Does Co-Speech Gesture Support Children's Analogical Reasoning? An Investigation Into the Differential Effects of Gesture on Learning

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE DANCING BODY POLITIC: ACADEMIC CAPITALISM AND AN ARTS PERSPECTIVE ON THE PUBLIC GOOD

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN HIGHER EDUCATION

BY

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CHICAGO, IL

MAY 2022
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I’ve often heard that research is an art, a comment that feels like an appropriate way to acknowledge the unpredictability, intuition, and nonlinear processes that are a particular part of qualitative scholarship. What I’ve realized in writing this dissertation is that my research is mostly related to the art of storytelling, and in many ways, this is a love story. A love story about dance. A love story about college. A love story about people working together to lift up their communities. Sharing those love stories is only possible because of the love that my friends, family, and mentors have blessed me with over the past 4 years—a love that has buoyed me throughout my doctoral journey. There have been countless moments of support—big and small, profound and mundane—that have seen me through the challenges and successes associated with academic life. If it weren’t for the relationships that have sustained me, none of this would be possible and none of it would be worth it.

To my dissertation committee: Dr. Blanca Torres-Olave—Thank you for your encouragement and compassion. Your targeted feedback at the beginning of my process helped clarify the direction of this project in a major way. I deeply admire the way you engage with students and your intellect and empathy are inspiring. To Dr. Doug Risner—When I started planning my proposal, you were the first person I thought of as an expert in dance scholarship. I’m immensely grateful for your support and see your work as an inspiration for all dance educators hoping to contribute to a more equitable and just field. Thank you also for suggesting the design-related term “spatiality” as I was wrestling with the linguistic failings of positionality.
To Demetri—We have discussed my utter rejection of your warning not to latch onto a faculty “guru,” but in my defense, that’s pretty much the only advice of yours I intentionally didn’t follow. To be frank, all my family and friends know I would have been lost for the past 4 years without you, period. Full stop. I’m constantly in awe of your vast knowledge of higher education in all its multifaceted complexity. And I don’t just admire you for your content area expertise. I admire you for your (YES) creativity and artistic directing skills, your subversive anti-authoritarian streak, and your sensitivity to the ways our social identities show up in teaching and scholarship. You’re also an amazing listener. I never had a mentor before this doctoral program, and man, I did not know what I was missing. From day one you pushed me to discipline my thinking, to take up space as a scholar, to make the intellectual “flex,” and to live in the borderlands of social science research. I’m a better researcher, educator, and person because of all of it. Thank you for embracing dance and for making me feel seen and valued.

To the 10 faculty members who participated in my study—My gratitude to you for carving out time in your incredibly busy lives to speak with me about dance education. At the end of an already fraught year upended by COVID-19, you agreed to yet another Zoom call, then shared many insights about your practices and all the contributions you are making to the field. I continue to be moved by your creative spirit, work ethic, and devotion to students. I also aspire to be the beacons of hope that you so clearly are within your institutions.

To my Loyola dance faculty colleagues (especially Sandra and SCF) and students past and present—Thank you for providing me with a professional home, for being my friends, and for offering your encouragement as I pursued this degree. Thank you for bravely wading into the murky issues associated with dance education, for being sounding boards for my philosophizing,
and for acting on ways to address inequity in movement related practices. The love, integrity, humor, and grit you put into the work you do get me out of bed in the mornings.

To my boss production team for study III, Sydney, Alysia, Spencer, and especially Ashley—Thank you so much for lending your considerable talents to this work. Making a dance film about a collegiate dance program must have seemed so weird, but you made it one of the highlights of my dissertation journey. Thank you for helping me process my thoughts and for shaping them into something cohesive and beautiful. Ash—Our debriefing conversations were one of the most meaningful aspects of my research and I’ll always think of you as one of MY teachers. Thank you for your artistic integrity, sharing your vulnerability, and for helping me navigate accountability as I invest in anti-racist work. You’re a warrior love goddess.

To the Raduly, Ardell Oster, and Schaefer Harms families—Families I was given and families I chose—I would not have gotten through this past year in particular, without your cheerleading, humor, commiseration, actual physical hugs, and other moments of joy that kept the darkness at bay. Thank you for helping Matt and I raise our boys and for providing them with a “village” so they could experience community in these strange times of isolation. Your friendship means so much to me and I love you guys. Extra special thanks to Jozsef who helped me with the symbiosis and protein synthesis metaphors.

To my mom—I am so lucky that you are in our lives. In the most tangible of ways, you provided childcare (in the midst of a global pandemic that decimated all other options), giving me the space to think and to write. The happiness you convey when being with the boys fills me with gratitude and will forever be one of the biggest blessings bestowed on our family. Just as significantly, your belief in me has never wavered. You’ve always suggested a world of “yesses”
Despite experiencing the world’s “nos” yourself; and my ambitions are fueled, in no small part, by the misogyny and sexism you faced as woman, an artist, and a mother in your own career. Losing Pops in 2019 was a devastation, but even in your grief, you still have your spirit of adventure, your lust for life, your willingness to grow, and your faith. I admire that so much. As you know, I have felt Pops with me in strange and magical ways. His life and death have shaped (and will continue to shape) my understanding of suffering, my beliefs about time, and the way I love. I hope I make you both proud.

August and Eli—You rascals are a big reason I set out on this journey in the first place. I wanted to show you that we can do hard things, that learning is fun and interesting, and that it’s important to use our gifts and whatever knowledge we possess to try and make the world a better place. I thought you kids were pretty cool when you showed up in my life, but over the years that I’ve been studying for this degree you’ve gotten WAY cooler. I’m constantly filled with wonder at the wisdom of the things you say, by your brightness, tenderness, empathy, and enthusiasm for life. You shock the heck out of me with your awesomeness and the way you lead with love means the world. As Eli says, I love you and everything about you.

To Matt—You are my Stella Polaris, my valentine, my dance partner, my home. There’s no one I would rather laugh with, lean on, dream with, or champion. I’m so proud of us for upholding our vow to “make a practice of love.” You’ve supported this doctoral journey by making breakfast, by cheering me on and cheering me up, by calling the exterminator to come get rid of the ants (three times), by letting me have meltdowns, by listening to me drone on about the ouroboros, by signing the boys up for camps, by never forgetting the romance, by fixing the leaks and bringing me glasses of water, by asking how you can help, by taking the car in,
formatting every bloody table of contents, by dealing with falling tree branches (literally and metaphorically), by changing the air filters, and by doing a million other things that kept the ship afloat. I love you ferociously with my whole heart. You’re the best model of humanity I could want for the boys, and I still can’t believe that in this big mad world, I found you. Of all the stories told in this dissertation, yours and mine is my favorite by far.
This is for Pap and Gram PJ.
Bodies never lie.

