

ABSTRACT

This thesis project centered on the creation of a performance work that embodied the sensorial images of *Burnt Norton*, from T.S. Eliot's work *Four Quartets* as applied to dance-making. It further explored the evolutionary nature of theoretical systems and used in creating dance from personal narrative. I worked with a group of my student dancers from the Mississippi School of the Arts in a somatic approach to improvisation and developing aesthetic acuity, that then grew into choreography. I also worked with a BFA dance major from a nearby college and developed a solo for her using a similar process as with my high school students. I drew the two choreographic explorations together to create one work, *Footfalls*, which was performed in March 2018.

This written portion of the thesis details my research into T.S. Eliot and creative practice as well as my experience working with taking visceral cues from language to create original movement.

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Footfalls: a choreographic exploration of sensorial images from

T.S. Eliot's poem *Four Quartets*

by

Tammy Warren Stanford

A Master's Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Montclair State University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

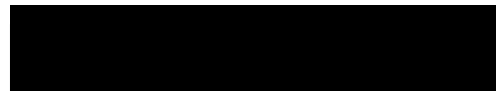
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FROM T.S. ELIOT'S POEM *FOUR QUARTETS*

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Dance

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TAMMY WARREN STANFORD

Montclair State University

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Introduction

What comes first? Time future or time past? How did I write a theoretical narrative, forget about it, and a year later choreograph it? Perhaps because, in the words of Dr. Penelope Hanstein, “Dance-making is an emerging and evolving system that (subconsciously?) recognizes (and/or perceives) sensations.”
(Hanstein)

I used the first stanza, *Burnt Norton*, from T.S. Eliot’s poem, *Four Quartets* as impetus for a choreographic project. This idea surfaced during a special projects course in fall 2017 in which I compiled a list of sensorial images from Eliot’s poem for the purpose of generating new choreographic material. Several images inspired the choreographic investigation during my personal improvisational practice.

During a special projects course in fall 2016 I investigated Ohad Naharin’s process for developing a dance vocabulary known as Gaga. I was especially curious as to the way Naharin trains his dancers using his vocabulary of sensorial images to encourage the embodiment of *felt* responses. A natural connection of the use of imagery between Eliot and Naharin occurred during my research when I came across a journal article titled “Speaking the Unnamable: A Phenomenology of Sense in *T.S. Eliot’s Four Quartets*” by Jurate Levina. Levina discusses the phenomenon of Eliot’s imagery and the sensory experience of the reader. It occurred to me I could use Eliot’s sensorial imagery to generate my own dance vocabulary word list for use during my personal improvisational practice and further challenge my creative process. I could also create an original performative work and use my new word list to train my dancers. I felt by using text and images from Eliot’s poem as an impetus for generating dance content I could create for the audience and dancers/performers a *felt* sensorial experience as well. I define a *felt*

sensorial experience as a means of using imagery for the purpose of manifesting an actualized, internal, and visceral movement experience by instructing dancers and inspiring an audience to follow/empathize with the sensations of selected images. The choreographic process of creating a *felt* sensorial experience was a natural extension of my special projects and informed the trajectory of my thesis research. This research on the use of imagery to create a choreographic work resulted in a live performative work and a refined rehearsal practice for training dancers.

Sensorial images from *Four Quartets* informed my inquiry for creating a solo and ensemble work for *Footfalls*. A five-minute solo for *Footfalls* was performed by Madison Bordelon at Belhaven University on the evenings of March 2 and 3, 2018 at Bitsy Irby Theatre in Jackson, Mississippi. A complete twenty-minute version of the work *Footfalls* was performed by an ensemble of six dancers and the soloist at the Mississippi School of the Arts on the evenings of March 7 and 8, 2018 at Enochs Black Box Gallery Theatre in Brookhaven, Mississippi. An investigation into the sensorial nature of Eliot's poetic imagery guided my creative practice and choreographic inquiry leading me through the process of exploring, creating, training and rehearsing my dancers, and a performance of the artistic work.

BURNT NORTON

(No. 1 of 'Four Quartets')

(Stanza I)

T.S. Eliot

I

Time present and time past

Are both perhaps present in time future, And time future contained in time past.

If all time is eternally present

All time is unredeemable.

What might have been is an abstraction Remaining a perpetual possibility

Only in a world of speculation.

What might have been and what has been Point to one end, which is always present.

Footfalls echo in the memory

Down the passage which we did not take Towards the door we never opened

Into the rose-garden. My words echo Thus, in your mind.

But to what purpose Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves

I do not know.

Other echoes

Inhabit the garden. Shall we follow?

Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,

Round the corner. Through the first gate,

Into our first world, shall we follow

The deception of the thrush? Into our first world. There they were, dignified, invisible,

Moving without pressure, over the dead leaves,

In the autumn heat, through the vibrant air,

And the bird called, in response to

The unheard music hidden in the shrubbery,

And the unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses

Had the look of flowers that are looked at.

There they were as our guests, accepted and accepting. So we moved, and they, in a formal pattern,
Along the empty alley, into the box circle,
To look down into the drained pool.
Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,
And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight, And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
The surface glittered out of heart of light,
And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.
Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty.
Go, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children, Hidden excitedly, containing laughter.
Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.
Time past and time future
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present. (Eliot 13,14)

Rationale

My purpose for creating the *Footfalls* project was to investigate, embody, and apply the parallel ideas of sensorial imagery as inspired by T.S. Eliot and Ohad Naharin towards the creation of a choreographic project. I researched the sensorial poetics of T. S. Eliot's work and his dynamic use of imagery. I researched scholars with ideas on the meaning of his imagery and how *Four Quartets* reflected his life. Terry L. Fairchild, literary scholar, Ph.D., and chair of the literary department at Maharishi University, notes this poem is "the greatest philosophical poem of the century" and that *Four Quartets* "...is a fuller,

more mature treatment of Eliot's spiritual vision...considering the relationship between life in time...bondage and suffering...eternity, freedom, and happiness" (Fairchild 51).

Dance writer, dramaturg, professor, and literary manager, Jana Perkovic identifies Naharin as "one of the most important living choreographers." She sums up the effect of imagery used during Naharin's process stating, "There are two ways in which artists think about their work: some envisage a series of effects they want to conjure for the audience. Others, like Naharin, are deeply internal in their process...never...depict a real situation, but instead aim to provoke an interior effect" (Perkovic). Comments made by Fairchild and Perkovic on Eliot and Naharin increased my curiosity when I discovered commonalities in their use of imaging. Through my desire to deepen my personal creative journey with their work, I found approaches/practices for choreography with sensorially inspired improvisational practices. These also led me to develop teaching and training practices based in their use of imaging.

