

The George Washington University

We're Alright Aren't We?

A Choreographic Analysis of The Human Condition as told through Modern Literature

Monique Martinez

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Advisor: Maida Withers

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Introduction

The Arts as History

The best method for understanding a period and the people who lived through it is art. Art, as opposed to history, is not an unbiased, factual account of a century, decade, year, or even a single day; it captures the authentic condition of the artist and essence of the moment. Art, despite being abstract and fictionalized, is much more truthful than history can be. In a letter to G. H. Lewes, novelist, Charlotte Bronte critiques Jane Austen's writing for being "sensible" and "real (more real than true)" (Smith 100). Bronte's distinction between real and true gets at one of the principles of modernist literature – revealing what is true about the human experience, behind the facade. Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and others like it are real in the sense that they paint a realistic portrait of life in Europe's countryside, but what these novels fail to do is look at the brushstrokes, the covered mistakes, the blending of colors, and the artist's decision making. Modernism turns attention inwards toward the human psyche, memory, and experience – things that are ugly and unknown. In many cases of modern literature, what is true is not realistic at all and it is not pretty either.

This semester, I had planned to exhibit my complete work on the Dorothy Betts Marvin Theatre stage for three nights on April 16, 17, and 18, however what ended up happening is truer to my purpose. The COVID-19 pandemic is an event that will be documented in our history textbooks; there will be statistics, a solution, and life will continue. The performing arts will return to the theatre again but for now, the work that has been put on hold or continued to be done virtually, represents the true experience of humanity through this time. In less than two months through fifteen rehearsals, my dancers and I created twelve minutes of work. On March 11th, 2020, we unknowingly had our only performance. The piece at that point was complete in

that it had a beginning, middle, and end, but there was still much cleaning and editing to be done. Some dancers were unsure of the choreography and their cues, they weren't confident in handling the props, the sound scape was incomplete, and some sections just needed to be completely redone – it was messy, but it showed the true process. Now, I am left with rehearsal videos that were never meant to be shown and notes that never had a chance to be applied but this is art and it tells the truth.

The Roots of Modernism

Modernization is the result of a society's shift from a "traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society" (Kumar). Between the mid-19th century and early 20th century people began growing closer physically and yet more distant emotionally. The move toward industry, although setting off socio economic advancements and benefits, had the adverse effect of alienating individuals from each other and their work. Because modern industry called for specialization in one area through "seemingly meaningless tasks and rapidly altering goals," life became monotonous ("Industrialization"). The invention and operation of trains allowed for much quicker travel in and out of cities. Suddenly, the modern epicenter of Britain, London, was much more accessible than before (Fainstein). A section of T.S. Eliot's epic poem, *The Waste Land*, captures the dreary process of commuting into the city for work in the morning and leaving the same way at the end of the day, a gray mass of bowed heads. The unprecedented first world war along with rapid urbanization and industrialization was the perfect formula to produce collective feelings of total despair.

World War I exposed the human experience as English philosopher Thomas Hobbes had described it, "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes). Soldiers in the war faced unimaginable experiences of killing innocent people and watching their comrades die violently

in combat. Many survivors that returned from war suffered from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), originally called “shell-shock” as a result of the powerful explosions (Alexander). When the truths of the war reached civilian ears and eyes, all illusions were shattered. Writings from soldiers, images from the trenches, and videos of traumatized patients shocked the world. Many of these men had gone into the war physically and mentally fit and eager to fight. A few years later, they returned a mere shell of themselves, some with missing limbs and others with no physical disabilities but severe neurological impacts. The war revealed the human capacity for violence and evil, which found representation in the arts. Modernism in literature has origins in the late-19th century through the mid-20th century as artists began to recognize “that world events were spiraling into unknown territory.” In search of new forms of expression, writers rejected the traditions that were popular in the 19th century, viewing them as a “cultural dead end” (Rahn).