—Martha Graham

If I can’t dance, I don’t want to be part of your revolution.

—Emma Goldman
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<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>BFA</td>
<td>Bachelor of Fine Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIPOC</td>
<td>Black, Indigenous, and People of Color</td>
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<td>DEI</td>
<td>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA</td>
<td>Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>NASD</td>
<td>National Association for Schools of Dance</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTFCLDE</td>
<td>National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement</td>
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<td>QCA</td>
<td>Qualitative Content Analysis</td>
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ABSTRACT

A well-established conceptualization of academic capitalism is rooted in the marriage of economic theory and critical social. Significantly, academic capitalism links economic dimensions with the political-ideological transformations of U.S. society associated with the fall of communism and the rise of neoliberalism. Academic capitalism is based on a recognition of the paradoxical nature of higher education and offers a lens through which to examine the ways in which institutions in the United States have come to prioritize learning for the labor market as a private good within the new global economy, while also becoming less beholden to the notion of learning for democracy as a public good. Some empirical research indicates there may be connections between liberal arts programs and democratic outcomes; however, this scholarship is contested. Even less is known about how individual disciplines that straddle utilitarian and liberal arts traditions, such as dance, navigate the private versus public good debate in the context of academic capitalism. There is much to learn about how these “divided fields” may be creatively bridging the gap between learning for a professional career and learning for civic virtues traditionally associated with undergraduate education in the arts and humanities. Using multiple data sources and analyses, the intent behind this three-study dissertation was to explore how dance programs are designed to both embrace and resist the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime.

Keywords: academic capitalism, neoliberalism, humanities, college dance programs
I am 21 years old and a few months shy of graduating a semester early from college with a Bachelor of Arts double major in dance and communications so I can ostensibly spend a few months auditioning for professional dance companies before I walk in my university’s commencement ceremony. I meet with Françoise, my French ballet mistress, a beautiful and terrifying woman in her late 60s who danced at the original Moulin Rouge and was a founding member of the Joffrey Ballet when it was based in New York City. We are on the steps of Halsey Hall on the banks of the Iowa River and the rain is falling as Françoise smokes a Nat Sherman cigarette. We finish our meeting and this woman I adore casually remarks that my program’s dance faculty have doubts as to whether I will ever “make it” as a professional dancer; the teachers are worried that I am too pre-occupied with my boyfriend. Instead of using this damning assessment as fuel for my professional ambitions, I promptly follow said boyfriend to Colorado where he drives a sleigh for tourists in a ski town and I work a part-time job as an administrative assistant in a Denver law firm.

A year later, I move to Chicago where I begin doing commercial dance work and am hired into one of the professional repertory companies offering season contracts. In the year 2000, this means a required but unpaid daily company class, a $5.00 hourly wage for rehearsals, and a $100.00 performance fee for every concert in which I perform. Workman’s compensation is covered by my company in case I am injured, but I do not receive health or retirement benefits.
To pay rent on an apartment I share with two friends, I work additional part-time jobs as a dance instructor and an administrative assistant at a performing arts center. Monday through Thursday I rehearse with my company from 9:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m. and then drive to the suburbs to teach dance to young students at a number of private studios from 3:30 p.m.–10:00 p.m. Friday through Sunday I regularly perform either in the theater or doing gigs, such as dancing back up for Huey Lewis at the Salton Maxim George Foreman Grill Christmas party. I love my life, but as a single woman living in an urban setting, I quickly become a living example of the unpredictability and financial instability associated with work in the arts.

**Story II. A Scholar Attempts Publication**

I am in my late 20s, rehearsing during the day as professional dance artist. I also teach part time at a 2-year college with a historical specialization in court reporting. The school is located in Chicago’s Loop. On alternating weeknights, I take the Chicago Red Line train up the street to a local university where I attend Master of Education classes in a higher education program. I think this degree will provide me some credibility in my role as college instructor and my assignments stimulate my thinking in ways my dancing does not. As part of an independent study, I get the opportunity to work on a project with one of my professors that involves an analysis of the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen data, and I develop a conceptual framework that integrates economic and sociological perspectives on the formation of human, social, and cultural capital while also addressing educational achievement gaps across racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups. Although my intention at the time was to encourage a revision of how educators define cultural capital, in re-reading what I wrote, I am struck by the
degree to which my literature review adheres to deficit-lens thinking about students of color and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

At the end of my final semester, my research mentor submits our paper for publication, a momentous step that barely registers in my mind, given my obliviousness to the norms that govern an academic career. Several weeks later, after I have graduated from the program, I receive notice that our paper has been rejected from the journal to which we applied, and I have been given access to the feedback. I only remember one comment: “Some people shouldn’t write about race.” I have just finished a program in which I was taught that it is my responsibility, as an educator committed to social justice, to engage intellectually with race, so this comment lodges deep, both perplexing me and inspiring a tentativeness when it comes to owning my voice in academic writing on issues of equity.

Story III. A Non-Tenure Track Faculty Member Serves on a Search Committee

I am non-tenure-track faculty at a mid-size private Catholic institution and am serving on a search committee for my boss’s position, which has been “converted” from a non-tenure to a tenure-track position. My boss is an applicant for the job—a position she has held for 10 years. Three candidates have been invited to campus for interviews, my boss among them, and I must participate in various sessions as the only dance specialist. All the committee members are White and one of the candidates is Black. During the interview portion of this candidate’s visit, he says to the group,

I notice that this dance program has a mission centered on social justice and yet, it is a ballet-based program and does not include any non-Western dance forms as part of its curricular requirements, nor are there any full-time faculty of color teaching in your program. I also see that the dancers in the advanced majors ballet class, regardless of race, wear the traditional pink tights—a uniform that idealizes Whiteness.
After this candidate’s interview, I am suddenly overcome with anxiety that he may be a more visionary leader and have a greater ability to run our fledgling dance program than my current boss, and I fear my boss may get edged out of the program she built.

**Story IV. An Artistic Director Wrestles With Racial Equity**

It is my first semester as a doctoral student in a higher education program, I have two kids under the age of 5 years old and my husband is recovering from an invasive emergency surgery related to Crohn’s disease. I am still a non-tenure-track faculty member and have also stepped into my boss’s role as the division director of our dance program while she is on sabbatical. I am tasked with producing our annual Mainstage Concert without any supplemental salary, while also teaching three courses per semester. We are staging *Le Jardin Animé*, which is an excerpt from *Le Corsaire*, a classical ballet that controversially romanticizes sex trafficking and often perpetuates racist caricatures of people from the Middle East.