During fall of 2016 I followed a personal investigative/improvisational practice of moving through images inspired by Naharin's Gaga vocabulary. This experience produced in my body, and eventually in that of my dancers, access to a *felt* sense produced by imagery. I elected to use this sensorial experience of my personal investigative/improvisational practice to create a live performance. I wanted to achieve for the audience and dancer an aesthetic/visceral and/or empathetic *felt* sense, thus achieving through dance what readers experience upon reading and hearing Eliot's work. Bodily sensations were directly inspired by Eliot's imagery and yet the content for *Footfalls* choreography was indirectly, subconsciously, and/or serendipitously inspired by

poetic narratives I wrote during a creative practices course in 2017. Furthermore, I wanted to refine my ability to teach and train my dancers to acquire a performance aesthetic that provided an empathetic experience for the audience.

Research

Background

In fall of 2017 Madison Bordelon, a senior dance major at Belhaven University, commissioned me to choreograph her senior capstone solo. Research for Bordelon's solo and several previous special projects and creative practice courses informed the final performative work of *Footfalls*.

My interest in exploring somatically inspired sensorial imaging for choreographic content began nearly two years ago while attending Claire Porter's Improvisation and Creative Practices I and Penelope Hanstein's Creative Practices II, graduate courses in the MFA in Dance program at Montclair State University.

Ever since I was a child, fluttering around in my local patch of woods, and more formally, during my undergraduate training, I have always loved composing movement from an honest and visceral level. The first day of class with Claire Porter re-enlivened my child-like joy of moving with the pleasure of sheer abandonment. Free from judgement and predetermined agendas, I found myself filled with excitement as I felt reacquainted with a long-buried desire to disappear into an *idea* for the sole purpose of journeying towards discovery. Disappearing into an *idea* meant a certain abandonment of

myself into the movement...the *idea* in its basic form being an honest manifestation of the sensation...truth and the phenomenon of experience.

Prior to 2016, my creative practices became limited to the teaching of dance technique and improvisation courses. As opportunities to choreograph came intermittently and the honor of deep investigative inquiry was limited, Claire Porter's courses allowed my body to begin repairing years of limited personal freedom and to realize the full extent of the burgeoning limitations of my current creative practice. Dr. Hanstein's course allowed me the deep inquiry of craft, practice, and theory, giving me the content and context to explore the poetics of dance. Content from the Improvisation and Creative Practice courses stirred my eagerness to attend to a new personal approach for dance-making. I found the wording of the course description "kinesthetic sensitivity, spontaneity, deepen... capabilities, and understand themselves as active artists" (Hanstein) as a much-needed mental impetus for engaging with a deep commitment towards achieving these goals as an artist. Upon completion of the studies during the summer of 2016 and the ensuing journey of returning to my previous understandings of creative processes and practices, I was met with a greater depth of knowledge, interest for exploring poetics through personal narrative, and a greater physical application than I could have imagined. Below is an example of the poetic explorations I began in Hanstein's course. The imagery that surfaced strengthened my courage to apply dance improvisation to imagery and propelled me towards a deeper investigation of potential choreographic uses for imagery.

Conjuring a Conversation with a Path

“Select a movement metaphor” is the instruction I give to myself and “maintain the flow, remember the solo, keep the volume low.”

Has serendipity surfaced again? Happy and resolved with new fervor, I begin the dance journey again. The podcast speaks, and I join the rhythm of the vocal cadence...and I respond.

A walking path conjures up conspiracies, I pace back and forth along the patterned pauses from left to right, pausing...a conversation begins, and a surprisingly long rhythmical dance phrase contributes to the spoken text.

In Fall 2016, I began striving towards deeper, intrinsic, and authentic motivations for movement, based on the promptings and encouragement of Professor Lori Katterhenry during my special project course that investigated Ohad Naharin’s movement vocabulary known as Gaga. This special project was a turning point in my life. I embarked on a deep investigation of how I could create a personal practice inspired by the somatic intelligence used by Ohad Naharin to prepare and train his dancers. Naharin trains his dancers in a practice that uses a layering of imagery to encourage a somatic exploration of sensations that can be experienced/felt in the body.

Inspired by Naharin, I embarked on my own personal practice and found that my kinesthetic growth was moving me towards relinquishing control of thoughts and outcomes, as well as increasing my pleasure of moving without over-analyzing. I found I was able to maximize my personal freedom while moving within the confines of an image score. The image score was a list of words and images I selected to guide my improvisational experience of somatic sensations. This allowed me to achieve a mental and physical state of surrender, allowing for a greater understanding of, and acquaintance

with, my body's capabilities. This further allowed me to extend my current physical and aesthetic range and to experience a pleasing abandonment reminiscent of the unrestrained motion I had experienced as a child. I learned, from my newly developed personal improvisational practice and influences of the Gaga approach, that imagery is a *way in* for surrendering the body to experiencing a *felt* sensorial truthfulness in movement. I found that imagery suggests to the mind first, and then the body is willing to spontaneously follow. One of my great challenges was to temper my mind's tendency to administrate a premeditated agenda, preventing free access to authentic movement experiences. However, my daily practice improved, developed, and eventually I accomplished the goal of increased movement sensations.

I adjusted and further developed my image word list and began to conduct movement experiences for a class of dancers enrolled in a second-year dance improvisation class for gifted and talented high school students. Understandably, as I began to teach the principles of image-based somatic exploration/improvisation to a group of students, my own understanding and growth increased as well.

Subsequent special projects throughout the year of 2017 included a semester of collaboration with published writer and poet Jan Risher. I created and performed in a solo work utilizing an improvisational score based on original poems devised during our collaboration. This collaboration further developed my interest in imagery. I was also prompted to inquire about potential aesthetic effects experienced by a performer and viewer of dance, and if this was parallel to the experience of a writer and reader of poetic imagery.

Continuing the trajectory of poetry and imagery, I found myself in fall of 2017 approached by a senior dance student, Madison Bordelon, from Belhaven University. She asked if I would choreograph her capstone project in partial fulfillment of her BFA degree in dance. Bordelon had attended my two special project performances, one being my solo *Symptoms of a Foregone Conclusion* in fall 2016 and the other being *Unraveling* in spring 2017. As a former student, she was acquainted with my teaching and hoped to secure me as a mentor and choreographer to guide her through the process of delving into somatic, improvisational principles.

The working relationship with Bordelon served as another turning point in my inquiry and investigation of somatic principles, as experienced through sensorial imagery. At every point of our studio sessions, new and valuable information surfaced in a seemingly serendipitous fashion. We were both awed by how imagery produces motion in the body, and delighted by the pure pleasure of following wherever inspiration happened to lead.

