merleau-Ponty, Nietzsche, Foucault and Sartre are but a few.¹ Many coaches, teachers, professors, friends, and peers have also been educators for me. As a young dancer I had a teacher encourage me to write about my dancing, write about my experiences. These writings have come to form field notes that stretch far into the history of my dance practice. Excerpts from these writings inform this study that develops further consideration of the concept of a bodily practice, a bodily practice that has served in the primary role of educator for as long as I can remember.

Currently my bodily practice is similar to a form of *askēsis*. The Greek term *askēsis* “refers to the notion of a regime of self testing and training.”² I could argue that this form of *askēsis* began to take shape the day I was born, born moving. I was an active child who played all the time, with my friends or on my own. This play would become more structured and formalized through dance, swimming, hockey, and skating lessons. Aiding these institutionalized structures of play was the socialization of my body and self, that inescapable external subtext that consciously and unconsciously shaped and confined my body/self.

In my early teenage years I was already training many hours a day as a competitive figure skater. I so enjoyed the feeling of skating fast, feeling the wind in my face, having an outlet to express myself. I enjoyed the feelings associated with learning new skills and the process of working toward something that brought me intrinsic pleasure. I also felt shame for enjoying an activity that by many accounts was simply not meant for boys. I felt fear for

¹ It is through their writing that these scholars serve as educators for me.

² Tony Schirato, Geoff Danaher, and Jen Webb, *Understanding Foucault: A Critical Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, 2012), xvii.

being different. By the time I entered university I was a National level competitor, taking dance lessons off ice to enhance my skating. My days were spent in the arena, classroom, and dance studio. My bodily practice included many types of codified movement structures, yet regardless of whether I was participating in a contemporary dance class or preparing for an on ice training session, these activities always began with a simple exercise: lying on the floor. It is this simple act, to lie on the floor, which can begin to illustrate my relationship with my body, my bodily practice, and one of the many ways in which my body serves as an educator for me.

To Lie on the Floor

I lie on the floor. This body that lies on the floor is a lived-body. I use this term lived-body referencing phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept that the mind is always embodied. Macey claims that Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is informed by an embodied consciousness, not from a Cartesian duality of body and mind.

For Merleau-Ponty the physical body is not only the seat of perception, but the vehicle for being-in-the-world or being-in-situation of an embodied consciousness. The body is not something that simply is in space and time; it inhabits space and time in a truly physical sense and the individual perceives it by constructing a bodily schema out of memories and perceptions.³

Through this body I experience life. In life, I am unable to fully escape my body; we are intrinsically connected. Implicated in I/my body is perception. Through our bodies we perceive and receive information. The body is never simply subject or object. I live my body,

³ David Macey, ed., *Dictionary of Critical Theory* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 248.

it is a phenomenon experienced by me, and it provides my very means of perception. Body and mind connect in consciousness, and I have access to my body only by living.⁴

Dance phenomenologist Sondra Fraleigh comments that:

The lived-body concept attempts to cut beneath the subject-object split, recognizing a dialectical and lived dualism but not a dualism of body-soul or body-mind. A phenomenological (or lived) dualism implicates consciousness and intention and assumes an indivisible unity of body, soul, and mind.⁵

Consciousness and the body are a unified entity contributing to the lived experience of a phenomenon. Lived experiences and the experiential descriptions of such moments form a foundation for existential phenomenology. What follows are three phenomenological descriptions of when I lay on the floor. These embodied moments from my past are not only captured in words but continue to exist in present time through the concept of a lived body's history.⁶ It is this lived body that is present within my bodily practice; it is I/my body that lives my practice, a practice that informs the choices I make as an individual. I/my body is my very means of being in the world.

On the Floor in Rehearsal (Journal Entry)

As I go down to the floor, I already feel pain in my left sacroiliac joint. This pain has been bothering me all day, a consistent nagging presence, but now, making my way to the floor I become even more aware of it.

⁴ This paragraph is a brief summation of ideas presented by Elizabeth Grosz and will be further developed later on in the chapter. Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994).

⁵ Sondra Horton Fraleigh, *Dance and the Lived Body* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), 15.

⁶ I will further develop the relation to temporality and the lived body shortly.

I lie on the floor and I take a deep breath.⁷

I take another deep breath. My mind is racing. Things have been moving very fast as of late, typical of a student's life at the end of a semester. I am walking more quickly to the many places I need to go to, moving at a rushed pace. I mentally race through my many obligations. I focus on my breathing. What may be a minute passes, and already I begin to feel tension in that troublesome sacroiliac joint beginning to release. Today the sun came out. The sun is shining through the window of the dance studio, hitting my bare arms as I lie on the floor; the sun on my skin feels great, warm. I am now highly aware of my skin.

I take a deep breath.

My skin. The flesh. I take many long and slow deep breaths.

My eyelids are heavy today, they are closing; is this hurried pace taking its toll? I take a deep breath and I focus on my body and hear a piece of music playing in the background, a piece of music I used to listen to many years ago. That time comes flooding back to me, washes through me, as I lie on the floor.

I begin to worry about my paper and the approaching deadline. I take a deep breath and I try to exhale that worry away. I take another deep breath and I move my arms and legs onto the diagonal plane, my body forming the shape of an X on the floor. I feel the bottom of my feet, particularly my heels against the floor. I feel my scapula beginning to open up and my upper back starting to relax.

I take a deep breath.

⁷ This breath is specific in nature, consisting of diaphragmatic, lateral costal, and apical breath. Focusing on these three features of breathing results in the deepest possible breath: the belly goes out, the ribs expand laterally, and the chest rises.

I take another deep breath. This time I am even slower to exhale the tension and the worry. With each breath I focus on my diaphragm, increasingly aware of my core. I feel connected between my upper torso and my lower limbs. I feel longer. I occupy more space. I feel this space through my skin, through my flesh. The texture of the air shifts, it is somehow denser. I feel the textures of my skin, my hands, my elbows, the tops of my feet; my porous skin interacts with the space surrounding me, the textures of my skin acting as signposts to my body occupying this space. I coexist in this space, the textures of my body and the texture of the space inseparable, experienced together in this time.

From this X position I draw my arms back to my side. Using my heels, I pull the weight of my body forward with the flexion of my ankle joints. Releasing this flexion results in a subtle bounce in my body. All the way through my spine, I can feel this gentle bounce. With my upper back pressed against the floor, this bounce reverberates gently through my body and my entire skeletal system.

I close my eyes.

I bounce and I take a deep breath drawing my arms across my chest. I begin to move my arms very slowly through a broad range of motion, always aware of my breathing and of my core. When I move through an area of tension I slow down. I move through this area, breathing through that tension and moving through that space. I continue to move my arms and time passes. How much time passes I do not know; time presents itself differently in this state of becoming.

My mind is focused on the sensations of this movement; I am swimming in sensation.

In these sensations of movement I am connected to a memory that is difficult to place, yet the feelings associated with this memory are so pronounced and obvious. It is such a full

and rich embodiment, an aesthetic experience grounded in a memory of sensation. I enjoy this experience for as long as it lasts.

Eventually I become aware again of my breathing.

I take a deep breath, and I open my eyes.

I feel alert. I feel present.

I stand up, and I begin my rehearsal.

On the Floor at Home (Journal Entry)

I am lying on the floor, on my back, with my arms stretched out to the side. I can feel tightness in my right shoulder. This tightness wraps around the front of my right deltoid. I can feel this tension all the way down to my right elbow. I have been sitting at my desk for three days, writing a final paper for one of my classes. Sitting for so long has made my lower back very tight. I feel stuck in many places including my left SI joint.

I take a deep breath.

I take another deep breath.

I just breathe and *become* through my breathing.

The tension I feel begins to evaporate into the space that surrounds me. Lying in this position I am greeted with the embodied memory of the other times I have taken this position on the floor. I begin to contemplate this action; for well over twenty years I have lain on the floor. Every day, warming up as a competitive figure skater at 6:45 in the morning, prior to my morning training session, I would lie on the floor; my initiation to the training day. I have lied in this position before every single dance class. I have lain in this position before every

performance, rehearsal, work out and stretch session. I have lain in this position in cities across the world: Moscow, Warsaw, and Vancouver, in different time zones and in different moments of my life. I lie in this position almost daily as a PhD student. In this position my past blurs with my present. My embodied past is here, in this lived body, lying on the floor.

My hip flexors present a familiar ache and I take a deep breath. I close my eyes to the pain I am feeling and I focus on my breathing. This pain is not new. It is my past made present. Physiologically my iliopsoas reacted to the repetitive activity of figure skating, creating tightness within the muscle. The iliopsoas is composed of the iliacus and psoas muscle. I am briefly preoccupied with the idea that was once shared with me, that the psoas is very sensitive to emotional trauma due to its relationship with the large intestine and kidney. Emotional trauma, chronic worry or fear associated with sex and identity, manifest in the psoas. This thought process is interrupted by the pain, a pain that is not new, a pain from a childhood that is supposed to reside in a past. Yet here and now this past resides in the tightness of my hips. I breathe. With each breath the pain dulls, shifting into a tension, and eventually to no pain at all.

I take a deep breath and the room appears brighter.

I move my arms and my legs out onto the diagonal planes of my body, my body resembling an X on the floor.

Everything changes.

The tightness in my pectorals is extreme. My pectorals are so tight that I feel my lower back begin to hyper-extend to accommodate this new X position. I realize I can't keep my elbows on the floor as I normally can. Why have I not noticed how tight my pectorals were becoming during the stress and schoolwork over these past few days? Unhurriedly I begin to address this presenting tightness.

I take a deep breath.

I take another deep breath.

I take another deep breath and my pelvis tilts and my back is no longer hyper extended. Now, there is a burning in my left and right axillary area. This burning in my armpits travels all the way into a tingling in my fingertips. Gradually the burning subsides, and a tension appears now in my chest. I breathe and I slowly open up.

My elbows fall to the floor. I have undone what was done.

Lying on the floor I now feel no tension, no pain. I now focus on the pleasure that my body provides. I feel whole. I feel energized. With this feeling I slowly stand and begin my day anew.

On the Floor in an Arena in Vienna (Journal Entry)

I am lying on the floor, on my back, on a yoga mat in an arena in Vienna, Austria. I am preparing to warm up for the Original Dance component of my first international Ice

Dance competition. Having placed well in the Compulsory Dance yesterday I feel a lot more anxious. I feel pressure building towards today's performance.

I am having a problem ridding myself of this anxiety. Knowing that this mindset is not a good space to be in to perform only adds to my present anxiety. Turning my head to the side I look out across the rink and see the Canadian flag hanging alongside the flags of the other competing nations. This visual reminds me of how it felt yesterday to be announced as "Representing Canada, Judith Longpre and Shae Zukiwsky." This embodied feeling, only a day old, is accompanied with mixed emotions as I contemplate a new politic of my body. This train of thought only momentarily distracts me, as my increasing anxiousness quickly returns. Even though I sought out the quietest area of the rink there are still people moving about. These people pay me no attention and no one interrupts me. With my partner Judith, just a few meters away, I close my eyes and I take a deep breath.

Lying on my back I focus solely on my breathing.

I take a deep breath and my mind drifts to my mom and family. I think briefly of all those people who support me back home. I imagine their faces. A soft smile spreads across my face and a feeling of warmth passes through my body. I remember my last trip home for the holidays, and I remember that feeling of being surrounded by the people who know me and care for me. I focus on the memory of that feeling. It is a memory built upon sensations. I take a deep breath. I allow that memory to permeate my current corporeality. Time passes and my anxiousness is no longer. I feel calm and able.

I open my eyes. The anxiousness I felt is gone.

I am now ready to begin my warm up.

To Self-Overcome

These three descriptive passages reflect the density of lived experiences that compose a bodily practice, a practice that is lived, existing in time and space and immersed in the social, physical, and psychical realm. To lie on the floor is an action that lends itself to the idea of embodied cultural capital. To lie on the floor is only a sliver of what constitutes my bodily practice, and yet within this action resides the two concepts of practice that I will elaborate upon: self-overcoming and the potential for individual agency. In her essay “Naked” (2006), Australian scholar Elizabeth Grosz states the following:

A body reproduces itself not only biologically but through its self-representations and the rigors of its practice. At this point, art figures itself as a bodily practice. While much of art merely re-presents the body (depicts or pictures it) at its most provocative, art also contains the possibility of refiguring, transforming, and functioning at the very limit of the body’s capacities – especially if (as Nietzsche outlines) the origin of art is the very exploration and use of the body.⁸

My art practice is indeed a bodily practice, a rigorous, engaging, and long standing means for me as an individual to transform, to learn and to overcome. I/my body that lives this practice is situated within the social realm. It was through learning and understanding that I began to appreciate the complexity of this socially located lived body.

⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, “Naked,” in *The Prosthetic Impulse*, ed. Marquand Smith and Joanne Morra (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006), 193.

Grosz states, “Every body is marked by the history and specificity of its existence.”⁹

I/my body is no exception. I cannot escape the confines of my body, nor can I escape the environment in which I am situated. My individuality becomes gendered, politicized, and processed through a variety of myths, stereotypes, and relations of power. Like all young individuals, I was subjected unknowingly to socialization from an early age and throughout my life. Attention and consequences were placed upon me/my body by outside forces. As a young dancer I was conditioned to desire the socially acceptable by denying and avoiding behaviors that do not belong to this acceptable paradigm. As a young male I was required by society to possess certain traits and to protect them, to never put them into question. If I did so, I would become other, the deviant to the norm.¹⁰ These forces contributed to the environment in which I/my body came to be.

The body is not outside of history, for it is produced through and in history. Relations of force, of power, produce the body through the use of distinct techniques (the feeding, training, supervision, and education of children in any given culture) and harness the energies and potential subversion that power itself has constructed (regimes of order and control involved in modern disciplinary society need the creation of a docile, obedient subject whose body and movements parallel and correlate with the efficiency of a machine or a body whose desire is to confess all about its innermost subjectivity and sexuality to institutionally sanctioned authorities.)¹¹

My awareness of how I/my body was situated within institutionalized frameworks and how I/my body had been so radically influenced by outside forces of power was instigated during a studio session during my undergraduate studies. An entry from a journal kept during these studies demonstrates my awakened acknowledgement of the effects that society can have upon an individual. My own process of self-overcoming, for recognizing, understanding,

⁹ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 142.

¹⁰ I am making reference to ideas developed in the following text: Larry May and Robert Strikwerda, *Rethinking Masculinity: Philosophical Explorations in Light of Feminism* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1992), 123.

¹¹ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 148.

and making choices that relate to my socially located lived-body, began with this experience. I also began the long road of confirming potential individual agency in the relation between an individual and his/her bodily practice.

The Body Inscribed

September, 2001.

How exciting to be in a university dance class with so many other men. So often I am the lone male in dance class. This year, at Concordia University, I am one of many. I am completing an undergraduate degree in Contemporary Dance. I have been dancing for many years and I believe that I have acquired a high level of skill.

In this particular class we begin an improvisation exercise. We begin to improvise, to move and dance freely however we choose. The instructor asks us to change and we are to significantly change the dynamics of our movement. We establish a new quality of movement, stay with it for a duration, then again we are instructed to change. After five or six alterations I am already beginning to repeat my movement. I can no longer change my movement significantly without repeating that which I have already done so I sit down and begin to observe the other dancers.

Observing the females, I sense a broader vocabulary of movement. I observe similarities but also differences. I continue to observe, focusing on the males. It does not take me long to recognise that all of the males dance in the same manner. Our movements are similar and the dynamic qualities are the same. I wonder how this happened. In moving freely it appears that the males are all bound.

The males in my class are from differing cultures, backgrounds, and age groups. We have come together here from various geographies, economic landscapes, and past experiences to gather and learn, but we all dance in the same way, direct, powerful, and limited. We have one thing in common, our gender. I am an artist creating with the same prescribed palette as my contemporaries. I have been blindfolded to the reality of my body.

Enter Nietzsche

Why did the females appear to have a broader range of movement and potential for expression than the males? How did it come to pass that all the males moved so similarly even though as individuals we were all so different? The influence of the social construction of gender upon our young dancing bodies and the influence of outside forces as referenced by Grosz in the above quote became so clear. These forces of power, further developed and considered in a later chapter, began to take a prominent place in my thinking of individualism and subjectivity, setting an initial premise for my long-standing enquiry into the theme of power. The gendered body and representations of gender continue to be subject material for many of my creative endeavours, including *Resistance*. Once the blindfold was removed and the reality of my own socially located self was better observed, I was left with choices to make. It was in making these very choices that I began to gain an increased interest in the writings of Sartre and Nietzsche. With these choices I was unknowingly creating and honing my own space within an embodied cultural capital. Nietzsche in particular began to influence many of the choices I was making by becoming another educator for me, informing and influencing my decision-making and my evolving art practice.

The first two parts of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (henceforth TSZ) were published in 1883. TSZ stands alone in style among Nietzsche's works.¹² Written in poetry and relying heavily on metaphor and allegory, Nietzsche creates the prophet Zarathustra. "In *Zarathustra* Nietzsche undertook to meet head on the challenge of Schopenhauer."¹³ Schopenhauer's pessimism heavily influenced Nietzsche's work, and Schopenhauer himself was a rare kind of educator for Nietzsche.

"This is a special kind of education, requiring a special kind of educator – and Nietzsche was then and subsequently convinced that the experience of encountering such an educator is quite essential, if one is to find one's way to a new Yes to life...a means of avoiding Schopenhauerian pessimism and the calamity of dead-end nihilism."¹⁴

It was in response to Schopenhauerian pessimism that Nietzsche formulated his particular philosophy and created another educator in the prophet Zarathustra. One of Zarathustra's lessons for those who choose to listen is that of self-overcoming.¹⁵

Self-overcoming, I suggest, is a process by which an individual strives to transform themselves within their socio-cultural environment. Similar to *askēsis*, this process can take many forms yet most important is that this process is a doing, a series of actions. The following excerpt in which the prophet Zarathustra comments on "He who will one day teach men to fly..."¹⁶ will serve to elaborate upon this idea of self-overcoming: "This – is now *my*

¹² "Thus Spoke Zarathustra is unlike any of Nietzsche's other works, which themselves are unlike virtually anything else in the history of philosophy." Robert Pippin, "Nietzsche: Thus Spoke Zarathustra," in *Introductions to Nietzsche*, ed. Robert Pippin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 152.

¹³ Richard Schacht, "Zarathustra/ Zarathustra as Educator," in *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*, ed. Peter R. Sedgwick (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 230.

¹⁴ Ibid., 224.

¹⁵ "The theme that plays the most important role in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, is self-overcoming." Pippin, "Nietzsche: Thus Spoke Zarathustra," 169.

¹⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-91; repr., London: Penguin Books, 1961), 210.

way: where is yours?’ Thus I answered those who asked me ‘the way’. For *the* way – does not exist!”¹⁷

My way places emphasis upon the individual. Whereas *the* way could suggest a universal path, one that is ‘good’ for all, *my* way suggests multiplicity and individualized paths. Zarathustra turns the question back to the pupil, placing the responsibility of finding one’s way upon the individuals themselves. By focusing on the idea of self-overcoming Nietzsche demonstrates “how each of us, as individuals, might come to be dissatisfied with our way of living and so be able to strive for something better.”¹⁸ This striving is a path, a path that the prophet Zarathustra himself walked. “What Nietzsche wrought in this work is the means of a remarkable possible educational experience and transformation...Zarathustra too has to be educated; and it is his education, as well as what he says and various other things about him, that is meant to serve ours.”¹⁹ The transformation of the individual through a process of education could be considered as an example of an individual who overcomes. The path of education may take many forms, multiple choices will be made, and how one informs and makes these choices will have distinct consequences to the path that is forged.

As an undergraduate dance student I was discovering *my* way. Once that blindfold was removed, I was completely dissatisfied with what I considered to be the truth of my art practice. I began to think like an individualist, recognizing our inherent subjectivities as potential anti-essentialist units pushing back against the social forces influencing me and the gendering and politicization of me/my body. Haunted by Nietzsche’s concept of eternal recurrence, this personal process of discovery began to take on even greater importance. For

¹⁷ Author’s emphasis. Schacht, “Zarathustra/ Zarathustra as Educator,” 212.

¹⁸ Pippin, “Nietzsche: Thus Spoke Zarathustra,” 153.

¹⁹ Schacht, “Zarathustra/ Zarathustra as Educator,” 231.

Nietzsche and Zarathustra, the individual within the educational experience makes choices.

My choices began to be made in relation to the idea of eternal recurrence.

The following is an excerpt of Nietzsche's own explanation of the idea of eternal recurrence:²⁰

“This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sign and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence....If this thought gained possession of you, it would change you as you are or perhaps crush you. The question in each and every thing, ‘Do you desire this one more and innumerable times more?’ would lie upon your actions as the greatest weight.”²¹

The act of making a choice in relation to the idea of eternal recurrence is a daunting, potentially paralyzing task. I remember clearly how I felt when considering the idea of eternal recurrence and making a choice. Suddenly I became more reflective, mindful, and responsible for the choices I was making. I grew increasingly cognizant of my actions, and became more accountable for them. If I was to live with these choices, again and again, I needed to find ease and comfort with them. At this time I turned to my art practice for assistance, a practice informed by my lived-body. It was my art practice that provided me with so much information, calm, joy, and an enhanced sense of identity. I began to associate certain values of worth with my practice, and in turn, my practice became increasingly valued and valuable to me. These values associated with my practice began, over time, to instill belief, a belief in the power of choice and self-overcoming. With my bodily practice in the role of educator, I chose to create.

²⁰ Nietzsche introduces the idea of eternal recurrence in section 341 of *The Gay Science* (1882), a text that preceded *TSZ*.

²¹ Arnold I. Davidson, “Ethics as Ascetics,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 140.

Author Rose Pfeffer suggests that the act of creation is a recurring theme in the work of Nietzsche, as apparent in the creation of the heroic individual within a culture that is tragic. Within the individual, “the divine element is revealed in the soul of the individual, in their eternal will to suffer and strive, to grow and create.”²² Mine was not an attempt at heroics but an attempt towards understanding, of learning in order to overcome, to make informed choices, to reflect upon these choices, and to create. I began to find greater confidence in my choreography and my dancing. My skills as a performer, creator, and individual began to blossom. Conventional assumptions that once restrained me began to fall away, one by one, opening new directions as I forged my own path. The dance studio became a site of exploration and discovery, as did the library, and the skating rink. My art practice was evolving into a bodily practice, and I was evolving with it. Those moments when I lay upon the floor were no longer just another step in a daily routine. These moments became opportunities for observation, reflection, understanding, and self-overcoming. I required a strong, clever, and capable body to achieve what I desired, yet my bodily practice was more than just a site for a Cartesian bodily maintenance of strengthening and conditioning, it was becoming a way of being, a way of existing within society. My bodily practice was being lived, day-by-day, ever changing and moving through time/space and experiences. This practice became its own process of becoming, and from it I garnered knowledge of approaches and strategies to develop outcomes that in the beginning were unknown.

I begin with an initial hypothesis: we don’t know what our bodies are capable of. This is not simply true because of the limitations of our current forms of knowledge, the lack of refinement in our instruments of knowledge, but more profoundly because the body has and is a history and under the procedures of testing, the body itself extends its limits,

²² Rose Pfeffer, *Nietzsche: Disciple of Dionysus* (Cranbury: Associated University Press, 1972), 104.

transforms its capacities, and enters a continuous process of becoming, becoming something other than itself.²³

A continuous process of becoming is never static, always falling into the present, the present becoming the past. This temporality is rapidly fluid and these processes of becoming are multiple, specific to the individual. As a dancer and dance scholar, I have often heard about and studied the so-called ephemerality of dance. This myth is consistently captured and reiterated within popular considerations of dance and in dance scholarship. I suggest that dance is no more ephemeral than the lives of the dancers who dance. The ephemerality of dance requires the dance itself, the performed work of art, the objectified cultural capital, to take sole precedence as the subject of consideration without any acknowledgement of the dancers creating and performing the work. The embodied cultural capital, the lives, talents and practices of the individuals creating the work of art remain in a position of subservience to the objectified and institutionalized forms of cultural capital. The dance, the performance, the work of art, passes into time with the completion of its performance, an ephemeral act, yet what of those who perform the act? As a dancer and choreographer forging *my* way, the lived history of me/my body, and my way of being within me/my body, forms a foundation to challenge the so called ephemerality of dance by simply changing the focus from the dance performance, a thing/object, towards an action; the doing, the action of dancing itself. This act is lived by an individual, an individual residing and making choices within a broader society. Given the above considerations, I raise the key question: Can our appreciation of sustainability broaden to incorporate the sustainability of the lives of the individuals who choose to dance?

²³ Grosz, "Naked," 191-92.

In my descriptions of myself lying on the floor, one can observe how quickly my body becomes the object of my directed consciousness: the awareness of pain in distinct areas, physical sensations in differing limbs, the sun on my skin, and so on. These moments represent the body as object, an object of my attention. In theoretical opposition to the body as object, is the subjective body, the body that I live through. During these lived moments on the floor these bodies are merged, both simultaneously present in any temporal moment. Physical pain in one area triggering an immediate emotional response, resulting in any number of thought processes may occur simultaneously. In lived moments, experience itself is not always sequential but simultaneous, multiple experiences and phenomena being perceived at the same time. These simultaneous experiences can be considered in direct contrast to written language. Writing forces a sequencing of one action to another, one word followed by another, and one idea leading to another. This sequencing of the written word often fails to capture the simultaneous nature of lived experience, contributing to the difficulty of translating experiences of movement into language.²⁴ In this sense written language can be considered similar to time's arrow, a linear progression of one moment into the next.²⁵ To better appreciate temporality as it is lived and experienced through the perceiving body is to reconsider how time informs an individual's subjective relationship to his/her own process of becoming. I/my body and my relationship to time and space inform this contemplation of temporality as it can be lived.

²⁴ Helen Thomas states, "The difficulty of translating dance practices in verbal language is a perennial one for dance scholarship and cultural criticism." Helen Thomas, *The Body, Dance, and Cultural Theory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 87.

²⁵ In an effort to convey to the reader through the mediation of the written word, experiences lived in a pugilistic world, Loïc Wacquant claims, "The mere passage to a scriptural medium of communication irrevocably transforms the experience to be conveyed." Loïc Wacquant, *Body and Soul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 70.

Space and Time

I will turn to space and step into time.

Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space. It applies itself to space like a hand to an instrument, and when we wish to move about we do not move the body as we move an object. We transport it without instruments...since it is ours and because, through it, we have access to space.²⁶

Access to space is through the lived body, as is our access to time. Grosz explains that “We do not grasp space directly or through our senses but through our bodily situation.”²⁷ If this is potentially how we grasp space, then how do we grasp time? Is my bodily situation a determinant of how I grasp time?

A Moment

2004 Canadian Figure Skating Championships

Each hair on my arm is a lightning rod; they stand to attention, active.

The space is brighter than usual. It registers like moving into the sun after a prolonged time spent in dim light. My eyes are situated at least two inches deeper into my skull; visual depth, what little there is, is perceived outwards from somewhere internal.

I move through a liquid space of light. My body and gravity take on new dimensions. I am lighter. I am porous.

The energy my body expends in the movement bleeds into the light that bathes us, surrounds us. I am buoyant, porous, and the energy flows. This is a different side of time, a lifetime in one moment. The ticking of a clock has no dominion here.

²⁶ Elizabeth Grosz directly quoting Merleau-Ponty. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 90.

²⁷ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 90.

I move through the space, space now composed of a different matter, a space where everything is energy but in different variations.

A private tragedy, only weeks old, weighs heavily upon me. Dreams slip away. Complete emotional exhaustion matched with peak physicality. These elements come together and combine to form a remarkable moment.

I do not close my eyes to remember this moment; that is unnecessary. I live it. I still burn from it. Charged. I am that moment as much now as I was then; smooth time stretching uncannily though space for that moment to exist, so many years later.

Agency is an Action

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari discuss space in the text *The Smooth and the Striated* from *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1988). According to their Maritime Model²⁸ the subcategories of smooth and striated space are defined as follows:

Smooth space is directional rather than dimensional or metric. Smooth space is filled by events or haecceities, far more than by formed or perceived things. It is haptic rather than optical perception. A Body Without Organs instead of an organism and organization. Perception in it is based on symptoms and evaluations rather than measure and properties. That is why smooth space is occupied by intensities, wind and noise, forces, and sonorous and tactile qualities, as in the desert, steppe, or ice. The creaking of ice and the song of the sands. Striated space, on the contrary, is canopied by the sky as measure and by the measurable visual qualities deriving from it.²⁹

To further elaborate, striated space is space that can be considered as broken down into points.

One travels from one point to another. Trajectory through striated space is subordinate to these points, moving from one point to the next. Smooth space is the opposite because the

²⁸ The Maritime Model is one of the many models the authors use to categorize the two spaces. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980; repr., London: The Athlone Press, 1988), 478.

²⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 479.

points are subordinate to the trajectory. The trajectory through smooth space is directional, a journey and a vector through the space. Movement in striated space is of dimensional or metric determination. Changes in direction that occur in smooth space may be due to the nature of the journey itself.³⁰

Deleuze and Guattari use the city as an example of striated space, as a city is a conglomerate of metrically divisible points. Metric feet form blocks of cement becoming a city block, a sub-division, and an increasing increment of metric space. Space in the city can be broken down into divisible units such as apartments, homes, city streets, and neighborhoods. Smooth and striated spaces are not rigid; they do not define how one experiences them. Deleuze and Guattari explain that “it is possible to live striated on the deserts, steppes, or seas; it is possible to live smooth even in the cities, to be an urban nomad.”³¹

As I move upon *my* path, I recognize so easily Deleuze and Guattari’s directional journey through smooth space. The creaking of the ice, the wind on my face speaks directly to my days spent training on the ice, living through the movement of my skating. Years of moments lived on the ice embodying various intensities, physical and emotional, exist in my memory of these sensations; bodily sensations from my past that with no effort return into my present. My moments on a darkened proscenium stage, in an environment where optical perception is compromised, are moments engulfed with intensities, haptic perceptions of me/my body living through movement and experience. Intensities, indeed: moments of sensations, sounds, textures and feelings combine in lived experience, occurring simultaneously, overlapping, jockeying for my attention. I am the nomad, moving through

³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 478.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 482.

space. But what about when I am perfectly still, when I lie on the floor? On the floor, lying still on my back, there is minimal movement through space. Yet in these moments exist those intensities, those haptic moments of sensing and sensation. Is it my relation to space or my relation to time that is smooth or striated? How is my bodily situation implicated in how I grasp time?

If I apply Deleuze and Guattari's idea of smooth and striated space directly to time, striated time becomes easily evident. Striated time, like striated space, would share the commonality of division, breaking time down into a division of points. Striated time becomes seconds, minutes, hours and then days. Some wear their time pieces on their bodies, seconds ticking away, breaking down the day into increments: morning, breakfast, lunch, afternoon, evening, dinner, time for leisure, rest, and repeat. Repeat and repeat. Days become weeks, weeks become seasons, followed by years. Years lend easily to categories such as childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, retirement, and old age. Striated time appears broken down into divisible units through which one can move in prescribed sequences. From birth to death is the sum of these increments. Striated time is clear. Relations of power maximize the use of striated time. Institutions rely upon striated time, working toward an increasing efficiency and regulation of bodies. But what of smooth time, time directional in nature, a trajectory, a journey forward?

Deleuze and Guattari comment that, "it is possible to live striated on the deserts, steppes, or seas; it is possible to live smooth even in the cities, to be an urban nomad."³² I propose that it is the individual and their ability to make subjective choice aided by skills developed through a bodily practice that may influence one's relation to time. Choices made,

³² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 482.

and the value and beliefs associated with them, influence and change an individual's journey through time. As previously quoted, "changes in direction that occur in smooth space may be due to the nature of the journey itself."³³ The nature of *my* journey is a forging of my way, influenced by values, skills, and belief in a bodily practice, and according to Deleuze and Guattari, this nature potentially impacts the changes of direction within a journey. In recounting those moments lying on the floor, or that unique moment during a performance, time was experienced differently than in other moments. Time experienced in performance, on stage, lying on the floor, is time *lived* differently. Energies, sensations, sensorial memory and emotion are moved through and lived. I/my body becomes an active agent in the very process of how I choose to perceive. The ticking clock, those divisible units of time, gives way to an individual becoming through sensing and sensations. Yet, at any moment these sensations are accompanied by any number of thoughts and/or emotions often experienced simultaneously. I choose my direction through these intensities; *I* direct my consciousness toward that which I desire. In these moments I am choosing a smooth journey through time, but more importantly I choose my own navigation through these various intensities and perceptions, and in these choices, I argue, reside individual agency. Agency is an action, a way of being in time and space.