Despite the constant presence of people as a result of urbanization, the growing alienation of the individual persisted. The generation that came of age during the time of World War I was appropriately named the Lost Generation (“Lost Generation”). They challenged the traditional notion that art had a duty to realistically depict the world, instead artists turned inwards and demanded active participation from readers to interpret abstract texts (Kuiper). Experimentation exploded, including the first attempts at “stream of consciousness”¹ writing by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf who explored the interiority of their subjects including thought processes and memory recall. Additionally, the ambiguous ending became the norm as opposed to the neat endings found in Romantic novels. The emotional distance felt between individuals was also represented in literature through meaningless and insignificant dialogue or unproductive

¹ Coined by William James in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890).

relationships. The modernist movement in literature is characterized as a complete break from tradition in an inexhaustible search for meaning with a slight longing for the structured and known past (Rahn). My choreographic thesis titled *We're Alright, Aren't We?* uses evidence from modernist literary texts to convey feelings of solitude and hopelessness faced by humanity in light of industrialization, war, and urbanization. My goal was to establish and represent through movement, sound, lighting, and objects, the insignificance of the human condition and interpersonal relationships.

Literary Evidence

To translate the ideas of modernist literature into choreography, I selected literary works that exemplified relevant themes and visualized key scenes from the most prominent works of modernist literature; these included Vladimir Nabokov's "Signs and Symbols," Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants," Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis," John Cheever's "The Enormous Radio," and the most defining work of the 20th century, T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. These works provide a window for understanding how individuals felt through the changing 20th-century landscape.

The Search for Meaning in a Meaningless World

Vladimir Nabokov's short story "Signs and Symbols" is symbolic of the 20th century nightmare world. Published in 1948, "Signs and Symbols" comes after two major wars that shocked the world. After hearing, reading and, witnessing the horrors of World War I, the public's faith in humanity weakened. The search for meaning in the Nabokov's narrative is indicative of the process through which many individuals dealt with what they knew. The short story begins with an older couple traveling by train to visit their middle-aged son who has "referential mania" and has attempted suicide. His sickness causes him to search for meaning in

everyone and everything, as if they are all symbols for something greater. “Everything is a cipher and of everything he is the theme... He must be always on his guard and devote every minute and module of life to the decoding of the undulation of things” (Nabokov). The signs and symbols the son sees suggest the existence of a higher power, order, and meaning for humanity’s existence and pain; His parents in the story also notice supposed “symbols,” though on a smaller scale, through their journey to visit their son. This restless search reflects denial of a modern belief that life may have no greater purpose.

A detached narrative style is common to modernist literature. The narrator of “Signs and Symbols” is emotionless, omniscient, and disengaged – the characters even remain nameless. In directing my thesis, I took into account this form of narration by allowing my dancers instances of individuality and character while also emphasizing the constant presence of the group. Their relationship to each other is emotionally distant and indifferent, yet they perform many of the same tasks together and at the same time. To exhibit the constant search for meaning the son in “Signs and Symbols” experiences, I used multiple instances of unproductive repetition in choreography.

Ineffective Communication

Another example of unproductive human action can be found in Hemingway’s “Hills Like White Elephants.” The short story is made up almost entirely of strained and superficial dialogue. As they wait for their train, a heterosexual couple sits at a bar within the train station. Their conversation is dry, surface-level, and skirts over the subject of the woman, Jig’s abortion; never is the word actually mentioned – it is the “elephant in the room.” Jig is aware of the superficiality of her surroundings and relationship and as a result, prefers silence. The couple’s

relationship speaks to the lack of depth in modern relationships, a common topic explored in modern literature.

This couple's life is stationary even as they wait for a train, providing a larger commentary on how we move nowhere and contribute nothing productive to society. Additionally, Jig and her partner seem to be on two separate pages; Jig's attention is on the distant hills, which function as a symbolic image of a pregnant belly, while her partner's attention is on her. "...[T]he girl looked across at the hills on the dry side of the valley and the man looked at her and at the table" (Hemingway 664). As much as individuals may be talking to one another, they may never be able to fully understand one another on a deeper level. Although the story is told almost entirely through dialogue, nothing is actually learned from it. The true meaning of the story is found between the lines of what is said, in the actions, observations, and surroundings of this couple. The most important theme I focused on from "Hills Like White Elephants" was the insufficiency of human communication. The superficial communication in the story served as inspiration for some of the duet work in my piece as well as the props: three large black frame structures with mesh stretched across. These screens provided a thin, translucent barrier which when looked through, obscures slightly the image of what is on the other side.