During my research into the phenomenon of imagery, the work of T.S. Eliot and his poem *Four Quartets* surfaced regularly. Being a long-time fan of T.S. Eliot and, admittedly, unfamiliar with this work, I made a dedicated effort to investigate my physical response to his imagery in this seminal work. I compiled a new list of imagery words pulled directly from *Burnt Norton*, the first stanza of *Four Quartets*, and used these to map out improvisational scores for Bordelon's solo. The studio sessions with Bordelon allowed my skills as a choreographer to develop and my pedagogical approaches to expand. I discovered a new, *felt* sense of ease during the creative process

and experienced simultaneous moments of creating, editing, and coaching with joy and confidence. Approaching creative sessions and rehearsal with an image score, directly inspired by the images of T.S. Eliot, proved to be a consistently successful method, fulfilling me as an artist and promoting deeper inquiry.

In retrospect, the narratives written for the Creative Practice II course (with Penny Hanstein) revealed a surprising parallel between a section of the narrative and the creation of Bordelon's solo. The similarities between an inquiry on theory from this class and the work I created for *Footfalls* was unexpected. The narrative was written well before I encountered the T.S. Eliot poem and months before Madison Bordelon commissioned me to choreograph her senior capstone solo. A portion of the narrative is included below. The entire narrative is included in the Appendix. This poetic exploration from Hanstein's course unknowingly led to the development of Madison's solo work. Noted in the narrative below is the word 'footfalls' and the title of my work is also *Footfalls*. The remarkable and detailed description perfectly parallels my thesis performative work. The second stanza is an equally remarkable, foreshadowing of the beginning of Bordelon's solo.

*The motional path has become intricate, delicate, disjointed, organic, barren, ridged, uneven, multi-directional, light, natural, detailed, pre-life. The effortful attempts to press onward reveal backtracking, rewinding, and reversing quick steps. **Footfalls** [emphasis added] conjure up rhythms that alternate quick staccato snaps from left to right and evolves into a slower synchronized tempo and then repeats. The focus returns to the intricate, pre-life, organic form of the path.*

The path resembles bending twigs, zig-zagging patterns on the floor, and trans positioning power. The path demands attention as the center-most

drawing power...The center...maintains control and draws me in. I retreat, recoil, and detour with the angled elbowing branches. Twists of my torso attempt to assert self from the power of the center. The wooded spine surpasses me with consistent strength. The resolve of the narrow (but not always straight way) insists on uniformity to the path.

Although I wrote the narrative for Hanstein's course, and a later created the choreography, I did not see the connection until a year later. This connection surprised me and coincided with another narrative, *Surprised by Serendipity* (included in the appendix). The moments described in the narrative reflect the exact concepts I attempted to explore through movement. What comes first? Time future or time past? How did I write the above content, forget about it, and a year later choreograph it? This process of investigation has admittedly humbled me, and I am left in awe of the entire process. I will continue to investigate theoretically and happily pursue choreographic endeavors with the hope that narratives from my investigations will once again create a parallel connection as demonstrated so apparently in my work *Footfalls*.

Audience feedback on Bordelon's completed five-minute solo surpassed my hopes. The final performative event encompassed many of my investigations. Bordelon's performance as well as my choreography received praise of the highest regard from Belhaven University professors, community/audience members, and her peers. This feedback encouraged me as I gained a sense that my work had been validated. I continued the rehearsal process and completed the next phase of research and the last section of the dance. With a new-found sense of clarity, I completed the process of choreographing my thesis performative work. I had spent hours in the studio engaged in my personal practice, writing imagery scores, experimenting with creative content on my cast of student

dancers, mapping out movement pathways, trusting my intuition, and finalizing my choices. I engaged all I had learned from the mindfulness gleaned from my Gaga-inspired practice and afforded myself the privilege of surrendering and suspending judgement on any outcomes regarding my choreographic work. This was a true test - theory put into practice. My dancers were remarkable at recalling content from one rehearsal to the next, even through a somewhat unexpected and extended break. I was overwhelmed with gratitude for their commitment to my dance work.

Methodology

Creating Choreographic Content

My methods for creating choreographic content required training my dancers to achieve a certain authentic performance aesthetic. To achieve this, I had to encourage new sensorial and somatic movement explorations for my dancers. I elected to begin each rehearsal with a twenty-five minute somatic improvisation using (as inspiration) sensorial imagery from the text of the Eliot poem and/or images inspired by Naharin's vocabulary. Examples of images used for the movement "warm-up" included words from Ohad Naharin's movement vocabulary: "luna, float, space between bones, circling, liquid bones, tiny explosions" (Seitz) and Eliot's imagery from *Burnt Norton*, the first stanza of *Four Quartets*: "eternity, perpetual possibility, passage, pointing, footfalls, echo, draining, pressure, unseen, pattern, deception, unheard music, and empty alley." (Eliot 13,14). I generated and devised motion/action based on the poem's text during personal studio sessions. The content was then taught to the dancers in a later rehearsal. This process was repeated for each of the subsequent rehearsals.

Considering the beginning of the choreographic project started with Madison Bordelon's solo work, her content became the impetus for generating all other material. In my personal rehearsal sessions, I gained inspiration from following the ideas that surfaced when reading the poem. I resisted personal judgment of my ideas and instead wrote, spoke, and moved as sensations surfaced for me. As the poem relates to the essence of human existence in non-linear and invisible time, I chose to show this abstract concept with a literal path, visible for the viewer to follow.

Bordelon, as the lead character, represented humanity, experiencing the nature of time. Additional roles included Junyla Silmon as Bordelon's *Déjà vu Time*, or *Time's Shadow/Foreshadow*, Kenya Moore as Bordelon's *Time Past*, Abigail Bankson as Bordelon's *Time Present*, Devonna Curtis as Bordelon's *Time Future*, and Tahj Harris as the *Game-Changer* or *Eternal Time*. Points on a spatial floor pattern represented each element of time. I juxtaposed the idea of invisible time with the dancers pointing directly to specific points in space. In this way, I hoped to achieve a visual representation of the inexplicable similarity between space and time, and place and existence. The dance was created in a somewhat backwards order, even though I was not aware of it at the time. Bordelon's solo was created first and eventually placed at minute fourteen in the actual completed work. The cast of *time-markers* begin onstage placed strategically at their designated place in *time*. *Time Past* is downstage left; *Time's Shadow* is upstage left; *Time Present* is upstage center; *Time Future* is upstage right; *Game-Changer* is offstage center right and Bordelon (*Humanity*) is offstage center left. In devising the

choreography, I created six movement phrases. All six phrases were inspired by sensorial images from T. S. Eliot's poem *Four Quartets*.

The six phrases

The first phrase is described in my journal as, "alternating- bobbing with slight tilt right and left -- the dancer is ready to 'go' -- sauté parallel first position...goalkeeper action/popcorn(ing) among dancers." This is the first phrase in my journal yet was placed as the fifth phrase in the performative work. This phrase was created to evoke the sensation of human desire to "go" towards the "gate" (Eliot 13,14) that was never opened in response to moments in time. The ensemble of dancers was directed to increase vertical height of jumps and to increase speed as the phrase was repeated, demonstrating the desire to enter the gate. The ensemble is seemingly prevented from advancing forward by the illusion of an obstacle. An image of goalkeeper was given to ensure that the dancer's focus remained fixed with a determined desire to reach what was once figuratively dismissed and underestimated. This phrase addressed the urgency to undo the damage of regret.