The choice of how to be in time is determined by how I choose to be within my body and in the action of active perception creating a distinct means of becoming. *Becoming* is an action, *being* is an action, *choosing* is an action, *skating* is an action, *dancing* is an action, and I propose *agency* is an action. These verbs suggest a fluid temporality, never fixed, and their meaning may be found in the actions themselves, as an individual experiences them. *How* an

³³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 478.

individual experiences these actions engages a past, the history of the individual; the past via memory is present in the very method of subjective meaning making. The history of I/my body, those hours in rehearsal, the force of those dance movements, every performance, all those lived intensities, reside within an embodied memory that informs my very act of subjective meaning making. As long as I continue to exist, continue to be, so too, in a way, do those performances. I was part of the creation of the work of art, and that experience of creating the work of art may continue to inform my means of subjective meaning making.

Embodied cultural capital is indeed embodied. The creative abilities, talents, styles, values, and dispositions of individuals creating the work of art are embodied. Talent is nurtured, and specific skills acquired over a period of time can complement that nurturing. Relating directly to those moments lying on the floor: it is a skill to be able to direct attention from pressing thoughts and emotions toward the sensing/sensational body. It is a skill to be able to recognize and remove stress, tension and pain in the body through breath and release. It is a skill to harness embodied memory and use it to inform a body's current bodily situation. As a dancer and a performer I acquired these skills. These skills directly influence *how* I experience and carry over into other aspects of my life. Skills acquired through a practice influence the multiple ways I choose to perceive lived experiences.

Through my long engagement with my bodily practice, a bodily history is formed, a history that is present and apprising me/my lived body of its current bodily situation and my way of being in the world. Agency might be considered as how one creates one's own way of being in relation to the world, how one creates one's own path. More importantly I propose that agency lies in the very method one chooses of being in relation to time and space, *my*

path inclusive of how I choose to navigate sensing/sensations and the multiple, simultaneous intensities experienced in the temporal act of perceiving.

To repeat Merleau-Ponty, “the body is not something that simply is in space and time; it inhabits space and time in a truly physical sense and the individual perceives it by constructing a bodily schema out of memories and perceptions.”³⁴ Dynamic intensities, lived in experience, actively perceived by an individual choosing a particular engagement with smooth time inform this process, a process that can illustrate how I perceive, what I *choose* to perceive, and also my subjective reasoning. The bodily situation is as foundational to our grasp of time as it is to space. Arguably, it is our bodily situation and the choices made while actively sensing and perceiving that are foundational to our individual agency and our very being in relation to the world.

A wide range of prominent philosophers, such as G.W.H. Hegel, Karl Marx, Soren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Merleau-Ponty, focus on aspects of rationality that reveal it to be less than fully independent of context and historical development. They argue that reasoning is itself a temporal process that is embodied in subjective and social struggles.”³⁵

I agree with the above argument, that “reasoning is itself a temporal process that is embodied in subjective and social struggles.”³⁶ I propose that this embodiment itself is directly related to how an individual/body relates to his/her bodily situation. Agency is located in the choice of how the individual chooses to actively perceive, an action informed by ways of being within their body/selves, and their relation to time and space. A determinant of the ways in which I could experience lived moments, through a sensing body in space and

³⁴ Macey, *Dictionary of Critical Theory*, 248.

³⁵ Robin May Schott, *Discovering Feminist Philosophy* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 10.

³⁶ Schott, *Discovering Feminist Philosophy*, 10.

time, were the skills acquired through a bodily practice.³⁷ My bodily practice sustains my ability to create. My bodily practice remains a site for the potential of self-overcoming. A bodily practice where I ask, “do I desire this, again and again”? A practice composed of doings, of actions, of testing and of training; a form of *askēsis*; testing what I value and the choices I make. A bodily practice immersed within the social realm, within struggles and challenges.³⁸ Foucault, acting as another educator along my path, facilitated my ability to reconsider how this practice resides within the social sphere.

In the chapter that follows, the voices of individuals who participated in the creation and performance of *Resistance* are heard. Each of these individuals has his/her own unique bodily practice, each individual creating their own distinct relationship with his/her lived body and relation to time and space. Diversity in the choices made by these individuals and their life experiences creates a variety of bodily practices. Despite differences in these practices there are also similarities, similarities in the values that these individuals associate with their respective practices.

To Find Comfort

The day I sat down at my computer to begin writing this chapter I learned of the death of a dear friend. He was a friend I met through the figure skating world, a French official from Paris who was in many ways a mentor for me. The news came suddenly and blindsided me. Just weeks earlier I had spent time with him in Dresden, Germany. I remember clearly our last dinner together and our conversation, a conversation that was in no way finished.

³⁷ I will further develop and articulate these skills when I discuss in detail lived experiences in the studio and on the performance stage.

³⁸ My bodily practice as defined here can be considered synonymous with the concept of embodied cultural capital.

I was unnerved, completely rattled, and sad. I was remembering him, his face, the places we had been and all the experiences we had shared. During this act of remembrance I felt like I was grasping to keep him, to somehow save him. I was somehow trying to gather up all of the feelings I had for my friend, keep them safe and remember him.

After haplessly going through the motions of what I had intended to achieve that day, I stopped trying to work. I changed into my dance clothes. I lit a candle and I chose to lie on the floor. A practice does not always relate to acquiring skills, a practice can be used to grieve, to mourn, and to heal.

I found comfort.

In time I came to an understanding. I do not have to remember these feelings for my friend as I continue to live them still. These feeling will evolve, change, yet they will still be there; embodied feelings, feelings associated to value, that continue to inform me of who I am.

Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Volume I: An Introduction*, p.86



Image 1

Chapter 2

As Process - *In Studio*

Curiosity and a steadfast discomfort stirred a simple idea; put theory into motion, choreograph Foucault. The bodies presented in the photo above are static, fixed in space and in time. These bodies cannot move from this position; they stand, heads bowed and gazes lowered. These bodies are observed, seen, they are representations, symbols, and a remnant

of a moment. Our lived bodies are also observed, they are representations, symbols and remnants of our histories. The methodology and purpose for *Resistance* was to put a theory into motion, observe a process in movement, a process that unlike a photograph resists being still.

In a 1972 conversation with Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze remarked that a “theory is exactly like a box of tools...It must be useful. It must function. And not for itself.”¹ The theory that galvanized the creation of *Resistance* was Foucault’s concept of the docile body. I used this theory as a means: a means to structure, to choreograph, to challenge and to think anew. As a choreographer-in-residence, working in a dance studio/laboratory, I was provided the opportunity to work with the York Dance Ensemble. The York Dance Ensemble (YDE) is the resident company of the York University Department of Dance and offers its undergraduate student members a pre-professional experience of creation, performance, and production in a company setting. The artistic director of the Ensemble during this research project was Professor Holly Small. I proposed my concept to her, she accepted and I ran with it.

Like Nietzsche, Foucault emphasized the importance of critique, which he understood both in terms of an investigation into what we are (how we think, what we value, how we understand ourselves, how we treat others) and as a concern with thinking what else we might be (how we could be different from ourselves).²

The creation and performance of *Resistance* was an investigation wherein a simple question was posed: given that I am a docile body, what else could I be?

¹ Alan D Schrift, “Putting Nietzsche to Work: The Case of Gilles Deleuze,” in *Nietzsche: A Critical Reader*, ed. Peter R. Sedgwick (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 250.

² Tony Schirato, Geoff Danaher, and Jen Webb, *Understanding Foucault: A Critical Introduction*. (London: Sage Publications, 2012), xii.

I began choreographing *Resistance* with the York Dance Ensemble on January 13, 2012. I had fourteen rehearsals in which to complete the work, with the public performances of *Resistance* taking place on March 22, 23, and 24 at the Sandra Faire and Ivan Fecan Theatre at York University. *Resistance* would be performed as part of the YDE's end of year show titled, *Tangled Dances*.³ I received ethics approval to conduct interviews with dancers participating in the choreographic process and performance of this dance work. One-on-one interviews were conducted throughout the creative process of *Resistance*. Following each public performance of *Resistance*, on-camera interviews were also conducted in order to document the perspective of the dancers who contributed toward the creation and performance of this contemporary dance work. Follow-up interviews were conducted one year after the public performances. Of the sixteen performers cast in the piece, twelve volunteered for the interview process and ethnographic component of this work. For the purpose of clarity, I chose to focus on five dancers and myself. Together, we would become the basis for this inquiry into the docile body.

In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault utilized the soldier as his ideal figure to elaborate upon the body as object as a target for power, a body that is manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skillful, and increases its forces.⁴ Foucault states that “a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved.”⁵ The methods in which the body becomes a site for subjection Foucault refers to as “disciplines” and these “disciplines” require a modality.

³ See Appendix A for the poster for *Tangled Dances*.

⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 136.

⁵ Ibid., 136.

There is the modality: it implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement. Methods, which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility, might be called ‘disciplines’.⁶

Thus, discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, “docile” bodies. Foucault distinguished between these particular “disciplines” and those of a monastic type.

They were different from asceticism and from ‘disciplines’ of a monastic type, whose function was to obtain renunciations rather than increases of utility and which, although they involved obedience to others, had as their principal aim an increase of the mastery of each individual over his own body.⁷

For my research project, *Resistance*, I replaced the soldier with the dancer, the dancer/body that is “shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skillful and increases its forces.”

Through this lens, another question was raised: what is the principal aim of the dancer? Is the principal aim of the dancer to increase “the mastery of each individual over his/her own body?”

In my own history as an athlete and a dancer, I experienced first hand the impact of discipline upon the body. I utilized the codification that partitions time, space, and movement to achieve particular goals. My history includes the creation and performance of a dance titled *Through*, a work in which I attempted to mitigate the two worlds I occupied, that of figure skating and contemporary dance, into one moving body. *Through* was a contemporary dance piece that I performed on one rollerblade and one bare foot. I call it a rollerblade as this is the term that most closely describes the actual object. The boot is an old figure skating boot for the right foot that I competed in for years. The boot is fitted with what is called a Pick-frame

⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 137.

⁷ Ibid.

which is a rubber stopper positioned at the front of the line of wheels that functions like the picks on a figure skate blade.

After a lifetime of figure skating my physiology had melded itself around this particular way of moving. My lower back was tight, my hips even tighter, and my connective tissue kept me bound. I often heard from my dance teachers that my body was not the ideal dance body. That said, my body did allow for the creation of a dance piece where I worked on one rollerblade and one bare foot, with the alignment of my hips offset by approximately three inches. It was a precarious place to move from. I had to break every thirty to forty minutes in rehearsal to avoid muscle cramping and/or muscle strain that would ache and persist for many days after. An earlier performance of an excerpt of this work resulted in a right-on-left rotation of my second lumbar vertebrae. Having lived through that injury once, I considerably strengthened my abdominal core in order to perform this dance work and avoid repeating this injury.

Perched on the rollerblade, I had to be in tune to the inner workings of my body. If I removed pressure from the blade to the ground, I would fall to the slippery stage floor. The wheels only turned front-to-back, back-to-front, and any movement sideways would throw me to the ground. The negotiation of weight bearing from the bare foot to the rollerblade had to be precise and aligned with the speed with which my body moved through space; if not I would tumble to the floor. With practice there was considerable less falling. I had to be mindful; I had to be in the moment. During one of the public performances of *Through* I did take a terrible fall. The feedback from certain audience members after that performance was that they loved my fall; the fall made them feel, the fall shocked them and made the entire work more exciting and ‘real’.

I am no longer willing to hurt myself on stage in order to make an audience feel something. I am no longer willing to put the health of me/my body at risk in order to create an experience for an audience. Discipline transformed and improved my body; it created a more skillful body capable of actions that arguably could never have been achieved without disciplinary techniques. *Resistance* would be a means for me to better understand the methods in which discipline operates, and re-consider my own docile body and the bodies of the dancers participating in the creation and performance of a dance work.



Image 2

Docile Bodies
 Kate, Nico, Jillian, Anastasia and Jess

Kate

I vividly remember the first time my great aunt took me to the ballet. It was a tradition in my family that once you reached the age of five, my great aunt and my granny would take us downtown Toronto to watch the *Nutcracker*. My parents did not put me in dance until we got the *Riverdance* VHS, the Michael Flatley version. I was

hopping around our cottage, watching that VHS everyday and driving my parents nuts. My aunt finally said 'you should put her into a dance class.' So, they put me in a ballet/jazz class at the community center, I was seven years old. Friends who my parents had gone to school with owned a dance studio. After really liking the community center dance class my parents enrolled me in a ballet class at their friend's studio; I was eight years old.

I mainly did ballet and tap until I was twelve. Then I saw my studio's competitive team and was like 'I want to do that!' Which was kind of funny because I was a really shy kid. I was the kid who would stand in the corner and cry when I couldn't do stuff. If you asked me to talk to you, I wouldn't.

Starting about grade nine, dance was something that I really had to fight for. In grade nine I always joked around that dance is what I wanted to do but I never said I was serious about it because I did not think my parents would be cool with it. I went to a really small Christian school and there were some people who I went to school with who thought that dancing was not cool. There were only twenty of us by the time we graduated high school and they were like my best friends, there was a lot of pressure for me to appear like I was less into dancing than I actually was. My parents were divorced and for a time neither of them had a job, and I realized that dance was something I really wanted because I understood that it was now something I might not be able to have.

My dance studio owner's daughter had gone to Ryerson University, so that is where I wanted to go; you always want to follow your role model. So I went to the studio owner and explained

to her that this future in dance is what I wanted. Even though I was this shy little kid who cried in the back, this teacher was supportive. I cleaned the studios to help pay for classes and she kept me on the competitive team. I auditioned for York and my parents did not think I would get in so they let me audition. I got in to York two weeks after my audition and my parents were like 'oh crap, we are going to have to let her go and do this.'

Nico

When I was three years old I started dancing Greek folkloric dance from the island of Crete. My dad was the teacher at the Greek Community Association of Toronto. When my elder brother was born my father put him into these Greek folkloric dance classes as soon as possible, same as for me, and my sister. I am the middle child of three. After watching a few episodes of *Dancing with the Stars* and *So You Think You Can Dance* I wondered if I could do that. I was fourteen when I knew I could dance Greek folk dance really well and I wondered if I could pick up other choreography. There was a girl in my high school that I had a crush on and I asked her if we could join the ballroom dance club together. She told me that I should take dance so I took dance in high school from grades ten to twelve. This was mostly jazz, tap, with a little bit of modern, ballet, and musical theatre; kind of a skimming over of most of the Western dance genres.

Dancing in high school was a commitment as I was already into drama. Performance for me was always a big thing whether it was a small play, a little dance, or a big musical production. It was hard

at first because I was the only guy in the high school that wasn't just in the dance club. I was the only guy taking class in dance. I got teased and bullied for it, and this taught me to have a thick skin and not worry what others thought about me. Obviously the generic stereotypes of the male dancer were put on me, like I must be homosexual or whatever. It was hard for me to prove otherwise no matter what I did. This bullying was hard for me because it was something I was not used to when I was only participating in theatre.

Jillian

I started dancing to improve my figure skating. I am from a small town up in North Ontario called Alliston and I skated there. I was like a noodle on the ice so I took dance class to try and improve. I started dancing when I was ten. I started in jazz class. It came to the point where I wanted to compete in either skating or dance more seriously, and I chose dance. I quit skating at fourteen and began to dance in a small studio back home.

Right from the very start dance was so much fun for me. I just loved being around other people and I loved being able to step outside of my shy body and become someone new, someone that was more me. Dance allowed me to really show who I was because I was a very shy person and it allowed me to bring the more outgoing personality out of myself. I think that is why I chose dance over skating because dance was so much more social with other people and I didn't feel as restricted. I could just go into the studio and move the way that I wanted to and have a lot of fun doing it. In high school I

was dancing about ten hours per week, these hours occurred after school or on the weekend, those hours were like my time, time to focus on myself.

At the end of grade twelve I decided that I did want to pursue dance. I did not have the confidence yet to say that I wanted to be a performer although I secretly wanted to, so I was like 'ok, I will be a dance teacher.' Because dance did change me in such a great way I really did want to share that with other people, so I came to York.

Anastasia

I started dancing when I was seventeen. All of my siblings had been dancing since they were little. My family had been moving back and forth between Canada and the USA and by the time we settled in Canada more permanently we lived in a really isolated place, so I couldn't take dance lessons. Then a woman from Paris moved to where we were living and I started to take Ballet lessons with her. I would follow her all over the countryside wherever she went; this was in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. I became a scholarship student with her and took as many lessons as I could. These lessons were mixed with all levels of students: children, adults, mothers and their kids, it was very interesting. I would go back to New York often and take open classes and I would also enroll in workshops in the cities that I would visit.

I went to Dalhousie University for a year and during that time I tried to not dance for three days. That did not go very well. I enrolled in a pre-professional ballet program in Halifax with the

Halifax Ballet Theatre. I was with them for a year and a half. The training that I had before Halifax was more about the joy of movement and the technique was poor because of the mixed levels in the classes. For the program in Halifax I was one of four students and sometimes I would dance from 5pm until 2am, it was very traditional ballet training, repeating exercises again and again.

I enjoyed that I was improving technically as a dancer but my teacher, she broke my heart, she broke my soul, I did not know what I was doing anymore. When I left that teacher I just couldn't continue, I was emotionally exhausted. It took me a couple of months to recover and realize why I liked dancing. When I first started dancing I *loved* it. I was seventeen years old and literally crying when I couldn't go to dance class. That teacher tore that out of me. If I didn't have someone shouting at me I did not know what I was doing, and I felt like if I didn't have her I would not be able to dance. She made me feel that way. It was a struggle to rebound from that.

I was at Dalhousie doing academics in the day and dancing in the evenings and my parents asked, 'what are you doing? You should go to a University program where you could do both of those things and focus.' I did not go into a dance program right away because I felt that I did not have enough training, but I did, I just felt that I didn't have the support I could have had.

Jess

I started out in figure skating when I was very little. I was super shy. All of my skating ice dance tests I failed because I

skated with my head down and I did not look up even once. I just kept failing everything. In skating competitions I would also keep my head down. People told me that I needed to learn how to perform and they suggested that I take dance class. I was put into ballet class at seven years old and I was like, 'I kind of like this' so I started taking Jazz, Tap and Acrobatic dance classes at a competitive dance studio. My main focus at that time was on Acro then on Ballet. Eventually I started to take Contemporary Dance classes as well, in which I also competed. I danced all through high school.

During high school I was dancing from 3:30pm – 9pm. Monday through Friday and on Saturdays from 9am – 3pm. It was very physical training, there was technique but as I was competitive there was also a lot of choreography to learn. You had to be on your game all the time, and go for it, regardless if you were hurting, tired, or sore. In the competitive stream you always felt that competition, even between your friends. You would look at other people, and try to be better than that person.

I have always been a bit of an intellectual so I applied to three Universities, all for Kinesiology, and my fourth choice was dance at York. Initially I thought I might want to be a physiotherapist. I studied Exercise Science in grade twelve and that really made me think if that was something I could study for the next four years. One of the girls from my studio was going to go to York for dance and she asked me if I would like to be her roommate. I was like 'Why not?' I liked dance and I was just so unsure if I could give it up in order to study something like physiotherapy. I

got a roommate, I was accepted into York dance, and I decided to go to York and this was one of the best choices I ever made.

Like the other dancers participating in the creation and performance of *Resistance*, Kate, Nico, Jillian, Anastasia, Jess and myself all entered into that project with our own unique and individual history. These individual histories, embodied in memory, are part of the histories Grosz refers to when she states, “Every body is marked by the history and specificity of its existence.”⁸ Our bodies were already marked from our earliest experiences. These experiences shaped us and molded us in ways that so often go unnoticed. The influence of family, of educational institutions, of community, and of people sculpted and confined us with an invisible wielding of relations of power, acting upon us often without our knowledge or consent. In *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, Foucault claims that, “power is tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself.”⁹ With *Resistance*, my aim was to address what often times remains invisible in the face of the visible. This revealing of the invisible occurred in three stages: in the studio, in performance, and in context.

In the Studio

To choreograph Foucault, the docile body as theory became the docile body as choreographic process and structure. According to Foucault, the disciplines that impact the docile body proceed from the distribution of individuals in space, and to achieve this end it employs several techniques: the art of distribution, the control of activity, the organization of

⁸ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 142.

⁹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1976; repr., New York: Vintage, 1990), 86.

geneses, and the composition of forces. These techniques set parameters for this research project and how I would begin to think, question, and consider my relation to the work itself and to the dancers who were part of this work. What follows are detailed descriptions of Foucault's disciplinary techniques, provided to clarify how these theoretical techniques became functional in my creative process and how they served as a means for critique, namely as "an investigation into what we are (how we think, what we value, how we understand ourselves, how we treat others) and as a concern with thinking what else we might be (how we could be different from ourselves)."¹⁰

The Art of Distributions

The "Art of Distributions" relates the individual to space. Foucault states, "Discipline sometimes requires enclosure, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself."¹¹ For *Resistance*, the enclosed spaces under consideration were: the dance studio (*Resistance In Studio*), the theatre (*Resistance In Performance*), and the classroom (*Resistance In Context*).

According to Foucault, the aim of this enclosed space was:

...to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communication, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using. Discipline organizes an analytical space.¹²

From this description of enclosed space, one can observe so clearly how educational spaces serve as examples of enclosed space. The classroom, the dance studio, these unique spaces

¹⁰ Schirato, *Understanding Foucault: A Critical Introduction*, xii.

¹¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 141.

¹² *Ibid.*, 143.

are sites where discipline promotes particular behaviors from each individual. These spaces are “architectural, functional, and hierarchical.”¹³

As an open space conducive to bodies moving, the architecture of the dance studio is quite simple. Four walls (one often fitted with mirrors), a ceiling, and a dance floor designed specifically for the moving body constitutes the typical architectural space of the dance studio. A sound system, perhaps a piano, and other instruments occupy various corners of the room, and on the edges of the studio space belong the dancer’s personal items; objects remain in the periphery to keep the space as open as possible.

The functions of the studio space are multiple: to train, to educate, to create, to rehearse, to discover, and to observe are but a few.¹⁴ Understanding *how* these functions occur begins to unmask the workings of power. In observing the behaviors of dancers within the studio one can come to appreciate that despite the disparate past histories the individual dancers might have had prior to occupying a shared dance space, relationships of power with the aid of discipline have already successfully shaped many of their behaviors and actions. Depending on the nature of the class, ballet versus modern, or a rehearsal versus a technique class, each specific class denotes a prescribed set of behaviors/actions. From participation in past similar classes, the appropriate behaviors are conditioned into the actions of the individuals. Of particular interest to me was the use of space within a space.

In observing a dance technique class, for example, the space occupied by each individual within the larger architectural space is clearly identifiable. In the period for warm up, each dancer occupies a limited space within the larger space, and these limited individual

¹³ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 148.

¹⁴ The studio space can also become a performance space. For the purpose of clarity, however, I will limit this discussion to the chapter “*Resistance In performance.*”

spaces remain for each exercise and/or drill. The dancers move through the space each within their own sphere, whether travelling across the floor or when positioned in any specific spot. For safety, and for observation, these spaces are rarely jeopardized. Depending on the purpose/intent of the exercises and the number of dancers participating, these individual spaces become smaller or larger but they are rarely questioned or challenged. The dancer has his/her own predetermined amount of space to move within the context of the technique class similar to the space the teacher/choreographer has to instruct and to observe. Foucault refers to this individual space as a “cell.”¹⁵

For *Resistance*, I altered this individual space, the cell, by making it as small as possible for each dancer. The structure of my choreography significantly reduced the individual space of each dancer. Positioned within a tight spatial configuration, the dancers would come to learn, master, and perform a clearly defined movement structure. The tight spatial configuration for the ensemble was set at the beginning of the very first rehearsal. Within these confined cells each dancer had not only to learn and perform the choreography but also to experience the choreographic process. I considered each individual dancer as a singular unit forming the ensemble, the ensemble itself forming a ‘machine.’ The ensemble’s movement patterns in space were developed similar to military exercises. Precision, unison, and a meticulous execution of these movement patterns were my communicated aim and objective. As choreographer I acknowledged the control I had over the dimensions of the space in which the dancers could move within the larger space. The small individual space each dancer occupied within a very tight group formation was a decisive creative choice that

¹⁵ Partnering (when dancers move together): contact improvisation, ballroom, and other forms of dance that require the dancers to share a space/cell for movement, are not considered in this particular investigation.

situated each dancer in a similar, unified relation to space. This similarity was of benefit for me as an observer and researcher.

For Foucault, “the educational space functions like a learning machine, but also a machine for supervising, hierarchizing, and rewarding.”¹⁶ In the role of researcher/choreographer, I made the creative choice to position myself also in the role of performer. The choice to perform in the work itself created a unique position in which to observe the other dancers. The enclosed space serves as a site for observing the actions of particular bodies. For Foucault, actions within an enclosed space allowed: “each variable of this force – strength, promptness, skill, constancy – could be observed, and therefore characterized, assessed, computed and related to the individual who was its particular agent.”¹⁷ My capacity for observation was transformed by my decision to place myself in the dance work. Within the choreographic structure for *Resistance*, I situated myself in a position external to the space occupied by the ensemble/group; an external position that I felt was the most sound for observation. While the ensemble, as a tightly knit group, could move through the space, I would remain stationary and in the exact same position in space for the duration of the dance work; I placed myself in one spot, one “cell.” My choices as an individual were how to be within that space, never to move from that space but to explore that space from within.¹⁸ The photo below captures the tightly knit positioning of the ensemble and my external position conducive for supervision and observation.

¹⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 147.

¹⁷ Ibid., 145.

¹⁸ The space I occupied in the performance of *Resistance* in many ways illustrates similar experiences I had regarding the position I occupied as a researcher, to explore the position of researcher from within.



Image 3

The hierarchical nature of the educational space, the classroom, the studio, is aided by the inclusion of rank.

‘Rank’ begins to define the great form of distribution of individuals in the educational order [...] rank attributed to each pupil at the end of each task and each examination; the rank he obtains from week to week, month to month, year to year [...] a succession of subjects taught and questions treated, according to an order of increasing difficulty [...] And, in this ensemble of compulsory alignments, each pupil, according to his age, his performance, his behaviors, occupies sometimes one rank, sometimes another...¹⁹

For *Resistance* I made the choice to contribute as little as possible to any real or perceived rank amongst the dancers. Instead, my attention would turn toward observing and

¹⁹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 146-147.

understanding the dancer's perception of such a rank and the effects it had upon them. My effort to contribute as little as possible to any hierarchy or rank can be observed in the movement/choreography I set in *Resistance*. With the exception of the ending of the work, the dancers performed the same steps, at the same time, in unison. There were no solos, duets, or stand-outs designed to highlight one dancer over another. The uniformity of the movement is matched with uniformity of the dancers' costumes. Combined with the conformity in which I taught the movement was my attempt to create equality amongst the dancers of the ensemble relating to rank.

The "Art of Distributions" related to three clear creative choices that served in structuring my choreography and as entry points in witnessing how techniques of discipline act upon a docile body. The choices made were: first, limiting the space of the individual "cell" each dancer occupied by positioning the ensemble as close together as possible in space; second, placing myself as researcher into the creative work; and third, discerning the influence of "rank" upon the dancers from this position of participant-observation.²⁰

The Control of Activity

While the "Art of Distribution" relates the individual to space, the "Control of Activity" introduces temporality into the techniques discipline employs upon the docile body by the coding of activities. Foucault distinguishes five components enabling this coding of activity: the *time-table* (emphasis Foucault), the temporal elaboration of the act, the correlation of the body and the gesture, the body-object articulation, and exhaustive use.

²⁰ These choices will serve to ground a broader consideration of Foucault's theory of *panopticism* provided later in the dissertation.

The timetable is used to “establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, regulate the cycles of repetition.”²¹ Any individual can likely appreciate the temporal rhythms in daily activities. From the moment of waking, until the moment one falls asleep, days often unfold through a temporal structure of rhythms and cycles. The dancers participating in *Resistance* were in their third or fourth year of their undergraduate studies. The time commitment for being enrolled as part of the York Dance Ensemble was Tuesday to Friday, 4:30pm – 8:30pm, with the addition of more rehearsals always a possibility. The majority of the York Ensemble dancers were also taking two dance technique classes, Ballet and Modern, for four days a week. These Ballet and Modern dance classes were an hour and a half in length. In addition to these dance classes were additional university classes taken throughout the day. For some dancers, work obligations, family commitments, and social life were all integrated into their particular schedules. The dancers’ timetables were exact and required diligent compliance. Failure to meet the obligations of these timetables would result in extreme consequences upon the individual. (Failure of classes, suspension from school, severance from work agreements, etc.) Discipline manifests in the precision and application of these timetables.

As a PhD student, I too had a very detailed and precise timetable composed of my own class schedule, work commitments, body/self cultivation and maintenance, and my own dance practice. The time allocated to me for the choreographic portion of my project *Resistance* was very precise; fourteen rehearsals in total, with the final four rehearsals already part of a pre-production period devoted to the end of year show, *Tangled Dances*. This specific allocation of time helped shaped my methodology for this research project and governed many of the creative choices I made. Knowing that ten rehearsals was not a great deal of time to create,

²¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 149.

rehearse and prepare a dance piece for performance motivated me to embrace and develop a strict timetable for my choreographic process, a timetable to which I remained firmly committed.

With my creative process needing to occur within ten rehearsals, I decided that I would create all of the movement alone in the studio on my own body, and then teach the dancers this movement collectively during our ten rehearsals together; these ten rehearsals following a clear timeline and method for teaching. Foucault's soldier became my dancers, the docile body and techniques of discipline a constant touchstone to my creative decisions. I aimed at minimizing, as much as possible, any collaboration during the choreographic process. The information I provided to the dancers during rehearsals was specific and deliberately focused on the movement; how I wanted these movements executed in time and space. I emphasized exactness and clarity of movement execution. The non-collaborative approach to creating and setting the choreography was a deliberate choice and a departure from how I normally choreograph. This departure served to clearly define the parameters of the work, and to better observe the techniques of discipline upon the docile body.

Foucault describes the "temporal elaboration of the act" as:

...a collective and obligatory rhythm imposed from the outside; it is a 'programme';... it assures the elaboration of the act itself...A sort of anatomo-chronological schema of behavior is defined. The act is broken down into its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed. Time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power.²²

The action itself becomes coded, the activity inscribed with a specific temporality. With specific positions of the body and limbs, and duration of time assigned to these actions, movement and temporality become unified. The military model, a prescribed succession of

²² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 152.

one moment into the next, denotes Foucault's "temporal elaboration of the act". However, does this particular technique of discipline require the adherence to what I would consider an individual's *striated* (emphasis mine) relationship to time? Does time penetrate the body? And does it do so with all the meticulous controls of power? Or does this require a singular, generalized relationship to how one experiences time? Answers to these specific questions surfaced from this research project.

The "temporal elaboration of the act" is succinctly captured in my use of specific counts of music, used to distinguish the duration of each gesture that composes the overall choreographic structure. *Resistance* was choreographed and performed to two pieces of music: *At My Mother's* and *Cranes* both by the Warsaw Village Band.²³ My decision to adhere to the rhythmic structure of these music selections in the creation of the movement phrases demonstrates the relation between time and action within my choreographic choices. In the choreography, the movement (action) was prescribed an exact amount of time (duration). The duration was measured by exact counts in the music. Consider again Foucault's "elaboration of the act",

The act is broken down into its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed. Time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power.²⁴

My process for teaching the movement deliberately followed this description. I worked toward precision, unison, and a meticulous execution of the set movement that was inclusive

²³ Warsaw Village Band is a band from Warsaw, Poland. *At My Mother's* and *Cranes* are from their album *People's Spring*, released in 2002 by the label Orange World.

²⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 152.

of duration, a specific use of time.²⁵ Within the choreographic structure it could be considered that I, as choreographer, attempted to control the use of space and the use of time.