Several weeks into the rehearsal process I send an email to our costume designer and our ballet master, a White male teacher in his early 70s with international status, who is a former member of the Danish National Ballet. In the email I write,

Given the increase in racial diversity in ballet programs like ours (and hopefully classical companies) there is a trend to consider that pink tights and pointe shoes perpetuate a White Eurocentric approach to the genre. I’m wondering if the two of you would be open to costuming our dancers in tights/pointe shoes that reflect the actual colors of their skin? As we are committed by our university and program mission statements to champion social justice, this would be a forward step in recognizing the changing landscape of ballet. Furthermore, many people believe that matching tights/shoes to actual flesh tones is a better aesthetic choice as it elongates the natural line of the body.

When I click open the ballet master’s response to the query, my stomach drops. He has stated his intention to resign from his post effective immediately and suggests we pull *Le Jardin Animé*
from the concert program. He also insists he always casts ballets “totally color blind and chooses dancers by their talent and not by race and/or ethnicity.”

Suddenly, I feel as though my own job may be on the line. What does it say about my leadership skills if I lose our ballet master and a major piece of public programming for our department mid-semester? I immediately walk back my position on the pink tights, stating in my reply:

I am so sorry that my email caused such upset. It was in no way intended to be a critique of your casting or costuming and I, along with everyone else, applaud the inclusivity that you always demonstrate. In NO way did I mean to imply that there has been a complaint from anyone about this issue. Your expertise, excellence, and artistry in teaching and restaging classical ballets is integral and foundational to our work in the major. You are beloved and revered by all in this program and as acting director, I would not willingly accept your resignation.

For years, I am haunted by the notion that my willingness to cave on the pink tights issue perpetuated microaggressions against our students of color and that my actions were a perfect representation of well-intentioned White people’s unwillingness to take personal risks in the fight for racial justice.

**Portraiture as Guiding Concept**

I begin this three-study dissertation with an attempt to draw a self-portrait in text. The stories I share represent how my own experiences training in a collegiate dance program, performing as a professional dancer, and teaching as a non-tenure-track faculty member informed my research agenda. Many joyful and fulfilling moments have driven my practice; however, reflecting on the narratives above illuminated external forces related to capitalism, equity, and sociopolitical power that I have not always perceived as having an impact on my life. Over time, I have come to question these forces and the norms and values embedded in training
systems that both sustain the professional concert dance world and govern university life. As research is both a science and an art, within this project I engage metaphors from the natural world and provide aesthetic symmetry, ending where it began with portraiture—in a dance film that profiles the members of a collegiate program wrestling with the very issues I myself have encountered as an individual artist, teacher, and scholar. Although the stories I have told here highlight challenges and conflict, those moments set the stage for growth and transformation. Narratives that reflect different perspectives on the power-related phenomena that have sparked my curiosity are woven throughout.

The following pages outline key definitions of the terminology used throughout this project and introduce the study’s research questions as well as provide a summary of literature related to the research phenomenon. A rationale for the dissertation’s three-study structure is included, as is a more detailed discussion of each study’s individual significance. I examine ontological and epistemological considerations with an overview of the dissertation’s research design. In this section, I revisit the research questions in more detail and include a narrow look at the methods associated with each study.
CHAPTER TWO
KEY TERMS, SPATIALITY STATEMENT, AND OVERVIEW

Key Terms

Providing definitions of key terms is necessary to situate this scholarship within the literature that currently exists and to operationalize particular concepts relative to my own understanding. These key terms include the following:

*Academic capitalism:* A theory and object of study used to explore higher education’s close relationship to market forces in the context of political-ideological transformations of U.S. society associated with the fall of communism and the rise of neoliberalism (Cantwell & Kauppinen, 2014; Picketty, 2020; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

*Ballet and classical modern dance:* Discreet movement practices (also called disciplines and movement languages) notable for codified systems of training born of a White Western aesthetic (Kerr-Berry, 2016). With the rise of the professional model (defined below), these disciplines have come to dominate collegiate dance programs and are also reflected heavily in the repertory of the most notable and financially stable concert dance performance ensembles in the United States.

*Dance programs:* Major courses of study embedded within Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree programs as I am distinguishing these programs from conservatory or Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) programs. Dance majors are often housed in stand-alone departments or within other fine and performing arts departments that are more broadly responsible for arts education. In turn, these programs are generally administrated within colleges with a focus on liberal arts. More
specifically, dance programs are often identified with the humanities, which alongside the study of art, also emphasize languages, history, jurisprudence, philosophy, and ethics (Nur Amin, 2016).

*Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI):* Within the context of these studies, DEI refers to the presence of racially diverse (i.e., Black, Indigenous, people of color, or BIPOC) students and educators as performers, choreographers, and scholars in academic dance programs (Mabingo, 2019; Risner, 2010; Schupp, 2017; Stinson, 2010; West, 2005). Beyond structural diversity, DEI also refers to the visibility, roles, and status of BIPOCs within learning communities as evidenced by intentionality around learning for democracy in both curricula and pedagogical approaches. DEI within the concert dance landscape refers to the diversity of dance artists working in professional contexts as well as to BIPOCs’ access to financial resources that make a career in the arts possible. Notably, though the subject was outside the scope of this project, an important conversation around (dis)ability is necessary to furthering DEI in dance education.

*Faculty:* In the following studies, the term faculty refers to a variety of roles held by academic professionals who are responsible for instruction in postsecondary institutions. Distinctions are made between part-time/adjunct faculty, non-tenure-track full-time faculty, and tenure-track or tenured faculty to explore hierarchies that affect workload and resource allocation within the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime.

*Learning for democracy:* I use the terms *learning for democracy, democratic engagement, civic engagement,* and *civic virtues* interchangeably throughout this dissertation to capture various forms of community participation such as philanthropy, volunteer work, and public artmaking, as well as political activities such as voting and activism. For a more nuanced
understanding of the distinctions between civic and political engagement, see Morgan et al. (2017). In the context of dance education, learning for democracy is rooted in the lives of students, is grounded in participatory experiential learning, and is informed by antiracist practices.

*Neoliberalism:* A policy model born of economic liberalism that is based on the idea that “human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2005, p. 2).