The second phrase is described in my journals as, "reaching backwards with the left foot to 'get the ball' while traveling in a direction opposite from the place the 'ball' is located." The dancers were directed to align this phrase with Eliot's image of "pointing to one end" (Eliot 13,14). The ensemble relentlessly aspired to the sensation of reaching towards the unreachable and formerly discarded, unappreciated goal, the "ball." This was the fourth phrase executed in the work and progressed towards a crescendo of physical intensity with rapid and broad sweeping direction changes. The face focused towards the

back-left foot as the torso spiraled around towards the right, and momentum forced the body low, forward, and away from the “goal.” The ensemble aggressively repeated this action as they retraced their assigned floor patterns.

The third phrase is described in my journals as, “deep second position turned-out position shifting the mid-back right and left as a *bear scratching his back on a wall (my image)* and arms are in demi-second position, the torso and weight shifts side-to-side softer and more “liquid” than the shift in the first phrase.” The dancer remains in plie throughout the phrase. This section elaborated on the indecisive and wavering vacillations of choice-making and the effect time has on thoughtful consideration of regrets. It was almost as if the ensemble was taunting the human with the reminder that she must make an immediate and final decision in spite of her past mistakes, fears of the future, and her disregard for the present moment.

The fourth phrase is described in my journals as, “an extension of the third phrase and continues the idea of ‘pointing to one end’ (Eliot 13,14).” After the dancers shift back and forth, right and left, the head initiates a percussive drop of the torso to the right and the left leg abruptly extends, creating a maximized lateral inversion. This is meant to encourage the human to become aware of her indecisiveness and to assist her in overcoming in order to make a clear decision to allow a shift that turns her perception of time upside down.

The fifth phrase is described in my journals as, “standing on the right leg in parallel plie -- the left leg is in a low attitude toward the back repeatedly ‘thrusting’ into the backspace, attempting to ‘point to one end’ (Eliot 13,14).” Arms mirror each other at

ninety degrees “L” angles, swaying and rippling together, reflecting the action of the torso and eventually progressing to swaying in opposition. The lower leg is still “thrusting” backwards. A high point in this ensemble section is when the timing of the actions become unsynchronized and seemingly chaotic. This represents to the human that place and space may be frighteningly invisible but nonetheless present.

The sixth phrase is described in my journals as, “sitting on the floor in second leg position -- arms in the same ‘L’ position as phrase the fifth phrase—torso twisting abruptly, right, and left, with a brief stop in the center—playing with opposites.” This phrase places the ensemble in specific places on the floor that the human must maneuver through during her entrance for her solo. She is directed never to “notice” those on the floor as she steps over their legs. This final section before the exit of the ensemble reveals a consistent and relentless reminder of Eliot’s idea of the universe’s ability to communicate with humanity on the power of time and place/space—that dance exists at the “still point” and that “Time past and time present are both perhaps contained in time future” (Eliot 13,14).

Costumes for the cast of time markers were gray and/or brown thigh-length tunics. Bordelon wore a paprika-colored, shin-length dress of flowing chiffon fabric. There were over forty light cues that coincided with either motion or musical changes. The colors selected were brief moments of deep blues, a bright Eternal light, several smaller bright lights at each corner of the stage, and warm central colors with an added pleasant purple.

Description of the Performance Work

The dance begins with sparse sounds from Hans Zimmer's *Interstellar* music score as *Time Past* slowly walks backwards retracing a predetermined pattern of time past in a present moment of time. Intermittently, each component of time begins walking. All time markers progress to running on their specific path, separate and never overlapping, until *Time Present* meets face-to-face with *Time's Foreshadow*, which causes *Time Future* to spiral from the effect and *Time Past* begins to follow *Time Future*. This encounter awakens the *Game-Changer* as he abruptly halts *Time Future* causing *Time Past* to fall away and the patterned game restarts from the beginning. The reboot of time's sequencing is now faster and like the birthing of a star or universe and layers of increased pressure spawn a series of motions. The movements from the ensemble of dancers foreshadow *Human's* (Bordelon's) entrance into time, an existence yet to come, and as a precursor to the voiceover of T.S. Eliot and the spoken text of *Burnt Norton*, the first stanza of *Four Quartets*.

The foreshadowed movements are derived from my personal improvisational sessions in which I experimented with the embodiment of imagery related to Eliot's poetry. Words and phrases explored include: "pointing to one end...footfalls echo in the memory...down the passage which we did not take... disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-Leaves... shall we follow... into the box circle... quietly quietly... pressure... grasping... pointing" (Eliot 13,14).

Each word phrase has a corresponding movement phrase. The dancers are given specific floor patterns, musical indicators as to the when sections change, and are trusted

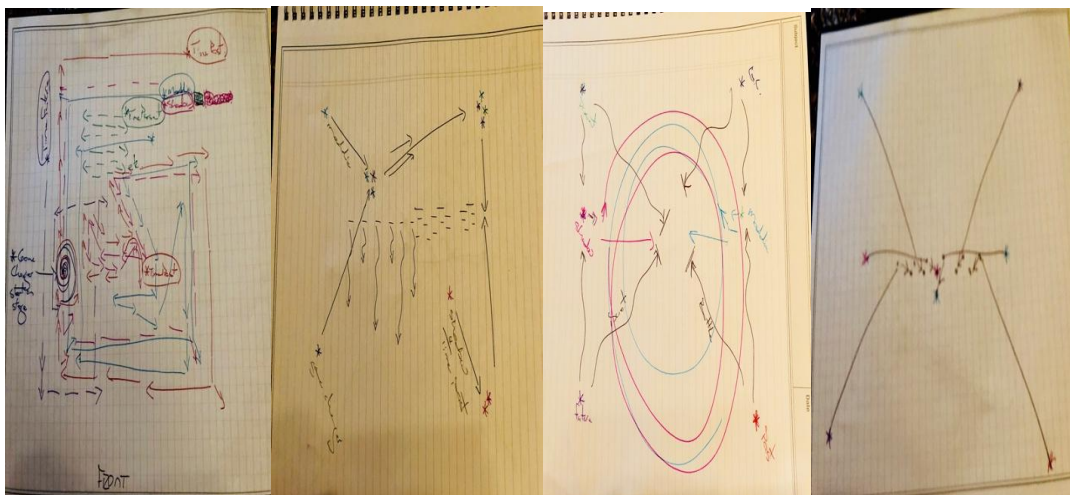
to maneuver through the floor patterns in an authentic manner consistent with their unified individual characters. The six phrases (representing the six characteristics of time and previously described in detail) are executed approximately eight times before seamlessly progressing into the next phrase of motion. The ensemble also replicates Bordelon's phrases during the final three minutes of the work.