The “*correlation of the body and the gesture*” (emphasis Foucault’s) requires a disciplined body as a prerequisite for an efficient gesture.²⁶ “Disciplinary control does not consist simply in teaching or imposing a series of particular gestures; it imposes the best relation between a gesture and overall position of the body, which is its condition of efficiency and speed.”²⁷ Dancers devote considerable time and effort to proper movement technique; their bodies are exceptional examples of a disciplined body. Indeed, the daily training regimen of the dancer works towards an efficiency, speed and strength of the body. However, this ‘efficiency’ is not the sole goal of the dancer’s gesture. The gesture of the dancer is so much more than just efficient movement; gestures are performances, interpretations, explorations, and means for communication. The “correlation of the body and gesture” suggests that the ‘best’ relation between a gesture and overall position of the body is the condition of efficiency and speed. *Resistance* will illustrate that although efficiency and speed are elements of this relation between body and gesture, there are many other elements potentially involved in this act of correlation executed by a disciplined body. Is efficiency as defined by Foucault able to absorb these other elements or will they disrupt the theoretical underpinning of the “correlation of the body and gesture?”

“*The body-object articulation* (emphasis Foucault’s) is when discipline defines each of the relations that the body must have with the object that it manipulates. Between them, it

²⁵ Appendix B contains my choreographic notes relating to the Ensemble. The diagrams depict the movement patterns through space with the accompanying duration/counts per movement.

²⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 152.

²⁷ Ibid.

outlines a meticulous meshing.”²⁸ Foucault uses two examples, the rifle and the pen, to demonstrate this relation between body and object. As an ice dancer this body-object articulation is epitomized in the relationship between myself, and the body of my ice dance partner.²⁹ In partnering work, contact improvisation, social dancing, etc. dancers are engaged with the bodies of other dancers. For *Resistance*, however, I chose not to have any partnered dancing within the choreography. The body-object articulation was therefore regulated to the dancer’s own dancing body. In the descriptions of myself lying on the floor (Chapter 1), I attempted to reveal how the subjective body, the body that I live through, can become an object of my attention, the body as object. By choosing my own path through the sensing/sensational body and directing my consciousness/intention I often simultaneously shift between my subjective body and my body as object. In the creative choice not to include any partnering within my choreographic structure, I intended to focus the “body-object articulation” on the articulation of one’s *own* body as the object for manipulation. What meticulous meshing would transpire with the dancing body as both the object of one’s attention (as it so often is in the action of movement) and the subjective body that an individual lives through?

“Exhaustive use” is the final element of the “Control of Activity.” Foucault describes “exhaustive use” as the following:

Discipline...arranges a positive economy; it poses the principle of a theoretically ever-growing use of time: exhaustion rather than use; it is a question of extracting, from time, ever more useful forces. This means that one must seek to intensify the use of the slightest moment, as if time, in its very fragmentation, were inexhaustible or as if, at least by an ever more detailed internal arrangement, one could tend towards an ideal

²⁸ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 153.

²⁹ Another body-object articulation is the relationship between my skates and myself.

point at which one maintained maximum speed and efficiency.³⁰

Similar to the “correlation of the body and the gesture,” “exhaustive use” regulates speed and efficiency as the preeminent features of an ‘ideal point.’ What I find particularly interesting about “exhaustive use” is precisely the use of time. *Use* (emphasis mine) is an action, and within an action I already suggest that the agency of the individual is potentially witnessed, the action itself providing the meaning of the act. For Foucault this ‘use of time’ suggests a specific relation of power, discipline acting upon the docile body. It is this relation of power that I hoped to disrupt with *Resistance*. Can the individuals themselves have power over time? And what are the necessary circumstances in order for this to occur? The language Foucault employs hints at the direction my creative choices took with *Resistance* while considering the “Art of Distribution” and the “Control of Activity.” As a researcher, I found myself far more at ease with the word ‘art’ versus that of ‘control.’ Control is a mechanism for power. To what extent can an activity be ‘controlled’ by discipline? *Resistance* poses the question: Where lies individual subjectivity and agency in this act of control?

The Organization of Geneses

While the “Control of Activity” coded activities with the use of time, the “Organization of Geneses” profits from the accumulation of time; an evolution over time. Foucault asks, “How can one capitalize the time of individuals, accumulate it in each of them, in their bodies, in their forces or in their abilities, in a way that is susceptible of use and control?” He subsequently answers:

³⁰ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 154.

Taking charge of the time of individual existences; for regulating the relations of time, bodies and forces; for assuring an accumulation of duration; and for turning to ever increased profit or use the movement of passing time.³¹

This adding up and capitalizing time Foucault proposes is achieved in four ways.

The first method for the “Organization of Geneses” is “to divide duration into successive or parallel segments, each of which must end at a specific time. For example, isolate the period of training and the period of practice.”³² With *Resistance* I realized this division of time into segments in two distinct procedures. The first was how I would structure my rehearsal time: warm-up, review, learn new material, rehearse, observe, choose to change, and video. Each of these segments of the rehearsal was allocated a certain amount of time. I elected to remain in strict adherence to the time I designated for each segment. The second method was the broader duration of the fourteen rehearsals in their totality and how they were arranged to get *Resistance* created, taught, and on to the performance stage. The number of rehearsals (ten) devoted to the creation and learning of the piece and the remaining rehearsals (four) used to prepare the piece from studio to stage demonstrates my own division of time as a considered progression.

The second way to regulate time is to break it down into separate threads and “to organize these threads according to an analytical plan – successions of elements as simple as possible, combining according to increasing complexity.”³³ As someone who has a long history of teaching movement and sequences of movements (choreography), these threads of time forming a broader plan are consistently employed in how I teach movement vocabulary and movement phrases. For example, a singular movement is taught; separately another

³¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 157.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 158.

movement is taught, and then these movements are joined together to create a movement phrase. Sequencing is also observed on the micro level of teaching a singular movement. For example, first teach the initial position of the body in space, then the biomechanical sequencing of actions that occur (flex ankles, bend knees, drop center, etc.) and then add the movement dynamics (quality of movement: fast, slow, heavy, light, etc.) to the movement. Depending on what the intention is for the movement, different sequencing of these threads occurs. Regardless of what form sequencing takes it becomes difficult to deny the sequencing itself, often in an order of increasing complexity.

With *Resistance*, the organizing of temporal threads according to an analytical plan is witnessed on many levels. Considered on a micro level were how I taught the movements, and then how these movements would come to form the choreographic structure and then the performance of the work. Considered on a macro level was how I organized the individual threads of time devoted to the creation and performance of *Resistance*, the subsequent interviews and transcription of data, the ‘write-up’ of the research project and the remaining degree requirements. All of these elements I combined according to an analytical plan.

These separate threads of time come to their conclusions with the act of an examination. “Finalize these temporal segments, decide on how long each will last and conclude it with an examination.”³⁴ I considered the use of the examination in three scenarios. One, in the context of the individual rehearsals for *Resistance*, the examination took the form of videotaping a run through (what had been choreographed up to that moment). The videotaping occurred at the end of the rehearsal, marking the end of the rehearsal itself and archiving the progress each individual had made up to that point. Two, in the broader context

³⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 158.

of this research project, the final performances of *Resistance* served as an examination of the creative/choreographic component of this work. Three, the words upon this page and the dissertation they are a part of formed the final examination of this project in its entirety.

The final way to accumulate time is to “draw up series of series; lay down for each individual, according to his level, his seniority, his rank, the exercises that are suited to him.”³⁵ The end of one series is the beginning of another series. The individual in this way becomes caught within this series. At the beginning of my first rehearsal for *Resistance* I made it clear to the dancers that not everyone would necessarily be performing the work. Each dancer had to demonstrate to me a competency and commitment to the choreographic process as well as the ability to perform the work to the standard that I required. A demonstration of these skills would guarantee them a spot in the final performances of *Resistance*. Each dancer easily achieved this, by the eighth rehearsal I let the dancers know that all had demonstrated the commitment and skill level I felt was necessary. All dancers performed in the final shows. The individual feedback, corrections, and comments I gave each dancer during the rehearsal process were considered in light of this particular method for regulating the time of individual existences; how my actions contributed to an individual’s perception of their own skills and “rank;” a rank that I made an effort not to contribute towards.

The “Organization of Geneses” creates a disciplinary time, and “it is this disciplinary time that was gradually imposed on pedagogical practice.”³⁶ This research project, part of the larger educational institution, simultaneously serves to demonstrate and illustrate the working relations of power contributing to the creation of “objectified”, “institutionalized” and

³⁵ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 158.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 159.

“embodied cultural capital.” Foucault asserts that “Power is articulated directly onto time; it assures its control and guarantees its use.”³⁷ *Resistance* reveals how power and temporality are implicated in the disciplinary techniques acting upon a docile body but more importantly it will discern the multiple ways in which an individual can *be/become* within a moment and within the evolution of time.

The Composition of Forces

The final technique that discipline employs upon the docile body is the “Composition of Forces.” The individual body becomes a functioning part of larger ‘machinery’, a cog or clog within a larger system.

Discipline must respond: to construct a machine whose effect will be maximized by the concerted articulation of the elementary parts of which it is composed. Discipline is no longer simply an art of distributing bodies, of extracting time from them and accumulating it, but of composing forces in order to obtain an efficient machine.³⁸

Foucault proceeds to dictate three ways in which discipline meets this demand of obtaining an efficient machine created by composing forces. First Foucault claims:

The individual body becomes an element that may be placed, moved, articulated on others. Its bravery or its strength are no longer the principal variables that define it; but the place it occupies, the interval it covers, the regularity, the good order according to which it operates its movements... The body is constituted as a part of multi-segmentary machine.³⁹

Secondly, Foucault states “the various chronological series that discipline must combine to form a composite time are also pieces of machinery.”⁴⁰ Finally:

³⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 160.

³⁸ Ibid., 164.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

This carefully measured combination of forces requires a precise system of command. All the activity of the disciplined individual must be punctuated and sustained by injunctions whose efficacy rests on brevity and clarity; the order does not need to be explained or formulated; it must trigger off the required behavior and that is enough.⁴¹

The “Composition of Forces” requires combinations; interplay between the different techniques of discipline constructing an efficient machine.

I considered the ensemble, a group of individuals dancing in unison within a confined space, as this efficient machine. I would attempt to construct this machine providing as little information as possible to my dancers. With brevity and very little explanation, I took advantage of my position of choreographer and the pre-existing authority that this role afforded me. I created a clear framework for employing the various techniques of discipline acting upon the docile body in order to try to achieve my goal, to choreograph Foucault.

In choreographing Foucault, the multiple machines and systems that my dancers and myself were a part of began to crystalize, in ways I had previously never considered. The university, the classroom, the artist within performance; our bodies are simultaneously a part of so many efficiently operating machines. These machines/systems employed precisely the same disciplinary techniques that this research project aimed to better understand. Discipline enables these machines, yet it also provides the individual with skills and abilities that can inform how they come to be within these systems, within the machine.

Resistance – In Studio Interviews

The following interviews aim to illustrate the dancers’ experience of my choreographic process. Two interviews were conducted during the creative portion of this work, one after the fifth rehearsal and another after the tenth. The first interview explored how

⁴¹ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 166.

the dancers related to my rehearsals and then how they were relating to the movement.⁴² The second interview was organized around the dancers preparation for *Tangled Dances*, how they related to my rehearsals, and how they experienced the choreographic process in general.⁴³ I have done minimal editing to these interviews in an attempt to have the dancers ‘speak for themselves’ of their experience in participating in this research project.

Kate – First Interview

I have been injured and I have never been injured before. In my three years here at York I have never had an injury that didn't go away in a couple of days. By the end of this September, when my schedule really started to get revved up, it just got harder and harder to take care of this injury. I was not short-listed during the April auditions for YDE (York Dance Ensemble) so I was not supposed to re-audition. I basically said that I really wanted to be in YDE, so just tell me what I need to do and I will do it. So I did it, and I got in. Now I feel I am living the scenario again that something that I wanted is being taken away from me; this time because I am injured.

Relating to Rehearsals

I look forward to them. I like the movement and everything behind it. I feel it is really about dancing with the group. A lot

⁴² The questions asked to the dancers: How would you describe your experience of participating in my rehearsals? What has been your experience in learning the movement for *Resistance*?

⁴³ The questions asked to the dancers: How are you approaching *Tangled Dances*? How would you describe your experience of participating in my rehearsals? What has been your experience of my choreographic process?

of the other numbers there is little to no unison, and it is really rare in the other numbers when we are all dancing as one. It's almost like this one feels the most like an ensemble because there is this kinesthetic energy. We are all standing really close and doing the same precise movement, and I feel like I can feel everybody more than in other rehearsals. I feel like this is the only dance that we are all on the same level, there are no solos or duets or trios, highlights featuring one over the other. Here we are all one, and we don't have to worry about being cast in certain sections and since everybody knows this about your piece no one is thinking that way and everyone is more mellow.

Relating to Movement

The way that you have structured the movement, breaking down the counts before hand; I know for some people that has been really, really hard. For me though, I have found it to be really useful. I read music and I can see things in my head so I find this process easier for me to remember what I am doing. I do not feel stressed out about remembering what I am supposed to be doing because of the structure you created. No counts, or work that is based on improvisation I have a harder time with, because your work is so structured I feel quite calm.

In terms of YDE and past pieces I have been a part of at York, your rehearsals are way different because most choreographers start with improvisation and then move on. They will give you choreography but then ask you to change it up. You are giving us exactly what you

want and then changing it based upon what you see. Other choreographers do not really give you the movement; they want you to give it to them. Your process is more similar to the musical theatre productions that I have done.

I think I like this process better but that might be because I am still at that place where I am not very confident in my own abilities. So when someone asks me to present the movement that I have, particularly when you share the room with other members of YDE, I feel like I do not have as much to offer. This process is better for me because I feel like I can put more of myself into this, which is kind of odd because I am not creating any of it, but I feel more comfortable in it.

You have provided us with limited information and I do not find that frustrating. I feel like I have been given just enough to satisfy what I need to know. I find it exciting that I don't know everything. I feel like I have enough information to produce what I think you want.

Kate – Production Week Interview

Q: How is your injury?

This year I am dancing a lot more than I ever have. I have been doing shows outside of York, so I have always had a lot of additional rehearsal time on top of my classes, but YDE is its own beast. For a while I was not coping very well. I had to learn how to be injured and keep dancing. Part of that was accepting that I was injured and being open to modifying things, this has been made

easier by some teachers who are accepting of me being injured. I have had teachers that have not been. On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the worst possible pain, I have got to at least eight a couple of times during rehearsals.

Q: How are you approaching *Tangled Dances*?

It is really hard when we get booked for extra rehearsals, when I am already considering every hour of my schedule. I have a pie chart in my head, what I can give for each rehearsal. When the show comes I refuse to be the person that is going to pull the show down. When I am on stage things feel more real for me, things click for me, also adrenalin kicks in and I do not feel my injury as much. However, adrenalin wears off and later I can be very unhappy.

The first time we interviewed I did not know that I was injured this badly. I just thought it was a tib/fib sprain and my IT band. Back then, ignorance was bliss, when I pictured the show I thought I would be fine by then. Because I am injured this could be my last show for a while; so as stressful as it is, it is making me try to enjoy it and appreciate it more.

Relating to Rehearsals

Your rehearsals feel the same. Lately you have been descriptive in the studio about costumes and lighting and I would try to imagine how this work would come together. I had a clear vision of what the atmosphere was going to be like and it's kind of scary, it has come together exactly how I pictured it in my mind. When we are

rehearsing in the studio I would imagine being in the space of the FFT (Sandra Faire and Ivan Fecan Theatre) and it is funny how it is almost bang on to how I imagined it.

Performing this piece I am quite chill. In the other pieces I am thinking about performance and that is all starting to click. When I was a kid I was trained to be uber-aware of where everyone is in the space and what everyone is doing. The nice thing about this piece is everyone knows what they are doing and I feel really confident about where we are all going, so I can let my 'performance smarts' go away a bit and just feel it. I feel different things. The intensity feels more real, especially in the part where Anastasia and I are staring at you. We don't laugh anymore. In different sections of the work when you can catch glimpses of other people's faces, the intensity on their faces appears more real. As a group, as a whole, it feels more unified, and what I am feeling I can see and recognize in other people.

I remember when we first found out that you would be in the piece with us we were all like 'Oh crap!' As for you being in the work it has not been weird. Even though you are in the work on your own and not part of the collective it does feel like you are part of the group. Not like there is us and there is you. The only thing that is different is that when we are running the work on stage you can't be out in the audience watching us to provide us feedback.

Relating to Process

The process has been super different. For the other pieces we had a lot more time. For the other choreographers there was a lot more exploring and improvisation. This piece felt like it had an intellectual side to it. How we learned this piece, you came in and you knew what you wanted us to do and you taught it to us. We made slight changes depending on what you saw. With the other pieces choreographers would come in not knowing what they wanted and we would create based on improvisation which would later become the set choreography.

When I found out you were only starting to choreograph in January, and how slowly the other pieces came together, I thought how were we going to learn a whole piece in two months and have it as ready as the other pieces for the stage? It is funny, because by the time we got to your tenth rehearsal I was thinking, 'Man, we are done! We just have to run this piece and it is awesome.'

Nico – First Interview

Relating to Rehearsals

My first day of rehearsal was definitely a challenge. I had missed your first rehearsal so I talked to three or four of the other dancers and I wanted them to catch me up because I did not want to come in to the second rehearsal blind. They tried to teach me the choreography but everyone had a different count for everything. I didn't know if things had been taken out and then added back in but everyone was arguing about the counts and the choreography. I was like, 'would someone please just show me the

dance!' So, the first day was complicated as I was trying to figure out what the dance was.

I did not find your rehearsals physically draining because I like moving in a deep second position. So the fact that we are down deep in second position so often is no problem for me. I am not used to working with counts and that has always been an issue for me. My Greek folkloric background and counts are 1,2,3 and 1,2,3 and 1,2,3 and that is it. So working with your counts are an issue. I find I can pick up yours a little bit easier because I am trying to relate it back to my Folkloric training.

Your choreographic process has been a breath of fresh air. I have found that a lot of work at York is based on improvisation. Your process is something I am not used to but I am willing to try it because I realize outside of York everyone is not going to work the same way we have been here. I am finding in some ways your process is easier because it is how it is supposed to be/needs to be versus how would I do it.

You have not given us a lot of information and I am a fan of this. Sometimes when choreographers are too specific you can get lost in the movement, worrying about whether you are doing it exactly correct. Personally, I can get too stressed out working that way. You not giving us those specifics is fine for me. I am curious about how this piece will come together. I see this piece as very controlling; you controlling us. I feel that the rest of our movement is going to be based upon your reaction toward us. I feel that we are going to be in close proximity for the entire dance, which will be a challenge for us as an ensemble.

Relating to Movement

Because of my dance background I work towards staying in unison as much as possible. I realize that I take bigger steps than other people. When we are moving in that tight group, I find I am always hitting the individual in front of me because they take smaller steps. I feel sorry at first, I don't want to hurt them, but at the same time I am wondering, 'Am I wrong, or are they wrong?' I always question myself and think that I am wrong. I have to go slower, or move smaller. I am getting used to being the one who always hits everyone else; it is not fun, it is *not* fun. I guess, in a sense, it is a compliment because I can travel through space but at the same time when people do not want to be in front of me, that is not the best feeling.

Nico – Production Week Interview

Q: How are you approaching *Tangled Dances*?

I find that I am a bit of an emotional wreck right now. I don't know why. It is one of the first times I felt this way. Right now I am a wreck. It is weird because I usually have everything under control. I am one of those individuals who have everything in check. Especially this year with my schedule being so daunting, I need to have order. I seem to have let go of everything and am now just focusing on *Tangled Dances*. I don't know if I feel this way because of exhaustion and the lack of sleep? I find that this process is making me very emotional in a way that I have never experienced. I

am not one to fall into tears right away, surprise, and I am finding myself getting teary eyed and choked up and I don't know why. I am trying to find excuses for this but none of these excuses stick. For me, everything has to have some sort of reason, it is just who I am. I have come to the conclusion that the reason why I pack my schedule so full is so I don't have enough time to just sit down and think and analyze. When I do analyze I over analyze everything and that is not good, not good at all.

I am extremely excited for this show to happen. My parents are coming Friday night. I have friends coming as well and I have invited some of my high school teachers as well.

Relating to Rehearsals

Between our last interview and today I had first thought that this piece was somewhat autobiographical. I thought it was some sort of struggle, if it was between you and bullies, and you and whatever it is. Then you had said that you often create pieces based on your research. Now I have come to understand that this piece has more to do with Foucault and some of his chosen theories. I find it interesting that you can create a dance about Foucault.

At first I was so caught up with the counting or if I would hit the person in front of me. Especially when I had Kate in front of me because I did not want to injure her more. Now I think more about the relationship between you and the group, who am I as a member of this group compared to you. The way I think about it, because I am often positioned in the back of the group except for one part, I

kind of feel like an anchor. I work a lot with narrative. Almost every piece that I have worked on, if I am choreographing or performing, I always create my own narrative for it or at least some sort of narrative with a beginning, middle, and end. I see your role in the piece somewhere between something that intrigues me and confuses me. I don't really understand what you are so I am coming closer in order to analyze you a bit.

Compared to the other pieces I am in, this piece, I feel, has just as much intensity, if not more, but achieved with minimal movements, which kind of astonishes me. If you compare this piece to the boy's trio, or Darcey's piece, they both have an intensity and a driving force. But this piece achieves the same intensity and power but on a different spectrum somehow. You proved that you do not need the stereotypical extreme dancer executing extreme movements on the stage to be effective. I think it is what is in here (points to his heart) that drives a dancer. Like Anne's piece, yours is not that out there with movement but it is about what I am feeling and experiencing as a dancer on stage that will then push off into the audience.

There is this sense of empowerment that comes to my body with all of us executing the exact same thing, all of us executing the exact same movements. One of my favorite sections of this piece is when we just finish the last hit and I can only see Jess and Megan, and we do this slow head movement together in unison, it feels so powerful. I can only imagine what the audience is going to be feeling.

Relating to Process

The brief knowledge we had of your history, and with the title *Resistance*, I thought this piece was going to be some crazy high-energy dance, or crazy Concordia movement piece. I did not picture it coming together like this at all, even after my first rehearsal. I remember thinking, 'will we ever get out of deep second position?' I did not expect this piece to be so intense. There are only two or three sections where I still have to count. Some sections, like the 'mob' section, I no longer need to count, it is just now what I do naturally. When I am not counting I am trying to be in tune with what I am feeling at that moment.

Jillian – First Interview

Relating to Rehearsals

It has been so nice to just be given choreography. Just to be told, 'Do this.' I like both ends of the choreographic spectrum, I really do love the creative process but sometimes it is just great to step outside of your own body and go into someone else's through their movement. You find out new things about yourself and you experience new things. That is what I really appreciate so far. It is great dancing as an ensemble and the fact that you have to be so similar to everyone else. Again, this is a new experience, you are going outside of your body from a 'hey, look at me, I'm the best' kind of moving to just working with the other dancers.

The judgment aspect of dance is something I do not enjoy. I do not like being graded while dancing, that is one thing about this

institution that is not comfortable. There are just some dancers in a class where you just can't escape feeling like you are being judged. Some people have a competitive nature, and people want to see who is doing what the best versus who is doing it the worst. Who am I better than? I try to stay away from all of this because dance class is for me and for me only. I don't feel this as much in your rehearsals.

Relating to Movement

It takes a little bit of getting used to just because all our bodies are so close in space. But it is great, it is kind of like an energy ball that everyone is sharing and giving. The movement somehow takes away from the individual dancer to just a cluster of people, its own living thing.

There are still hiccups at times. Because we have been going so detailed with the counts it makes it a bit easier. Knowing exactly what to do and what we are doing together. I feel comfortable with the movement, we are only five rehearsals in and I think I have become comfortable with the movement. Dancing and being in the group, you can see when you are doing something different from everyone else, and that is reassuring. My hamstrings are sore!

Sometimes I think of the ensemble as bad guys, I have not painted a clear narrative yet. You have not provided us with a lot of information and I think that is a good thing. When you do leave out information it allows us to put in our own thoughts and ideas into the movement. With the little bit of information you have given

us I feel like I know what direction the work is going in, but I still have the space to input my own personal thoughts into the process and help my performance.

Jillian – Production Week Interview

Q: How are you approaching *Tangled Dances*?

Right now I have those anxious feelings, that questioning, 'Are we going to get through this?' I just feel like I am going to get hit with a ton of bricks and I am just trying to prepare myself for that. I want to make sure that I take care of myself enough this week. I do have a lot that goes on outside of Ensemble with the DSA, school, and other commitments. I really had to learn how to say no. I need to sleep. I need to eat. I need to sit. I can't be going for twelve hours straight before a show. For this week this is what is important, it really needs to be my number one priority, which is hard.

Relating to Rehearsals

Your rehearsals are different now because I have embodied the movement and it just happens naturally now. I am not about thinking anymore, the movement just kind of rolls. I find I am in my own world a lot of the time, but I do notice when someone close to me makes a mistake and gets in my way. We are just so close. Sometimes it is just so loud. I just want to step outside of it, it is just a lot to handle. Once you begin dancing it is not as bad, we all have our own space and everyone stops talking. It is the minute before we

start a run, even before the music starts, when I really just want to be able to focus.

I think we are a very strong force as an ensemble. I do not really see us as individual characters but more of us as a group, a strong force. We are kind of destructive. I feel strong and grounded, like this strong ax. That moment when we cross over to your side of the stage feels like a forest fire, nothing can stop us on our way. It is always fun to experience new things like this. I definitely would not want to be in your position because I feel like we are this scary group coming to take you down, and sometimes that makes me feel bad but in the moment I am that person, right now.

Relating to Process

All of the pieces are completely different. I find that I just step outside of my body and become someone else for every piece; I put on a different character. Through the rehearsal process I have already internalized the work, the movement, it is now at the point where the movement happens and I can focus on the performance and allow myself to become this entirely new person.

With you being in the piece with us I wondered how you were going to provide us with feedback regarding the run-throughs, but you record those, watch the video, and then give us feedback and I think that process works.

Anastasia – First Interview

Relating to Rehearsals

Normally I really like to know the substance behind the movement, what exactly the choreographer wants me to be working towards. But for some reason we were all so focused on the counts that I didn't notice this substance missing. The real focus seemed to be on moving with the people, with the group, and that became my main focus. I just assumed that this is what you wanted. I felt you wanted us like a mass, a conglomerate of people.

Relating to Movement

For me, the section of choreography that gets me is the part where we are all moving forward together. I want to boot it and there are people in front of me who don't and I have to be very conscious of them. I do not count and I like to dance for myself, so I have to be so aware. That thirst for me to move bigger, I have to hold back on it. I feel like when someone makes a mistake we have to work with them to make up that whole mistake, there is a real sense of the group. Sometimes if someone around me does something wrong I feel the urge to almost make the mistake as well. I am fighting the desire to do exactly what the bodies are doing around me, even if I think they are not correct.

Focusing on the counts has changed my dancing a lot. I am not a counter. (Laughs). I am *not* a counter. I was just never trained that way and it is not easy for me. I never did hip-hop, I never did tap, I just never really worked with counts.

Anastasia – Production Week Interview

Q: How are you approaching *Tangled Dances*?

You are going to get a bad answer right now, just because my computer just crashed. My focus is so *not* on the show. I am excited to perform and I know what I am doing most of the time. I am slightly injured in my toe and that worries me; but overall I am just excited to do it. I am not nervous. In terms of performing your piece, I am nervous because I can't see people. In the first run we did on the stage, it was shaky, and I am looking forward to feeling better about it.

Relating to Rehearsals

I felt really weird dancing this piece now on the stage. The space was different, the lighting was different, I couldn't see the other dancers. In the studio you can see everyone around you and I couldn't see anyone. I did not feel as connected with the other dancers as I did in the studio. Maybe because we were on stage I felt like people were pretending to project, to perform, and that was different from before and I was aware of this going on. People would say, 'Oh, that was such a good run!' I would be silent and in disagreement.

Relating to Process

I was really impressed with how this piece came together; because it came together, it was done, and we moved on to just cleaning it up. I guess that is why I am not nervous about

performing this piece. It didn't matter that you had less time to create the piece because you knew what you wanted. With the other choreographers, it was almost like a test run, we would do this and then take it away, try something else and then take it away. You had all the movements already in your head and you were straight up, it is this, it is this, with only a few changes. Because your process is and was so structured, I found it challenging to deviate away from your process.

Jess – First Interview

Relating to Rehearsals

Honestly, I think for all of us your rehearsals have been a breath of fresh air; just walking in to the studio and having something set. It is a lot of fun and you grow creatively when doing a more collaborative, improvisational approach to creating work, but we have been doing so much of that approach this year. I love learning repertoire, just going in to the studio and learning a piece of work. So I love just coming in to your rehearsals, you know what you are doing and you just go right into it.

I think I feel more comfortable with this process because it is not me putting my own stuff out there to be judged. It is more just my dancing of your work that is judged. I can learn the work and try to embody the work. If it is my own movement I always wonder if it is right for the piece, for what the choreographer wants. So I feel comfortable and I can go right into the work your way.

Your role in the piece is super vague right now. We have only seen a little bit of your movement, maybe only a few positions so far, so there is this mystery with the work. This made me feel a little uncomfortable at first but now I actually find not knowing to be better. If you practice so much and you have something so set it can become habitual or boring. This way we are kind of kept on edge, and when we go on stage it might just be more of a natural reaction to you. We will actually be coming after you to see what this 'thing' is.

Relating to Movement

The movement for this piece is the polar opposite from that of Darcey's piece. In his piece, it is chaotic and we are all moving around the entire time on our own path. I still have to be spatially aware so I do not crash in to anybody. With this piece we are a lot more together and we have to be. We feel each other's movements. If someone is on a shallower diagonal in front of me when we are moving together, I have to work with it because I *have* to, being in such a small, shared space. If not, we would just be hitting everyone, all 'crashy-smashy.' I feel this is good because we are not used to this. Just dancing so close to somebody, it really makes us into an ensemble and tunes us in to what everybody else is doing.

I think the beginning section that we have been doing now for a while, I no longer have to think about it, or the counts. I can just go and start to think about my relationship to you and to the rest of the group. I have focus issues, I get shifty eyes and I am always

asking myself 'Am I doing this right?' Often I end up looking at the floor. With your work I feel like I can already start performing. The mob scene and the last section you just set I still have to count my way through it. I guess, in a way, I am still counting through the whole piece. But in those newer sections in particular, I am thinking if I am on, if I am correct with the timing and the movements.

Jess – Production Week Interview

Relating to Rehearsals

I spoke in our last interview about how I felt dancing so close to everyone. Back then it was a good learning experience because we were not used to moving like that. Now things have changed a lot. I feel like we are now much better at moving together. During the 'square dance' section, for example, before I would hit Heather every time we moved forward and I would hit Kate every time we moved back. This just worked itself out over time.

Now I just feel that I can let myself go. I feel like all of us feel that we are moving with each other. Being that close to everybody, all the time, you begin to feel like you could go a bit crazy. You mentioned to us once about possibly having to go to your 'happy place.' If I did not hear you say that I probably would have gone insane by now. I am always trying to get to that 'happy place' because you just constantly hear people. People talking, and singing, and it is just so hard to shut all that out but still stay present in the piece. During lighting level sets, we are not doing

so much on the stage, and I just had to close my eyes and breathe. This definitely helped a lot. As I get to know the piece better and the other dancers are getting more comfortable with the work, people just get crazier and more excitable.

Relating to Process

I think we all walked in to your first rehearsal asking how we were going to finish a piece in twelve weeks. Then knowing that everyone was going to be on stage for the entire piece it seemed a bit overwhelming. I think because you came in to each rehearsal with a goal and with such a solid structure, it helped us to push through it faster and get everyone working on the same page quicker. The piece did come together the way I thought it would.

When we brought the piece to the stage it felt so good to perform it with the group; it feels so empowering. The stage gave us drive, the stage got small, it just got so small and all of a sudden we didn't have room. I love being in the theatre as it makes everything feel real. In rehearsal I was never really sure what I was going to feel when I actually performed this work. Now in the theatre, it feels totally intense, like I am really coming after you. This brings out a lot performance wise that I was struggling to achieve in a rehearsal space.