*The new global economy:* I use the terms *new global economy, new knowledge economy,* and *new economy* interchangeably throughout this dissertation to describe competitive high-growth industries tied to technological innovation, as drivers of global economic trends (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

*The professional model:* A curricular and pedagogical training system designed to educate collegiate dancers for professional performance or artmaking careers in commercial or concert (theatrical) dance. Commonly, dance as an academic discipline in a university program emphasizes applied skills training in movement practices, performance, choreographic craft, and practice-led scholarship (Risner, 2010). For example, the field’s accrediting agency, the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD, 2018), states that within BA programs,

Students enrolled in professional undergraduate degrees in dance are expected to develop the knowledge, skills, concepts, and sensitivities essential to the artist in the field of dance. To fulfill various professional responsibilities, the dance artist must exhibit not only technical competence, but also broad knowledge of dance and dance repertory, the ability to integrate dance-related knowledge and skills, sensitivity to dance and musical styles, and an insight into the role of dance in intellectual and cultural life. (p. 97)
**White Western aesthetics:** It is important to interrogate the use of the term “White Western” in relationship to the study of aesthetics, or the philosophic principles that define beauty and artistic taste. “Whiteness” as a social construct and “Western” in reference to European-influenced culture do not capture the diversity of embodied experiences that the terms convey. White Western is not meant to imply homogeneity. However, I use the term White Western in the context of this research as a shorthand for practices/methods that regularly reflect hegemonic, patriarchal, and racially oppressive systems. For example, Whiteness has been applied to dance education so as to link perceived racial superiority to certain dance languages such as ballet and classical modern. This is not to say that White Western forms of dance are problematic per se—they are valuable cultural forms like all dance forms; however, in the United States, these dance forms have also come to be associated with socioeconomic privilege, elitism, restricted access for BIPOC, and a hierarchy of knowledge as it relates to movement. For this reason, it is necessary to link Whiteness with Western when discussing dance aesthetics.

**Spatiality Statement**

The key terms introduced above highlight that language is processed and filtered through each individual’s distinct lens. It is therefore necessary for scholars to consider their salient social identities and biases within the qualitative research paradigm (Creswell, 1998). I chose to intentionally lean into the conceptual mobility of the term “spatiality” rather than to use the more familiar and static term “positionality” in order to recognize myself as a researcher in progress (Cooperman, 2018). Spatiality involves recognition of the fluid application of social identities within relational contexts and might be considered a metaphor for dance itself—I am moving toward and away from positions that are never fully formed and realized but are constantly being
renegotiated in dialogue and reflection, much like a dancer in a duet explores tension within a relationship or a soloist might hold a suspended pose related to the architecture of the performance space that is ultimately part of the fall and recovery of dynamic or rhythmic phrasing.

Also useful for framing spatiality are Goffman (1959) and Bhattacharya’s (2009) re-imagined allegories of onstage and backstage spaces, each of which has its own distinct audience. The application of social identities in this context supports that there is a performative element to scholarship, which means our actions vary depending on the perceived power held by each audience and our relationship to those audiences. Further, onstage and backstage spaces do not necessarily “hold onto their absoluteness for too long” (Bhattacharya, 2009, p. 1065). In moving between these points, as is suggested by spatiality, one negotiates the performative self with all its “contradictions, tensions, voices, and silences,” a process that represents the border crossings of lived experience (Bhattacharya, 2009, p. 1065).

In this project, I acknowledge that my views are influenced directly by my identity as an able-bodied, cisgendered, heterosexual, White woman who is working to confront a personal relationship to privilege and power in a plurality of contexts. In adhering to a post-positivistic mindset (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), I note that my role as an educator, my experiences training in multiple dance disciplines throughout college, and my professional performance career influenced my interpretation of the data and findings, as did my understanding of the current political climate in the United States.
Overview

Schulze-Cleven (2015) argued that the liberalization of postsecondary study “is a cross-national phenomenon grounded in policymakers’ desire to use higher education as a means to manage the tensions between democratic capitalism’s two constitutive logics: rule by both market competition and democratic citizenship” (p. 2). Schulze-Cleven’s claim shows higher education can be viewed as a paradox like the ouroboros (See Figure 1), a circulatory process for both the manufacture and transformation of society in the United States. Put another way, a college education ideally does two things simultaneously—it embraces a vision for “activating workers (i.e., sustaining their employability and supporting their social security within – rather than outside – the labor market” [Schulze-Cleven, 2015, p. 13]) and it fosters civic virtues that engage students as global citizens who are able to tackle the most pressing issues of our time (Caruana, 2014; Newfield, 2016). Like the snake eating its own tail, higher education both creates and destroys the world in which it exists.

Figure 1. The Ouroboros.
In practice, the history of U.S. higher education has never fully reflected the mystic unity of the ouroboros. Instead, it resembles a weighted scale, with the shifting balance between democratic capitalism’s constitutive logics playing out in myriad ways that emphasize either communitarian or neoliberal philosophies (Kezar, 2004). To date, scholarship has failed to blunt the forcefulness of voices that emphasize a false dichotomy regarding the purpose of a college degree; thus, discourse on higher education in the public sphere often reflects the values of those who hold more power within society (Kezar, 2004; Mendoza, 2009; Tierney, 2006). These arguments are inextricably linked to various stances on what defines education as a public good and also hinge on the concept of college as a financial investment. To provide more context for the investigation of the above issues, in the next section I present contradictory notions of higher education as a public good and introduce academic capitalism as the conceptual framework guiding the three studies in this dissertation. This discussion is followed by a presentation of the research questions and a review of literature to provide further context for the dissertation’s subject and organization.
CHAPTER THREE
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Academic Capitalism and the Public Good

Regarding communitarian ideals associated with the individual in relationship to their community, numerous scholars have argued that learning for democracy fulfills higher education’s social charter (Dewey, 1929; Hübler et al., 2020; Kezar, 2004; Musil, 2016). Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) defined the public good knowledge/learning regime through Mertonian norms such as “communalism, universality, the free flow of knowledge and organized skepticism” with new knowledge “serendipitously leading to public benefits” (p. 28). Furthermore, some scholars have suggested learning for democracy has been part of the social charter for the past 100 years, as U.S. institutions reflect communitarian goals such as “developing leaders, serving the needs of regional and local communities, or acting as a social critic” (Kezar, 2004, p. 435; see also Marginson, 2011).

The Truman Commission’s examination of the democratic function of higher education in 1947 is an example of this belief system and reflects a national ethos shaken by the atrocities of World War II and the ushering in of the atomic age (Hutcheson, 2007). As the nation recovered from the conflict, members of the Truman Commission argued that increased access to college would ideally provide students the opportunity to develop “ethical principles consistent with democratic ideals,” the ability to act as “informed and responsible citizen[s],” and a foundational desire to “maintain peace with the rest of the world” (President’s Commission on Higher Education, 1947a, pp. 50–51). The influence of this philosophy runs deep within U.S.
institutions, as Morphew and Hartley (2006) found that mission statements today commonly reflect the goal of “preparing citizens” or “promoting civic engagement” (p. 465). Thus, higher education symbolically reflects in words the educational values associated with the public good knowledge/learning regime.