The ineffectiveness of human communication is the central theme in Kafka's "The Metamorphosis," which creatively communicates the idea by narrating from the point of view of a human-turned-beetle. Narrator and protagonist of the story, Gregor Samsa is transformed into a beetle and rendered incapable of speech although he tries tirelessly to communicate his situation to his family. As expected, they are repulsed by the large beetle who has taken over the space of Gregor, and do not understand that it is Gregor, their brother and son, who is trapped in the hard

and disgusting body that can only scurry and hide. Gregor begins to succumb to his station in life, becoming less human and more heavily silenced until he dies alone in his room. His family quickly moves on.

In Gregor's case, language fails to provide a means for meaningful communication; the barrier Kafka uses to establish the disconnect between the Samsa family is Gregor's new identity as a beetle. Kafka's creative illustration of a common concern in modernity exemplifies the possibility of literature (and art in general) to communicate the same idea through infinite iterations. This story was extremely influential in informing the relationships between dancers on stage, particularly to show how a collective can still be so disconnected. The fundamental misunderstanding between people, which Kafka brilliantly communicates, is the core of my thesis work and where I began.

The Veil Comes Down

The private and public lives of the 20th century family are challenged in this ironic and miserable short story by John Cheever. "The Enormous Radio" centers on the rapid deterioration of one painfully average family. It begins when the mother and wife of the family of four, Irene, receives an enormous radio from her husband. Although she believes the radio to be broken, she decides to turn it on and listen one day. Surprised, she discovers that the radio projects overheard conversations from other families living in the same complex. Irene, at first, feels guilty about invading the privacy of others so she resolves not to listen, however, her resolve breaks and eventually all she can do is listen in on the private lives of the people she interacts with every day. She becomes paranoid that they too are privy to the happenings of her own private life and shares her concerns with her husband and two children at dinner. An argument ensues and by the end of the dinner, all illusions of a perfect life are shattered. Both Irene and the reader understand

that by the end, everyone's personal lives and public lives are disconnected. The veil we put in front of us to mask reality only works until it doesn't, and we are made to confront the truth of a meaningless, futile, and trivial life. Ironically, this truth that Irene becomes addicted to, and chases in order to feel better about her own life, is what undoes her.

I used multiple aspects of "The Enormous Radio" in the planning of my thesis. I drew character inspiration from Irene and assigned one dancer to embody her insecurities. Irene's desire for the truth, and yet her fear of it, addresses a common paradox that challenged humanity during the 20th century. In terms of World War I, people outside of the war were curious and excited about it until they realized the irreparable physical and psychological damage it had done to so many. Reality lives behind a thin veil that we can choose to ignore or like Irene, allow curiosity to get the better of us. Unfortunately, once that veil comes down, there is no putting it back up. The idea of a veil or curtain that we use to shield ourselves from the horror of a meaningless reality directly influenced the design of the free-standing mesh screens I used. This story is also from where I derived my title. Just before the veil is completely torn from in front of Irene's eyes, she seeks assurance from her husband.

Life is too terrible, too sordid and awful. But we've never been like that, have we darling? Have we? I mean, we've always been good and decent and loving to one another, haven't we? Our lives aren't too sordid, are they darling? Are they? We're happy, aren't we darling? We are happy, aren't we? (Cheever 256).

Irene's pathetic questioning and search for assurance indicate considerable insecurities but also suggest that she already knows the answer. "The Enormous Radio" negatively portrays the American life through Irene who is concerned about keeping up appearances. The narration

therefore asks the reader to acknowledge the trivial nature of American life, emphasizing through Irene and her radio, that a perfect world and life do not exist.

A Brief and Insignificant Existence

Written in 1922, T.S. Eliot's epic poem came at a time of cultural crisis – it expressed ideas and thoughts in a form that the public could latch onto and that other modernist poets could refer to in their own works. Through numerous dramatic, often satirical, scenes in “The Fire Sermon,” “A Game of Chess,” and “The Burial of the Dead,” *The Waste Land* expresses a truth about the brevity, disconnectedness, and insignificance of human existence in urban society. “The Fire Sermon” assesses the river Thames and the ease with which the river clears itself of all human evidence, proving the insignificance and brevity of modern existence in the context of the larger, natural world. Another image in “A Game of Chess” contains a couple that fails to communicate with each other aloud. Through Eliot's alternating use and absence of quotation marks, it is known that the reader is listening in on a one-sided conversation, in which one participant refuses to speak but answers in his mind.