Resistance – In Studio Conclusion

In these interviews echoes of the dancers' individual histories are heard in their words. The invisible techniques of discipline are captured. Also captured are each dancer's unique

experience relating to how I employed “The Art of Distribution” and the “Control of Activity” as an attempt to ‘control’ the use of space and the use of time; similarities and variances both present as they experienced the small space of the “cell” within the tightly knit group formation, and the forced adherence to a strict use of counts as a prescribed “elaboration of the act”. The “Organization of Geneses” with an evolution of time and the “Composition of Forces” figure prominently from the first interview to the second. Movements, counts and actions that initially were so awkward and unfamiliar are shortly described as being ‘natural.’ In the dancers’ narratives what surfaces are the disciplinary techniques that train the body through a modality that is rarely observed and/or questioned. Docile bodies relating to the experience of being manipulated, shaped, trained, and becoming skillful. With this acquisition of skill through disciplinary techniques another space opens, and in this space is voiced the word ‘performance.’ *Resistance* is research where discipline becomes the means through which to achieve and create, research that begins to question, unravel, and propose new understanding in studio, and in performance.

Chapter 3 As Process - *In* performance

Overcoming Superstition

Figure skating competitions were early sites of performance for me, so many years of competition, so many performances. As an athlete, I developed a distinct routine to prepare myself for these performances. This routine developed slowly, one performance after another, and eventually became a clear series of actions. Superstition played a defining role in shaping these actions.

The daily training site was a localized space for these superstitions related to performance to become patterned and ingrained into my actions. One of the more prominent superstitions was my behavior with my skate guards, the plastic covers that protected the blades on my skates when I wasn't on the ice. For every practice I would place my guards side by side, the right one in front of the left, on a particular place on the arena boards. This particular place where I put my guards was on the first seam in the boards to the right of the entryway to the ice surface. I placed my skate guards in the same position, in the same place, every time I took to the ice, regardless of where I was or what rink I was skating in.

For practice, for competition, those guards and the behavior I adopted with them stayed the same, unchanging, consistent. It was at a National Championship competition when that behavior was changed. It was the Free Dance portion of the competition, the final portion of the event, and for my partner and I, the most important performance of our competitive season. A coach of ours, who was attending the competition with us, had been observing my routine with my guards. On the ice with my partner, in the final

moments of preparation before I would go to my starting position, those last brief moments to achieve that ideal state for performance, I watched as this coach took my guards from their space. Watching him take those guards from their space I was consumed with a surge of different emotions; anger, contempt, surprise, feeling these emotions rush through me I watched my coach break into a smile. With our names being announced and all eyes, cameras, and attention now on us, my partner and I took to our starting positions.

We skated beautifully; we performed beautifully, one of those performances that you train so hard for all year in order to have at the right moment. After the performance, after going through all those very public spaces and actions of an athlete post-competition, I shared a private moment with this coach. He said to me that he took those guards in the hope I would realize that I controlled how I performed, that I made the choices that lead to a great performance and not superstitions. I did come to this realization that day. My behavior towards this specific superstition, and all of my other superstitions began to change following that performance, and with this change of behavior the power of these superstitions faded away.

In this moment, under these circumstances, it was the actions of a coach (an educator) that facilitated my ability to overcome, to *learn* how to choose differently. With *Resistance*, the action of an educator is replaced with theory; theory implicated within a dance practice that can teach one how to choose differently, to become more than what one was before.

Choreographing *Resistance*

The previous chapter opened with Foucault's quote, "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power."¹ This chapter considers performance, or more precisely the act of performing, as an example of such resistance. To consider performance as an act of resistance, I turn once again to the space of the dance studio and to the docile body, implicated within disciplinary techniques, and engaged in choreographic processes.

The act of creating the movement for *Resistance* occurred while I was alone in the studio. As mentioned in the previous chapter, my rehearsals with the York Dance Ensemble were moments to teach and set the movement with the dancers following an adherence to a predetermined schedule. By myself in the studio, my rehearsals unfolded in a different manner, a disciplined body working towards choreographing Foucault.

As already referenced, Foucault's "disciplinary techniques" formed a cornerstone for the choreographic structure of the ensemble. In consideration of these techniques various creative choices were made before any specific movement was set. Concerning the ensemble; no solos, duets or standouts (with the exception of the ending); utilizing a tight spatial formation with movements set specifically to counts of music; the dancer as soldier, a docile body being molded, shaped, and trained, with each dancer a singular unit forming a larger machine; these creative choices were already made, prescribed by the methodology of my research project well before I found myself settling in to deep second position alone in a dance studio.

¹ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (1976; repr., New York: Vintage, 1990), 86.

Moving through the space of the studio in deep second position, I first created the movement vocabulary then designed the pathways for the ensemble. My priorities while creating these movement patterns was to define the relationship of the movement to specific counts in the music, to define a clear understanding/expectation of how I wanted the body moving through the space, and define how each individual dancer contributed to an overall movement of the ensemble as a singular unit. I imposed no emotional value or subjective connection to the movement phrases; instead my task was akin more to a drill sergeant, creating maneuvers for my dancers/soldiers moving through space and time. The final choreographic structure for the ensemble was influenced by the consideration of how these maneuvers performed in deep second position would require repetition and training in order to be precisely executed throughout the duration of the piece; docile bodies moving in unison as part of a monolithic group. During rehearsals I had alone, I would set (and chart) the material I would teach the ensemble for the next rehearsal we would have together. This process for creating the movement for the ensemble was followed until I choreographed the ending of the work.

The creative process for choreographing the solo movement I would perform in *Resistance* was starkly different than the process described above. Here, further theories of Foucault informed my choreographic process and the creative choices. This process initiated a reflection upon the history of I/my body in ways I had never contemplated before.

In *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, Foucault leads the reader into his method for an analytics of power as he advances a certain number of propositions directly associated to power, moving “less toward a ‘theory’ of power than towards an

‘analytics’ of power.”² Foucault suggests that, “Power is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere.”³ The creative process for how I generated my solo movement illustrates how the act of choreography and the act of performing, executed within the context of a dance practice, can serve as an example of shifting relations of power. The individual subject is a site of power and knowledge, a “power that comes from everywhere.”

In his essay, “The Subject and Power” (1982), Foucault claims, “it is not power but the subject which is the general theme of my research.”⁴ His stated objective of his work; “has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects.”⁵ In the creative act of choreographing *Resistance*, I/my body was researcher and subject; a subject positioned within the very relations of power that I sought to investigate. Concerns that this research constituted a form of ‘navel gazing’ were alleviated upon reading the following passage from “The Subject and Power.”

I would like to suggest another way to go further toward a new economy of power relations, a way which is more empirical, more directly related to our present situation, and which implies more relations between theory and practice. It consists of taking the forms of resistance against different forms of power as a starting point [...] Rather than analyzing power from the point of view of its internal rationality, it consists of analyzing power relations through the antagonism of strategies [...] And, in order to understand what power relations are about, perhaps we should investigate the forms of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these relations.⁶

² Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, 82.

³ Ibid., 93.

⁴ Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (1982), 778.

⁵ Ibid., 777.

⁶ Ibid., 778.

Theory informs my dance practice. With this ethnographic research, theory is firmly imbedded within a methodological framework that works towards signifying new considerations of relationships between theory and practice. The act of choreography, the act of performing, and the dancer's sensing/sensational body moving through space/time, I propose are all potential strategies, strategies the subject can employ as acts of resistance; resistance that is not aggressive, militant, or oppositional, but resistance as a self-overcoming; a fluid shift of power produced somewhere anew yet localized within the subject.

To Steal

I offer you this sign: every people speaks its own language of good and evil: its neighbor does not understand this language. It invented this language for itself in custom and law. But the state lies in all languages of good and evil; and whatever it says, it lies – and whatever it has, it has stolen.⁷

What has the State stolen from me? How did it do so? During one of his last interviews Foucault claimed, "I am simply a Nietzschean, and try as far as possible, on a certain number of issues, to see with the help of Nietzsche's texts..."⁸ My reflections upon Foucault's principles of power, as presented in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*, provided me with a means through which I could try to see afresh, and with an entry point into a particular choreographic process for creating my solo movement vocabulary for *Resistance*. A choreographic process that would lead to a fuller appreciation of the

⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1891; repr., London: Penguin Books, 1961), 76.

⁸ Michel Foucault, *Foucault Live*, ed. Sylvere Lotringer (New York: Semiotexte, 1989), 210.

State I am a part of and my choice to attempt reclamation of that which the State may have stolen from me.

As an individual who identifies as a queer male I have found myself labeled as a deviant, a pervert, an ‘other’ to the hetero-normative. The State’s invisible reach into what is ‘normal’ pathologized my desire. What the State stole from me was a childhood without shame, a childhood without the fear of what I thought I was.

As a young male participating in the activities of figure skating and dancing I was constantly bullied, teased, and ridiculed. ‘Faggot’, ‘fairy’, ‘queer’, were titles hurled upon me by others at such a young age I couldn’t even begin to appreciate what these words meant, but I absolutely knew that they were meant to set me apart from the group; to define me as something different and strange. The history of I/my body includes this past. Studying Foucault I became conversant with his principles of power. Considering his cautionary prescriptions, I began to conceptualize discourse in a different manner.⁹ Discourse, for Foucault, both “transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.”¹⁰ I contribute to discourse, to the “Malthusian couple” which I am not, to the “perverse adult” of which I am, to the relations of power in which I exist.¹¹ “Silence and secrecy are a shelter for power.”¹² The licit versus elicit, the spoken versus the unsaid, the permitted

⁹ Foucault’s cautionary prescriptions: Rule of immanence, Rule of continual variations, Rule of double conditioning, and Rule of the tactical polyvalence of discourse all initiated a reconceptualization of how I thought of power relations.

See: Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, 98-102.

¹⁰ Ibid., 101.

¹¹ Here I am making a direct reference to the four figures that emerged from Foucault’s “The four great strategic unities” as outlined in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*.

¹² Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, 101.

versus the forbidden, within these relational binaries the state and law create gaps filled with silence and secrecy. To render fragile these archetypes I chose to revisit embodied memories from my history. With those sensations, feelings, thoughts of worth and belonging that I associated with the ‘faggot’ and the ‘sissy’ I chose to create, and to move. I put philosophy to work.

Perhaps this work was an attempt through a choreographic process to heal, to empower, and to release. The work shifted the meaning of particular words, experiences, and memories; it lay bare what the State had stolen from me, a State I am a part of, speaking in my own language of ‘good and evil.’ A skilled, disciplined docile body, speaking outside of language, through movement: I/my body...dancing.

I am stuck.

Too often I find myself in that space of ‘other’ to my society’s ‘normal.’

How do I move from this space?

I realized I don’t move from it, I must move from within it.¹³

The Process to Reclaim; Creating Movement

Entering the dance studio, a series of actions unfolds. I change into my dance clothes, I set up a small video camera in the front of the studio, and then I lie on the floor. I warm up, I prepare, prepare to create. Going through these actions I recognize elements of the various disciplinary techniques I am studying, and I reflect upon the process that is unfolding; how I, a disciplined body, acquired and practice specific skills. When I feel prepared to create, I/my body moves toward the sound system. I put the music of Warsaw Village Band on the sound system.

¹³ My program notes for *Resistance*, from *Tangled Dances*.

I chose this music for two reasons. First, it reminded me of my childhood; upon listening to it I was transported back into a past, specifically to my Grandmother's farm that I visited as a young child. (Such is the power of music). Second, the lyrics were not in English but Polish. As a child, at my grandmother's farm, English was spoken but so too was Ukrainian; it was the latter foreign language that adults used when they did not want the children to understand what they were saying. Music with lyrics/words that I could not understand was critical in my process.¹⁴ I sought words/lyrics that could not in the choreographic process shape a narrative for the dance or prescribe meanings to my movement. (So strong is the power of words).

I move to the video camera and I hit record.

I move to stage left center and I place my right foot on one spot on the floor. The position of my right foot will never change throughout *Resistance*; this is/will be the position in space I find myself. *How* I will occupy this position is the crux of my research. I take a moment to remember, remember a specific memory¹⁵; a memory of the body/mind, a memory composed of feeling, of emotion; embodied memory. With my eyes closed the history of me/my body informs the now, and informs the performance that is about to occur. Entering into a smooth relationship with time, where sensing and sensations give way to choices, I begin to move, to react, to re-experience, to re-write, and to release memories associated with moments of bullying, of being ostracized.

Time experienced in this performance is time *lived* differently. Energies, sensations, sensorial memory and emotion are moved through and lived. I/my body

¹⁴ After completing the choreography for *Resistance*, I had the lyrics of the music translated. See Appendix C for the translated lyrics.

¹⁵ The duration of these moments would vary.

becomes an active agent in what and how I choose to perceive. The ticking clock, those divisible units of time, Foucault's measurement of duration, give way to an individual becoming through sensing and sensations. Yet, at any moment these sensations are accompanied by any number of thoughts and/or emotions often experienced simultaneously. I choose my direction through these intensities; *I* direct my consciousness toward that which I desire. In these moments I desire to react, to live inside this moment and allow movement to be my response. I am *performing* movement, actively choosing *my* way through the various intensities, sensations, emotions and thoughts.

Being pulled from this particular state of becoming is what signals the end of this particular performance. What was my experience? How do I feel now? I consider these questions and sometimes make brief notes in a journal. A quick drink of water; perhaps a moment or two for reflection, but most likely I walk to the music equipment to start the music again from the beginning, and return to stage left center with my right foot once again where it was just moments before; this is/will be the position in space I find myself. *How* I will occupy this position will be up to me.

I take a moment to remember, remember a specific memory. The choices of how to be in time during this performance are determined by *how* I choose to be within my body and in the action of active perception creating this distinct means of becoming; these choices made possible with skills acquired through a dance practice. *Becoming* is an action, *being* is an action, *choosing* is an action, *dancing* is an action, *performing* is an action. These verbs suggest a fluid temporality, never fixed, and their meaning may be

found in the actions themselves, as an individual experiences them.¹⁶ The meanings of these particular performances, alone in a dance studio, that created my movement vocabulary for *Resistance* altered those embodied memories that I worked with. In these performances shame became strength, fear became skill, childhood innocence and adult knowing existed together in movement. Through movement creation and these performances I *live* resistance, I begin to re-write a past, in a certain manner, I undo what was once done.

The 'Wrist of Fury'



Image 4

¹⁶ The performance of these actions and the meanings created examples of individual subjectivity.

Through practice and repetition a gesture can take on new meanings for the performer executing them. Often linked to the effeminate male dancer/figure skater is the ‘limp wrist’.¹⁷ As a child, being called ‘faggot’ or ‘sissy’ was often accompanied with a gesture, a limp wrist that dangled from the arm of the person calling me these names as he/she gave a performance of his/her own. It came as no surprise when this gesture began to surface in the movement creation process for my solo work in *Resistance*. In the performances described above, alone in the studio using embodied memory as a means for movement creation, the physicality of this limp wrist emerged. Using my notes and the video from my rehearsals I selected particular performances. From these performances I then isolated certain movements that I had executed.

Returning to the studio I would try to repeat the selected movement pathways. I attempted to recreate the movement phrase, matching it as precisely and meticulously as possible to the original. I then began to link these individual movement phrases into a larger choreographic structure. Even in this creating/learning/performing phase I experienced these movement sequences differently. The act of repetition resulted in varied subjective experiences. Sometimes the emotions and feelings that I experienced during those original performances surfaced again, yet through repetition, variances were as common as similarities.

From this process of generating movement, the choreographic process evolved into structuring these movement phrases into a defined choreographic structure. During this phase of the choreographic process, in which I set my solo movement for *Resistance*, I was mindful of the structure of the ensemble that I was simultaneously shaping. I would

¹⁷ For scholarship relating to the effeminate male dancer see: Ramsay Burt, Jennifer Fisher, Peter Stoneley, Doug Risner.

have the ensemble's choreography always slightly further developed than my own so that when I was alone in the studio it was as if the ensemble was there with me; an invisible group, moving to counts in music that I knew so well, informing how my broad range of movement sequences would come together in a defined structure. I attempted to continue this process for as long as possible, keeping the ensemble unaware of my role in the piece and the movement I would eventually be performing with them.¹⁸ Three large movement phrases took shape, and each one of these phrases concluded with what we came to call 'The Wrist of Fury'.

As mentioned, I purposely did not have the ensemble observe the movement I would be performing until further along in the choreographic process. When it became time to set the ending of the work I began to perform my movement in the rehearsals shared with the ensemble. It was during one of these rehearsals, after I had performed a large section of my choreography with the ensemble, that I jokingly referred to one gesture as 'The Wrist of Fury' in front of the ensemble. The name stuck.

'The Wrist of Fury' is a simple gesture: my right foot positioned in the same spot on the floor bearing the weight of my body, my left leg extended behind on the back left diagonal, my left elbow held parallel to my left shoulder with my left, soft limp wrist positioned in front of my heart, and my right arm fully extended on the lower right diagonal. Moving my head from left to right the gesture concludes with a subtle, soft flick of my right limp wrist.

'The Wrist of Fury' was performed three times within the choreographic structure of *Resistance*. After the first execution of this gesture I turned to face the ensemble, to see

¹⁸ It was for reasons of practicality, the limited time I had for creation, that motivated my decision to keep this process removed from the rehearsals I shared with the ensemble.

them for the first time.¹⁹ The second and third execution of ‘The Wrist of Fury’ concluded with a slow, deep obeisance: a bow, a personal homage. The first obeisance I enacted for the ensemble, and the final obeisance, myself alone on the stage and in total silence, was staged for the audience.²⁰ Used as a signpost, a marker for an experience repeated again and again, performing ‘The Wrist of Fury’ serves to exemplify various concepts I have proposed and can be used to begin to answer questions that emerged from this work.

Foucault described the “temporal elaboration of the act” as follows:

The act is broken down into its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed. Time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power.²¹

The action itself becomes coded, the activity inscribed with a specific temporality. With specific positions of the body and limbs, and duration of time associated to these actions, movement and temporality become unified. I previously asked the questions: Does this particular disciplinary technique require the adherence to what I would consider an individual’s *striated* (emphasis mine) relationship to time? Does time penetrate the body? And does it do so with all the meticulous controls of power? Or does this require a singular, generalized relationship to how one experiences time?

Repeatedly performing ‘The Wrist of Fury’ led to multiple subjective experiences. Sometimes feelings of empowerment, of strength, were experienced, while

¹⁹ Prior to turning to face the ensemble my back was to them. With my back to them they were most certainly observed, felt, but not yet seen.

²⁰ The gesture/performance of the obeisance will be further developed in the conclusion of the dissertation.

²¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 152.

other times thoughts of self worth and of alienation were experienced and *lived*. Entering into a *smooth* relationship with time, I navigated through presenting intensities, thoughts and emotions. With my *intention* to live within that gesture, within that moment/movement, I/my body penetrates time. Relations of power are experienced shifting away from the external toward the self. With skills acquired by an individual devoted to a practice, further knowledge and power informs a subject as they choose their *own* path through time. Power/knowledge of the individual may also penetrate time.

The “*correlation of the body and the gesture*” (emphasis Foucault’s) requires a disciplined body as a prerequisite for an efficient gesture.²² “Disciplinary control does not consist simply in teaching or imposing a series of particular gestures; it imposes the best relation between a gesture and overall position of the body, which is its condition of efficiency and speed.”²³ I devoted a considerable amount of effort and time to proper movement technique and learning movements/gestures; I/my body a disciplined docile body. I worked towards an efficiency, speed and strength of the body. However, was ‘efficiency’ the sole goal of the gesture ‘The Wrist of Fury’? This gesture was an action, a performance composed of discovery, of healing, of learning anew, and of communicating in movement that which can’t be expressed in language. Foucault’s “correlation of the body and gesture” suggests that the best relation between a gesture and overall position of the body is the condition of efficiency and speed. ‘The Wrist of Fury’ prompts a reconsideration of Foucault’s use of ‘efficiency’. Can ‘efficiency’ encompass the subject’s *intention* motivating the performance of a gesture? Is ‘efficiency’ defined externally from the subject or can ‘efficiency’ be defined inclusive of the internal

²² Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 152.

²³ *Ibid.*, 152.

intentional subtext of the subject? As a dancer performing gestures, Foucault's act is indeed broken down into its elements; "the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined;"²⁴ yet so too is my *intention* motivating the gesture. Disciplinary control provides a subject with the means to develop skills, skills that the subject may then use to impose their own motivation on to a gesture; a process of self-overcoming. If 'efficiency' as used by Foucault takes into account the intention of the agent behind the gesture, "correlation of the body and gesture" is not disrupted. What may be disrupted are the ways in which 'efficiency' has been/can be interpreted.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, "*The body-object articulation* (emphasis Foucault's) is when discipline defines each of the relations that the body must have with the object that it manipulates. Between them, it outlines a meticulous meshing."²⁵ 'The Wrist of Fury' is an example of a gesture where the body-object articulation is regulated to the dancer's own dancing body as the object for articulation. What meticulous meshing transpired with my dancing body as both the object of my attention, as it so often is in the action of movement, and the subjective body that I live through?

I move to stage left center and I place my right foot to one spot on the floor. The position of my right foot will never change throughout *Resistance*; this is/will be the position in space I find myself in. *How* I will occupy this position will be up to me.

This *how* is a performance, a meticulous meshing repeated again and again, each time with differing results. With each performance another experience is added to the embodied memory of the performer. *How* each of these performances is experienced also engages a past, the history of I/my body, the past via memory present in my very method

²⁴ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 152.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

of subjective meaning making. ‘The Wrist of Fury’ is an example of both a meticulous meshing and a subject’s individual agency, I/my body *dancing*. A meticulous meshing as a site of “power that comes from everywhere” internalized within the subject, disciplinary techniques providing the docile body with skills and aptitude to perform gestures of resistance.

Choreographing an Ending to *Resistance*

Choreographing the ending to *Resistance* was the final phase in my choreographic process. For this phase of the creative process, I was not alone in the studio; the ensemble was present for each creative choice I made. In my experience, choreographing a beginning to a work is easy while choreographing an ending can be much more difficult. Feeling that only a portion of this research project was coming to an end, and with so much more of this ethnographic study yet to develop, deciding how I would end this dance work required a great deal of thought. After much contemplation I decided upon my approach. Having set such a small restrictive space (a cell) for each individual of the ensemble, I would simply enter into that space, enter in to those individual ‘cells’ and touch each dancer.

As researcher/dancer my touch was the *singular* moment in which any of the bodies on stage would intentionally come into physical contact with one another during the entire duration of the work. Upon being touched the dancer would enter into stillness, and then, cued by one of my movements, they would exit the space of the stage. Unable to move from my position on the stage, with my right foot still firmly anchored to one position on the floor, required each member of the ensemble (except one) to move into

arm's length of my touch. One by one I would enter into the cell of each dancer with my touch, signaling a moment of stillness, followed by their exit of the space, until only two docile bodies remained on stage.

With this ending, the monolithic group moving in unison is reduced to a singular individual. Two docile bodies remain on stage, side by side. The remaining singular member of the ensemble moves into a grounded position of strength; the force and power of multiple bodies moving through space and time reduced to this final moment of stillness.²⁶

As the remaining ensemble dancer holds a position of strength the stage lights begin to fade to black. The very moment that she is no longer visible, I am now alone on the stage. I then, as dancer/researcher, perform my third and final 'Wrist of Fury' and obeisance. With this gesture, *Resistance* comes to a conclusion.²⁷

²⁶ See Appendix D for a photo of the remaining ensemble dancer.

²⁷ See Appendix D for a photo of my last 'Wrist of Fury.'

Performing versus performance

Perform (verb)

Present participle: performing

1. to do an action or piece of work ²⁸

Judith Butler's performing gender, Goffman's performing of self, or Sartre's waiter all propose reconsiderations of what it means to perform, consistent in all their descriptions is that to perform is to do; it is an *action*. Do these actions necessitate an audience in order for them to occur? When alone in the studio, performing gestures of resistance, I was the sole witness to these performances, a subject who was simultaneously both performer and audience. This chapter has depicted how through being alone in a dance studio, occupying the dual roles of performer and witness, one can acquire, and develop skills that impart strategies that dissociate relations of power.

Chapter 2 provided individual accounts from the dancers participating in the creation and learning of *Resistance*. These interviews articulated their lived experiences of performing actions that contributed to the process of learning new choreography. What follows are interviews from dancers speaking of their experiences performing *Resistance*, and other works from *Tangled Dances*. Perspectives of the audience member or the critic are consistently documented. Rare are the archived experiences of dancers performing. The dancer is so often seen, but so rarely heard.

See the Supplementary File for a video of *Resistance*.

²⁸ See: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/perform>

Resistance – Post Performance Interviews

March 22

Kate

Resistance felt really good, very powerful with a full audience, it was very intense. It somehow feels more real when there are people there, people watching, when you are giving that intensity to the audience and faces you can see. It feels more real.

Two pieces into the show and my leg still works so that is good. Last night in dress rehearsal my hip locked during your piece and that was not fun but it didn't tonight which was much better.

Nico

Resistance felt good. I really got into a character today and for some reason it took me to a dark place where I felt a lot of anger. So far, having only performed half of the show, I have experienced comedy and humor with *Suddenly Everyone*, with *It's just what you do* I felt depressed, a sad individual with a dying wife, and with *Resistance*, this piece makes me feel a real, genuine anger. I have already lived a whole spectrum of emotions.

Anastasia

Tonight's run of *Tangled Dances* was a bit of an emotional test for me. Throughout the day as I waited for YDE rehearsal to begin, I tried very hard to mentally and physically prepare

myself as I was feeling burnout. I was given a few substantial last minute corrections that made this opening night very stressful for me as I was dancing not only with a checklist of corrections but also trying to map out new directions/movement/exit-entrances/etc. as I was performing. Having these brought on at such a fragile time was taxing on my performance. For example, one of the changes was for me to exit out of another wing and to come back on stage quicker. Having not rehearsed this in a performance setting resulted in a collision between myself and another dancer. This collision made me feel like I had made a terrible mistake and took a toll on my performance and confidence throughout the night.

During *Resistance* I remember mentally fighting a strong negative inner dialogue. I was really self-doubting myself, and my memory. I remember thinking that one of my Modern teachers was in the audience and I experienced a growing tension as I thought of making a mistake with her watching. This is because this teacher scares me to death...almost.

This was my opening night. It was challenging and very unlike the experiences of the dress rehearsals. I tried very hard to beat away the negative feelings but the unforgiving perfectionism was too strong.

Tomorrow I am going to go in and think only of performing. But then again, that is what I tried to do tonight. The first piece was fine...I don't know why it had to turn into a dark experience.

Jess

Resistance tonight was unreal; it felt perfect. It probably wasn't perfect but with everyone on stage, amped up, it felt like the energy of a thousand people rioting. I guess it felt perfect because it happened all on its own.

Tangled Dances tonight was probably my favorite show I have ever danced in, in all of my time dancing, because it felt like it was just for us; it wasn't a competition. I was not dancing for a mark or a grade, but it was all about us dancing together. We had a bit of a cry session today where we realized just how amazing this experience has been. I went on stage not taking anything for granted and every piece just felt amazing. I really can't say anything else. Hopefully tomorrow is just as good because this is a feeling I would like to hold on to forever.

Shae

So much fun! I can't remember the last time I had fun of this kind. Being around the ensemble dancers and experiencing all that show energy was such a joy.

There are so few moments or circumstances in my life that mirror those moments while I wait to take a stage, my slightly elevated heart rate within a body buoyant between fight-or-flight, married with a deep inner calm. My embodied memory is thick with so many of these moments; waiting in the incredible bright lights and chaotic public space of the competitive skating rink; and waiting in the dark, private, and solitary moments in

the wings of a proscenium stage. Tonight's moment was surprisingly so calm and unfolded with an ease and contentment. The other dancers with whom I shared the space were all so generous. Trying to put aside my role as a researcher, as an observer, I chose to simply let be. In this performance tonight I felt I was completely myself, without experiencing any feelings of judgment.

On stage I lived from one moment into the next, grounded and secure, skillfully navigating my way through the experience. The ensemble approached me today with an excited, bubbling energy that I was ready for; this time their intensity would not throw me off. The energy from the audience came up on stage to join us; I felt them with us, bolstering our performance, present and engaged. The energy on stage was certainly intense, as this piece so often is, yet it felt excitable, sparkling. As I entered into each dancer's private 'cell' for the ending of the work I acknowledged and thanked each of them in my own silent way.

In the change room, taking off my stage make-up, half clothed with finally a moment for self-reflection, I write these words. I feel pleased with how the evening unfolded. I am genuinely happy, content. Tonight my supervisor saw me perform for the first time and somehow I find this strange. Yet these thoughts I will save for another time as I enjoy this sweaty moment of satisfaction.

March 23

Kate

Tonight's performance was good but I guess there was not the same intensity tonight, maybe because it was not opening night? Maybe there is just an excitement and energy about opening night. It is not that there was not energy in the performance, it was just a different type of energy; less nervous energy and more of Zen energy, that is how it felt. Last night I was like 'there are people here tonight so don't mess it up!' and tonight I was like 'OK, last night went well, so now I know what I am doing.' That is how I felt in this piece tonight.

It is only the second night of performance but it is already kicking in that we only get one more night of this and...I really can't even think about that yet. (Gets visually upset). We need a full week of performance, not just three days. Six months of work for three nights of performance, shame. Kind of feeling sad already being the second night, I need more of this; I really do not want it to end.

Nico

Resistance felt pretty good tonight, except that I did some arms early. Supposedly I did some arms way, way too early. I keep getting reminded about that mistake which is just so much fun. Yeah, it sucks, because it is film night so that mistake is what is going to be remembered. But I am trying to go with the positive. Everyone says that it looked ok because I was in the

middle of the group in the front, so it wasn't that noticeable that it was a mistake.

It is just after intermission and so far the first half of the show has been going well. We did not get the same reaction that we did for *Suddenly Everyone* from the audience as we did yesterday. Yesterday the audience was laughing, hooting and hollering. Today it feels kind of like a dead audience. It did not feel good, I was expecting people to be laughing and hollering, trying to go for a comical response but it didn't happen. I felt more emotional today dancing *It's just what you do* than yesterday. I did not cry, not yet. I have been close to tears so many times with this piece; so many emotions are similar to things I am struggling with right now with my own family.

Once again I was really ticked off today dancing *Resistance*. Especially after the 'mob scene,' I just got really angry. This piece channels an inner anger in me and, I guess, I just, I have no idea why. Maybe because I associate this piece with bullying and I just immediately get pissed off. Maybe that is it?

Holly told us all today before the show to be careful with the second show drop. I am not feeling it drop so far. Just being told to be careful of a second show drop, I am not a huge fan of. Hopefully the rest of the show goes well.

Jillian

I did not do an interview opening night because the night was so crazy and my mind was in a million different places, it just totally slipped my mind. The frantic excitement of the night and my superstitions just made me forget. Due to not doing the interview opening night I almost did not want to do this interview because of superstitions, a desire to just follow what I did for opening night. I feel that performance can become all about the mind-set.

This evening *Resistance* felt...it was one part of the night that I felt valid. I felt that I got grounded in a good way. There is a moment in time where the ensemble just stands completely still for about a minute and forty seconds, and that is the first time from the beginning of the show that I stop; just stop moving. That is the moment of the show where I really just breathe, and settle, and get into a zone for *Resistance*. Which is important because it is a dance where I really need to be tuned in one hundred percent to myself and to everyone around me. So the experience tonight was great and turned the night around for me. The second night jitters were gone after *Resistance*, I was like 'Alright! I am good now!'

When performing *Resistance* I get to a really zoned in character. Shae once said 'I see daggers in your eyes' and I feel like I do have these, I am giving all of my attention to him. That is what I feel *Resistance* is; it is just a kind of focus. Focus with Shae, focus with the audience, focus with the ensemble to ensure we are moving as an ensemble; that is what makes *Resistance*.

Performing *Tangled Dances* tonight, well, it is the second night and the second night I feel is the hardest. You are over the jitters of opening night, you have gone through the show once and you want it to feel how an opening or closing night feels like. Performing *Tangled Dances* this second night, I had to keep reminding myself to just be calm, and this helped, but still there was just a lot of negativity in my head and way too much thinking. A lot of the time I just had to tell myself to 'shut up!' and zone out everyone and everything else so I could focus and not mess up, because if I do mess up, it would be the end of the world for me.

One more night and then it's over and it is going to be great but also a very scary thing. Tomorrow I am sure I am going to feel completely different and a lot of emotions are going to come out and I am just trying to stay as far away from that as I can right now and not think about it at all. Honestly, being up there on that stage is the experience of a lifetime, nothing in the world beats being up there on that stage.