Bordelon makes three intermittent appearances for brief moments before her solo section. She is almost ghost-like as she floats on stage, gazing outward toward the audience, as if searching for the portal of time. Her brief appearances contribute to the continued and slow building crescendo of the music and its kinesthetic counterpart, the dancers.

Bordelon's last entrance causes the slow disappearance of the *time-markers* and the explosive effect of deep blue lighting and sounds resembling of the ticking of time. Bordelon's solo has two sections, both of which are identical in content, yet vastly different in execution. In the first (the minimized section), she is directed to perform (as a foreshadowing) a complete internalized version of her entire dance content. During this minimized section she is limited to her axial space and mimics a liquid quality and a struggling aesthetic. The minimized phrase serves as a foreshadowing of her upcoming maximized section. In this section she expands her performance space to include the furthestmost parts of the stage space and Bordelon finds herself compelled to move with the pleasure of no attachment to time. Seemingly the game changes and she is driven to mark through the passage of time in an outward, maximized, and overt manner. As she approaches each "edge of time," lights brighten and dim. This same light pattern occurs

later during the climax of the last three minutes of the work. The light pattern coincides with the musical score as the cast of *time-markers* seem to chase the light. This reflects the human's existence, indicated by Bordelon's prior tracing of the pattern. She reaches to the outer points of the floor pattern and with each new place (in time), she is faced with more of her humanity. The work ends with a crescendo in the music; the *time-markers* return to the stage retracing the *Human's* steps and the *Game-changer* wields his influence by trapping all of time (the rest of the dancers are upstage center of the human). *Game-changer* races and/or creates time by running violently around the time markers until the lights black out suddenly. Immediately lights return to the place of *Eternity* (downstage left). The dancers are relocated in the *Eternal* light space, breathless and holding shapes, doggedly reflecting their determined purposes. *Time Past* is pressing *Time Future*, *Time Present* is attempting to balance everyone as *Time's Shadow* looks on. The *Human* remains outside of time. The *Game-changer* disappears, and an additional sudden blackout ends the work.

The Pathways for Footfalls



Results and Implications for the Future

Audience Feedback on the Performance

Included below are comments from peers, professionals, students, and audience members who attended my performative work titled *Footfalls*. Based on specific remarks, it is apparent that I achieved my goal of having the audience experience an empathetic and visceral response to the work. Here is a sampling of comments shared with me, verbally, at the end of the performance:

- An unnamed audience member from the Mississippi School of the Arts March 2018 performance noted, “I was very drawn into *Footfalls*. I felt connected to the dancers and found myself holding my breath several times. I believed we were all part of a same experience.”
- An unnamed audience member from the Mississippi School of the Arts March 2018 performance noted, “I found myself in tears while watching...I wasn’t sad. I don’t know why I was moved to tears.”
- Regarding Bordelon as the soloist, arts administrator Suzanne Hirsch stated, “...the work demonstrated a command of nuance and the power of emotion. The solo dancer was mesmerizing.... The moment the dancer was center stage and seemingly ‘screaming,’ it brought the audience into a visceral experience.”
- Retired university dance professor Patricia McConnell remarked after viewing a video recording of the performance, “It was a visceral experience.... beautifully unpredictable...unbearable fury....”

- Belhaven University dance professor Erin Rockwell remarked after the Belhaven performance, “It was a visceral experience...every time I watch the dance I respond the same way.”
- Regarding the overall aesthetic of the work a film/media instructor, John Shelbourne, remarked after the Mississippi School of the Arts performance, “I was greatly moved...the soundtrack is just astounding...the combination...of the music with the movement of the dancers to create...(an)existential piece (it)truly had me tearing up.”

Student Growth

A sampling of Madison Bordelon’s journal clarifies the depth of her experiences.

My first session was nerve-wracking because I didn’t really know what...to expect when I’d walk into the studio and start on this long process.

Soon after I could feel my entire body heightening in sensation as I continued to imagine the first score of luna (luna is a word used by Ohad Naharin to express the idea of space) expanding the space between the fingertips and noticed that it naturally began to take hold felt as if I was molding the most wonderful clay between my hands. The most surprising sensation was that I felt the pulsing of energy from my head to the tips of my fingers begin to take on a much stronger physical sensation.

I began to have these spontaneous sparks of movement that I was initially confused by and wasn’t sure I that was supposed to be happening. To my delight, Tammy excitedly yelled that that was precisely the point that I wanted to reach because my body was finally moving in completely harmony and was the one calling the shots. (Bordelon) (The above section from Bordelon’s journal was her response to a guided improvisation using a select list of images. This process was reminiscent of my fall 2016 personal improvisational practice inspired by Ohad Naharin’s Gaga.)

As a teacher, my objective for the students was to increase their current level of understanding so new mastery could be exemplified in the following areas: performing improvisational scores; acquiring aesthetic depth; comprehension of literary approaches; embodiment and authenticity in movement; experiencing kinesthetic knowledge as a means to encourage less “dancing” and more listening with the body; increased trust for intuition and inspiration; and how to perform a layering of textural words. Clear student growth for both Bordelon and the ensemble was evident in the results of the performance. I observed student interest and investment in the content as well as the growth and development of their movement intuition. The application of improvisational approaches that proved most effective will inform my future teaching practices.

Choreographing *Footfalls* was greatly rewarding and fulfilling. The experience had by the dancers and audience more than made up for the minor errors in lighting and the setbacks of delayed rehearsals. If given the opportunity, I would happily reset the work. The performance was successful and appropriately challenging for the dancers. The aesthetic result, i.e. visceral result of the performed work, as experienced by both viewer and dancers, surpassed my expectations.

I hope to continue honing the skill of making dances from image scores. I see this research continuing to ask the questions: What comes first? Time future or time past? How do I write narrative content, forget about it, and a year later choreograph it? I will continue to investigate dance-making theories, narrate my improvisational scores, and inquire deeper into the process of training dancers using improvisational practices.

I only explored the first stanza of the first quartet *Burnt Norton. The Four*

Quartets is a seminal work and I find Eliot's imagery singularly provocative. For future endeavors I would like to continue exploring the idea of "time" and "space" as they relate to humanity as well as continuing to investigate, discover, and apply ideas of embodied knowledge (inspired by T.S. Eliot's work) through choreography. The sensorial poetics of T. S. Eliot's work and his dynamic use of imagery manifests for the reader an actualized and oftentimes visceral experience. I plan to attempt a re-creation of this experience by developing a practice for dance students in class, rehearsal and performance that finds inspiration from language prompts. I intend to choreograph more works that reflect a kinesthetic counterpart to Eliot's linguistic form.