The most prominent image I had in my mind when constructing my choreographic thesis was that of a large mob of people crossing the London Bridge found in “The Burial of the Dead.” I aimed to replicate this scene with a large, apathetic cast walking in the shadows on stage.

Unreal City, Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street.

For generating choreography, I drew on the images described in the poem to provide some tangible evidence for the audience to grasp and understand. The modern, urbanized world as depicted by Eliot, hardly ever calls for situations in which humans have to communicate on a deeper level; instead, our language is pointless. Therefore, I planned to communicate that regardless of our perceived close connections to one another, we will always have a fundamental misunderstanding of each other and ourselves.

Methodology & Process

The process of integrating my research into choreography relied heavily on extracting direct quotes, scenes, and overall themes from my evidence and fitting them for performance. My notebook was my main companion through this entire process beginning with the proposal and research collection. The first step was brainstorming ideas related to modernism, which can be found in Appendix B. I was interested primarily in the characteristics of modern literature such as the presence of an unreliable narrator, an ambiguous ending, disillusionment and fragmentation, and the alienation of the individual. I thought about how these could be translated into dance, for example, identifying a dancer who would function as an unreliable narrator or creating a plan for an ending that doesn't bring closure. The following step was compiling a list of modernist works that I could reference for choreographing and staging specific sections. What I learned about modernism as a movement and its representation in literature heavily influenced the structure of my piece and ultimately, the movement material and formations.

Although I consulted a variety of mediums in my preliminary research, my primary sources from which I derived structure and choreography included Nabokov's "Signs and Symbols," Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants," Kafka's "Metamorphosis," Cheever's "The Enormous Radio," and Eliot's *The Waste Land*. With these five texts chosen, I extracted

main ideas and themes from each, many of which were present in two or more of the stories. The most common ones that I identified and kept in a master list in my notebook were an inexhaustible and pointless search for meaning, a fundamental misunderstanding of the self and others, a lack of meaningful communication, unproductive and superficial relationships, and inescapable monotony. Others that I considered were materialism, the paradoxical denial and search for truth, nostalgia, lack of agency, paralytic fear, demand for productivity, and indifference toward individuality. Another important factor was tone; coincidentally, all five stories had a similar tone and narrative style characterized by detachment, irony, and slight disgust towards the involved characters.

Auditions

In addition to identifying themes, I also extracted quotes, characters, and key scenes that I could visualize and recreate for the stage. What I ended up with was a preliminary outline of a fifteen to twenty-minute work composed of eight sections, including multiple duets, small and large group work, and solos. I came into auditions knowing that I wanted to cast a large group in order to have the ability to divide my cast into these smaller groups. I definitely had a soloist in mind that would be a central figure who I wanted to be feminine and who could be melodramatic. I also knew I wanted to include a lot of partnering and dancing in pairs, so I looked for dancers who complemented each other. Finally, I wanted to see how well the dancers could take in choreography or a task and manipulate it to produce something more. To be able to generate movement material with only verbal instruction is a skill that comes with experience but one that is necessary for dancers who are participating in a fifteen-minute work put together in fewer than three months. In terms of dancers' styles, I wasn't very concerned with any overall cohesiveness since I wanted my dancers to come across as people – inherently individual and

different from each other. After auditions were over, I was also open to accepting dancers who were not casted in any other works; these individuals became part of the corps.

Rehearsals

I began with a large cast of thirteen dancers that was reduced to twelve a few weeks in. A struggle that came with this size cast, but one I accepted and prepared for, was availability. Before auditions and casting, I knew the planned structure of my piece would benefit me in dealing with this size cast because there were very few sections that the entire cast would be involved in. For this reason, I casted the dancers I wanted before verifying their availability and then decided on rehearsal dates. Luckily, all of my dancers were able to attend Tuesday rehearsals but only six to eight dancers could be consistently present at my Friday rehearsals. As a result, Tuesday's were the days where I would try to involve the entire group either by teaching them all the same material or dividing them up and assigning tasks. Friday's were mostly dedicated to small group work and cleaning. Video was an essential element in rehearsals, especially to remind dancers of choreography that was no longer fresh in their minds and bodies. It also helped me plan for edits by forcing me to take a step back and view my existing material as a whole.