Anastasia

Resistance tonight was really interesting because I had such a bad night last night. I had to repress those feelings and really focus on my own dancing which was tricky because this piece requires that you watch everyone else, feed off their energy, feed off of their choices. Tonight I just focused on listening to the music and kind of putting myself back into a

studio situation. I feel that of all the pieces this is the piece that I worry about the most because it just does not feel the same as it did rehearsing it in the studio. On stage we don't have the same environment, it is so dark and everyone looks the same. It just feels very, very different and that can be quite stressful to perform all of those great moments and movements. Like tonight, Heather was in front of me, and she did this jolt, and I was like, 'Don't follow her, she is wrong, you are right, it's ok.' That was *Resistance* this evening, it went well; it felt powerful, I was feeling the dynamic of the group and that makes this piece feel just so powerful.

Overall tonight was a good night. Right from the beginning of the warm up I had a lot of fear that tonight was going to be like yesterday. I just let that fear go and made tonight a whole new night. I was worried at times I would self-sabotage myself with negative thoughts but I left the stage feeling satisfied. Tonight I feel really good and really happy. Tonight my movements projected out, had integrity, had substance and meaning, and that is a really great feeling.

Sometimes forcing a smile really does work, it can make you feel happy and at rest for a moment

Jess

Tonight's performance was like the flip of yesterday's, although it probably wasn't all that bad. I am so sorry Shae; I screwed up a few times today dancing *Resistance*. These mistakes were probably very little but for me they felt huge.

I guess I have this superstition about second nights now because Holly said before the show, 'Opening night is always great and closing night show is always good because everyone is like, 'Yes, last show!' But the second show is always 'iffy'. I never knew this before, it had never crossed my mind and now it seems like it is always in the back of my thoughts. So now everything feels like a potential to screw up. In *Resistance* I fell out of the back bend after the first 'Wrist of Fury' and I made a couple of other little mistakes but they felt huge to me. So it turns out it was kind of an 'iffy' performance. When I came off of the stage from performing *Resistance*, I had to take a few deep breaths before I could go on with the rest of the show. Now that it is after intermission I figure, 'what happened, happened' and now I am moving forward with the rest of the show.

Again, so sorry I screwed up. Especially on video night, but tomorrow will be better. I still had fun, and as a whole I think it went well. Hopefully because there are so many of us dancing, people in the audience won't notice that I screwed up.

Shae

I am so tired. I have been dragging all day. Both of my sisters and my mom are in town for the show, hanging out with both my sisters at the same time can be exhausting. Hosting them and spending time with them today instead of resting, I clearly overspent myself. Lying on the floor, as I began my warm up for tonight's show, I was overwhelmed with fatigue. I modified my

warm-up routine slightly, hoping to reserve what little energy I had.

While yesterday's performance unfolded with such ease, today so much felt like a struggle. Tonight I felt no energy coming from the audience; it was like they were not even there, a black void, an empty space. I felt watched, I felt observed. While recognizing these feelings my mind began to drift ever so slightly, and in this moment I somewhat lost my balance, forcing me to take a small step to regain it. I know some people will see this step, and having had to take this step bothers me. The fact this bothers me bothers me even more! This work for me is much more than the precise physical execution of steps, yet with the slightest error I am personally confronted again with my past made present. I fully recognize that this is not a competition, not an exam or a moment for self-assessment, and yet I can't help feel the twinges of disappointment.

Tonight felt forced, because it was. Dancing through fatigue I simply could not stay present, stay and be within each movement. A genuine connection between myself and the other dancers came and went, and instead of giving more energy to them I felt like I was retreating. My final 'Wrist of Fury' felt like submission rather than its familiar empowerment, and this submission grew in force as I took my final obeisance. The energy generated with this work, that intensity was still there, yet it was darker, more severe, and performing my final obeisance, feeling watched and observed, I felt feelings of discomfort and disapproval.

Writing these words in the change room I resolve that I will make sure to rest tonight and tomorrow.

March 24

Kate

Tonight went really well, it was by far the most intense experience. I am a little upset though because there was someone in the wings taking pictures and for half a second I got distracted. I am a little upset that I got distracted, but maybe that is just silly.

I am doing this interview at intermission, probably a good thing that I am not doing it when the show is over because there would probably be tears. I guess part of me is a little bit relieved because this has been a very, very long week for my body, because it is injured and has been so sore. I was worried about doing the show because I had a consultation with my physiotherapist on Thursday where we discussed whether or not we should be pulling me from the show because I was hurting so much after Wednesday night's Dress Rehearsal. But here we are, almost at the end of the shows, and I am really happy that I pushed through.

This experience has been so positive. *Resistance* is not a 'frolicking through the fields' kind of piece; it feels much darker than that. Learning it was fun and working with you was a really positive experience. On days when rehearsals felt long for my body, and I was tired and hurting a lot, my injury feeling

horrible, I did not feel these things as much in your rehearsals. They were fun, went by fast, and you were so positive with the group and everyone else.

Talking about *Tangled Dances* as a whole I guess it has been a positive experience too. I still have half a show to go so I know I can't let myself feel like this is all over because I can't lose it when I still have to go perform two numbers. Part of me never thought I would have this last year because I wasn't supposed to be in YDE. I fought through that and pushed myself to get in. Then I was injured and my injury got worse and worse. Part of me is relieved that I made it here today because I thought I would never have this experience and get to be a part of something like this. I always thought that I was going to go into performing and I am not anymore. I am excited about coming back to school next year and doing a new direction of studies. But I really wanted this moment and this feeling of knowing that I could do this because people have told me that I couldn't, that I wasn't good enough. Now that I am here I feel like, 'I did this!' I just wanted that one moment and now I have it.

(Visibly upset) I still have another three weeks of school and I am pretty sure that I am going to be told that I should really stop dancing. That is scary. I know that it is not forever, and I just need to get better, but I have never been told that I can't dance. I am a little bit terrified of hearing that at the Doctors. I am just going to think about this moment, this show, being out on that stage, and all of this experience,

and hopefully that will get me through until I can dance again. There will be other moments like this.

Nico

Closing night and I didn't fuck up today, which I am really happy about! *Resistance* went really well, I felt the usual emotions I feel when I dance this piece but times ten. Actually, today all of my emotions were enhanced. I don't know if this is because it is closing night or maybe me realizing that this might be the last time I get to dance with certain people. I just don't know.

The first piece went better than yesterday but not as good as opening night. In *It's just what you do* I started to tear up, that piece just hits a spot in me that brings all these feelings that I have with a family situation I am living through right now. I am both happy and sad that the show is over. Happy in that I finally get to rest. Sad in that this experience is over and I will not be back on a stage until next year and it will not be with the same people who I have really grown so close to.

It has been a different kind of experience working on this project. I was not used to working with counts. It was hard at times because your rehearsals usually landed on a Friday and Friday is when I usually have to go to the States. I did not want to miss your rehearsal but at the same time I could not say no to my family. That was difficult. Picking up your movement was not that hard but getting my hips to open up was interesting. Overall

I enjoyed the experience, there were bumps here and there, at times difficult to work with certain people, but I survived.

Jillian

Well tonight was very different. Like I said opening night is very jittery and nerve racking because you do not really know what to expect. The second night is even scarier because you have to beat the first night and you still feel like you have something to prove. Tonight I said to myself before the show, 'Tonight, I am just dancing for me.' Especially with this being my last performance at York I had nothing more to prove, my friends would love my dancing no matter what. Really, tonight was just about living in every moment and enjoying it. It is an amazing feeling being on stage and I did not want to waste a second of it and that was what tonight was about for me.

In *Resistance*, I really wanted to put everything in my body and try to amplify it. I felt it was not the same force as it has been before, it was not malicious like it has felt before, but really more of just being in the moment, being *in* it and seeing a different side of it.

How do I feel now that the show is over? I don't want to get into that because it is going to make me really upset. (Visibly gets upset) It was my last show here at York (Long pause...now crying). I think for a dancer there is always that feeling of being afraid you won't have another chance to perform, especially as a contemporary dancer. Sorry. (Pause...wipes away

tears). You might not have that same chance again; you never know what is going to happen. So I really just wanted to enjoy every moment of tonight. I am so happy the show is over because we have been working towards it all year and this process has kind of captured our journey here at York. I am upset but...it is a big moment in my life and I just don't want it to pass.

My overall experience working on this project has been really eye opening. I have never really thought about, even though I am in the position, the dancer's opinion towards performance. This experience has opened my eyes. I said it has been a different experience every night, it is *not* the same, and it is different for every single dancer I would think. It would be interesting to hear what the other people think and how the other dancers analyze performance. I loved working with Shae. He brought a really perfect mixture of discipline; do this and this and this, which I liked, but he still had a relationship with us. There wasn't a hierarchy, he was with us, he understood us, and he respected us as artists, which I really appreciated. I hope to have this relationship with a choreographer again in the future.

Anastasia

Resistance closing night was not as good compared to yesterday. There was a weird feeling tonight. It was the final night tonight and there were a lot of emotions being lived. You want to do really well and I felt like I had an inner dialogue going on again. I did really great in the beginning of the piece and then in the 'mob scene' I did the wrong arms because I was

only thinking 'Do it well, do it well.' The congestion of all those thoughts, the changes of directions, and what I should be doing was hard to manage tonight. I had a really rough opening night because again I wanted to do so well.

I feel really good now that *Tangled Dances* is over because I have so much other stuff that I still have to do. Maybe that is why I have been overly analytical lately because I have been going home and doing homework, reading and writing. I think that I have been out of my body and into my head doing this and that has been an unfortunate experience because this is my final show at York and this out of body feeling has been my mind-set throughout the entire run of the show. These shows felt like something that I needed to get done and I wasn't able to really experience them. Yesterday being Friday night and knowing that school was over I could already sense a change of feeling in myself.

I can't help feel like there is some kind of cryptic thing that we are going to find out about this work of yours. You were so mysterious and vague in the beginning that I feel like everything that I am saying is going to become some kind of definitive thing. I guess I am just suspicious, overall though I really enjoyed this experience. It was really challenging to work in the manner you had us moving and learning. Usually I just like to move and not to count. When I do not have an emotional connection as to why I am moving, I can find it really challenging. I like to know why I am moving, so I can go with a feeling versus thinking my way through the movement. Working on

Resistance in the beginning was about learning the counts and thinking through the movement. As I began to learn more about the work I could somehow put my own body language into the movement and this felt so powerful. I am sorry for messing up the arms tonight; I was like, 'ah, shit!'

Jess

Resistance felt so much better than last night. It was a bittersweet performance. It felt so good. I felt engaged the whole time, my entire body. Everybody felt so intense tonight! Looking at the faces of the other dancers I was like, 'Holy demon child!' Everyone was feeding off of each other and it was kind of like the energy from opening night, but it was different because I felt like I had to give it that much more because I knew it could be the last time I would be dancing with some of these dancers.

Yes, it felt great. I did really notice tonight the blackness of the audience, like how it was just pitch black out there. I could not see anyone, and this somehow made me think about what my face was doing and whether people in the audience were scared or intrigued, and this made me feel involved with the audience in a way I just did not feel yesterday.

Now that the show is over I feel devastated, sad. Preparing for this show has been our lives for the past year and what we have been working towards, and now that we finally got here it felt like it all went by in three seconds. The first show I was

like 'Oh, I have two more.' The second show, 'Oh my gosh, there is just one more.' And now that the last show is done it felt like it all happened in a matter of hours and not days. No regrets, I loved every minute of it.

Even when I did not feel perfectly positive and happy about how I performed it was still something I would never take back. This has been the greatest experience I have had at York and I hope to do it again next year. I feel like I have grown a lot this year and I just want to keep growing. These performances felt genuine, a lot of the time when I was competing you had to smile, you had to force a smile and you were faking how you were feeling. I never felt that at all.

Thank you Shae for coming in and working with us. You have this great energy but still this bam, bam work ethic. I really enjoyed it because although I like to have fun while in rehearsal and performing I also like structure and getting things done. You came into this project with that attitude and I loved working with you.

Shae

What a pleasant way to bring this experience to a close. Having slept well and after taking it easy prior to arriving at the theatre, I felt great. Every moment I soaked up and appreciated.

During the performance I was *inside* the moment: in relation to my fellow dancers, in engagement with the movement and music, *in* time. No us, no them, no stage, no audience, only moments

unfolding with me choosing my way through them. The moment waiting in the wings and on stage flew by with energy, intensity, and something similar to a good-bye?

Each 'Wrist of Fury' tonight registered varying emotions/meaning; the initial gesture the familiar feeling of deterrence, the second of strength, yet the third and final one took me by surprise, it was indeed a good bye. During my final obeisance I felt like I was living this entire creative process and journey in a single gesture, and surprisingly, it felt fantastic.

Sitting here now in the change room, alone while the other dancers are still finishing the show, I feel that this is an end-of-sorts; an end to this process, an end to this wonderful creative sharing between myself and those involved in this project. I feel no regret; there are no lingering negative thoughts from the night before. I recognize that I am fatigued but satisfied, and I welcome a new change of pace.

Did I overcome and become something different than I was before? Did I choreograph Foucault? In this moment I am not sure, so I place my palms together, I close my eyes, and I begin to softly press my hands against each other; I absorb this feeling, these feelings of resistance. Resistance and acceptance, when to push back and when to accept, this is my choice.

I open my eyes with a confidence, a confidence in confirming that this creative experience did indeed feel for me, like resistance.

Concluding *Resistance* – In Performance

These interviews capture *how* dancers experienced the performances of *Resistance* and *Tangled Dances*. *Dancing* is an action, *performing* is an action, and the meaning of these actions can be observed in the subject's experience of the action. The actions contribute to the *how* of performance; mistakes being made, skills being acquired and demonstrated; feelings of being part of a group; a shared collective moment of good bye; emotions, thoughts, identification, and narratives of individual subjectivity being lived through time/space *performing* movement. The *how*'s and *why*'s of individuals moving along their *own* path, within a practice, make new meanings of performance, meanings so scarcely shared or documented.

These interviews contribute to a discourse.

As an ethnographic project, *Resistance* can be characterized as an example of the postmodern ethnographic movement, a continuation of Clifford Geertz's ethnographic enterprise where the "ethnographic observers were required to ask what precisely they were looking at, and what they were trying to do."²⁹ *Resistance* looked specifically at the act of performance within a practice. *Resistance* enhanced the understanding of the methods in which Foucault's disciplinary techniques operate upon the docile bodies of dancers participating in the creation and performance of a contemporary dance work. I was trying to put philosophy to work, to utilize theory as a means for creation of movement, to develop a choreographic process for personal self-overcoming, and to illustrate how the creative act can serve as a form of research for the acquisition of power/knowledge.

²⁹ Helen Thomas, *The Body, Dance and Cultural Theory*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 68.

In choreographing Foucault the multiple machines/systems that my dancers and myself are a part of began to manifest in ways I had been unable to appreciate before. The university, the classroom, the dancer within society; our bodies simultaneously a part of so many efficiently operating machines that employ precisely the same disciplinary techniques this research project aimed to illuminate. Discipline enables these machines yet *Resistance* demonstrates that within the context of a practice, discipline also provides the subject with skills and abilities that inform how they come to be within these systems. The narratives of these dancers, docile bodies relating to the experience of being manipulated, shaped, trained, and becoming skillful, will promote a reconsideration of performing and performance.

Consistent within these narratives is the ‘mistake’, errors made in the execution of a dance. The need to apologize, the feelings of disappointment, the reaction of others; a mistake can weigh heavily upon the psyche/experience of the dancer. Did I as choreographer encourage an environment and/or mindset that led to these feelings, these experiences? Perhaps these experiences relate to the undue importance placed upon the performance in front of an audience in the context of the theatre; a clear demonstration of a hierarchy between studio and stage, between “Objectified Cultural Capital” and “Embodied Cultural Capital”, and between the product over the process. It is possible these experiences illustrate the depth to which disciplinary techniques shape the subject, the well conceived and utilized ‘performance as an exam’, a component to the “Organization of Geneses” influencing pedagogical approaches that in turn mold the aptitude of the subject. Unquestionably I view these experiences as a direct engagement with relations of power. As researcher/choreographer/teacher I am troubled by these

effects a ‘mistake’ can have upon the experience of a performer. Is a mistake not an opportunity to learn? What does it mean to dance? In asking and answering these questions for *oneself*, a process for dissociating relations of power can be initiated.

I previously commented that as a researcher I found myself far more at ease with the word ‘art’ versus that of ‘control.’ As choreographer/researcher I was mindful of what I was trying to ‘control’: the physical movement of bodies in space/time in the context of a dance work, and the teaching methods and methodology that I would employ to create the work of art. I believe success was achieved only with the latter. Choreography sets specific parameters for the moving body in space/time, yet the individual, not the choreographer, ultimately determines *how* they fully engage with space/time; *how* each individual is *within* time, *within* space was clearly outside of my control. *Resistance* demonstrates docile bodies/subjective selves that are able to exert their own specific agency in the *action* of doing, of performing, while concurrently illustrating how behavior and skills are strongly influenced and shaped through relations of power.

Creating the work of art was handled with skills I have developed from my practice, and was aided with my use/appreciation of disciplinary techniques. Many behaviors exhibited by the dancers; a respectful and professional work ethic; an appreciation for the medium; a respect and safety for other moving bodies in the space; these observable behaviors benefited my choreographic process and were a continuation of behaviors by disciplined, molded individuals, shaped by multiple machines that make manifest a process of socialization. I was confident that bodies moving together in unison, sharing a space and a time, would result in experiences of intensity, power, and community; connecting increasingly aware individuals to the actions of a larger group.

This intensity and force experienced by the group projected outwards to the audience and observers. As a choreographer I find myself in a position to be able to shape particular experiences, promote particular emotions and visceral responses, yet ultimately be it dancer or audience member, how that work of art is experienced lies within the individual.

Foucault comments, “To be ‘gay’, I think, is not to identify with the psychological traits and the visible marks of the homosexual, but to try to define and develop a way of life.”³⁰ The choreographic process of *Resistance*; the methodology in which I structured the work and generated my movement; the multiple experiences lived in both creating and performing this work helped me, as a gay male, to define and develop my way of living. Yet the potency of this quote far exceeds the individual effect upon my sexuality if one substitutes ‘gay’ and ‘the homosexual’ with ‘a dancer’. “To be a dancer, I think, is not to identify with the psychological traits and the visible marks of a dancer, but to try to define and develop a way of life.” What these interviews provide is a snapshot, a brief moment in time, of individuals developing their own unique way of life. Individuals as part of the State, deciding for themselves their “good and their evil.” The force behind Foucault’s idea becomes increasingly salient and relatable if ‘a dancer’ is replaced with ‘an individual’, the individual trying to define and develop a way of life.

In my attempt to choreograph Foucault, selected theories of his were woven into a methodology and choreographic process. Arising from this project were multiple experiences that were voiced, voices of dancers sharing their experiences. My experience allowed me to become more than I once was, to establish a strength and confidence in

³⁰ Arnold I. Davidson, “*Ethics as Ascetics*” *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, ed. Gary Gutting, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 134.

aspects of my identity that were once the source of ridicule and of shame, to continue to develop specific skills in the context of a practice, and to no longer passively occupy my space within the State. In choreographing Foucault I have come to appreciate that I am the dancer and the dance.

I am stuck.

Too often I find myself in that space of ‘other’ to my society’s ‘normal.’

How do I move from this space?

I realized I don’t move from it, I must move from within it.



Image 5

Chapter 4

Resistance - In context

The article “Dance Theory?” (2005) is a transcribed and edited conversation between Susan Leigh Foster and Harmony Bench. Foster is currently a professor at UCLA’s Department of World Arts and Cultures and her scholarship has contributed significantly to the field of dance studies. In this article, Foster is of the opinion that theory has the potential to inform, to discover new things, and to assist in reevaluating the premise of learning. From Foster’s perspective, theory is woven into the entire creative and critical process. Foster states:

It seems to me that any dance class, through the activities or exercises it proposes, conveys certain ideas about what the body is. Does the class treat the body as a machine? As a vessel? As a precision instrument? As a source of ideas? As a vehicle for expression? How does the dancing discipline the body?¹

The docile body can easily be considered a machine, a vessel, and an instrument of exacting precision. Docile bodies are also people, individuals capable of agency; I/my body is a source of ideas, an agent of expression. This chapter will revisit Foucault’s concept of the docile body implicated within techniques of discipline. By reviewing selected comments made by the dancers the often-unseen techniques of discipline become apparent. These subjective articulations voiced by dancing bodies were drawn from the period of the first interview conducted during the fifth week of the creative process, up to the final post-performance interview for *Tangled Dances*. To further the discussion of dancing bodies and discipline, Foucault’s theory of *panopticism* will be

¹ Susan Leigh Foster, “Dance Theory?,” in *Teaching Dance Studies*, ed. Judith Chazin-Bennahum (New York: Routledge, 2005), 21.

treated in a similar manner, by utilizing dancers' remarks speaking of their own unique experiences participating in the creation and performance of a contemporary dance work.

Turning away from the docile body and techniques of discipline, *Resistance* – In Context will then circle toward one of Foucault's last theoretical queries, namely "Technologies of the Self." Two articles from established dance scholars will assist in promoting present-day considerations of dancing bodies while concurrently demonstrating how the dancer's body-as-object, devoid of personal experience, has often been represented in Western theatre dance theorizations of bodies that dance.

A 'Cell', Counts, and Repetition

Dancers Nico, Kate, Anastasia, Jillian, and Jess were never only bodies-as-object, devoid of personal subjectivity; their shared subjective experiences provide points of entry into observing that which is often difficult to detect and rarely archived. In *Resistance*, an example of practice-based research using theory as a functioning choreographic tool, one can observe various processes at work, processes occurring over a prolonged period of time.

The chapter, *Resistance* – In Studio, provided a detailed overview of how Foucault's disciplinary techniques: "The Art of Distribution," "The Control of Activity," "The Organization of Genesis," and "The Composition of Forces" became functional in my creative process. The positioning of each dancer/docile body within a small 'cell' moving in a tight group formation emphasized "The Art of Distribution." The forced adherence to a strict use of musical counts, counts as prescribed duration, underlines the "elaboration of the act" contributing to the "Control of Activity." In two specific

procedures I utilized a working approach representative of an “Organization of Geneses,” procedures that I strictly adhered to. The first approach focused on how I structured my rehearsal time: warm-up, review, learn new material, rehearse, observe, choose to change, and video. The second aspect concerned the duration of the fourteen rehearsals I would have and how they were arranged to get *Resistance* created, taught, and on to the performance stage; ten rehearsals devoted to the creation and learning of the work, and four used to prepare the piece from studio to stage.

Practice and repetition were required for the dancers to become accustomed to moving in a confined amount of space, with gestures set to exact counts of music. Through the process of repetition and a commitment to learning, a clear progression of skill development is observed, these skills opening up various avenues for the dancer’s experience. Formations of these subjective experiences were made in relation to the other dancers, an intersubjectivity between bodies moving within a shared time/space.

Following are comments made by Jess, in a chronological order from the first interview to the opening night performance of *Resistance*. Her experiences are numerous, the evolution of skills is transparent, and the intersubjectivity between her and the other dancers is a constant reminder that in *Resistance*, dancing bodies learned and performed the work together.

Jess (First Interview)

With this piece we are a lot more together and we have to be. We feel each other’s movements. If someone is on a shallower diagonal in front of me when we are moving together, I have to work with it because I have to, being in such a small, shared

space. If not, we would just be hitting everyone. I feel this is good because we are not used to this. Just dancing so close to somebody, it really makes us into an ensemble and tunes us in to what everybody else is doing.

The mob scene and the last section you just set, I still have to count my way through it. I guess, in a way, I am still counting through the whole piece. But in those newer sections in particular, I am thinking if I am on, if I am correct with the timing and the movements.

(Second Interview)

I spoke in our last interview about how I felt dancing so close to everyone. Back then it was a good learning experience because we were not used to moving like that. Now things have changed a lot. I feel like we are now much better at moving together. During the 'square dance' section, for example, before I would hit Heather every time we moved forward and I would hit Kate every time we moved back. This just worked itself out over time.

Now I just feel that I can let myself go. I feel like all of us feel that we are moving with each other. Being that close to everybody, all the time, you begin to feel like you could go a bit crazy. You mentioned to us once about possibly having to go to your 'happy place.' If I did not hear you say that I probably would have gone insane by now. I am always trying to get to that 'happy place' because you just constantly hear people. People talking, and singing, and it is just so hard to shut all that out

but still stay present in the piece. During lighting level sets, we are not doing so much on the stage, and I just had to close my eyes and breathe. This definitely helped a lot.

(Opening Night of *Resistance*)

Resistance tonight was unreal; it felt perfect. It probably wasn't perfect but with everyone on stage, amped up, it felt like the energy of a thousand people rioting. I guess it felt perfect because it happened all on its own.

From thinking, counting, and reacting to bodies in a shared space, to a performance happening all on its own; this period between creation and performance emphasizes a progression of skill development and a range of lived experiences. Within a fluid temporality, consistently pressing forward, an advancement of skills can easily be overlooked, particularly when the focus lies primarily on a final moment/performance. A strict application of an appreciation for an "Organization of Genesis" lent itself to this process of skill development, a process that was not independent of each dancer's relationship to their respective dance practices. What follows are comments provided by the dancers relating to my choreographic process.

Kate

When I found out you were only starting to choreograph in January, and how slowly the other pieces came together, I thought how were we going to learn a whole piece in two months and have it as ready as the other pieces for the stage? It is funny,

because by the time we got to your tenth rehearsal I was thinking, 'Man, we are done! We just have to run this piece and it is awesome.'

Anastasia

I was really impressed with how this piece came together; because it came together, it was done, and we moved on to just cleaning it up. I guess that is why I am not nervous about performing this piece. It didn't matter that you had less time to create the piece because you knew what you wanted.

Jess

I think we all walked in to your first rehearsal asking how we were going to finish a piece in twelve weeks. Then knowing that everyone was going to be on stage for the entire piece it seemed a bit overwhelming. I think because you came in to each rehearsal with a goal and with such a solid structure, it helped us to push through it faster and get everyone working on the same page quicker.

As formerly stated, the time allocated for me to create and teach *Resistance* to the dancers was ten rehearsals. For those with little point of reference for how long this period of creation can take, ten rehearsals is not a lot of time. Foucault's disciplinary techniques, in particular "The Organization of Geneses" provided me with both an appreciation and a practical approach for how I regulated the time I had. My steady

adherence to this structure, itself a form of discipline, was easily recognized by many of the dancers participating in the creative process.²

The choice to place myself in the work, as a performer, created a unique position for me to observe the other dancers but also to be *inside* of the work. Had I made the choice not to perform, my capacity for what and how I could observe would have been significantly altered. Sharing those performances with the dancers, sharing all those moments together in the studio, is a form of participant-observation with the researcher placed *in situ* to the various phenomena being considered. What emerged from this position was a greater appreciation of ‘being observed.’ Foucault’s disciplinary techniques are dependent on the subject implicated within acts of observance. “The Art of Distribution” demonstrates this pronounced reliance upon observance: “...each variable of this force – strength, promptness, skill, constancy – would be observed, and therefore characterized, assessed, computed and related to the individual who was its particular agent.”³ The act of observing is the basis for Foucault’s theory of *Panopticism*.

The *panopticon* as described in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, is a building consisting of a tower with windows looking down on a structure that was divided into separate rooms or cells. Within each cell an individual is located in a position to be observed by a supervisor in the tower. The individual is not able to tell when they are being observed, “Hence, the major effect of the *panopticon*: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic

² This ‘non-collaborative’ approach to choreography will be further developed later in the chapter.

³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (1975; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 145.

functioning of power.”⁴ In contemporary culture, *panopticism* can be considered as a metaphor for the multiple mechanisms of surveillance and discipline that are integrated into all facets of society. Surveillance no longer requires specific architectural design, like the *panopticon*. Instead, observation and surveillance are widespread throughout society through relations of discipline, “the basic functioning of a society penetrated through and through with disciplinary mechanisms.”⁵ The dancer, in studio and performance, is constantly caught in both the acts of observing and being observed.

The training of a dancer is a procedure that utilizes the act of observation as a tool for the development of skills. An analysis of Foster’s article “Dancing Bodies” (1997) will serve to clarify further how dance instruction is dependent on the action of observation.⁶ From their earliest moments as children in a dance studio, to undergraduate students in classrooms of a university, the dancers participating in *Resistance* were accustomed to constant observation from their dance teachers. These dance teachers observed, supervised, and provided dancers with information and feedback to promote skill development. In placing myself in the role of performer, I had blurred this clear delineation between student and teacher. My position for observation was from *inside* the dance work. It was my absent body, represented by the video camera recording the run-throughs of our performances that occupied an exterior position for observation. It is this exterior position for observation, occupied by choreographer, teacher, or audience member that appeared to have a significant affect upon the dancers performing in *Resistance*.

⁴ A summation of the *panopticon* as described in Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish, The Birth of the Prison*, 200-201.

⁵ Ibid., 209.

⁶ The analysis of “Dancing Bodies” will occur later in the chapter.

Kate

Even though you are in the work on your own and not part of the collective it does feel like you are part of the group. The only thing that is different is that when we are running the work on stage you can't be out in the audience watching us to provide feedback.

Jillian

With you being in the piece with us I wondered how you were going to provide us with feedback regarding the run-throughs, but you record those, watch the video, and then give us feedback and I think that process works.

I did not feel that being with the dancers on stage, as part of the performance, jeopardized my ability to provide feedback. In many ways, performing with the dancers provided me with observations of their dancing that I simply could not have perceived from a position in the audience. The mechanisms of surveillance and discipline that privilege exterior positions of observation upon dancers, dancing, are all pervasive. The following comments reflect mistakes being made or potentially being made. Is it a misstep in execution that is troublesome or that the mistake is witnessed from an observer in an exterior position of influence?

Jess (March 23 - Post Performance Interview)

I am so sorry Shae; I screwed up a few times today dancing *Resistance*...Hopefully because there are so many of us dancing, people in the audience won't notice that I screwed up.

Nico (March 23 - Post Performance Interview)

Resistance felt pretty good tonight, except that I did some arms early. Supposedly I did some arms way, way too early...Everyone says that it looked ok because I was in the middle of the group in the front, so it wasn't that noticeable that it was a mistake.

Anastasia (March 22 - Post Performance Interview)

During *Resistance* I remember mentally fighting a strong negative inner dialogue. I was really self-doubting myself, and my memory. I remember thinking that one of my Modern teachers was in the audience and I experienced a growing tension as I thought of making a mistake with her watching.

Shae (March 23 - Post Performance Comments)

I felt watched, I felt observed. While recognizing these feelings my mind began to drift ever so slightly, and in this moment I somewhat lost my balance, forcing me to take a small step to regain it. I know some people will see this step, and having had to take this step bothers me. The fact this bothers me bothers me even more!

Techniques of discipline shape, train, and modify the docile body. These techniques are dependent on relations of power. *Panopticism* can be used to demonstrate power being exercised during the surveillance of self by another. The above comments

are indications of various polyvalent modalities of surveillance occurring during the act of dancing/performing. These subjective experiences occurred in relation to others, an intersubjectivity reliant upon multiple forms of observation between self and other. A form of surveillance that is of utmost importance in the training of a dancer is the surveillance of oneself, by the self. This particularized means for self-surveillance can be considered as a way for an individual to know him/herself. Considered in the context of a practice, I propose that this training, this way of being, can be considered as a contemporary form of Foucault's "Technologies of the Self."

"Technologies of the Self"

In the fall of 1982, at the University of Vermont, Foucault gave a faculty seminar where he positioned a new direction for his work. This new direction noted a shift in Foucault's ideas. The following passage is taken from the introduction to the book, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (1988), wherein the editors comment upon this shift from Foucault's earlier work to what would be his final work. They write:

Throughout his works Foucault had concerned himself largely with the technologies of power and domination, whereby the self has been objectified through scientific inquiry and through what he termed 'dividing practices.' ... His new project would be, rather, a genealogy of how the self constituted *itself* as subject.⁷

⁷ Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton, eds., "Introduction," in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 3.

With the assistance of Foucault's article "Technologies of the Self," a foundation will be developed in order to consider the action of dancing, within the context of a practice, as a contemporary form of "technology of the self."