In describing a tool kit designed to support student learning for democratic engagement, Hübler et al. (2020) evoked Dewey’s (1929) contention that “democracy should be understood not merely as a form of government, but as a way of life expressed in ‘the living relations of person to person in all social forms and institutions’” (pp. 473–474). Musil (2016) also argued that institutions of higher learning “are important sites for educating students for engaged participation and leadership in a diverse democracy, as well as for the global citizenship necessary in our deeply contentious, interdependent world” (p. 84). Last, the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (NTFCLDE, 2012) called for massive investment in higher education in order to “renew the nation’s social, intellectual, and civic capital” (p. 2). The overarching assumption here is that a college-educated populace makes for a strong body politic.

Of course, it must be noted that the social charter has not consistently manifested across institutional practices. For example, the earliest college degrees were reserved for White Christian men with wealth (Thelin, 2011). Therefore, institutions’ continued conflicts over social movements related to race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and class must be acknowledged as points at which higher education has failed to fully reconcile its observable practices with its stated commitment to democratization. Another example is that during the Cold War, Department of Defense funding supported institutions’ research into weapons of mass
destruction as a means to strengthen the might of the U.S. military (Kezar, 2004; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). With these considerations taken into account, the communitarian character of the social charter can still be engaged as a heuristic to broadly conceptualize education for the public good with its emphasis on civic virtues (Kezar, 2004; Marginson, 2011).

Evoking a different perspective on the public good, other scholars moved away from Mertonian norms and their potential benefits for democracy (Fish, 2004; National Association of Scholars, 2017). Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) contended that the neoliberal state focuses “not on social welfare for the citizenry as a whole but on enabling individuals as economic actors. To that end, neoliberal states move resources away from social welfare functions toward production functions” (p. 20). Neoliberalism bolsters the assumption that capitalism serves the public good via the commodification of individual citizens who have the ability to use the market to accumulate wealth. For example, Harvey (2005) referenced the “neoliberal turn” as a set of beliefs that portray individual successes or failures as “entrepreneurial virtues or personal failings” (pp. 66–67). Individualism is key to neoliberal discourse in that it comprises themes of meritocracy, competition, and entrepreneurship, couched in the language of morality.

In line with this emphasis, neoliberalism is associated with a shift of the cost of college from the public to the individual. Subsequently, students and their families, as well as policymakers in government and industry, have increasingly demanded that institutions of higher education be held accountable for delivering on educational outcomes that link academic programming to earning potential post-graduation (Akers & Chingos, 2016; McMahon, 2009; Schulze-Cleven, 2015). Taking a shorter-term utilitarian approach, institutions increasingly behave like marketers responding to the consumer consciousness of students who are concerned
with future earnings (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Neely (1999) stated, “Young people do not go to college to become fuller persons, better citizens, or more lively intellects. In post-war America, college education is justified by the additional lifetime income it will produce” (pp. 36–37). An example of this claim can be found in Harper and Hurtado’s (2007) finding in a study with 38,538 first-year students surveyed in 2005 that 67.9% of students reported “being very well off financially” was the most important or essential of their goals, whereas “influencing the political structure” was deemed very important or essential by only 21.5% (p. 24). Given these trends, it is important to note that reports like those from the NTFCLDE (2012) reflect that reducing a college education for job preparation alone moves the country toward a “citizenless democracy” (p. 1).

Of note, those who embrace neoliberal ideals still use language that evokes the concept of the public good. Thus, the distinction between communitarian and neoliberal paradigms within the higher education context warrants clarity. Going forward in this document, policies and practices that further democratic ideals will reference one side of the ouroboros as the public good knowledge/learning regime (public good) and policies and practices that further concepts related to the value of labor in a capitalist marketplace will reference the other side of the ouroboros as the academic knowledge/learning regime (private good).

The interdisciplinary theory of academic capitalism highlights the paradoxical nature of higher education and offers a lens through which to examine the ways in which institutions in the United States have come to prioritize learning for the labor market as a private good within the new global economy, while also becoming less beholden to the notion of learning for democracy as a public good (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Significantly, a well-established
conceptualization of academic capitalism is rooted in the marriage of economic theory and critical social perspectives (Cantwell & Kauppinen, 2014; Rhoades & Slaughter, 1997; Slaughter & Cantwell, 2012; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

As a point of departure, Slaughter and Cantwell (2012) outlined six dimensions of academic capitalism as follows:

The creation and expansion of intermediating organizations external to universities that promote closer relations between universities and markets; interstitial organizations that emerge from within universities that intersect various market oriented projects; narratives, discourses and social technologies that promote marketization and competition; expanded managerial capacity; new funding streams for research and programs close to the market; and new circuits of knowledge that move away from peer review and professional judgment as arbiters of excellence. (p. 585)

Notably, academic capitalism links economic elements with the political-ideological transformations of society associated with the fall of communism and the rise of neoliberalism both in the United States and abroad (Cantwell & Kauppinen, 2014; Picketty, 2020; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

Although the implications of academic capitalism as both a theory and an “object of study” (Cantwell & Kauppinen, 2014, p. 6) are vast and have been used to explore an array of topics, Rhoades (2014) acknowledged that the concept has often been narrowly applied to explorations of institutions’ revenue generating activities. My focus in this dissertation, however, was on human capital narratives associated with the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime. These narratives emphasize the role of the individual, the common perception that postsecondary education is a private benefit, and the tipping of the scale toward learning for the labor market in the new global economy. Brint, Proctor, Murphy, and Hanneman (2012) are particularly helpful here in defining market influences, in part, as “employer demand for labor,
indicated by high median incomes and changes in median income occupations closely linked to academic fields; [as well as] student demand for curricula, indicated by changes in degrees awarded in academic fields” (p. 278). The research questions driving the studies in this dissertation were intended to shed light on the implications of academic capitalism that go beyond revenue generation. To that end, the next section details the lines of inquiry for studies I, II, and III.