Fairchild purports that Eliot's path, from eastern religious ideals to an Anglican view of life, forged the path for his optimistic approach to poetry (Fairchild 52). The revelation of his spiritual journey in my research deepened my personal experience of the poem. I hope to affix commonalities of his work with my personal creative journey and approaches/practices for choreography, as experienced and revealed through my studies with somatic/sensorial-inspired movement practices, i.e. improvisation, composition, and pedagogy. A continued investigation into the sensorial nature of images used in poetry will further guide my creative practice and I intend to continue developing pedagogy practices that promote new, sensorial explorations for my dancers. Specifically, I want to develop a deeper relationship between the sensorial phenomenon of Eliot and the medium of dance. I want to continue exploring ways in which viewer and dancer may experience an aesthetic/visceral and/or empathetic *felt* sense in my choreographic works. I hope to achieve through dance what readers experience when reading and hearing Eliot's work.

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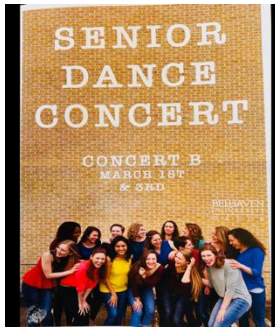
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APPENDIX

Program Documentation from the Belhaven University Senior Capstone Performance of Madison Bordelon



Senior Project of Miss Gentry
 Topic: The purpose of this project is to create a program that will be a source of inspiration and motivation for the students of Belhaven University. The program will be a source of inspiration and motivation for the students of Belhaven University. The program will be a source of inspiration and motivation for the students of Belhaven University.

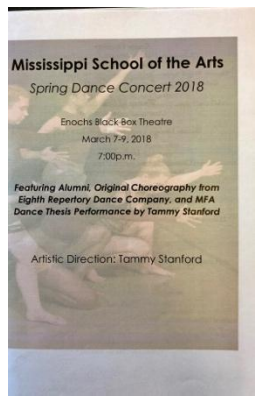
Intermission
 Topic: The purpose of this project is to create a program that will be a source of inspiration and motivation for the students of Belhaven University. The program will be a source of inspiration and motivation for the students of Belhaven University. The program will be a source of inspiration and motivation for the students of Belhaven University.

Crew
 Stage Manager: Jimmy Babin
 Account Stage Manager: Landon Oliver
 Light Board Operator: James Dean
 Sound Board Operator: Maggie Hestley
 Gait Crew: Carrie Gandy, Christa Ebbitt, Miranda Spradling, Hannah Johnson

Box Office Manager: Leah White
Box Office Assistant: Anna Whiting
House Manager: James Elizabeth Garcia, Holly Layton, Alex Higgins, Natavia Watson
Laborer: John Campbell, Andrew Hester, Stephen Pizack, Chase Wright, Jordan Campbell, Anna Zachary, Lydia Barfield, Alyssa Landrum, Sarah Hill, Josh Barfield, Taylor Adam, Bailey Brantley, Eric Campagna, Carter Grace Eaker, Carter Price, Landon Oliver

Upcoming Dance Events
 at **Irby Visual Arts and Dance Center**
 Spring Dance Concert
 Friday & Saturday, April 20 & 21, 7:00 PM
 Friday & Saturday, April 27 & 28, 7:00 PM

Program Documentation from the Mississippi School of the Arts complete twenty-minute work.



Senior Opening
 Choreographer: Leigh Bennett Dance Company
 Music: "Ain't No Way" by Tyla
 Dancers: Aligi Barbieri, Briana Blankenship, Devonna Carter, Michelle Gause, "Cali" Harris, Lauren Martin, Kenya Moore, Jordyn Sliemers

Women of Color!
 Choreographer: Emma Martin
 Music: "If I Had a Boy" by Beyoncé
 Dancers: Devonna Carter, Kenya Moore, Jordyn Sliemers

Children
 Choreographed and performed by Emma Martin
 Music: "Woman International" by T-Pol
 Dancers: Devonna Carter, Kenya Moore, Jordyn Sliemers

Contaminated
 Choreographer: Michelle Gause
 Music: "No Way to Stop This" by Nicki Minaj
 Dancers: Aligi Barbieri, Briana Blankenship, Colleen Gause, Emma Martin, Kenya Moore

Citizens of Color
 Choreographed and performed by Michelle Gause
 Music: "The Game" by Jay-Z
 Music: "Ghetto" by Jay-Z

Finalist
 Choreographer: Jordyn Sliemers
 Music: "Ain't No Way" by Tyla
 Dancers: Aligi Barbieri, Devonna Carter, Dana Fisher, "Tali" Harris, Kenya Moore, Emma Martin, "Miyah" Randolph, Jordyn Sliemers

5-minute piece
Senior Opening
 Choreographer: Nicky Gause Dance Company
 Music: "Ain't No Way" by Tyla
 Dancers: Grace Anne Bass, "Michelle" Clark, Jameson Carroll, Dana Fisher, Colleen Gause

Contaminated Level 6
 Choreographer: Briana Blankenship
 Music: "Ain't No Way" by Tyla
 Dancers: Grace Anne Bass, Aligi Barbieri, Jameson Carroll, Devonna Carter, Dana Fisher, Jordyn Sliemers

MIDWINTER
 Choreographed and performed by Briana Blankenship
 Music: "No Way to Stop This" by Nicki Minaj
 Dancers: Grace Anne Bass, Jameson Carroll, Devonna Carter, Dana Fisher, Jordyn Sliemers

Looking Through
 Choreographer: Emma Martin
 Music: "Ain't No Way" by Tyla
 Dancers: Grace Anne Bass, Jameson Carroll, Devonna Carter, Dana Fisher, Jordyn Sliemers