Foucault claims that there are four major types of technologies. They are:

(1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends of domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.⁸

Commonalities exist between these four technologies and the previously addressed three notions of cultural capital: objectified, institutionalized, and embodied. These forms of cultural capital do not exist independently from one another. Instead, a consistent interplay with interrelationships occurs between them. This modality is similar to Foucault's "Technologies." Foucault states:

These four types of technologies hardly ever function separately, although each one of them is associated with a certain type of domination. Each implies certain modes of training and modification of individuals, not only in the obvious sense of acquiring certain skills but also in the sense of acquiring certain attitudes.⁹

Foucault himself claims that his early interests centered upon relations of power.

Perhaps I've insisted too much on the technology of domination and power. I am more and more interested in the interaction between oneself and others and in the technologies of individual domination, the history of how an individual acts upon himself, in the technology of the self.¹⁰

⁸ Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," in *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, eds. Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick H. Hutton (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 18.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 19.

One can only imagine how Foucault's ideas would have evolved regarding the "technology of the self." Serving as an educator, Foucault's ideas can be braided into the creative and critical process; functioning as theory that Foster opines has the potential to inform, to discover new things, and to assist in reevaluating the premise of learning.

Epimelesthai Sautou – "To Take Care of Yourself"

To develop the concept of a "technology of the self" Foucault relies upon "Greco-Roman philosophy in the first two centuries A.D. of the early Roman Empire and Christian spirituality developed in the fourth and fifth centuries of the late Roman Empire."¹¹ His emphasis was "to discuss the subject not only in theory but in relation to a set of practices in late antiquity."¹² Foucault writes, "These practices were constituted in Greek as *epimelesthai sautou*, 'to take care of yourself,' 'the concern with self,' 'to be concerned, to take care of yourself.'"¹³ Practices formed the basis for a subject to better know him/herself, practices which were *doings*, *actions* occurring over time with specific associated intentions and goals.

The precept 'to be concerned with oneself' was, for the Greeks, one of the main rules for social and personal conduct and for the art of life. For us now this notion is rather obscure and faded. When one is asked "What is the most important moral principle in ancient philosophy?" the immediate answer is not 'Take care of oneself' but the Delphic principle, *gnothi sauton* (Know yourself). [...] Perhaps our philosophical tradition has overemphasized the latter and forgotten the former[...] In Greek and Roman texts, the injunction of having to know yourself was always associated with the other principle of having to take care of yourself, and it was that need to take care of oneself that brought the Delphic maxim into operation."¹⁴

¹¹ I will focus on the Greco-Roman philosophy for my discussion of *askēsis*. Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," 19.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

How could my own dance practice be considered in light of what Foucault proposes with ‘to take care of yourself?’ Can a dance practice, as a means for learning *how* to know oneself be considered as a contemporary extension of *epimelesthai sautou*?

In Chapter 2 – *In Practice*, I referred to my bodily practice as being similar to a form of *askēsis*, and defined *askēsis* as “the notion of a regime of self testing and training.”¹⁵ Foucault presents *askēsis* as a derivative of the philosophical tradition dominated by Stoicism, claiming:

Askēsis means not renunciation but the progressive consideration of self, or mastery over oneself, obtained not through the renunciation of reality but through the acquisition and assimilation of truth. [...] It is a set of practices by which one can acquire, assimilate, and transform truth into a permanent principle of action [...] it is a process of becoming more subjective.¹⁶

Asking what are the principle features of *askēsis*, Foucault subsequently answers:

They include exercises in which the subject puts himself in a situation in which he can verify whether he can confront events and use the discourses with which he is armed. It is a question of testing the preparation. [...] The Greeks characterized the two poles of those exercises by the terms *meletē* and *gymnasia*. *Meletē* means ‘meditation,’ according to the Latin translation, *meditatio*. [...] While *meditatio* is an imaginary experience that trains thought, *gymanasia* is training in a real situation, [...] for example, in Plutarch’s *De Denio Socratis*, one gives oneself over to very hard sporting activities.¹⁷

Beginning with that moment as an undergraduate student at Concordia, a moment of resistance followed by an acceptance, I embarked upon a long progressive consideration of self. My dance practice developed beyond that of mere ‘physical activities’ into a process, a process designed to observe my socially located self and to

¹⁵ Tony Schirato, Geoff Danaher, and Jen Webb, *Understanding Foucault: A Critical Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, 2012), xvii.

¹⁶ Foucault, “Technologies of the Self” *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, 35.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

decide for myself “my good, and my evil.” This process of distinguishing for *oneself*, one’s good and evil, reflects an “acquisition and assimilation of truth,” a truth that is neither inherent, nor prescribed, but created out of relations of power and history. In learning to appreciate and understand the history of I/my body and relations of power through the context of a practice, I was discovering *my* way. This practice did not feel like a form of renunciation in order to achieve the way.

My dance practice developed into a process that felt more like an observed “meticulous meshing” with I/my body, more than a form of “mastery over oneself.” How can someone master something that is fluid and ever changing? Within this practice infinite subjective experiences are lived, experiences that lend themselves to the continuous formation of oneself. I/my body developed skills and methods through repetition and values associated with these specific actions. Seeking mastery of certain skills and abilities potentially becomes a taking care of one’s self. In this care lies a potential for self-overcoming, a transformation of oneself within one's socio-cultural environment.

“The discourses of which I am armed” are multiple; I am versed to various degrees in all four of Foucault’s technologies. These discourses are also doings, actions. Concentrating on “technologies of the self,” consider again the descriptions of myself lying on the floor. Could this act be considered a form of meditation, of *meletē*? *Meletē* was not consistent. Between the Stoics and the Epicureans the meditations that composed this practice were very different. However, a commonality between both was that *meletē* was “the work one undertook in order to prepare a discourse or improvisation by thinking over useful terms and arguments. You had to anticipate the real situation

through dialogue in your thoughts,”¹⁸ a form of meditation as a means for an internal dialogue to “imagine the articulation of possible events to test how you would react.”¹⁹ For me, lying on the floor is indeed an act of preparation; a dialogue with me/my body that prepares me for an immediate future of creation, training, or performance. It is a ‘working’ but not one composed exclusively of thought and arguments but inclusive of one’s bodily situation and physicality. It is thinking achieved through different means, a ‘working’ where energies, sensations, sensorial memory and emotions are moved through and lived. I/my body an active agent in the very process of *how* I choose to perceive. This *how* is what shapes a particular way of being, this *how* potentially informs my reactions to possible future events.

The training of a dancer can be considered synonymous with *gymnasia*, ‘to train oneself.’ Consider the rehearsals for *Resistance* as a period for the training of oneself. This training that prepared the dancers (and myself) for public showings of the dance work occurred in relation to and with the help of others. From the comments provided by the dancers, these public performances of *Resistance* appear to be situated at the top of a hierarchy relating to the many performances that occurred during the period for this research project. Perhaps the errors in execution, the ‘mistakes’ made during those public performances and their corresponding feelings of disappointment, relate more to a perceived failing of training? To speak only to my own experience, I reflect upon that bothersome moment performing *Resistance* when my mind began to drift resulting in a loss of balance that forced me to take a small corrective step. Was this step due to insufficient preparation? If the public performances of *Resistance* serve as a ‘testing of

¹⁸ Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” 36.

¹⁹ Ibid.

my preparation' that small step represents a falling short of preparation toward a desired outcome, a state of perfection in execution. If the final public performances are the sole measurement of my training for *Resistance* then that small step could signal a failure in my preparation. Fortunately, my practice has taught me to value the preparation over a state of perfection in a singular moment of performance, a lesson learned by the very act of 'training oneself.'

In the Presence of a Master

As a means for learning *how* to know one's self better, my bodily practice serves as a contemporary extension of Foucault's "technology of the self." With the help of teachers, coaches, and educators, I have developed skills and methods that inform a practice of taking care of the self. Foucault, giving a lecture at the College de France on the "Hermeneutics of the Subject" stated, "There is no care of the self without the presence of a 'master'." ²⁰ If I consider my bodily practice as a contemporary extension of a "technology of the self" then I posit that educators occupy this role of "master." Many of these educators, like Nietzsche and Foucault, made their presence felt by the force of their ideas, their writings serving as tools through which I could come to better know myself. Many professors along my path encouraged and challenged how I would think of dance, nurtured my confidence and provided me with a space in which to articulate what dancing is for me. These individuals I consider to be "masters." The relationships

²⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France 1981 – 1982*, trans. Graham Burchell, ed. Arnold I. Davidson (New York: Picador, 2005), 58.

between these educators and myself nourished the development of my own “technology of the self.”

Foucault claims, “The care of the self is actually something that always has to go through the relationship to someone else who is the master.”²¹ In my studies one of the relationships that would inform the development of my thought and the very construction of my research project *Resistance* was the discourse of Western theatre dance that composed the curriculum of my university studies. Two dance scholars of particular influence were Susan Foster and Ramsey Burt. The representation of bodies that danced in their writing left me discomforted and prompted a direction for my research. Foster’s article “Dancing Bodies” (1997) and Burt’s article “Genealogy and Dance History” (2004) are used as examples of the discourse *Resistance* was created in response to. Both articles utilize Foucault in order to achieve their desired ends.

“Dancing Bodies”

Susan Foster describes herself as “a dancer working with, in, and through the body.”²² Published in 1997, her article “Dancing Bodies” entered into the canon of Western theatre dance studies. Writing in the first person, Foster shares her thoughts regarding critical writing about the body. Foster writes:

When I read recent critical writing about the body, I am, on the one hand, delighted at this new interest in it, and on the other, dismayed by the tendency to treat it as a symbol for desire or sexuality, for a utopia, for that which is unique to woman or for the elusive nature of the text. These writings seldom address the body I know; ...Alternatively, these writings scrutinize and analyze the body, but only as a

²¹ Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the College de France 1981 – 1982*, 58.

²² Susan Leigh Foster, “Dancing Bodies,” in *Meaning in Motion*, ed. Jane C. Desmond (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 235.

product of the various discourses that measure it. Here it exists as the referent for genres of calculation that concern the historian of science or sexuality: we learn intriguing details about the significance of sundry anatomical parts and how they have been subjected to study – and, by extension, incorporated into larger workings of power.²³

I share many of Foster's thoughts. As an undergraduate student reading dance history and criticism I was often at odds with how the body and dancing were portrayed. The literature comprising the core reading for my dance classes did not seem to address the body I knew. More importantly, this literature often left me feeling at odds with what I was experiencing as a dancer/performer. The theoretical body, used as a referent, was the subject of many of my required readings. In direct comparison to this theoretical body was my lived body, my subjective body that I was living through in the actions and doings of my studio classes. My subjective experiences, as well as those of dancers participating in *Resistance*, will be in dialogue with the theoretical bodies Foster proposes in "Dancing Bodies."

Foster, in response to this critical writing, voices her desire for "a more meat-and-bones approach to the body based on an analysis of discourses or practices that *instructs* it."²⁴ To provide her own discourse on such practices that instruct the body, Foster turns to Roland Barthes and Foucault. Foster states, "Michel Foucault delineates aspects of the instructable body when he describes the disciplinary procedures, the lines, hierarchies, and spatial organization that bodies are asked to maintain as part of the disciplinary lineaments of culture."²⁵ *Resistance* – In Studio offered a detailed consideration of Foucault's disciplinary techniques that instruct the body. Commenting

²³ Foster, "Dancing Bodies," 235.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 236.

on two theoretical ideas of Barthes and Foucault in which the body is implicated, Foster states:

These two examples hardly suffice, though, when one considers what might be done toward studying methods of cultivating the body – whole disciplines through which it is molded, shaped, transformed, and in essence created. Such disciplines include all sports and physical-culture pursuits; regulations governing posture, etiquette, and comportment...habits in the workplace or place of worship; in the performing arts; patterns of standing, lying, sitting, eating, walking...²⁶

Sport, physical-culture pursuits, the performing arts, an individual's daily participation in these types of disciplines often lead to the development of a practice. Quoting Foster, "The daily practical participation of a body in any of these disciplines makes of it a body-of-ideas."²⁷ Within a practice, a "body-of-ideas" is cultivated, shaped and transformed. Commenting on practices as defined above Foster states "Such practices, Foucault has demonstrated, are part of the fabric of culture itself. They 'invest, mark, train and torture the body; they force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, and to emit signs.'"²⁸

In these practices described above by Foucault and Foster it is important to appreciate that *someone*, not *something* participates in these practices. Within these practices potential strategies for a "technology of the self" are created; methods for a care of the self are developed and performed by subjective selves. These *actions*, and their subsequent meanings are part of a series of *doings* that lead to any number of lived corporeal experiences. *Resistance* illustrates that the process of someone being molded, shaped and trained over a period of time, results in multiple subjective lived experiences for the theatrical dancer learning and creating a contemporary dance work. "Dancing Bodies" aimed to provide a detailed analysis of the instruction of a theatrical dancer.

²⁶ Foster, "Dancing Bodies," 236.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

Foster writes, “In what follows, I shall attempt to describe one such body-of-ideas, that of the theatrical dancer. I have imagined that I am addressing someone who has seen but never participated in theatrical dance.”²⁹ Foster’s imagined reader is one that has no first hand experiences of participating in theatrical dancing; the reader’s understanding of dancing in this context is consequently formed solely upon what they have seen of theatrical dance, and the information that Foster provides.

Foucault’s “instructable” body provides a framework in which Foster details the training of the theatrical dancer. In this process of dance training three theoretical bodies emerge. The first theoretical body proposed by Foster is the perceived and tangible body. “The dancer’s perceived body derives primarily from sensory information that is visual, aural, haptic, olfactory, and perhaps more importantly, kinesthetic.”³⁰ The following passage depicts the perceived body:

Dancers see large portions of their own bodies, a vista that changes as they move. They hear the sounds produced by locomotion, by one body part contacting another, by the breath and by joints and muscles creaking, popping, and grinding as they flex, extend, and rotate. They feel the body’s contact with the ground, with objects or persons, and with parts of itself, and they sense its temperature and sweat. They smell sweat and breath.³¹

The perceived body is the dancer’s body-as-object, the object of the dancer’s directed consciousness. The reader of “Dancing Bodies” can relate to this perceived body as their body is also a body that feels, that sees, that smells, that moves, that senses. In those moments in which I described myself lying on the floor, one can observe this perceived body: the awareness of pain in distinct areas, physical sensations in differing limbs, and

²⁹ Foster, “Dancing Bodies,” 236.

³⁰ Ibid., 237.

³¹ Ibid.

the sun on my skin. However, *how* the body can be perceived varies considerably and can be altered with skills acquired through a bodily practice.

In those moments lying on the floor, or moments I lived creating, rehearsing, and performing *Resistance*, perception was experienced differently than in other lived moments. Energies, sensations, sensorial memory and emotions are moved through and lived. I/my body becomes an active agent in the very process of *how* I choose to perceive. Living through sensing and sensations, thoughts and emotions are experienced simultaneously. I choose my direction through these intensities; I can direct my consciousness toward that which I desire. *I* am present in the perceiving body; I/my body *becoming* in the action of active perception. This is how I have experienced the perceived body in the action of dancing.

The second theoretical body proposed by Foster is the aesthetically ideal body. Information provided by the perceived body aids in the dancer's construction of the ideal body. Foster states:

...information about the perceived body may be incorporated into the dancer's ideal body, where it combines with fantasized visual or kinesthetic images of a body, images of other dancers' bodies, and cinematic or video images of dancing bodies. The dancer's ideal body may specify size, shape, and proportions of its parts as well as expertise at executing specific movements.³²

This ideal body can be considered alongside Foucault's concept of *panopticism*; an ideal body partially constructed by the act of observing other dancers' bodies in any number of scenarios and circumstances. The reader of "Dancing Bodies" at this point is no different than a dancer; the reader's own "ideal body" also constructed out of the actions of observing other bodies. The specific movements these ideal bodies may execute will

³² Foster, "Dancing Bodies," 237.

differ, so too the activities, spaces, and environments these bodies will occupy, yet the *processes* of constructing the ideal body are arguably shared between a dancer and non-dancer. Foster denotes that both bodies, the perceived and the ideal “are constructed in tandem; each influences the development of the other.”³³ These two theoretical bodies participate in the various activities specific to a dancer and their acquisition of skills “at attending to, duplicating, repeating, and remembering bodily movement.”³⁴

The third theoretical body proposed by Foster is the demonstrative body. As defined by Foster, “the demonstrative body displays itself in the body of the teacher, and sometimes in one’s own image in the mirror and in the bodies of other students in the class and their mirror images.”³⁵ The dance teacher’s body is a demonstrative body that leads the teaching of dance techniques in specific classes. In their pedagogical approach, these dance classes depend upon Foucault’s techniques of discipline, techniques elaborated upon throughout the dissertation. Like a docile body, the dancer’s body is used, transformed, and improved in structured classes within enclosed spaces as they train in these specific techniques. According to Foster, “Each dance technique cultivates bodily strength, flexibility, and alignment, the shapes made by the body, the rhythm of its movements, and the quality and amount of tension throughout it.”³⁶ In learning these techniques the dancer becomes skilled in the movements specific to dancing particular techniques. “Dancers pull, tuck, extend, lift, soften, and lengthen areas of the body throughout the duration of the technique class. They learn the curves or angles that body

³³ Foster, “Dancing Bodies,” 237.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 238.

³⁶ Ibid.

parts can form, and to place these in a particular shape at a given time.”³⁷ These actions of pulling, tucking, extending, etc., concisely describe *what* the dancer does in these movements. These actions are not always visible to everyone who observes dancers moving. What is absent in this description is *how* the dancer experiences these actions. Would the *how* be consistent? Is this *how* a reflection of each dancer’s history and/or intention motivating the execution of these actions? *Resistance* suggests that this *how* would be multiple, shifting over time, and informed by the specific skills each dancer may have.

The non-dancing body also requires demonstrative bodies in the various practices it too must learn, from standing, lying, eating, and walking; to postures, etiquette and comportment in various spaces; demonstrative bodies serve both dancers and non-dancers. Foster’s imagined readers, non-theatrical dancing bodies, have similarities to bodies that perform theatrical dance. The theoretical formation of non-dancing and dancing theatrical bodies share reliance upon demonstrative bodies for the shaping and transforming of his/her body with the perceived and ideal body implicated in this process.

In the context of the choreographic process for *Resistance* I occupied the role of the demonstrative body. As mentioned, my choreographic process could be considered as non-collaborative. With each rehearsal I would teach the specific movements for the ensemble to the dancers, my demonstrative body illustrating precisely how I wanted the physical execution of the set movements. This process elicited differing subjective experiences for the dancers involved. Consider again dancers’ comments relating to my rehearsals and the movement I taught them.

³⁷ Foster, “Dancing Bodies,” 239.

Jillian

It has been so nice to just be given choreography. Just to be told, 'Do this.' I like both ends of the choreographic spectrum, I really do love the creative process but sometimes it is just great to step outside of your own body and go into someone else's through their movement. You find out new things about yourself and you experience new things.

Jess

I love learning repertoire, just going in to the studio and learning a piece of work. So I love just coming in to your rehearsals, you know what you are doing and you just go right into it. I think I feel more comfortable with this process because it is not me putting my own stuff out there to be judged. It is more just my dancing of your work that is judged. I can learn the work and try to embody the work. If it is my own movement I always wonder if it is right for the piece, for what the choreographer wants. So I feel comfortable and I can go right away into the work your way.

Kate

Your rehearsals are way different because most choreographers start with improvisation and then move on. They will give you choreography but then ask you to change it up. You are giving us exactly what you want and then changing it based upon what you see. Other choreographers do not really give you

the movement; they want you to give it to them. I think I like this process better but that might be because I am still at the place where I am not very confident in my own abilities...This process is better for me because I feel like I can put more of myself into this, which is kind of odd because I am not creating any of it, but I feel more comfortable in it.

Anastasia

You had the movement already in your head and you were straight up, it is this, it is this, with only a few changes. Because your process is and was so structured I found it challenging to deviate from your process.

These comments depict the subjective experiences each dancer had while being part of a set procedure for learning a contemporary dance work. These experiences are varied and reflect each dancer's individuality. In contrast to these dancers' multiple, subjective experiences of learning and executing specific movements, is the singular and generalized aesthetic experience of a dancer that Foster refers to as a "hired body."

In the article "Dancing Bodies" she writes:

My comments fall into two sections: the first focuses on the formation of dancing bodily consciousness, and the second situates this bodily consciousness in a cultural and aesthetic moment. Both are firmly rooted in a Western framework for considering the purpose and value of dance; they cannot avoid, even as they try to provide a perspective on, Western assumptions about the body, the self, and the expressive act.³⁸

³⁸ Foster, "Dancing Bodies," 236.

Foster's theorization of perceived, ideal and demonstrative bodies assists her formation of a "dancing bodily consciousness." Her descriptions of various dance techniques: Ballet, Duncan, Graham, Cunningham, and Contact Improvisation, serve to "situate this bodily consciousness in a cultural and aesthetic moment," with each dance technique prescribed its own exclusive "aesthetic vision." As a theatrical dancer with training that includes Ballet, Graham, and Contact Improvisation technique, I am not the imagined reader Foster is addressing. My own experiences, or "aesthetic moments" of learning and dancing Ballet, Graham, and Contact Improvisation techniques are in conflict with the specific "aesthetic visions" that Foster provides for each technique. Do these differences in aesthetic experience signal a failure on my part? My inability to achieve the desired "aesthetic visions" these dance techniques offer? Or could these differences signal an inability for Foster's "aesthetic visions" to accommodate the individual subjectivity of dancers, and the multiplicity of "aesthetic visions" dancers can experience performing these techniques?

"Dancing Bodies" was published in 1997. During this time the strict separation of the various dance techniques Foster describes was changing. She writes:

Prior to the last decade, each of these techniques was considered to be unique. Not only did each mark the body so deeply that a dancer could not adequately perform another technique, but each aesthetic project was conceived as mutually exclusive of, if not hostile to, the others.³⁹

Social shifts; new dance makers and choreographers creating work; interdisciplinary approaches to the creation of dances; formalized institutions of dance in competition with new entrepreneurial approaches; these changes resulted in the formation of the theatrical

³⁹ Foster, "Dancing Bodies," 253.

dancer as a body for hire.⁴⁰ I was an undergraduate dance student, training to be a dancer, when I first read the following passage from “Dancing Bodies.”

This body exists alongside others that remain more deeply involved in, and consequently more expert at, the techniques I have outlined. It does not display its skills as a collage of discrete styles but, rather, homogenizes all styles and vocabularies beneath a sleek, impenetrable surface. Uncommitted to any specific aesthetic vision, it is body for hire: it trains in order to make a living at dancing.⁴¹

I could never identify this “hired body” as described by Foster. Does Foster know the level of involvement these hired bodies have to the learning of dance techniques? Do all hired bodies homogenize styles beneath a sleek, impenetrable surface? Most importantly, how does Foster know the dancer’s commitment to an aesthetic vision? I was already deeply committed to my own aesthetic vision during my training to be “a body for hire.” In this passage, Foster is not avoiding assumptions of dancing bodies; she is making assumptions; assumptions that contribute to a discourse. How would her imagined reader, with no lived experiences relating to training and performance, come to understand this information provided by Foster? When her reader views a theatrical dance performance, will they do so thinking that the bodies they are observing are uncommitted to an aesthetic vision?

She writes:

The hired body, built at a great distance from the self, reduces it to a pragmatic merchant of movement proffering whatever look appeals at the moment. It not only denies the existence of a true, deep self, but also proscribes a relational self whose desire to empathize predominates over its need for display. The hired body likewise threatens to obscure the opportunity, opened to us over this century, to apprehend the body as multiple, protean, and capable, literally, of being made into many different expressive bodies.⁴²

⁴⁰ A summation of information provided by Foster. Foster, “Dancing Bodies,” 253.

⁴¹ Ibid., 255.

⁴² Ibid., 256.

My hired body that I lived and experienced, was in direct contradiction to what Foster suggests in the above quote. My hired body was nurtured through a dance practice, a practice that was developing into a care of the self. How was this body built from a great distance from the self?⁴³ *Resistance – In Performance*, provided a clear account of the creative process I went through to create my solo movement for *Resistance*. If *Resistance* was to follow the same creative process, instead of being created within an academic institution produced in an entrepreneurial framework, would the movement I performed in *Resistance* be considered as “whatever look that appealed at the moment” executed by a pragmatic merchant? It was my need to *create*, my need to *learn*, my need to *discover*, and not my need for *display* that proscribed a relation to the self. I/my body is an expressive body, as are the many bodies that participated in *Resistance*. I do not recognize any of these bodies in Foster’s description of a “hired body.”

Foster’s imagined reader of “Dancing Bodies” is now drastically different from her theoretical hired body. The reader’s subjectivity is not fixed, their subjective experiences remain open, undetermined. Foster dictates for the hired body its subjective experiences. Reduced by assumptions, the hired body is limited, his/her potential for experiences capped. The hired body becomes a potential threat to possibilities. The relationship I formed with Foster’s discourse in “Dancing Bodies” was educational. Compelling me to reflect, challenging me to respond, she helped to guide me along my path.

⁴³ I am speaking here in the past tense. As a choreographer and teacher of dance and figure skating, my role currently is more that of a demonstrative body. I am still a body for hire, yet in a different capacity than I once was.

“Genealogy and Dance History: Foucault, Rainer, Bausch, and de Keersmaecker”⁴⁴

The opening sentence of Ramsay Burt’s essay “Genealogy and Dance History” reads, “This essay examines issues of body and presence in three ambitiously innovative dance pieces from the second half of the twentieth century.”⁴⁵ The three dance pieces under examination are Yvonne Rainer’s *Trio A* (1966), Pina Bausch’s *Café Muller* (1978), and Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker’s *Rosas Danst Rosas* (1983).⁴⁶ Does this examination of issues of body and presence rely upon a theoretical body and/or the body of the choreographer; the body of the dancer/s creating the works in question, or those of the audience member/critic? Whose body and presence is being examined in this essay and how?

Burt formulates multiple questions by building upon a quote provided by Rainer “my body remains the enduring reality” and program notes from a 1968 performance of *Trio A*. Of particular interest to me is his question, “In what ways, during the last forty years of the twentieth century were dancing bodies subject to normative ideologies, and how could radical, experimental performance practices transform these bodies into sites of resistance?”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Henceforth, “Genealogy and Dance History.”

⁴⁵ Ramsay Burt, “Genealogy and Dance History” in *Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on Dance and Performance Theory*, ed. Andre Lepecki (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 29.

⁴⁶ All three of these dance works included the choreographer as one of the performers of the work.

⁴⁷ Burt, “Genealogy and Dance History,” 29.

To answer this question Burt relies upon various poststructuralist methodologies. Two prominent theorists referenced by Burt are Foucault and Judith Butler. Commenting on his three chosen dance works Burt writes:

Trio A, *Café Muller*, and *Rosas Danst Rosas* are in danger of being reified by the discourse of dance history as it creates the canon of late twentieth-century postmodern dance. This process of reification is one in which the challenges to normative ideas about body and presence that have been made through the performance of these works become displaced by concerns about the stylistic identity of individual choreographers and their place within a narrative of formal and aesthetic innovation.⁴⁸

A consideration of this article will demonstrate how the representations of these three dance works utilize a writing strategy that privileges the body of the choreographer and/or audience member over that of the dancers performing these dance works. The absence of subjective experiences of dancers reinforces a discourse that objectifies the dancer's body-as-object, devoid of personal experience.

Burt implies that the process for the formation of a canon in dance studies bares similarities in tensions between ideologies of body, metaphysics, and history found in Foucault's essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (1971). In this essay, Foucault proposes "a type of history that attempted to identify a 'genealogy' of divergent traits through focusing on the corporeality of experience and the ways in which the embodiment of subjectivity is vulnerable to impositions of power."⁴⁹ Burt then proceeds to assert that Foucault's genealogy "is thus the re-appropriation of those archival records out of which the myths of traditional history have been created in order to find something altogether different."⁵⁰ I suggest that Burt's article, and corresponding examination of

⁴⁸ Burt, "Genealogy and Dance History," 30.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 31.

issues of body and presence, forms its own re-appropriation of these dance works, contributing to the discourse of Western theatre dance.

Burt aligns the provocative, disruptive entry of Foucault's genealogy into the public sphere during the time of its publication, with Rainer and her fellow artists "avant-garde attack on the traditions and conventions of theatre dance."⁵¹ Burt suggests that the work these artists produced out of the Judson Memorial Church in the early 1960's "opened up various levels on which theatre dance operates as a signifying practice in such a way as to make it necessary for spectators to engage in creating their own readings of the performance text."⁵² In the context of this article, for whom does theatre dance act as a signifying practice?

Burt occupies a position external to these works in question, from the outside looking in.⁵³ From this position, and in this context, the dance performance serves as a text to be 'read' with an audience member/author doing the 'reading.' In this article, the dance performances of *Trio A*, *Café Muller*, and *Rosas Danst Rosas* function as depictions of practices.⁵⁴ These three dance works and accompanying theoretical considerations serve to represent decades of bodies dancing. "Genealogy and Dance History" is a contribution to dance history discourse and an archived record of these three dance works. How are myths of history created? How do theorizations of dancing bodies predicated upon assumptions of the dancer's subjective experience of dancing uphold pre-existing ideas of dance? To come to better appreciate this *how*, the following

⁵¹ Burt, "Genealogy and Dance History," 31.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ This external position will be further developed in my discussion of "art as an irreality."

⁵⁴ Burt's use of the dance performance *as* practice, provides a direct point for comparison to how a practice has been defined in the dissertation.

questions will be asked in relation to this article: What subjective embodiments are shared within the context of this article? Are moments of corporeal experience articulated and by whom? How does theory function within the article?

One of the many theories Burt employs to further his examination of issues of body and presence is that of inscription.⁵⁵ Burt makes use of Butler's critique of Foucault's account of cultural inscription on the body to "help clarify what is at stake in the tension between presence and repetition."⁵⁶ Commenting on Butler, Burt writes:

Butler's concept of performativity of gender has much in common with Foucault's notion of genealogy. Just as Foucault sees individuals as subject to impositions of power that have accumulated over time, Butler argues that individuals are forced to conform to preexisting cultural relations.⁵⁷

In comparing Butler with Foucault, Burt states:

One striking difference: whereas Foucault sees the body as a passive recipient of cultural inscription, Butler sees embodied subjects as agents, albeit restricted ones who enact interpretations 'within the confines of already existing discourses.' Thus for Foucault, the body is the subject of inscriptions: for Butler, however, subjects as agents 'dramatically and actively embody and, indeed, wear certain cultural significations.'⁵⁸

Burt provides this theoretical background of Butler and Foucault in order to situate the crux of his article:

Issues of the body and presence arise because of the ways in which dancing bodies are produced through the intersection of codes of the social and the aesthetic. The radical, experimental performance practices whose histories I discuss in this essay can only disrupt or resist impositions of normative ideologies by revealing the otherwise hidden strategies through which the fiction or illusion of an a prior presence is performatively produced. I am therefore taking genealogy to include

⁵⁵ Foucault's inscription is dependent upon techniques of discipline as outlined in previous chapters.

⁵⁶ Ramsay Burt, "Genealogy and Dance History" 33.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

both an uncovering of the process of history's destruction of the body and the possibilities of agency and resistance within performative repetitions of discourse despite the all-encompassing nature of the disciplinary effects of those discourses.⁵⁹

Foucault's "Four Technologies" and techniques of discipline as previously discussed can be used to unpack the intersection of "codes of the social and aesthetic." The detailed articulation of docile bodies in relation to *Resistance* provides reference to Foucault's inscribed body representing "history's destruction of the body" and Butler's subjective body as a possibility of agency and resistance that "wears certain cultural significations." For both Foucault and Butler, the body remains implicated within relations of power and techniques of discipline. Although the broad scope of Burt's referenced body is vast, can his referenced body remain a representation of an individual and the bearer of subjective experience? These various theoretical considerations regarding the subject signal a potential multiplicity of corporeal experiences, regardless of what theoretical degree (and processes) the body/subject is constructed through relations of discipline, power, history, and discourse. In "Genealogy and Dance History" this multiplicity of potential corporeal experience is reduced to a singular experience; either that belonging to the choreographer or to the author.