Research Questions

I designed this project’s research questions to address the inherent paradoxes of higher education as captured by the vision of the ouroboros as it relates to dance. Each study was designed to wrestle with a particular dimension of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime and knowledge generation is scaffolded so the first two studies are unified in the approach to study III. Study I was guided by the following: (a) What do websites communicate about dance programs’ commitment to the professional model? and (b) How do dance programs support additional messages about learning for democracy in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion? The research question for study II was: How do roles, responsibilities, and disciplinary status play into faculty perceptions of academic capitalism in dance programs that attempt to balance learning for the labor market and learning for democracy? Finally, the research questions for study III included: (a) How does one dance program embrace academic capitalism in terms of learning for career preparation as a private good? and (b) How does the same dance program resist academic capitalism in terms of learning for democracy as a public good?
The above questions, with their focus on dance education, are inextricably linked to the liberal arts and humanities, which are at the heart of debates over the value of higher education and its relationship to professional work. To illuminate dilemmas facing what constitutes the old undergraduate core, the following section draws on scholarship that paints a complex picture of liberal arts and humanities programs. Specific topics covered include academic capitalism and its relationship to the arts and humanities, resource allocation for the humanities and quasi-markets, the rise of the professional model in collegiate dance education, and institutional/labor market implications of the professional model.
CHAPTER FOUR

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Academic Capitalism: The Liberal Arts and the Humanities

The current state of liberal arts on college campuses reflects Brint, Proctor, Murphy, and Hanneman’s (2012) narrow focus on market forces, as disciplines housed in liberal arts programs propagate disagreement about the role of higher education in learning for career preparation. These scholars’ attitudes suggest students are more likely to view their education from a human capital perspective and will therefore “choose majors linked to the new economy, such as business, communications, [and] media arts” that are expected to produce the most substantial returns on educational investments (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, p. 2).

Brint et al.’s (2005) study supports this contention and indicates business has been higher education’s fastest growing occupational field over the past 30 years. The same study revealed that most fields, including all of the humanities, are “in absolute decline as measured by numbers of graduates” (Brint et al., 2005, p. 159). Significantly, Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) also contended that “programs, departments, or colleges that resist, ignore, or are unable to intersect the new economy within institutions that are generally pursuing an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime rarely share in its rewards and incentives” (p. 22).

The accountability narrative connects higher education more exclusively to the new economy labor market and is an element of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime into which educating for democracy factors less. However, empirical research sheds little light on how this plays out with regard to the fine and performing arts. Some studies of the general
erosion of the liberal arts over the past several decades have shown a general decline in its disciplines reflects the high wage-earning career expectations of student consumers (Baker et al., 2012; Breneman, 1990; Brint et al., 2005; Brint, Proctor, Mulligan, et al., 2012; Brint, Proctor, Murphy, & Hanneman, 2012; Delucchi, 1997). Replicating Breneman’s (1990) study, Baker et al. (2012) stated “a competitive market, students’ growing vocational orientation, and precarious finances have been eroding the clear purpose of liberal arts colleges” (p. 52).

On the other hand, some scholars (Brint, Proctor, Murphy, & Hanneman, 2012; Delucchi, 1997; Freeland, 2009; Kezar, 2004; Osley-Thomas, 2019; Spellman, 2009; Tierney, 2006) point to the resilience of the liberal arts. Schools overwhelmingly retain liberal arts missions and adapt curricula that pair traditional liberal arts classroom learning strategies with more vocational field-based opportunities such as service learning, undergraduate research, and study abroad (Baker et al., 2012; Delucchi, 1997). Indeed, Engell and Dangerfield (2007) argued employers in the new fast-evolving economy actually value the liberal arts and want “flexible, adaptable minds, exposed to a broad range of knowledge and trained in rigorous critical thinking,” rather than students educated in the “prematurely narrowed point of view” associated with vocational training (p. 16).

Furthermore, Brint, Proctor, Murphy, and Hanneman (2012) determined that though the humanities are generally losing resources and status, visual arts fields have grown “significantly faster in degrees awarded than in institutional representation” (p. 290). In addition, relative to other fields, the performing arts have grown somewhat (Brint et al., 2005). Though dated, these reported phenomena indicate students are “more interested than institutions in self-expression” (Brint, Proctor, Murphy, & Hanneman, 2012, p. 290), which both fits and challenges the concept
of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime. On the one hand, student consumers drive program expansion. On the other hand, arts programs are notable for being distant from the new economy that drives investment in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields.

**The Arts and Humanities: Democratic Outcomes**

Beyond a nuanced picture of the popularity of liberal arts, numerous scholars have argued that there continue to be important connections between these programs and democratic outcomes (Hanson et al., 2012; Mayhew et al., 2016; Pascarella et al., 2005; Siefert et al., 2008). For example, Pascarella et al. (2005) acknowledged that the liberal arts centerpiece of undergraduate education has come to broadly represent learning for the “foundations of a democratic society and the responsibilities of citizenship” (p. 3). Contemporary scholars frequently echo the sentiments of the Harvard Committee (1945) who, in response to the atrocities of World War II, provided a direct counterpoint to the neoliberal argument for higher education as a private good by stating “rugged individualism is not sufficient to constitute a democracy; democracy also is fraternity and cooperation for the common good” (pp. 76–77).

On another note, practices associated with a liberal arts education are more statistically significant for women, students of color, and others who have been historically underserved (Mayhew et al., 2016; Pascarella et al., 2005; Siefert et al., 2008). Siefert et al. (2008) found that even when controlling for student background and institution attended, the liberal arts experience had the strongest relationship to citizenship and civility scales. Pascarella et al. (2005) noted that liberal arts college alumni reported their undergraduate education had a significantly stronger positive impact on the “development of responsible citizenship” (p. 74) than did similar alumni of public universities. Regarding the humanities, Musil (2016) asserted that,
when humanities courses are structured around difference, community, and democratic thinking, they can illuminate how it has been and can be possible to bridge the divides apparent in the nation and to realize the democratic ideal of E Pluribus Unum. (p. 85)

Musil (2015) also noted that “at critical historical junctures, when democracy seems at risk, visionary leaders have underscored the power of the humanities as guardians of democracy and a source of its rejuvenation” (p. 240).

Like conflicting reports on the deterioration of the liberal arts, it should be acknowledged that scholarship on democratic learning outcomes associated with the liberal arts and humanities is also contested (Dodson, 2014; Doyle & Skinner, 2017; Zilvinskis et al., 2020). In dance, for example, Mulvihill (2018) theorized that collaboration provides spaces “where dancemakers can examine how they treat one another, notice where power shifts, and learn how to voice aesthetic and civic principles” (p. 113). Wilkinson (2020) supported Mulvihill’s claims and suggested that in higher education, “the richness and depth of a creative process can build a bridge between movement as a way of knowing and democracy” (p. 9). For example, dance “can subtly promote political interactions that are a counterpoint to the polarization, manipulation, and inequity so commonly referenced in the dominant narrative about U.S. politics” (Wilkinson, 2020, p. 9).

Mendl Shaw et al. (2017) further stated dance-centric community-building through rehearsal and performance furthers active citizenship by emphasizing teamwork, physical listening, clear spatial intent, physical and mental stamina, and global thinking.