For every day of rehearsal, I came in with a specific plan, which is represented in Appendix A. My plans helped me stay on track but were purposely stated more as prompts to encourage my cast to contribute ideas and material. I would say that about 50% of my rehearsals were conducted in the following way: I would give my dancers an idea, prompt, or a few movements, allow them to work for some time while checking in and give feedback, and then we would document their work or finalize the product together. The other half consisted of me teaching choreography I had prepared beforehand or generating choreography in involvement

with the dancers. In addition to being the choreographer, I also had the role of director. The large group sections in particular needed heavy directing as dancers relied on me for their entrance cues or the order of the sections. As a director, I was most concerned with how each section functioned cohesively. If we had continued rehearsing as planned, following Spring Break, my role as director would have been increasingly important.

Choreographic Analysis

The Duet

In terms of structure, duets were essential in depicting scenes from my research material. The most influential works for the duets were *The Waste Land*, “Hills Like White Elephants,” and “The Enormous Radio.” All three of these exhibit a relationship between a man and woman that is either challenged in terms of communication, superficial, or unproductive.² The first duet (chronologically) in my piece features two dancers who appear to be having a conversation through the use of quick gestures. This duet came about in one rehearsal when I asked my dancers to divide into small groups and pairs and assigned a task to each.

The task I gave this particular pair was to create a duet that was a one-sided conversation. I let them read the text from where this idea came: the second section of *The Waste Land* entitled “A Game of Chess.” In this scene, a couple sits in a decadent room, waiting for something as the woman says aloud “[m]y nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me. Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak. What are you thinking of... I never know what you are thinking. Think” (Eliot). It is clear that the male hears her because he responds, however, he responds in his own mind and does not say anything aloud (as indicated by the absence of quotation marks around the lines). This one-sided conversation goes on for a few stanzas without garnering any

² In terms of a relationship between man and woman, unproductive describes the couple’s inability to conceive and therefore, their lack of contribution to society.

verbal response from the male. After reading the section a few times, the dancers got into creating about forty seconds of material. I also met with this pair alone on a Friday, when most of the cast was out of town. In the Friday rehearsal on February 14, we completed and refined their duet. We began with a few gestural movements that I had come prepared with and then asked them to add on to. We then used differences in timing to show the discrepancy in their relationship; for the latter half of the phrase, one dancer turned away as the other stood behind performing the gestures frantically without response.

The one-on-one method for creating material was extremely useful for me and is how I made the most progress. Another section I tackled this way was one of the last sections of the piece, which consists of three separate duets working with the black screens. These duets intend to show both an idealized relationship and one that is truer to the representation of relationships in modern literature. The three translucent screens that they dance on either side of symbolize the veil that not only exists between us and reality but also between ourselves and others, and our own consciousness.

The next duet is between the soloist I had chosen to represent the character of Irene from “The Enormous Radio” and a male dancer. This duet occurs after the soloist sees the one-sided conversation happening and hopes that it does not reflect her own relationship. Her partner enters to save her before she thinks too hard on it and they dance together in a dream-like state. The sound changes to something ethereal, contrastingly different from any other sound in the piece, and the lighting would have also changed to something soft with a colorful tint. This interaction shows Irene’s perfect world that she has constructed for herself. It all comes to a halt however when her partner leaves and dancers from the corps take his place to shield her eyes.

The third duet is not a duet at all. In one rehearsal, I prompted the dancers to consider what a duet, that does not acknowledge itself as a duet, looks like. They came back with many responses but the one that I felt best represented this idea and the modernist movement in literature was a duet that starts with two people on opposite sides of the stage moving towards each other. As they slowly move close enough to interact and anticipation builds for their moment together, it never comes; they simply continue on their paths never acknowledging the other's presence.

The Group versus The Individual

In order to recreate the key scene that I had picked out from *The Waste Land* of a mass flowing over London Bridge, I knew I needed a large cast. At auditions, I looked for dancers who would work well together in duets but also for those who could also bring humanity into dance. The corps was an important element not only because it allowed me to experiment with formations and visuals, but because it gave me the opportunity to show the individual in the context of the group.