Three dancers perform *Trio A*. Burt feels that Rainer's intention of the work *Trio A* "seems (emphasis mine) to have been to reduce dance movement to the simple, phenomenological experience of mundane physical activity."⁶⁰ Is there a difference in corporeal experiences between performing "mundane physical activity" and performing movement gestures more conventional to theatre dance? Are the subjective experiences

⁵⁹ Burt, "Genealogy and Dance History," 34.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 35.

the same for all individuals who perform “mundane physical activity”? Burt provides no corporeal experiences relating to what the three dancers experienced in performing these “mundane physical activities.” What Burt does offer are comments relating to the choreography and to Rainer herself. Of particular interest are Burt’s comments on how Rainer “had become aware of the narcissistic involvement of the performer and of her own narcissistic pleasure in performing”⁶¹ Burt directly quoting Rainer:

[I]t was as good as orgasm. I knew that was where I lived, that was where I belonged, doing that work and presenting myself physically to an audience. And that, of course, was part of the charisma. That is the urgency, and that pleasure in exhibiting oneself is part of the seduction of an audience. The performer *has* (emphasis mine) to experience that in order for the audience to get a sense of this presence or to be taken in by it.⁶²

Rainer’s comment is the only subjective experience provided by a dancer speaking to the *action* of performing in “Genealogy and Dance History.” The reader is provided with a clear appreciation of how Rainer related to performing at one point in time. Did the other two dancers performing *Trio A* feel as Rainer did?⁶³ The singular body of the choreographer becomes a referent for the plurality of absent bodies/subjectivities, a generalization that underwrites the absence of other dancing bodies. Through Rainer alone we are left to consider the relation between performer and audience. Burt writes, “I am arguing that *Trio A* attempted to forefront the actual weight, mass, and unenhanced physicality of the dancing body by eliminating the kind of presence that is produced

⁶¹ Burt, “Genealogy and Dance History,” 36.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ My experiences as a performer contradict what Rainer claims, namely that a performer must experience a pleasure in exhibiting oneself as part of the seduction of an audience.

when the audience senses the performer's pleasure in exhibiting themselves."⁶⁴ The assumption that Burt makes here lies in the "pleasure" (or lack thereof) in a dancer's performance. To be sure, performance skills that are developed through the very repetition and theoretical discourses referenced by Burt allow a performer to perform *representations* of pleasure or a lack thereof. What is necessary for Burt's argument is that the *audience* senses this lack of pleasure, not the performer. The performer may feel any number of things; pleasure, boredom, joy, the gamut is endless; but the *audience* must sense this lack of pleasure from the performer. What Burt is arguing for here, is that theatre dance remains a signifying practice for the audience, not a signifying practice for the performers creating the dance work.

Burt describes *Café Muller*, first performed in 1978 as "a dark piece full of missed encounters and failed acts of communication..."⁶⁵ He aligns these failures in communication with poststructuralist theory provided by Foucault, Butler, and additionally, Althusser; theorists who have "examined the ways in which individuals are interpellated within ideological discourses."⁶⁶ Burt gives a detailed, and succinct description of one of the scenes from *Café Muller*. In this scene a couple (originally performed by Dominic Mercy and Malou Airaud) embrace, their embrace disrupted by dancer Jan Minarik.⁶⁷ Burt's skill in translating movement and choreography into the written word prompts the citation of this passage in its entirety.

It begins as Mercy and Airaud fall into one another's arms in a tight embrace. Minarik walks up to them, wearing a suit but barefoot. Slowly, without any particular force, he shifts their arms around, makes Mercy kiss Airaud on the lips

⁶⁴ Burt, "Genealogy and Dance History," 37.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 38.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ This paragraph a summation of information provided by Burt.

while holding her awkwardly in midair in front of him, and then walks away as if about to leave the stage. The instability of the new embrace leads Mercy to drop Airaud, who picks herself up off the ground and urgently hugs him again the way they had kissed before Minarik's intervention. Minarik pauses when he hears the fall, comes back, and rearranges the couple the way he had left them before, in an unhurried, matter-of-fact way. He leaves them again, the new embrace collapses, and the whole cycle is run through again. This continues a number of times, gradually becoming faster, as Airaud and Mercy begin to tire and Minarik gets shorter and shorter distances from them before having to come back. There eventually comes a moment when Airaud picks herself up off the floor and embraces Mercy directly but then the two of them go on to kiss in the way Minarik had directed them to do without his intervention, and Minarik leaves the stage. Airaud and Mercy go through their now hectic cycle repeatedly until they are clearly out of breath and weary. It is as if they had internalized Minarik's role and no longer needed him there. In the end they prop one another up clasped in their original embrace, their bodies heaving with gradually subsiding pants of exhaustion.

This scene is shocking and deeply depressing...what this scene stages, I suggest, is the process of interpellation described by Althusser...What I, the spectator, found compelling about this scene was how the excessive repetition leaves the dancers dazed and confused, suggesting that, in the face of Minarik's violating demands, there is no possibility of agency.⁶⁸

The spectator (Burt) witnessing the conclusion of this scene with its excessive repetition sees the dancers as dazed and confused. In his reading of this dance scenario, Burt's suggestion that "there is no possibility of agency" relies upon dazed and confused dancers, an assumption of the dancer's experience made by an observer. Earlier in this Chapter, Jess spoke to her experience of learning and then performing choreography. A process that occurred over a prolonged period of time in which disciplinary techniques aided the development of skills that resulted in various lived experiences in performance. Perhaps these dancers were dazed and confused, or maybe they both lived very different thoughts, emotions, and sensations while performing this scene, repeatedly. One way to know is to ask. Like the body connected to the various theoretical discussions provided

⁶⁸ Burt, "Genealogy and Dance History," 38-39.

by Foucault, Butler, and Burt, the bodies of these dancers represent theoretical bodies. Burt's representations and readings of dance performances as texts often rely upon assumptions of a dancer's experience. Consistent among these theoretical bodies are how they represent a concept but are rarely representative of some *one*.

One of the initial questions posed by Burt was "How were dancing bodies subject to normative ideologies, and how could radical, experimental performance practices transform these bodies into sites of resistance?"⁶⁹ The normative ideologies under consideration in "Genealogy and Dance History" were the various poststructuralist theories presented by Burt. The dancing bodies in question are subject to normative ideologies by existing within a social realm, implicated within relations of power, discipline, and history. Burt answers his latter question by upholding many pre-existing relations of power that relate to the formation of Western theatre dance discourse. The dance performance serves as the predominant object under consideration. Theatre dance remains a signifying practice for the audience while the embodied cultural capital, the skills, talents, and aptitudes of the dancers creating the work of art are all but absent, an absence that further displaces the potential forms of resistance existing within the dance performances that Burt's writing aims to represent. Theorizing upon dancing bodies remains reliant upon assumptions of the dancer's subjective experience made by an observer of the dance work. Historically the perspective of one who observes dance is privileged over one who creates the dance.

How experimental performance practices transform dancing bodies into sites of resistance need not be answered exclusively by considering how these dance

⁶⁹ Burt, "Genealogy and Dance History," 29.

performances were signified to an audience. If one considers dancing bodies and the action of dancing as a *doing*, a doing repeated again and again over a period of time, in the context of a practice, resistance also appears possible. In the *action* of dancing, skills are developed; skills that initiate various corporeal experiences in the performance of repeated gestures and in these moments a dancer chooses his/her way through a sensing/sensational body. In these moments agency is an *action* and the body is potentially transformed into a site of resistance.

Art as an Irreality

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche comments on the relationship between artist and audience. “‘Audience’ is merely a word, and not a constant, immutable standard. Why should the artist feel obliged to accommodate himself to a force whose strength lies purely in numbers?”⁷⁰ As a contemporary dance choreographer, working within an academic institution on *Resistance*, I cared very little for the audience.⁷¹ The dancers I worked with were the force I was most interested in. Occupying the role of a contemporary dance choreographer/practice-based researcher, I made the choice to address the disproportionate amount of dance scholarship between discourse predicated upon the perspectives of those creating/living the dance work (dancers) and those

⁷⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, (1872; repr., London: Penguin Books, 1993), 57.

⁷¹ In contrast, for my employment as a choreographer for competitive figure skaters I am highly aware of the audience, in particular the panel of judges; individuals that literally judge my work, awarding the work a score between zero and ten. In my role as a figure skating choreographer I accept and am mindful of my hired task to choreograph programs that will score well within the system they are a part of.

observing the work of art (audience members/critics). I chose to highlight this imbalance in dance-scholarship that I suggest may be grounded in the real, versus in an irreality.

During the choreographic process of *Resistance*, I often found myself thinking about a particular idea proposed by Jean-Paul Sartre. In his book, *The Imaginary* (1940), Sartre provides the idea that “the work of art is an irreality.”⁷² To discuss the work of art Sartre chooses a portrait of Charles VIII and Beethoven’s *Seventh Symphony*. Music, like the *Seventh Symphony*, shares a so-called ephemerality with dance. Sartre comments that a performance of the *Seventh Symphony* is an analogon for the Symphony itself: an analogon being the “mental image” or object that occupies the space of an absent object within one’s consciousness. Sartre argues that every performance of the *Seventh Symphony*, including the original, is an analogon of the Symphony. “Does one not clearly see that the performance of the *Seventh Symphony* as its analogon?”⁷³ A listener attending a performance of the *Seventh Symphony* is confronted by the Symphony in person, yet according to Sartre the Symphony is “no way in time. It therefore entirely escapes the real.”⁷⁴ To better illustrate this point Sartre states the following:

I do not really hear it. I listen to it in the imaginary. This is what explains the considerable difficulty that we always experience in passing from the ‘world’ of the theatre or of music to that of our everyday concerns. To tell the truth, there is no passage from one world to the other, there is a passage from the imagining attitude to the realizing attitude. Aesthetic contemplation is an induced dream, and the passage to the real is an authentic awakening.⁷⁵

According to Sartre, a listener of the Symphony is listening to it in the “imaginary.”

⁷² Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary* (1940; repr., New York: Routledge, 2004), 188.

⁷³ Ibid., 193.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 192.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 193.

In *Nausea* (1938), published prior to *The Imaginary*, Sartre introduces the character of Antoine Roquentin, a writer struggling with his own existence. Antoine's former lover is Anny, an actress whom Antoine has not seen for many years. The following is an exchange between the former lovers when they meet again. In this fictional exchange one can already begin to observe Sartre's position of the "work of art as an irreality."

Antoine: 'But the theatre...'

Anny: 'What about the theatre?'

Antoine: 'But weren't you ever carried away by your part?'

Anny: 'A little, sometimes: never very strongly. The essential thing, for all of us, was the black pit just in front of us, in the bottom of it were people you didn't see; obviously you were presenting them with a perfect moment. But, you know, they didn't live in it: it unfolded in front of them. And we, the actors, do you think we lived inside it? In the end, it wasn't anywhere, not on either side of the footlights, it didn't exist; and yet everybody thought about it.'⁷⁶

From this excerpt one can observe that the theatre provides the audience with a "perfect moment," a play, the work of art. The work of art unfolds in front of the audience but the audience does not live in it. The artwork "wasn't anywhere", it is out of time and therefore an irreality. According to Anny the artwork "didn't exist" and she was never carried away by her part.⁷⁷

Anny commenting on the play "that it didn't exist" can be confusing. What could she mean by this? Surely the play does exist in that actors act it and an audience witnesses it; this exchange is a lived experience shared between performer and audience

⁷⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea* (1938 repr., New York: New Directions, 1964), 152.

⁷⁷ In direct contradiction to Anny, who was "not carried away" by her part, are multiple accounts given by dancers of being "carried away" by their parts. These articulations found within the provided interviews.

member, with the performers creating the work of art potentially having very different lived experiences than those of the audience members. For both performer and audience member, these lived experiences are real and embodied. So what is it that didn't exist? What was not real? Perhaps the irreality exists in the constructed representations emanating from the work of art.

For example, often as a male dancer/figure skater I am/was cast in the role of the heterosexual male in a duet with a female. In this hetero-normative, Malthusian coupling, I perform representations of the masculine hetero-normative. Although I identify as a queer male, my skills as a performer lead the audience to believe in the *illusion* of hetero desire between male and female. The representation of this particular desire is potentially the "irreality" of these particular performances, "it doesn't exist" and yet the audience thinks about it. For myself, the lived experiences of these particular performances are extremely empowering. Considered from my perspective, these performances provided me with the opportunity to 'queer' the same masculine behaviors that so often served to oppress my 'otherness' to existing norms. Performing these roles on the dance stage and in competitive skating arenas not only mitigated my ability to perform *representations* of hetero-normative masculine movement styles but also created lived experiences in resistance to existing stereotypes of the queer male. These performances were moments for a shift of individual power, power that can come from everywhere. In these hetero-normative roles I *lived* through a personal process that exposed these representations of hetero-masculinity for what they are: fragile and reproducible. For me, performing these roles was a means to undermine normalized masculine behaviors. As a performer, the ability to comment and theorize upon my own lived experiences in a dance performance

is critical, for it offers a perspective that is rarely archived and which often is in direct opposition to conventional discourse. Shaun McLeod states:

If men who dance and choreograph insist on portraying men in dance only as 'strong' and 'muscular', analogous to the macho hero in movie making, then they are failing to acknowledge the issue. If men in dance insist on making male dancing 'acceptable' by continually virilising their activity, then the act is one of compliance to the patriarchal demands.⁷⁸

Who are men that dance, making dancing acceptable for? An audience? What about *how* and *why* men dance? What about the dance practices that provide the ability for those men to dance? What can be said about the potential varying, multiple experiences male dancers may have performing these 'strong' and 'muscular' dances?

Theory and criticism that only embrace representations and concepts that arise from the work of art often privilege the experience of the observer of artwork over the creator/performer of the work of art. This does not diminish the validity, importance, or role that this particular theory and criticism provides. However, with the focus solely upon "objectified cultural capital" the "embodied cultural capital" is often completely neglected. If one considers what Sartre proposes, scholarship conceived by the audience member/critic in an "imagining attitude," living "outside of the work of art," is grounded in a perspective very different than that of the artists creating the work. *Resistance* is a practice-based research project anchored in the real, in the lives and subjective experiences of the creators/performers of a work of art.

⁷⁸ Shaun McLeod, "Chamber: Experiencing Masculine Identity Through Dance Improvisation," in *Practice As Research: Approaches To Creative Arts Enquiry*, ed. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 86.

In his article, “Cultural Studies and Dance History” (1997), author Norman Bryson commented on the current position of contemporary dance history at that time. Bryson suggested that dance historians would benefit in redefining dance. He states:

...moving the definition of dance from 'ballet' to 'socially structured human movement' may be vertiginous as an opening move, but it has heuristic advantages in showing how local and limited our sense of dance tends to be.⁷⁹

He argued that in redefining dance, the potentiality for the field of dance history and the topic of the body and movement as subject material for theoretical positioning would be greatly increased. In discussing new dances of the late 19th century, Bryson stated the following in regard to the cancan performed in dance establishments such as the Moulin Rouge.

Though erotic, the dance is entirely impersonal, dehumanized, and repetitious; though it reveals the anatomical body with unprecedented frankness, this is accompanied by an extraordinary objectification of the body by its owner, who in order to perform the dance successfully (pulling one leg straight up to the head while hopping on the other) must treat her body absolutely as a thing, as a puppet or marionette.⁸⁰

Why must the dancer treat her body like a thing, particularly a puppet or marionette?

Bryson's statement demonstrates the tendency to view the body that dances merely as an object. In this particular instance the 'owner' of the body treats her body as a puppet. Perhaps somewhere along the process of learning to dance the cancan a dancer would need to consider her own body as the object of her attention in order to learn the movement. However, once skills are acquired, and as Bryson mentioned, repeated again and again, there is no doubt that the dancer would have varied subjective lived

⁷⁹ Norman Bryson, “Cultural Studies and Dance History,” in *Meaning in Motion: New Cultural Studies of Dance*, ed. Jane C. Desmond (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 58.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 69.

experiences of dancing the cancan. I argue that these subjective experiences would bear little resemblance to the process of objectification of one's body to the likes of a marionette. The dancer's individual agency in this statement is completely absent and replaced with an observers' interpretation of what it is to dance the cancan. Bryson, commenting upon the cancan from a position of spectatorship, illustrates criticism originating from an "imagining attitude" that is focused solely upon objectified cultural capital; the dance performance.

Although Bryson's interpretation acted as grounds for further theorization about "socially structured human movements,"⁸¹ it neglected to acknowledge the agency of the individual dancer. Can an attempt to broaden the scope of 'what is dance?' and confirm movement as valid subject material for theoretical positioning be inclusive of the subjective experiences of the dancers, dancing?

Author Jill Sweet's article, "The Anthropology of Dance: Textural, Theoretical, and Experiential Ways of Knowing" (2005), offers a point of comparison to Bryson's account. Sweet provides the reader with a brief overview of her own personal, theoretical, and pedagogical associations between anthropology and dance studies. She suggests that it was Allegra-Fuller Snyder who first conceptualized the idea of dance as a 'way of knowing.' Sweet positions this embodied knowledge alongside the textual, and theoretical ways of knowing. The subjective lived experience of a dancer could be understood/read as a means toward this experiential way of knowing. As a teacher, Sweet

⁸¹ Norman Bryson, "Cultural Studies and Dance History," 58.

stressed the importance that her students physically engage with movement and learn to acknowledge and describe their own experiences with the dance.

The students also talked about how important it was for them to ‘try it out’ in their moving bodies and about the different ways a dance can be experienced; through reading a descriptive empirical text, through applying a theoretical perspective, and by actually physically doing it. Interestingly, it was not until the students moved from the seminar room to the studios that they came to realize what I meant by multiple ways of knowing.⁸²

In her pedagogical approach Sweet acknowledges the experiential way of knowing and the potential agency of her students. In the act of ‘trying it out’ the student becomes the dancer, the one who subjectively lives through a movement. The student’s knowledge of dance is altered with this additional way of knowing. A way of knowing that is anchored in the real versus the “imagining attitude.”

Real *Resistance*

Resistance attempts to archive this way of knowing proposed by Sweet. In response to dance scholarship that marginalizes and objectifies dancers’ body-as-objects, devoid of personal experiences, *Resistance* positioned the personal experiences of dancers as the touchstone for this research project. A form of practice-based research, *Resistance* demonstrates how theory can be woven into the creative process and how the creative act can function as a form of knowledge formation and scholarship. Foucault’s docile body often conceived as a passive body “destroyed by history” can be reconsidered in the context of *Resistance* as a body for agency. The dancer/docile body as

⁸² Jill D. Sweet, “The Anthropology of Dance: Textural, Theoretical, and Experiential Ways of Knowing,” *Teaching Dance Studies*, ed. Judith Chazin-Bennahum (New York: Routledge, 2005), 143.

subject, implicated within various relations of power, disciplines, and histories, develops skills and abilities that inform how they come to be within these systems. Skills and aptitudes that inform a practice, a practice as a ‘technology of the self:’

Technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.⁸³

With *Resistance* the actions of dancing give way to meanings for dance. Alone, and with the help of others, a series of doings are lived and experienced in the creation and performance of a dance work. These actions form a discourse. Like the dance articles referenced in this chapter that form a discourse on Western theatre dance, the actions of these dancers learning, creating, and performing also contribute to discourse. In this dissertation dancers’ subjective experiences are of equal importance to those moments and ideas translated into language by scholars.

⁸³ Foucault, “Technologies of the Self,” 18.

Conclusion

The Dancer and the Dance

Labour is blossoming or dancing where
 The body is not bruised to pleasure soul,
 Nor beauty born out of its own despair,
 Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.
 O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer,
 Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
 O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
 How can we know the dancer from the dance?¹

The final stanza of William Butler Yeats' poem "Among School Children" (1933) poses the question, "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" My answer? You can't, the dancer is the dance.

The discourse surrounding Western theatre dancing bodies often negates the dancer completely, the signification of the dance performance being of utmost import and consideration. The dance performance is a singular moment, a snapshot of a space and time, a moment that has been historically privileged in Western theatre dance scholarship. *Resistance* responds to this type of discourse with action, with *dancing* that occurs over a prolonged period of time; dancing inclusive of a past (embodied memory), a present (agency as an *action*), and an ever-approaching future (a preparation). "Are you leaf, the blossom or the bole?" Yeats asks the chestnut tree. The tree is all three: a past, a present, a future, and a sum of its entire life. I/my body is like this tree; mind, body, spirit, existing in a fluid temporality of past, present, and an inescapable end. To translate into

¹ The final stanza from "Among School Children."
 W. B. Yeats, "Among School Children," in *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats: A New Edition*, ed. Richard J. Finnerman (London: Macmillan Publishing, 1933).

language how I experience dance and movement was not possible. To create a research project that could speak to my experiences and values I associate to movement and my practice, that was within my ability.

In her book, *Dance and the Lived Body* (1987), dancer/writer Sondra Fraleigh states the following:

Dance is a creative and aesthetic extension of our embodiment. The body and the dance are inseparable. The body is the dance, as the dancer is the dance; the body is concretely there in the dance. The body is not the instrument of dance; it is the subject of dance. The body cannot be an instrument, because it is not an object as other instruments are. Even when it is objectified in dance, it retains its subjectivity.²

I have at length, at times exhaustively, illustrated how the body has been objectified in Western theatre dance scholarship. Devoid of personal experience, of subjectivity, this body as referent does not reflect my experiences. I agree with Fraleigh that the body and the dance are inseparable. I agree that “the body is the dance, as the dancer is the dance.”

The following passage from Hahn’s *Sensational Knowledge* in which the author describes a moment in one of her *nihon buyo* lessons exhibits how one might come to think of the dancer as the dance.

During a lesson I heard Iemoto call out from the front of the dance studio, “...there [in the dance passage], where the icy breeze hits your face. Next time you experience wind like this [outside], remember it in your body memory.”...Here dance and daily action inform each other and interconnect. The lines distinguishing them can blur and become liminal; as the movements of dance are informed by daily life, movements in life draw us to recall dance.³

² Sondra Horton Fraleigh, *Dance and the Lived Body* (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), 31-32.

³ Tomie Hahn, *Sensational Knowledge: Embodying Culture through Japanese Dance* (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 2007), 47.

Past and present, sensations and sensing, movement is lived and experienced. Daily life and life in dance intertwine within a fluid temporality; how then can we know the dancer from the dance? The dance studio, the proscenium stage, a floor, is space a dancer may occupy. Time the dancer occupies; a life that is lived.

Dancers in Time

To come to understand *Resistance*, is to come to know the dancers who created and performed the dance. In my interviews with Nico, Kate, Jillian, Anastasia and Jess I asked them, “What do you enjoy about being a dancer?” Their responses reflect only a brief moment in their lives, a portrait of a specific time. In their comments, an appreciation for why bodies dance is gained.

Nico

With dance I enjoy that I get to think, use that logical side of my brain, but I also need to be physical. I love the fact that I do not have to explain everything through thought or words; I get to explain myself through a different form. I can still explain a story, something about myself, or just something I want to communicate. I find this liberating. I was never one to openly talk about my emotions. I never talk about what is hurting me, or why I might be upset. Not only do I never talk about these feelings I also don't emote them. I guess that might be consistent with the stereotypical male, men do not emote, and that is it. I find that I can experience emotions through my dancing, channel emotions in to a different medium.

What I value about dance, and training to be a dancer, is the type of person that it can make you. It is one of those art forms, or careers, or whatever you may choose to label it as, that really does teach you punctuality, organization, time management; all these things are something that I have had to try and work towards. These are things that my family values also. The one thing I really value about dance is that it can make you into a better person.

In the studio we share so much of ourselves. These are people who I took down my walls for and they took down their walls for me too. I do not think I can explain this to someone who has never been in a studio with someone else. That feeling that you have shared sweat and that you have seen one another working to our fullest potential. We see each other in our good moments and our bad moments, those moments when you want to go to a corner and cry out your sorrow, or shoot yourself because you are so frustrated. I can't say I have ever had those experiences with anyone else outside of a studio. These experiences in the studio are more important to me than those I have had outside of the studio.

These experiences are very personal moments shared without ever having to vocalize that they are personal. Any artist who shares a space with another artist knows when they are moving away from just experiencing something that feels stagnant to sharing an experience that is so sincere, close and personal. When Megan and I would dance Anne's piece we would leave the studio every time in tears. I danced this same duet with

Anastasia and it was very different, yet still there was a similar reaction, leaving the stage in tears. When we toured that piece to high school students those students thought we were dating. There is a sense of accomplishment because they believed what we were trying to portray. As an artist this feels great, it means that I am doing my job and doing it well. As an individual, part of this is scary because there are still feelings there, you can make those feelings into something so believable. That piece made me fall in love with Megan and Anastasia every time we performed it. I feel very lucky because I have got to experience the emotion of love in so many ways. Love is such an addicting emotion and as a performer you get to feel it in multiple levels and that does something to you as an individual.

I feel like I will always have a desire to be on stage. I get to become someone I am not. Even if I am being a character that is a lot like me, I get to express things in a way that I probably would never do outside of dance. This is true more for dance than theatre, as I find dance is a completely different way of expressing oneself. I have never found an equivalent way other than dancing to express emotions, inner thoughts, struggles and accomplishments. I feel everyone needs a way to express those things. Who are you if you can't express yourself?

Jillian

Dance is something that I can be anything in. It is a time when I can choose to focus on myself or on others. It is the time

when I feel the most comfortable. I just have never found something in life, whether it's studies, other arts, or activities that I just feel right in. I feel like dance is exactly what I should be doing. I feel I am glowing when I am dancing.

Even just doing a technique class I can always find something within the class that brings me up a level. I have never lost interest in dance. I find that there is always something more one can do with dance. I am someone who is goal oriented and in dance there is always more that one can learn, more one can go into.

Kate

I remember the Winter Semester, the semester when I was not dancing. I was having a lot of problems with whether or not I was still a dancer if I was not dancing anymore. I feel like for the four years you are in a dance program you wake up every morning and tell yourself, "I am a dancer, I am a dancer" but you question it every single day. Then, if I am not dancing anymore, or if I can't dance, who am I? Am I still a dancer? I didn't know. For a while, when I stopped dancing, I felt I wasn't a dancer anymore. All of my peers that were dancers did not see me as a dancer anymore. It was like 'You can't dance anymore, you are not one of us anymore.' It was like, we are here and you are there. For a long time I still didn't know who I was.

It wasn't until I spent an entire year of not dancing, I have not danced since *Tangled Dances*, that I made a promise to

myself that I was not going to do something I loved in an exuberant amount of pain. I got to the point that I hated dance. A year in, when I still had not danced, I still woke up every morning thinking about dance and feeling it in my body. Even though I could not dance, I finally knew I was a dancer; and I *believed* it. I am not dancing anymore, I do not want dance as my career path, but I will dance again. It is sad for me that for four years in a dance program, I questioned if I was a dancer every single day. Now I am not in a dance program, and I know that is what I am and who I am.

Anastasia

Dance is the one thing that allows me to do everything. You know when someone asks you, "What do you wish for?" Well, I would wish for a million wishes. That is what dance is like for me, I can investigate, question things that are not normally questioned, and answer things that are often unanswerable. Dance is like a tool for me to live. I am more of a whole person with dancing. Being a dancer feels like the possibilities are really endless. You can never be bored and you can never be perfect, and that is exciting for me.

There is something about being your own instrument and being connected to yourself. I just feel like there are so many bodies wandering around that have no idea what they are doing. As a dancer, I am both with myself, and getting to know myself.

Jess

I love moving, I love being physical. I hate sitting still. I feel myself being drained of energy if I am sitting too long. I need to move in order to feel like I am living.

Dance practitioners articulating what dance means to them. The actions of dance, the doings of dance, are embodied in their individual histories, dancing through time. These are docile bodies that can create and perform resistance.

Dance as a Way-of-Being

With this ethnographic and practice-based project, Foucault's theory of the docile body was firmly imbedded within a methodological framework that worked towards signifying new considerations of relationships between theory and practice, and the relationships between individual dancers and their dance practices. The act of choreography, the act of performing, and the dancer's sensing/sensational body moving through space/time suggesting potential strategies; strategies the subject can employ as acts of resistance. In resistance there is also acceptance, and a potential for self-overcoming.

I referenced two forms of discipline when I introduced Foucault's methods in which the body becomes a site for subjection, his "methods of discipline" as described in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. First, discipline that produces subjected and practiced bodies, "docile" bodies, and second, disciplines of a monastic type. Foucault delineating between these two forms of discipline states:

They were different from asceticism and from ‘disciplines’ of a monastic type, whose function was to obtain renunciations rather than increases of utility and which, although they involved obedience to others, has as their principal aim an increase of the mastery of each individual over his own body.⁴

Published in 1975, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* reflects his emphasis on what he termed “dividing practices”, the various “modes in which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects”⁵ and also, stated differently, how the self can become objectified.

Toward the end of his life, Foucault’s emphasis shifted. The following is an exchange between Foucault and the interviewer from “The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom” (2006).

Q: There is now a short shift: these games of truth no longer are concerned with coercive practices but with the practices of self-formation of the subject.

MF: That is correct. It is what one might call an ascetical practice, giving the word “ascetical” a very general meaning, that is to say, not in the sense of abnegation but that of an exercise of self upon self by which one tries to work out, to transform one’s self and to attain a certain mode of being.⁶

In Foucault’s response one can observe an emphasis upon how the *self* works toward a transformation of self. To compare a monastic asceticism, that in which each individual “has as their principal aim an increase of the mastery over his own body”⁷ with an ascetical practice, “an exercise of self upon self by which one tries to work out, to

⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (1975; repr., New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 137.

⁵ Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power,” *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 4 (1982), 777.

⁶ Michel Foucault, “The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom,” in *The Final Foucault*, eds. James Bernauer and David Rasmussen (New York: Routledge, 2006), 2.

⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 137.

transform one's self and to attain a certain mode of being"⁸ is to appreciate the role of the body in both. A "mastery over one's body" versus "a certain mode of being." My bodily practice, a practice that informs my relationship to dance, develops a certain mode in which I come to be; I/my body forming a way to care for the self. I do not hear a "mastery over one's body" in the above comments from the dancers. What I hear are certain "modes of being" achieved through the act of dancing. I hear workings, a working of the self upon the self. What I recognize is a potential for self-overcoming.⁹ The dancer is the dance; dance a practice of the self, transforming the self; a statement made in light of my use of Foucault.

Other scholars from various fields have utilized the work of Foucault in order to achieve different outcomes. In her article "Anarchic Bodies: Foucault and the Feminist Question of Experience" (2004) philosopher Johanna Oksala argues that, "Foucault's understanding of embodiment and experience can provide important tools for feminist theory."¹⁰ She writes:

My aim is to show that Foucault's thought offers feminist theory tools, which are often overlooked by both his feminist critics as well as his appropriators in trying to understand experience. [...] I argue that Foucault's account of the sexual body is not a naïve return to a prediscursive body, nor does it amount to discourse reductionism and to the exclusion of experience. Instead, Foucault's idea of bodies and pleasures as a possibility of the counterattack against normalizing power presupposes an experiential understanding of the body.¹¹

Oksala stresses the shifting role and importance of woman's experience in feminist theory. She states, "The notion of experience has thus become polarized as either a

⁸ Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom," 2.

⁹ I also hear answers to one of the questions I posed in the dissertation, is the principal aim of the dancer to increase "the mastery of each individual over his/her own body?"

¹⁰ Johanna Oksala, "Anarchic Bodies: Foucault and the Feminist Question of Experience," *Hypatia* 19, no. 4 (2004), 115.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 101.

positive or a negative term in feminist debates between postmodernism/modernism and humanism/antihumanism.”¹² In her article Oksala suggest that while “Foucault is not generally regarded as a philosopher of experience”¹³ she suggests, “experience *is* a central topic in Foucault’s thought, its importance has been bypassed by many of his commentators.”¹⁴ She grounds this comment with the following:

Foucault does not explicitly mention experience in this work (*History of Sexuality*), but he makes a claim about bodies and pleasures, which in my view presupposes an understanding of the experiential body in so far as pleasure can only be understood as an experience of pleasure, not solely as a concept or a practice. [...] Foucault suggests that it is bodies and pleasure that can become the locus of resistance.¹⁵

In order for the body to become a site of resistance, Oksala makes the following claim.

It is my contention that if we wish to consider Foucault’s idea of bodily resistance, we must leave behind the conception of the body as a mere material object, the body as an object of natural sciences and disciplinary technologies. If we conceive of the body as a passive object, it is possible to discipline it, but equally impossible to theorize about its resistance to normalizing power. The question of resistance arises if we take the experiential body – the body as experiencing in everyday practices of living – as the starting point.¹⁶

With *Resistance* I aimed to illustrate that the dancer is the dance: the dancer’s everyday practices and experiences of living informs the dance, the dancer’s experiential body inseparable from those experiences outside/inside the actions of dancing. Similar to Oksala, Foucault provided me with the tools in order to comment upon the experiential body, a body in dialogue with contemporary feminist theorists who accuse Foucault “of

¹² Oksala, “Anarchic Bodies,” 99.