On the other hand, Zilvinskis et al. (2020) found that an institutional emphasis on activism and higher ratios of tenure-track faculty are more significantly related to student activism than are other institutional-level characteristics. Significantly, these data highlight the lack of knowledge about how individual disciplines that straddle utilitarian and liberal arts
traditions, such as dance, navigate the private versus public good debate in the context of academic capitalism. Subsequently, educators have much to learn about how these “divided fields” may be creatively bridging the gap between learning for a professional career and learning for the civic virtues traditionally associated with undergraduate education (Brint et al., 2005, p. 155).

A nuanced picture that acknowledges a blending of institutional missions and learning outcomes perhaps reflects both the power of neoliberal messaging and the historical prestige associated with traditional liberal arts programs (Osley-Thomas, 2019). However, an evolving vision of the liberal arts may also offer insight into the creation of a new higher education paradigm—a paradigm represented by the ouroboros. This new paradigm has the potential to marry a utilitarian approach to vocational training and the communitarian value of education for democratic engagement. The problems of systemic racism, climate change, wealth inequality, and continuous warfare imply that the world requires community-oriented solutions and collective action; democratic societies need leaders “served by a foundational education in the arts and sciences that is broad in scope, critical in perspective, and idealistic without illusions” (Engell & Dangerfield, 2007, p. 20). I would therefore contend that it is a matter of urgency for leaders in the humanities to fervently assert their role in educating for democratic engagement.

**Resource Allocation for the Humanities: Quasi-Markets**

The long-debated position of the liberal arts as related to academic capitalism is significant in terms of resource allocation. Slaughter and Cantwell (2012) stated the arts and humanities, in particular, are distant from the new economy and provided a social critique of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime; these fields are therefore more exposed to the
market failure to which Engell and Dangerfield (2007) referred. In the absence of extensive literature specifically regarding performing arts programs, research that references the humanities more generally must provide a foundation for an investigation of quasi-markets.

Taylor et al. (2013) approached the resource allocation question from a new perspective built on resource dependency theory rather than on the organizational ecology theory deployed by Brint et al. (2005); Brint, Proctor, Murphy, and Hanneman (2012); and Brint, Proctor, Mulligan, et al. (2012). In resource dependency theory, social context matters (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). As an institution’s leaders attempt to exert more control over the environment that provides organizational resources, it will inevitably experience new and unexpected patterns of interdependence that influence decision-making and power acquisition (Jaeger & Thornton, 2005). Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) noted “people, groups, or departments inside organizations that [can] reduce uncertainty, manage important environmental dependencies, and help the organization obtain resources, [hold] more power as a result of their critical role in ensuring organizational survival if not success” (p. xiii). Within the context of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime, colleges and universities compete in quasi-markets that arise from the interconnectedness of government and industry, but lack the “free flow of labor, products, and capital” (Taylor et al., 2013, p. 680) that characterize traditional economic markets. Taylor et al. (2013) suggested that in the current policy environment, STEM programs are prioritized because these fields are linked directly to the new knowledge economy, whereas humanities disciplines are perceived as “unlikely to yield novel discoveries or workforce development” (p. 678).
Taylor et al. (2013) further posited that humanities programs exist within quasi-markets that operate differently by “sector, level, and control” (p. 676). For this reason, humanities programs do well in some contexts and languish in others (Taylor et al., 2013). For example, Osley-Thomas (2019) found “higher status universities are more likely to shield liberal arts disciplines” (p. 229) that represent core organizational identity. On the other hand, Taylor et al. (2013) explored two quasi-marketplaces (i.e., student tuition payments and research funding), ultimately finding that changing quasi-markets spur institutions to de-emphasize the humanities. Significantly, public institutions that receive direct funding subsidies from state governments may not be as quick to go this route as are their private school counterparts; however, the authors noted the 2008 economic crisis might be a factor of influence in future studies of similar design (Taylor et al., 2013).

**Academic Capitalism and the Rise of the Professional Model in Dance**

Inferences can be made about dance’s relationship to academic capitalism through an exploration of dance as a distinct discipline in higher education. Although the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime may appear at first glance to be distant from the arts, one can find echoes of its narratives within the relationship of dance as a field of study in higher education to dance as an industry. Historically, dance curricula have been distinguished by two schools of thought represented by iconic programs launched at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Bennington College in the early 1900s. Although there is little empirical research on the topic, in many ways these two approaches elegantly mirror opposing sides of the debate over academic capitalism in higher education. At the University of Wisconsin, program developments included an intentional departure from codified ballet and boundary-breaking modern techniques
developed in the 1920s and 1930s (Ross, 2002). These strategies were partially intended to liberate women’s bodies so they might “withstand the rigors of intellectual study” (Ross, 2002, p. 115). The approach also advanced Dalcroze’s Eurhythmics method, which emphasizes a playful and experiential approach to movement (Brennan, 1972; Ross, 2002).

Conversely, at Bennington, ballet and modern paradigms were established as foundational to professional dance work (Soares, 2009). The school became a place where revolutionary artists trained aspiring dancers who would eventually join their companies (Manning, 2016). Significantly, the Bennington model led to the professionalization of BA and BFA degrees¹ and fueled the expansion of many dance programs across the country (Risner, 2010). As a result, training the individual for a performance career has become the focus of dance in higher education (Bonbright, 2002; Manning, 2016). To provide more clarity on this system of training, the following paragraphs detail the historical development of curricular and pedagogical approaches associated with the professional model.

Dance in the academy began to emerge in the 1900s within physical education programs for women. The first dance major was approved at the University of Wisconsin in 1926 under the guidance of pioneer Margaret H’Doubler (Bonbright, 2002). Notably, the curriculum was influenced by the ideas of progressive educators that were beginning to find traction in educational institutions (Flinders & Thornton, 2017; H’Doubler, 1921; Vertinsky, 2010). H’Doubler’s (1925) commentary reflects progressive ideas:

> The dance is peculiarly adapted to the purposes of education. It serves all the ends of education – it helps to develop the body, to cultivate the love and appreciation of beauty, to stimulate the imagination and challenge the intellect, to deepen and refine the

¹ The current study ultimately focused exclusively on BA programs (instead of BFA) in 4-year institutions; a detailed discussion of private versus public school programs was outside the scope of investigation.
emotional life, and to broaden the social capacities of the individual that he may at once profit from and serve the greater world without. (p. 33)

To study dance was to study movement as a way of understanding oneself in relationship to the world. Significantly, H’Doubler’s approach captured the spirit of the ouroboros in part; her vision of dance education reflected the communitarian value of the public good knowledge/learning regime as well as the individual value of personal profit, without tying a college degree explicitly to a performance career. However, as Hagood (2008) discussed, H’Doubler’s emphasis on the value of an individual’s unadjudicated creative expression also meant she utterly rejected artistic trends and professional concert dance values in her pedagogy.