The group/individual dynamic is present throughout, beginning with the opening. The piece begins with one dancer in light, in the downstage right corner, as the group approaches. Their presence causes the soloist to recede into herself until they arrive in a semi-circle around her; a movement she does causes them to disperse, offsetting the next section of random entrances and exits crossing the stage. In each dancer's brief trip across the stage, we see their individual selves in the crowd. A similar thing happens in a section where all the dancers are grouped in a pyramid formation and a ripple happens from front to back. The ripple goes on for almost a minute as the dancers follow the exact movements of those in front of them until they all end on the floor, together. They all perform the same movements, but in each dancer's

execution, there are slight modifications that represent their individuality. Although one of the major purposes of the corps is to convey monotony, individual beauty persists.

Evaluation

By the night of the March 11th showing, I had a complete twelve-minute work. There had been a few absences in the rehearsals leading up to the showing, so I expected the actual steps to be messy, but I expected the dancers to better represent the idea. The reactions I got from the panel were slightly disappointing. Two of the panelists felt that the piece was comedic, but for the previous two months, I thought I had been creating something so utterly sad to match how individuals felt through modernization. Looking back, what I realize is that the comedic tone does have a place in my piece; my research has not just been about the history of modernity but about how literature has responded to it. The works I used as reference all have a tone of dry, ironic humor. The narrator typically takes a clinical view of the characters in the story and feels little empathy for their pathetic lives and outcomes. Modern literature addresses extremely difficult topics but often approaches them with dark humor and absurd situations to make them more accessible and digestible.

After showing, I watched the video many times and wrote notes for our next rehearsals after spring break. I had hopes of lengthening certain sections, choreographing some duets that the dancers had originally helped construct, fixing the dancers' interactions with the screens, and solidifying the desired mood of the piece. Although I had communicated pieces of my thesis with my dancers on a few occasions, I would have conducted a more in-depth conversation to inform their performance. Unfortunately, the conversation never happened and the notes I had never had the chance to be implemented, meaning I was left with the video from showing as my product. The product I ended up with this semester is unrefined and unfinished, however this may be a

more honest representation of my research than if it had been completed, refined, and presented on stage. For now, I have accepted this experience for what it is. The work I ended up with stands on its own as a true representation of modern literature through movement and staging: it is chaotic, perplexing, and requires a lot of work from the audience. Completing the written portion of my thesis has allowed me to acknowledge the end of this particular project.

Future Possibilities & Conclusion

Although I am content with what I accomplished this semester, I would like to see where else this topic could go, including the stage. The involvement of technical elements would possibly sacrifice the unrefined nature I found this semester but would enhance the work in other ways. Lighting would be crucial in establishing the mood by creating a desolate scene with minimal lighting and vast shadows. The costumes would humanize the dancers and establish them as a cohesive group made up of individuals. The completed soundscape would transport the audience to another world that is not so different from its own.

One thing I struggled with most this semester was representing the vastness of my research in a single work. I drew scenes and themes from at least five different modernist works that together, produced roughly eight sections. A consideration I have for the future is addressing this topic through a series of works, each representing either a key theme of Modernism or a defining piece of modern literature.

Modernism emerged in response to unprecedented change. When previous forms of expression are no longer suitable to describe truthfully what it is to be human, we find another. The dramatic transformations and traumatic events of the 20th century gave rise to a generation of artists who founded a new norm. Our current position living through a 21st-century pandemic puts us at a crossroads for change that has already begun to take place in the virtual landscape.

Regardless of if and when the world returns to its previous state before COVID-19, the effects of change are undeniable, and the arts will reflect it.

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Appendix A: Rehearsal Schedule and Plans

Tuesday 1/21

- Explore gestural movement/mannerisms
 - Gestures found: waving, knuckles/hands/nails, adjust collar, pockets, hair, scratching, stretch ribs, tie shoes, pull up socks, adjust bag/clothes, step back, crack neck, roll ankles, draw foot up leg
- Work in pairs to explore possible iterations of a duet (specifically a duet that is a one-sided conversation)
- Work together to create a walking phrase using gestures

Friday 1/24

- Explore a second duet; prompt = a duet that is not addressing or acknowledging that it is a duet
 - Suggestions from group included 1. Two dancers occupying each other's personal space with some overlap in movement but no contact, 2. Repetition of a few motif movements without dancers seeing each other, 3. Each dancer follows a different path with the potential for crossing but no interaction happens between them.