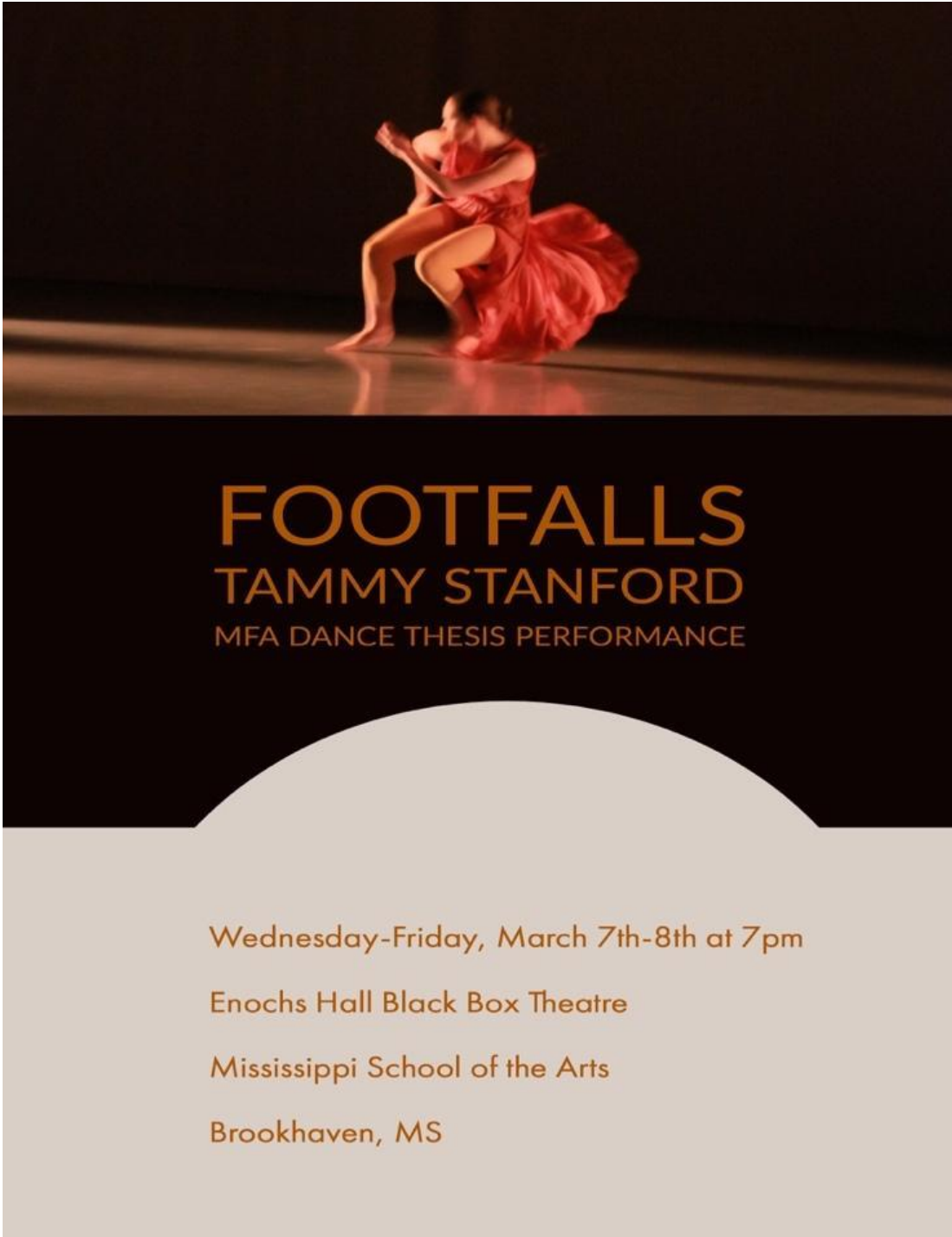
7 Kingdom Against Kingdom
 Choreographer: Devonna Carter
 Music: "Ain't No Way" by Tyla
 Dancers: Grace Anne Bass, Aligi Barbieri, Briana Blankenship, Jameson Carroll, Dana Fisher, Michelle Gause, Colleen Gause, "Tali" Harris, Kenya Moore, Emma Martin, "Miyah" Randolph, Jordyn Sliemers

Vanguard
 Special Thanks: Luke Townsend and Christine Butler
 Choreographer: Aligi Barbieri
 Music: "Blades of Grass" by Philip Glass
 Dancers: Devonna Carter, Kenya Moore, Emma Martin, Jordyn Sliemers, Undancers: Dana Fisher, Michelle Gause

Intermission
Finalist
 Choreographer: Tammie Stanford
 Music: "Ain't No Way" by Tyla
 Dancers: Aligi Barbieri, Devonna Carter, "Tali" Harris, Kenya Moore, Jordyn Sliemers

Special Thanks
 Suzanne Hirsch, Sade Palmerton, Suzanne Noble, Benny Knight, Cindy King, Jennifer Jackson, Patrick Brown, MSA staff, Debbie Hardeman, Belhaven University

Flyer Documentation for Mississippi School of the Arts Performance



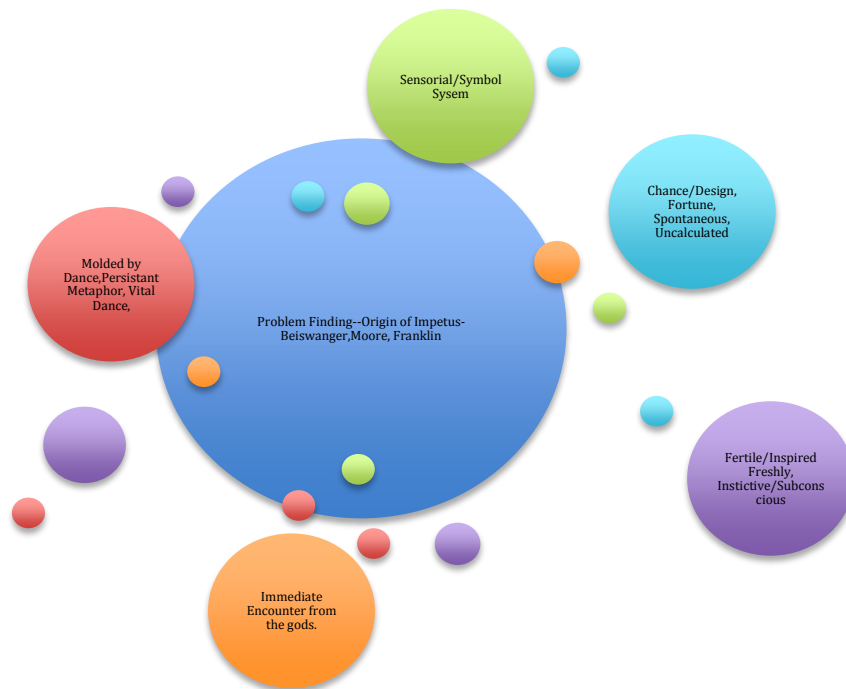
Explanatory Model of the Dance-making Process and Rendering (Hanstein)

Created for Penny Hanstein's Creative Practices II course

Tammy Stanford

Walking in Two Directions at the Same Time—Henry Moore
Non-logical, Instinctive, and Subconscious (Moore), Molding, Shaping, Metaphor
Evoking (Beiswanger)

Explanatory Model of the Dance-making Process ^, Rendered with Types of Learning
and Pedagogical Artistic Practices*



Dance Making as an Emerging and Evolving System-Recognizing Sensations
17-Step Theoretical Narrative (Hanstein)
Created for Penny Hanstein's Creative Practice II Course

Tammy Stanford

Conjuring a Conversation with a Path

The professor gives the directive, *begin by selecting a movement metaphor.*

It isn't exactly the way we planned it, responds the encouraging conversation from the podcast as I pretend it's my inner voice doing the talking. Immediately the poet's text revives in my mind, *Life is more complicated than it seems.* Those are dancing words. Comparisons begin to flow, and forms are seeking a representative in my body. I can feel it is happening. The fire has been lit. Let the engulfing begin! The infant flame fizzles as new directives surface for the chosen dancing space.

maintain the flow, remember the solo, keep the volume from the voices on the podcast low. Counts conjure, 1,2,3,4 - 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 – 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13

This bombardment creates a cog in the gears.