¹³ Ibid., 101.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 102-103.

¹⁶ Ibid., 108-109.

neglecting experience and the dynamism of the body in favor of regulated discourse and social constraints.”¹⁷

In the article “Spaces of Invention: Dissension, Freedom, and Thought in Foucault” (2002) Kendall R. Phillips discusses Foucault’s relationship to the study of rhetoric. Phillips poses the question, “How might invention be rendered within a Foucaultian framework?”¹⁸ He answers this question with the following:

My contention is that a space for invention exists within Foucault’s studies of knowledge, power, and subjectivity [...] The limiting/enabling relations of knowledge/power/subjectivity are counterpointed by three terms that describe the conditions for invention: dissension, freedom, and thought.¹⁹

The restriction of new ways of being within Foucault’s thought is a shared sentiment between some contemporary feminist scholars and rhetoricians. Phillips states:

Rhetoricians, to be clear, are not the first to be concerned with the apparent foreclosing of the possibility of invention within Foucault. Focusing mainly on dominating relations of power/knowledge/subjectivity, Foucault seems to leave little ground for the creation of new ways of acting, speaking, or being.²⁰

Phillips makes a decisive claim that within a Foucaultian framework exists the potential for new ways of being. His claim requires a reconsideration of the spaces in which these new ways of being emerge. He writes:

Perhaps, discussing Foucault principally in terms of power and resistance limits our understanding of the implications of his work. Framing the discussion in this way sets up power and resistance as oppositional terms and places attention squarely on the resistant act as evidence of potential transformations. Before attending to the resistant acts that emerge within relations of power, we should attend to the antecedent gaps from which they emerge. [...] These gaps, then, are not only the spaces from which resistances emerge, but also the spaces in which resistances are

¹⁷ Oksala, “Anarchic Bodies,” 115.

¹⁸ Kendall R. Phillips, “Spaces of Invention: Dissension, Freedom, and Thought in Foucault,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 34, no. 4 (2002), 329.

¹⁹ Phillips, “Spaces of Invention,” 329.

²⁰ Ibid.

created. In other words, the antecedent gaps within networks of power (and knowledge and subjectivity) are not only spaces for emergence, but must also be spaces of invention; spaces within which the possibility of new actions (or utterances or selves) can be imagined.²¹

Phillips suggests that this subjective agency; this possibility for a newly imagined self, the potential to be more than what one was before requires dissention, freedom, and thought. He posits that how an individual can come to experience what he describes as “Spaces of Dissension,” “A Space of Concrete Freedom,” and “Space for thought” promotes the potential for invention and new discourses; invention implicated within the act of subjective meaning making. “The space within which new discourses and power relations are developed and from which they emanate also involves the possibility of reconstituting subjectivity.”²² In this vein the care of the self could be considered an action for reconstituting subjectivity.

The experience of thought also opens up possibilities. These possibilities are facilitated through both the creation of a space for reflection on one’s self and also through the impetus for such reflection. In other words, having reached a point at which one can no longer live as one has, a space for inventing subjectivity is both very useful and very necessary.²³

Resistance illustrates how the dancer is the dance; dance a practice of the self, transforming the self; a practice of the self that can open up possibilities. The meanings dancers create with the movements they execute/perform and the integration of dance practices into an individual’s “modes of being” can be read alongside Phillips’s account of “invention.” Similar to these articles by Oksala and Phillips, the work of Foucault

²¹ Phillips, “Spaces of Invention,” 331-332.

²² Ibid., 337.

²³ Ibid., 338.

provided me with tools, tools that allowed me to reconsider individual subjectivity and agency through my own means.

Cultural Knowledge - Cultural Sustainability

In the introduction to Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*, editor Michael Tanner claims that Nietzsche "held unswervingly the view that the health of a culture was to be estimated in terms of the art it produces."²⁴ I suggest what is critical when reflecting upon the art a culture produces, is to observe why and how art is produced.

Resistance aimed to shift the focus from "objectified cultural capital" (the work of art, the dance performance) toward "embodied cultural capital," "the creative abilities, talents, styles, values and dispositions of individuals and communities that emerge from, and relate to artistic production and employment."²⁵ The interrelationship between the "institutional," "objectified," and "embodied," cultural capital is witnessed throughout the dissertation. The various books, articles, and publications in which Foucault, Nietzsche, Sartre, Foster, and Burt inform and influence, are examples of artifacts that constitute objectified cultural capital; artifacts endorsed, published, and conceived within institutionalized frameworks; artifacts that provide ideas, inspiration, and develop the creative abilities and talents of individuals. Housed within York University, this research project encapsulates all three forms of cultural capital. Positioned at the center of this research project is the creative act as a form of knowledge and scholarship.

²⁴ Michael Tanner, ed., "Introduction," in *The Birth of Tragedy: Out of the Spirit of Music* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), xii.

²⁵ Estelle Barrett, "Introduction," in *Practice As Research: Approaches To Creative Arts Enquiry*, eds. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

How and why I created *Resistance* has been chronicled in detail in previous chapters. Curiosity and a steadfast discomfort stirred a simple idea, put theory into motion; choreograph Foucault. The discomfort was with the idea of a docile body, seemingly void of personal agency. In response, I created an ethnographic practice-based research project that could speak to my experiences and to the experiences of those participating in the project. I aimed to archive the embodied, contributing to a discourse of bodies that dance. In *Critical Resistance: From Poststructuralism to Post-Critique* (2004) author David Hoy writes:

If the body can be shown to have been lived differently historically (through genealogy), or to be lived differently culturally (through ethnography), then the body can be seen to be ‘more’ than what it now has become, even if this ‘more’ is not claimed to be ‘universal,’ or ‘biological,’ or ‘natural.’ The contrast alone will not make us change, of course, but it will open the possibility of change.²⁶

Foster’s “body of ideas” was respected in the dancers creating and performing *Resistance*, dancers willing to share their subjective experiences. “Hired bodies” in training do not threaten possibility but gesture toward possibilities for change; a change of self, a change in the care of the self, and a change in how dance can be considered and archived.

Through study and practice the creative act is formed. In this act of creating lies a production of knowledge. The creative act is a form of scholarship. That this form of scholarship has the capacity to be undertaken speaks to a cultural knowledge. This form of cultural knowledge is dependent upon creative abilities, talents, and skills. Is this knowledge dependent on individuals who make art or individuals creating themselves as a work of art?

²⁶ David Couzens Hoy, *Critical Resistance: From Poststructuralism to Post-Critique* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 63.

I raised the question: Can our appreciation of sustainability broaden to incorporate the sustainability of the lives of individuals who choose to dance? What could be needed to sustain these individuals? Mentors and educators. Spaces designated for these actions, and doings. A society that values this form of knowledge. A continued production of art that respects the multiple and varied values that contribute to how and why art is produced. A fostering of practices, in whatever discipline they may be in.

Follow-up Interviews

More than a year and a half after the public performances of *Resistance*, I met up with Nico, Jillian, Jess and Kate for a final interview. We talked about what had transpired since we last met. I heard how they continue to create for themselves, their *own* paths. *Resistance* had contributed to the lived histories of these individuals. I asked them the question, “What do you remember from the project, *Resistance*?”

Nico

I remember *Resistance* very well. I re-live certain moments from it all the time. I remember how long we were in that one position that stretched my calf for so long. I wonder how we ever handled it. I remember that at the beginning of the choreographic process that moment was unbearable, and by the end of the process it was nothing. I re-live my mistakes *constantly*. I find I do that with every piece that I have performed. I re-think my mistakes. Now these mistakes become more of a joke, if anything.

I can remember all those times I thought I was off of the counts, either just too early or too late.

Jillian

Your rehearsals were a lot of fun. I really enjoyed how you were straight to the point. I remember how we, the ensemble, always talked about how much we loved movement exploration and improvisation, but when we got to your rehearsals we knew it was just time to listen and do, and that was so refreshing. To just be told what to do and do it. (Laughs) Because of the feeling of the group in *Resistance*, I remember feeling both joy and annoyance at the same time. Annoyance when the other dancers wouldn't shut up. In your piece I remember stepping outside of myself and feeling like I was this dark, mysterious, and serious person, which I totally am not. On stage I strongly remember that feeling of being an ensemble, because the piece had so much unison movement within the group. *Resistance* was just so powerful; thrusting, and always moving forward toward something.

Jess

I remember counting. I remember being so aware of the other dancers. That was the most I have ever been aware of other dancers because we were so close together. Every angle we moved in had to be so specific, moving in that close proximity, that was a unique experience. I think it would be interesting for me to dance *Resistance* again, having grown so much as a performer this last year and a half. I have discovered more of what one can

feel on stage, and it doesn't always have to be a prescribed feeling, it can be whatever I need it to be. The choreographer may want something specific but I am the one interpreting the movement. If I have to interpret it in a different way, then I do; I need to make it something for myself. At the time of *Resistance* I was an obedient student. I think it would be interesting to see what I would feel performing it now.

Kate

Resistance was more of a painful piece for me with the music and everything else within it. Sometimes I do think about it and I think I understand your role in the dance. I can now relate to your role more because I feel like I have been put into one spot and I can't move from that spot. I just had to learn how to live there, in that spot, and explore that space while everybody else moved around me. I remember you talking once about how you felt that *Resistance* was not aggressive, you were not fighting us off. I kind of feel like that now. I am not mad at the people around me; I do not have resentment towards people who can still dance while I can't. I just had to find a different way to interact with them because things are no longer the same. I can now relate more to, 'I am here, and I am forced to be here now, and I just have to find a way to be in this space.'

A moment I remember the most was from Holly's piece, *Tangled Rags*. I felt there was a story to be told with that piece and I was allowed to tell that story. The thing that always comes back to me is, and I've always wanted to share this with Holly,

was a moment from the first part of that piece. We came from the corner and then we all walked forward. Some people would then fall to their knees. During one of the last dress rehearsals Holly said she felt that I should just keep walking, just keep walking forward in the silence while everyone else remains still.

That moment turned into this thing for me. On the last night I was walking and it felt like there wasn't anyone else on the stage anymore. I didn't feel like there was an audience. I didn't feel like I was in a show anymore. It was just *me*. I remember looking out and seeing nothing and feeling like I could see everything, and everything would be fine. I had this moment of calm and peace. I felt like it lasted a really long time until everyone else ran forward and then I was out of that moment. That moment has stayed with me. All I have to do is close my eyes and I can take myself back there.

That moment has come to me in some really odd times. I remember going to the doctor's to get my first hip injection. I was lying on the table, and thinking 'I am not going to panic.' Then out of nowhere I had that vision of being out on the stage again, and just walking forward. I instantly became so calm.

My Obeisance

The creative process for the movement I performed in *Resistance* highlights how the act of choreography and the act of performing can shift relations of power. My series of actions and doings attempted to heal, to empower, to release, and to reclaim. I/my body danced gestures of resistance and acceptance.

The ‘Wrist of Fury’ was performed three times in the choreographic structure of *Resistance*. After the first execution of this gesture I turned to face the ensemble. The second and third execution of ‘The Wrist of Fury’ concluded with a slow, deep obeisance: a bow, a personal homage. The first obeisance I enacted for the ensemble, and the final obeisance, myself alone on the stage and in total silence, was executed for the audience.

Similar to ‘The Wrist of Fury’ I used the gesture of the obeisance, practiced again and again, as a marker for experience. Each execution of my obeisance enacted for the ensemble was a gesture in which I acknowledged the dancers that I was sharing this moment with. With each performance of this gesture my experiences would vary. Often I had feelings of gratitude, on occasion, intimidation. At times it felt like I was bowing to bodies from my past, imagined dancers that form my memory. In other moments this obeisance for the ensemble felt like an appreciation for the many educators and “masters” that had brought me to that point.

My final obeisance performed for the audience took on a figurative meaning, as my personal homage to Western theatre dance discourse, to the privileged role of the audience, to those who observe the dancer and the dance. Initially, performing this gesture felt more like resistance, by the end I experienced acceptance. In the movements and moments of this gesture, practiced again and again, I found my space in a discourse and a history. I close my eyes and remember those moments performing that obeisance, those embodied memories that continue to inform choices that I make now.



Image 6

Canadian Practice-Based Research

Occupying the role of a contemporary dance choreographer/practice-based researcher, I made the choice to address the disproportion of dance scholarship between discourse predicated upon the perspectives of those creating/living the dance work (dancers) and those observing the work of art (audience members/critics). In archiving moments lived by dancers participating in the creation and performance of *Resistance*, I contribute to the field of artistic research. Fortunate to have a place and support in

Canadian academia at the doctoral level, the methodology and emphasis of my research challenges what I consider overly restrictive understandings of Western theatre dance.

The broadening of considerations regarding the what, why, and how of dance is present in the work of other Canadian dance artists who are challenging traditional methods for creating, producing, and considering contemporary dance. Examples are artists such as Toronto-based Public Recordings whose work, “develops and presents projects that test hypotheses about group work through performance, education, publishing and other collective gestures,”²⁷ and Montreal-based, PME-ART whose artistic work challenges the traditional role of the choreographer and processes for creation.

We are deeply engaged with the ethical and political challenges that arise when working collaboratively, searching for a delicate balance between the essential freedom of the performers (to create the thinking, the physicality and substance of the work) and the rigor necessary to structure and gradually refine the material over the course of the process.²⁸

Another example is Benoît Lachambre, with his long established practice and commitment to the somatic. “Central to his practice is the idea of detachment, relieving the body from the constraints that political, socio-cultural and esthetic hierarchies can entail.”²⁹ The works of these individuals inspired and gave me confidence to position my own dance practice as the primary field site for an ethnographic study that considered the body, individual subjectivity, choreographic processes, and agency.

²⁷ See: <http://publicrecordings.org/information/>

²⁸ Quote from PME-ART’s Artistic Statement. See: <http://www.pme-art.ca/en/>

²⁹ See: <http://www.parbleux.qc.ca/en/artistic-direction/>

An Ending

My bodily practice continues to be a source for discovery and a care for the self. In the space of the dance studio and the skating rink, in moments of rehearsal and training, I have witnessed some of the most powerful, affecting performances I have ever had the freedom of experiencing; performances that have stayed with me, transformed me. No tickets were sold. The price of admission to these performances was the commitment to a practice; me/my body investing in an activity of personal value, day after day, weeks into years, living through movement. This is a way of being that I have created for myself.

From that moment as an undergraduate student at Concordia, a moment of resistance followed by an acceptance, I began a long progressive consideration of self. My dance practice developed beyond that of mere ‘physical activities’ into a process to observe my socially located self and to decide for myself “my good, and my evil.” This process of distinguishing for *oneself*, one’s good and evil, is my own process for an acquisition of truth and knowledge, a truth that is neither inherent, nor prescribed, but created out of relations of power and history. Through my dance practice, this research has allowed me to appreciate and understand the history of I/my body and relations of power I am part of. Research a process for discovering *my* way.

The creation and performance of *Resistance* was an investigation wherein a simple question was posed: given that I am a docile body, what else could I be? In my attempt to answer this question, what have I come to learn? I have learned that I am the dancer and the dance, and that this, in itself, is more than enough.

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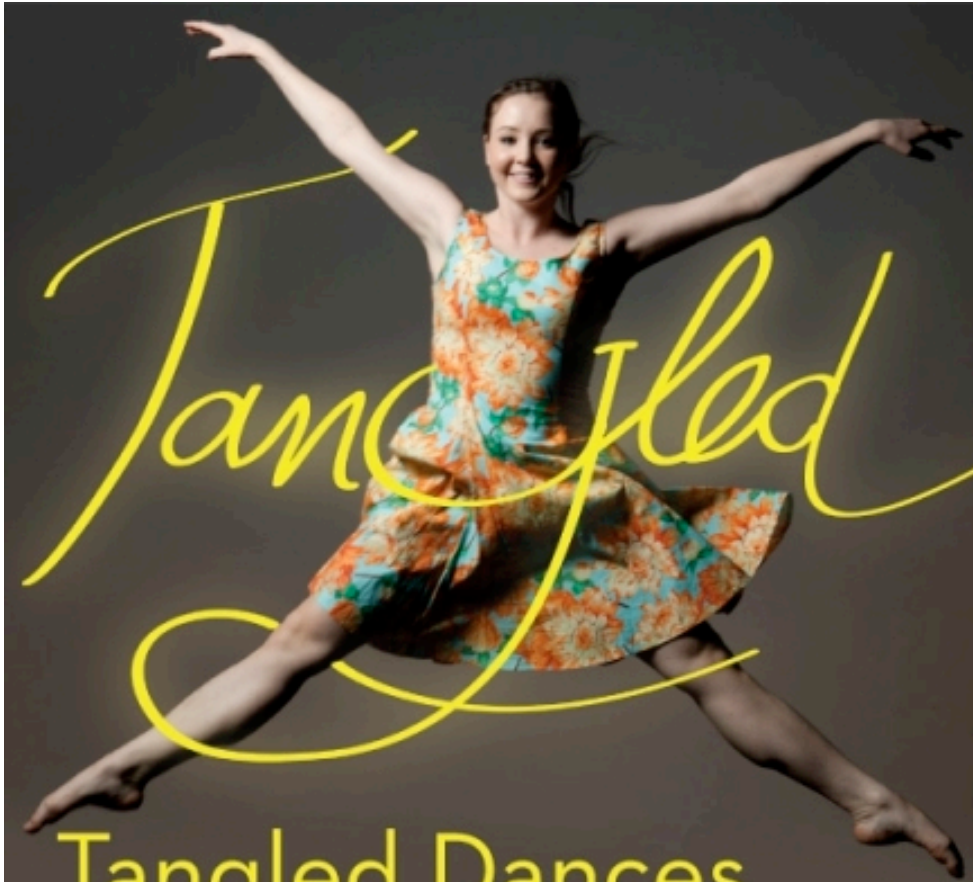
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Appendix A



Tangled

Tangled Dances

YORK DANCE ENSEMBLE
Artistic Director: Holly Small

MARCH 22-24 7:30 pm

Works by Darcey Callison | Anne Goad | Holly Small | Shae Zukiwsky
and dancers and musicians of the York Dance Ensemble

Lighting Design by William Mackwood

Sandra Faire and Ivan Fecan Theatre | Accolade East Building, York University
\$20 | \$10 students, seniors & CADA
Box Office: 416.736.5888 | www.yorku.ca/perform

Photo: David Heu | Dancer: Megan Windeler
Choreographer: Darcey Callison

www.yorku.ca/finearts/dance

YORK FINE ARTS | YORK UNIVERSITY

Image 7

Appendix B

Resistance – Music Breakdown in Counts/ Choreographic notes

At My Mothers by Warsaw Village Band

1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6

1,2

1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6

1,2

1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6

1,2

1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6

1-6, 1-6, 1-6, 1-6

1,2,3

Begin 'Cranes'

Cranes by Warsaw Village Band

1-4, 1-4, 1-4

1-4

1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4

Vocals I.

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4

1+2+

Vocals II.

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4

Square Dance

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4

Vocals III.

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4

1+2+

Vocal IV.

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4

Mob Scene

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4,

1-4, 1-4,

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4

Vocals V

1-4, 1-4, 1-4

Vocals VI.

1-4

Ending

(∼) (2:33-2:43)

1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4

1-4

1-4

1-4

1-4

Final Vocals

1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4

1-4

1-4

1-4

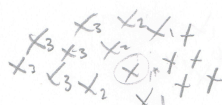
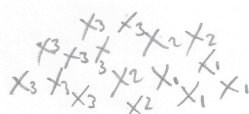
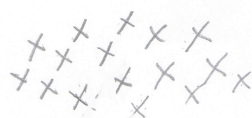
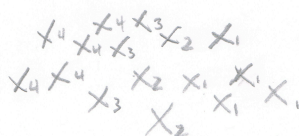
In Silence

1-4, 1-4, 1-4

Image 8

Resistance

Ensemble - 'Cranes'



1-4, 1-4, 1-4

1-4

1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4

1-4 still

1-4 still

1-4 weight shift to R

Heads on 1, 2, 3, 4

1-4 weight shift L

1-4 weight shift L

1 All heads left + shoulder/knee 2, 3, 4 shift direction

1-4 Draw back leg in

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4

1-4, 1-4

1-4 weight shift R

1, 2, 3 coord. shift R 4 change shift to L

1 - arms, 2 - arms 3 - arms 4

1, 2, 3 arms, 4 drop arms, body square

1-4 x_1 1-2 Bowed Right 3, 4 return centre x_1 → slow drop 1, 2, 3, 41-4 x_1, x_2 1-2 SR-C x_1, x_2, x_3 3-4 SR-C

1+2 SR-C 3 + knee 4

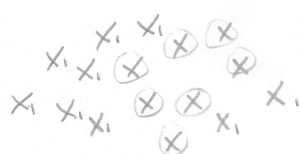
1 - Right 2 left 3 right 4 centre

Ensemble - 'Cranes' 2

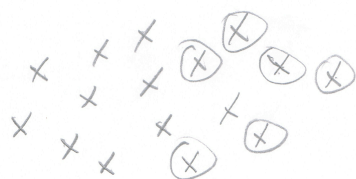
Vocals 1.

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4

1 + 2 +



1 left 2 right 3 L 4 R
 1 + 2 + 3 + 4
 x L c L R c R travelling left
 (x) L R L R stationary.



1 + 2 + 3 + 4
 1 + 2 + 3 + 4
 (x) LD R c R c R 4-3-2
 x LD R L R stationary

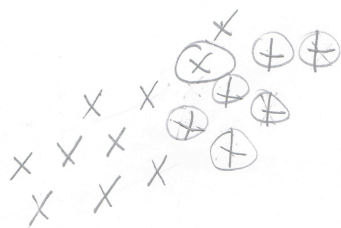
1 + 2 + 3 + 4
 (x) L R L R stationary
 x L c L c L c L
 1 2 3 4

1 + 2 +
 (x) c c
 x c c

Ensemble - 'cranes' 3

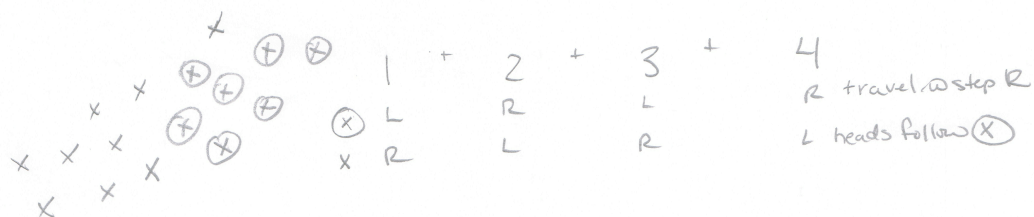
Vocals II

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4



	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	
(X) L			R		L		R	drop arms
X R			L		R		L	head look L slow 4, drop arms

	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	
(X) L			R		L		R	heads look R slow 4
X								



	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	
(X) L			R		L		R	R travel @ step R
X R			L		R		L	heads follow (X)

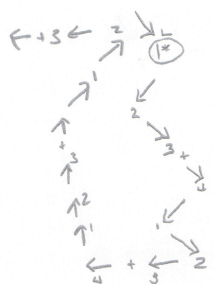
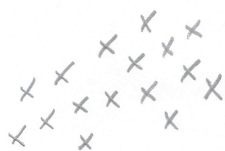
	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	
(X) L			R		L		R	R travel @ step R
X R			L		R		L	heads follow (X)

Into 'Square' dance

Ensemble - 'cranes' 4

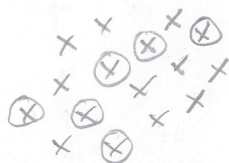
'Square Dance'

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4

Needs
work!

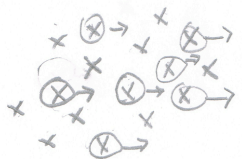
1*	+	2	+	3	+	4
↓L		R		↓L	C	↓L
1	+	2	+	3	+	4
R		↓L		R	C	R
1	+	2	+	3	+	4
↑L		↑R		↑L	C	↑R
1	+	2	+	3	+	4
↓R		↓L		L	C	L

1-4, 1-4



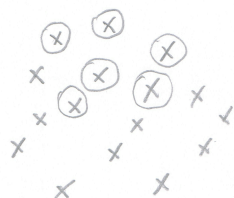
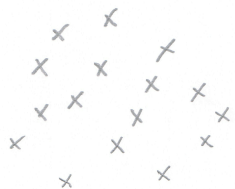
1	2	3	4
X plie → head stays front			
⊗ head L	still	still	still
1	2	3	4
X slow turn head to			left.
⊗ plie	—	—	plie.

1-4, 1-4



1	+	2	+	3	+	4
X still		R		L	C	L
⊗ → L						
1	+	2	+	3	+	4
X L		R		L	C	L
⊗ L		R		L	C	L

Ensemble - 'Cranes' 6



Continue... 'Moto Scene'

1-4, 1-4

1	2	3	4	Arm throw up TT (↑)
L	R	L	R	on 1
1	2	3	4	Head front on 1
L	R	L	R	Arm toss side on 2. ← → (↔)

1-4, 1-4, 1-4, 1-4 HD = head down

	1	2	3	4
X	L↑	R↔	L HD	R HD
(X)	L HD	R HD	L↑	R↔

	1	2	3	4
X	L↑	R↔	L HD	R HD
(X)	L HD	R HD	L HD↑	R HD↑

	1	2	3	4
X	L↑	R	L 2nd P	R plie
(X)	L↑	R "	L 2nd P	R plie

	1	2	3	4
X	plie	→	→	→
(X)	→	plie	→	→

(Four counts to deep 2nd P :))

1-4, 1-4

	1	2	3	4
X	L↑	R	L	R
(X)	L↑	R	L	R

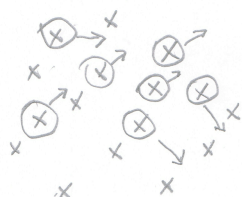
	1	2	3	4
X	L	shift weight to R		
(X)	L	"	"	R

2, 3, 4 head look Right

Ensemble - 'Cranes' 7

Continue 'Mob Scene'

1-4, 1-4

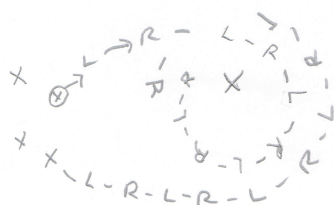


1	2	3	+	4
X ↔	sink deeper into R knee →			
⊗ L	R	L	c	L
1	2	3		4
X R	L	R	c	R
⊗ R	L	R	c	R

Vocals V

↻ clockwise

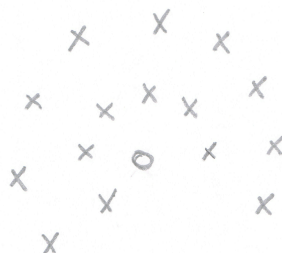
X ↻ c. clock



1	2	3	+	4
L	R	L	c	L
1	2	3	+	4
R	L	R	c	R
1	2	3		4
L	PIVOT to Centre →			

Ending

Choreograph in studio @ ensemble



- move each dancer into arm's length
- touch will signal stillness
- my next gesture will signal exit off stage

Appendix C

At My Mother's - English Translation

At My Mother's from the album *People's Spring*, released 2002 by Orange World.
The Warsaw Village Band

At my mother's glasses clanged
and now they don't because there is no daughter

Oyla oylala oylala Oyla oylala oyla

Glasses, clang as you clanged.
Boys, love me as you loved.

Oyla oylala oylala Oyla oylala oyla

Boys, go there, where is a white floor.
Boys gather there, where they sense a girl

Cranes - English Translation

Cranes from the album *People's Spring*, released 2002 by Orange World.
The Warsaw Village Band

The cranes were flying and suddenly dived in to rest on the plough land
The prior patch of soil is better than later one
The prior patch of soil is better than later one
Because there is wheat growing there not a common grass

The first wife is better than the beautiful second one
He had children with the first one and sent them away with the second wife
He had children with the first one and sent them away with the second wife
My children, go away into the world to serve (work)
There is no place for you here anymore

My children, go away into the world to serve (work)
There is no place for you here anymore
My children went away
And they left me crying
And I went to the bar to drink my sorrow
While the old bar-keeper was surprised at my heavy drinking

While the old bar-keeper was surprised at my heavy drinking
I was crying with sorrow at my fate and drank and drank
I was crying with sorrow at my fate and drank and drank
I got up with resolution to bring my children home

I got up with resolution to bring my children home
My children come home, do not serve anybody

My children come home, do not serve anybody

My children come home, do not serve anybody

My children come home, do not serve anybody

Appendix D



Image 9

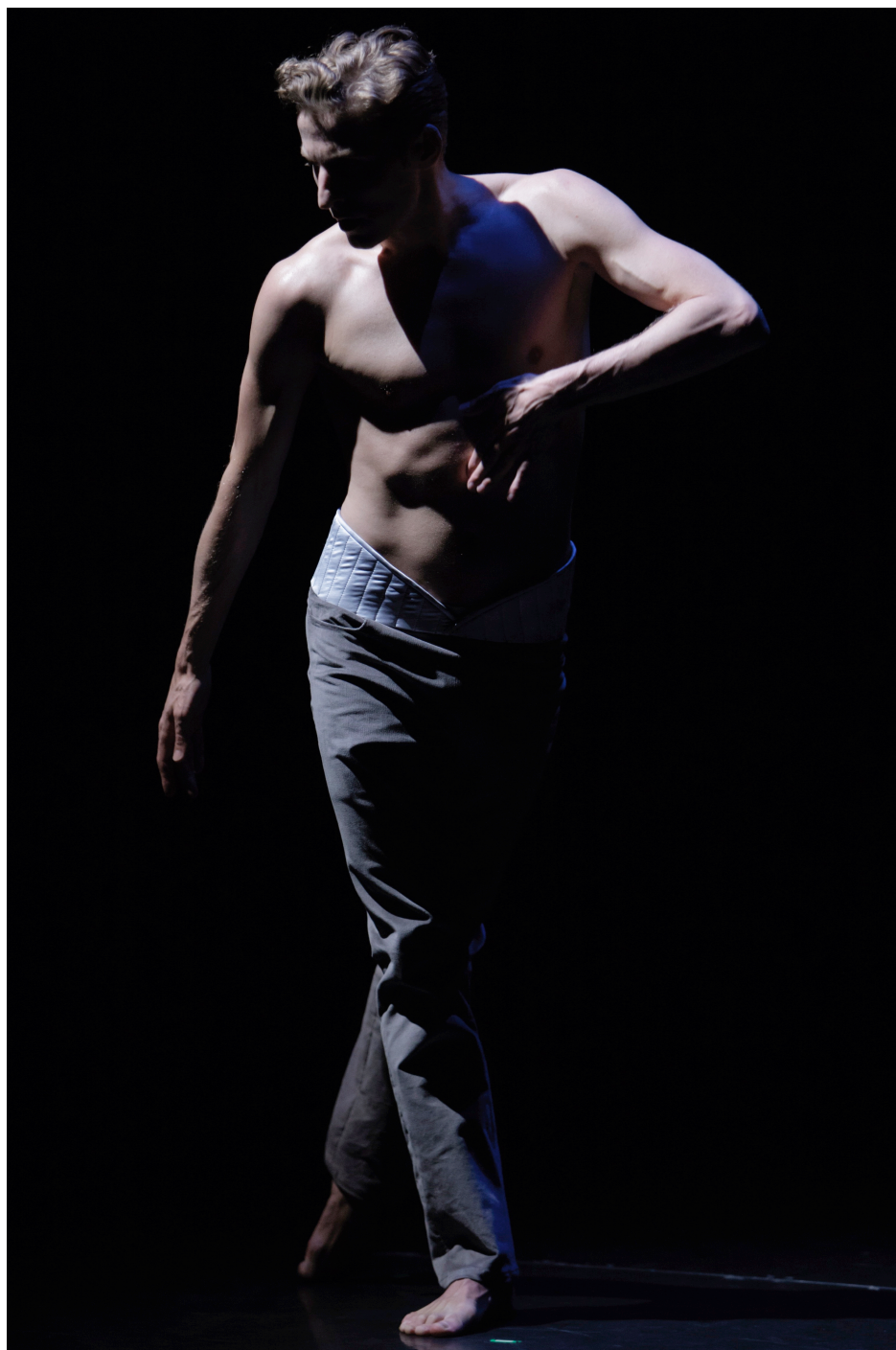


Image 10