Tuesday 1/27

- Divide into small groups (duet, trio, quartet) and give specific prompt to each from research
 - Make a duet using one of the screens, make a duet that is a one-sided conversation, explore a paradoxical duet, create composition with objects for materialism section
- New small group section from "Enormous Radio" – soloist moving across stage surrounded by 3-4 dancers who are constantly trying to cover her eyes/block her vision

Friday 1/31

- Add on to gestural phrase
- Practice moving close to each other and touching/giving and receiving weight
- Continue with duets

Tuesday 2/4

- Teach first group section – begins with one dancer at center stage, group A enters creating an inner circle around the first dancer, group B enters creating an outer circle. Circle travels and transforms into a pyramid led by the first dancer. Choreography ripples from the front to back of the pyramid until all end up on the ground
- Review gesture phrase

Friday 2/7

- Create solo and practice flocking
- Go over ripple and circle choreography
- Set entrances for top of piece

Tuesday 2/11

- Go over outline of structure with group (8 sections) and complete walk through
- Review choreography of section 2 (circle into ripple), section 1 (scattered entrances and exits), section 3 (duet #1), and the gesture phrase
- Work with screen duets while flock group practices

Friday 2/14

- No rehearsal for group, work with duet #1
 - Conversation facing each other, slightly off timing, one dancer turned away while other tries to get attention

Tuesday 2/18

- Use first hour to work on screen duets
- Second hour for entire group

Friday 2/21

- Continue flock and all group sections
- Transition from duet #1 to “L” formation around stage to duet #2

Tuesday 2/25

- Begin with full run through of all sections from the top
- Fill in floor choreography – add on phrase starting with fist and elbow drop

Friday 2/28

- Review duet #1 → “L” → duet #2
- Full run through
- Duets continue to work with screens

Tuesday 3/3

- Full run through from top
- Clean and clarify choreography/transitions (specifically “L”)
- Test sound
- “Enormous Radio” solo → duet #2

Friday 3/6

- Complete ending

Tuesday 3/10 (rehearsal before showing)

- Review ending
- Run from the top at least twice

Wednesday 3/11 – **Showing**

Appendix B: Brainstorming

how one for the piece?

unreliable narrator

disillusionment

fragmentation

inner self of the narrator

ambiguity, consciousness

on happy endings

rejection of the Victorian era's traditions and the exploration of industrial age, real-life issues, and cemented a rejection of the past w/ experimentation after WWI

Proletariat

Interpretation

"break from tradition"

break from tradition

loss of impersonal stability

nonsense

grotesque

stream of consciousness

machinery - capitalist

In literature

Emile Zola - Delacroix

Rudolf Laban

Lone Fuller

Expressionism

Contribution

In art

Impressionism

Cubism - geometric shapes (architectures)

Futurism

Expressionism

Contribution

Erna Bund (poetry)

T.S. Eliot - "layering of meaning and contrasting of style"

artists of the Lost Generation (Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitz)

"struggled to find some meaning in the world in the wake of chaos"

turn inward to consciousness

"Gave up on the idea that anything was truly knowable."

All truth became relative, conditional, and in flux"

"The War demonstrated that no guiding spirit rules the events of the world, and that absolute destruction was left in check only by the thives of margins"

hunt for something better

Thesis Preparation

Research

- people watch, pedestrian movements (human)

The Modernist novel/work

Invincible Man - Ralph Ellison

The Crucible - Arthur Miller

Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury

1984 - George Orwell

"A Good Man is Hard to Find" - Flannery O'Connor

Catch-22 - Joseph Heller

The Bell Jar - Sylvia Plath

One Hundred Years of Solitude - Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Tess of the D'Urbervilles - Thomas Hardy

What We Talk About When We Talk About Love - Raymond Carver

The Handmaid's Tale - Margaret Atwood

Ulysses - James Joyce

The Waste Land - T.S. Eliot

Mrs. Dalloway - Virginia Woolf

The Man Without Qualities - Robert Musil

Waiting For Godot - Samuel Beckett

To the Lighthouse - Virginia Woolf

Death in Venice - Thomas Mann

The Great Gatsby - F. Scott Fitzgerald