This isn't exactly the way I planned it.

I wanted no interruptions in the studio nor in my mind. No onlookers peering through the narrow windows on the studio doors. No students. No teachers...friendly or otherwise. No, none, nothing. Still, life can prove to be complicated, more complicated than expected.

Maybe I'll use this opportunity.

I'll allow the onlookers to look this time and then ask their opinion of my moving metaphor.

Tempting thoughts suggest, *maybe life isn't as complicated as we imagine.* Has serendipity surfaced again? Happy and resolved with new fervor, I begin the dance journey again. The podcast speaks, and I join the rhythm of the vocal cadence. It delivers a dialogue and I respond. The interviewee speaks, *I found I was not honoring where my food comes from,* (walking in a square path and transitioning into parallel paths from upstage to down) *riding it out* (diagonal paths, seaweed from the hip to the fingertips – reverb from the waist down – slow progression on the diagonal and repeat) *going thru the motions* (undulations ensue from the feet to fingertips – evolving into a revolving and expanding sphere) *the comfort zone is there* (still moving forward – reaching out) *reaching out to someone, it isn't exactly the way we planned it, go back to the thing that intimidates me the most.*

Interviewer: *Are you being real?*

Interviewee: *Yes, on that question.*

Interviewer: *You said your past relationships; how many do you have?* (14 count phrase – no pauses, progressing on downstage diagonal)

Interviewee: *What did you say?* (repeat 14 count phrase) *That's funny, that's funny, ha, ha, ha,* (right, left, arm up, down, repeat, parallel lines repeat, circling pulls the head around, expanding, buckling happens at the hips)

A walking path conjures up conspiracies, I pace back and forth along the patterned pauses from left to right, pausing when the interviewee says, *black and white*. A fighting financials conversation begins and a surprisingly long rhythmical dance phrase contributes to the spoken text.

Improvisation earns space, time, and place on the floor.

Step right foot onto the fuzz on the floor – giant brush back to catch it in the wind, bouncing smiling movement alternates left and right – leg crossing/uncrossing, pelvis is thrown and hinges – arms respond with the fluid center – silky lines – ribbons almost

Interviewee: *I couldn't decide if I wanted to buy a video camera*

Sauté – low battement, left leg/left elbow immediately pulls to right, spring off the back to the low left attitude, repeating – alternating quality from liquid to harsh wall.

Enter obtuse student. *Ms. Tammy, what are you doing on the floor? I thought you had a stroke!*

This isn't exactly the way I planned it. No, not, nothing conjures up inside my head.

Professor Penelope Hanstein's *17-step artistic process project* is experienced as a 13 and 14 –count phrase. The motional path has become intricate, delicate, disjointed organic, barren, ridged, uneven, multi-directional, light, natural, detailed, pre-life. The effortful attempts to press onward reveal backtracking, rewinding, and reversing quick steps. Footfalls conjure up rhythms that alternate quick staccato snaps from left to right and evolves into a slower synchronized tempo and then repeats. The focus returns to the intricate, pre-life, organic form of the path.

The Path

The path resembles bending twigs, zig-zagging patterns on the floor, and trans positioning power. The path demands attention as the center-most drawing power in the creative practice. The center stem maintains control and draws me in. I retreat, recoil, and detour with the angled elbowing branches. Twists of my torso attempt to assert self from the power of the center. The wooded spine surpasses me with consistent strength. The resolve of the narrow (but not always straight way) insists on uniformity to the non-uniform structure that governs the way. The path's daring crooks demand another

conversation. *It isn't exactly the way I planned it.*

Artistic Process Narratives-Exploring Images (Hanstein)

Created for Penny Hanstein's Creative Practice II Course

Tammy Stanford

Surprised by Serendipity

More than once I've heard it said, "Creativity comes to the prepared mind".

After four hours of following the asphalt swamp of south Louisiana and trading one studio for the next, I realized creativity was needed to generate the coveted and emerging "transitional space" and to devise a new and motional investigation. Upon entering the studio, I was moved by the display of visual art, broad spaces, and the floor's silent invitation to dance. My mind was reinvigorated by the opportunity to freely play at dancing, yet my body was hardened by the transport. The prepared dance space, lulling poetry of human voices, and soft musical echoes of Philip Glass coaxed a transition from pedestrian driver to a forming, shaping, expanding, construction and deconstruction of kinesthetic inquiry. Weary sighs of traffic hazards yielded to deep exhales, releasing of tensions, and undulations inspired by a writer's prompts. Reminiscing descriptions from the poet of an "invisible red and common thread" brought gasps of surprise to me and spontaneous jumps upward and outward. Bolting from a chair, I ran decidedly, changing direction three times, spinning around my axial space and finally dropping childlike back into my seat. Exploding disbelief of hearing "red thread" resonated with the scarlet string tied to my heart, producing squeals of delight and a vocalized, "WHAT"? This happen-stance reinstated my belief in serendipity. Creativity in this instance came to the unsuspecting mind.

Initiation Through Dictation

Pivotal moments while mapping, ordering, and juxtaposing common and uncommonalities in search of territories ripe for writing and dancing, or is it dancing and writing?

Verbalizing her punctuated and accented remarks, the poetic scribe foretold my path and initiated the making of a dance.

Evolving worlds began to pulse with life.

Hold onto the *skein* of things, spoke the muse of the prose. Breathable pauses contained my willing arms in high space as my legs shadowed the held shapes from above. Every attempt for motion resulted in a new living *hold* and thus progression was slow. Invisible threads crocheted lively currents from one paused *hold* to another. The *skein's* forces

schemed through levels of holdings that shifted directions and depths. My eager limbs found zones and passages providing space and place holds of uncharted arenas. *Mark* this *lost* place! *Leave* it at once!

Mark the twisted (my body whispered *twists* on command), *slow forming* (previous *holds* returned anew and conformed by legato), *conjuring*, (became my “favorite”, its potential for overtly carving positive paths in the negative space thrilled me) *infected space* (infection spread complexity and bore nuance in a dis-eased state). *Leave* it at once! *Let go* (repeating *holds* disappeared, the cord was cut, my body jolted from the release). Find the *liberating, comforting pleasure* of the *spiraling DNA*. (pleasurable play ensued)

Texturizing the punctuated and accented movements, the poetic dancer foretold the stark stanzas and dictated the forming of prose.

YouTube link for Bordelon’s solo from *Footfalls* dress rehearsal at Belhaven University

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_Hq45uRsNA&index=2&list=PLBrz3XNfl2RYY9ga442h7KLN07Za6rmAi&t=0s

Images of Madison Bordelon’s solo from *Footfalls* at Belhaven University

https://www.myqnapcloud.com/share/6c3i508io61n8216v7yw45b1_6s2JAWW#/home/Concert%20B%20Dress/02%20Tammy%20Stanford