During the 1970s, physical education became more directly tied to athletics and sports science whereas dance developed as an art form that ultimately found a home in newly created colleges of fine arts (Bonbright, 2002). One such institution was the Bennington School of the Dance, founded in 1934 by Martha Hill and Mary Jo Shelley in the midst of the Great Depression and in the wake of Roosevelt’s New Deal legislation (Manning, 2016; Soares, 2009). At Bennington, Hill established the first BA degree in dance (Manning, 2016). In contrast to H’Doubler, Hill’s acknowledged curricular stamp was to confirm ballet and modern disciplines as the most noble and rigorous forms of physical training (Soares, 2009). Hagood (2008) stated Hill “turned the focus of college dance from amateur/liberal to professional/fine arts” (p. 11). Ultimately it was Hill’s philosophies that led to the rise of the professional model and drove the expansion of university dance programs in the United States (Risner, 2010).

Whereas H’Doubler might be considered a proponent of progressive education that promoted engaged citizenship, Hill advocated for the blurring of lines between academic and professional work. Specifically, she believed disciplined study led by masters in the field could
provide standards for dance education (Soares, 2009). Visionary choreographers such as Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm, and Charles Weidman, who were recruited as faculty for Hill’s programs, created original works on college campuses where their companies were in residence (Manning, 2016). These dancemakers, many of whom were women, often augmented the casts of premiere pieces with students from fledgling academic programs; this practice made the connection between a college dance major and professional work all the more explicit (Soares, 2012).

In opposition to Hill, H’Doubler and her acolytes warned early on that the development of civic virtues could never co-exist with “professionalism and competitive production which runs rampant in all professional studios and . . . threatens decadence to professional dancers” (Richardson, 1937, as cited in Hagood, 2008, p. 14). Specifically, H’Doubler (1921) perceived that Hill’s elevation of the visionary artist to master teacher would undermine the very function of a progressive education:

The student should be taught so that she may give expression to her own reactions, and not to those of another . . . [This second approach] is at best an imitative process, a type of work which does not grow from any creative germ. It is destructive to any stimulus for originality. It is mechanical, an application, not a creation. (p. 11)

H’Doubler believed a dance education should develop a student’s “understanding of movement’s expressive capacities and stimulate the creative use of movement in the expression of individually inspired art ideas” (H’Doubler, 1921, p. 11), whereas Hill’s approach at Bennington emphasized technical proficiency, formalism, and discipline as correctives to “amorphous self-expression” (Hagood, 2008, p. 25).

H’Doubler “snubbed the artistic importance and vitality of dance in the larger culture” (Hagood, 2008, p. 18) and rejected it as a vocational opportunity. Hill, on the other hand, helped
to cement practices that professionalized collegiate dance degrees, but did so at the expense of the valuable self-discovery methods that H’Doubler so championed. Ultimately, these two pioneers’ diverging paths reflect conflicting narratives about the primary purpose of college by pitting a liberal arts ethos in dance education against the professionalization of dance degrees. The same binary continues to be argued more broadly in the private good (politically neoliberal) versus public good (politically progressive) debates about higher education today.

By the 1980s, college dance curricula were focused primarily on students’ mastery of the codified ballet and modern techniques that arose from Hill’s programs (Smith-Autard, 2002). Part of this focus helped to establish dance more firmly as an arts-based discipline distinct from physical education programming and helped to define professional norms (Hagood, 2000). To emphasize that point, the vast majority of 4-year university dance programs offering major or minor courses of study are solidly housed in departments of fine and performing arts, up from 63% in the late 1980s to 81% in the early 2000s (Bonbright, 2002).

Significantly, though language around the study of dance in higher education is still pulled from H’Doubler’s progressive philosophies, Hill’s leadership and the influence of revolutionary modern dance masters are undeniably dominant in the curricular structures and pedagogical approaches of today’s collegiate dance programs (Risner, 2010; Soares, 2009). What has changed since this debate in dance education began is related to what more recent community-centered approaches, DEI initiatives, and a plurality of voices mean for both professional standards and the democratization of the field. Importantly, curricular structures that prepare students for the concert dance world are intrinsically tied to values within embodied
practices. Some of these practices continue to undermine dance’s role in educating for democracy and are explored in this dissertation’s three studies.

**Institutional and Labor Market Implications of the Professional Model**

Significantly, the professional model has an uneasy relationship with the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime as it relates to the labor market. On one hand, the model is designed to prepare students for professional performance careers. This accounts for the establishment and flourishing of collegiate dance programs to which creatively minded students have flocked (Risner, 2010). On the other hand, the model ambiguously reflects corporate values associated with the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime in two ways: (a) dance programs continue to maintain fringe status in the academy and can be perceived as expensive to run, and (b) the vast majority of graduates are unlikely to dance professionally (Montgomery & Robinson, 2003; Risner, 2010).

**Small but Expensive**

Despite their growth over the last several decades, dance programs still serve a relatively small number of students (L. Green, 2008; Risner, 2010). Programs also demand significant capital for their operation. The professional model prioritizes intense specialization, which includes extensive coursework in technique classes that also demand high contact hours between students and faculty who must be paid to teach. For example, a typical advanced ballet class is 90 minutes and is taught 5 days per week as opposed to other majors’ classes that may meet for as little as 2 hours per week. In standard professional programs, a ballet class would be offered and required for majors every semester. Due to their physicality, dance classes must also remain relatively small, and they require special facilities equipped with expensive features such as
sprung floors. Florida International University’s dance program was shuttered in 2008 and, according to the program director, the dean’s decision to eliminate the program “was solely based on numbers; how many students each program could teach in each class . . . dance generates the fewest because we teach bodies moving in space and cannot put 50 people in a technique class” (L. Green, 2008, p. 75).

In addition, choreography and performance require heavy production seasons that are accompanied by significant expenses such as costume construction, sound engineering, and lighting design (Risner, 2010). Risner (2010) also noted the “cost of faculty hires with prestigious professional credentials, high quality dance production, and noted guest artist residencies also requires substantial financial investment” (p. 125). Programs competing for students are pushed to deliver on the “ever-increasing, quantifiable, and measurable outcomes” listed above; however, Risner theorized that a “one-size-fits-all corporate mentality ignores the extensive resources and personnel that are needed to nurture and maintain quality programs” (p. 125).

The dominant narratives regarding the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime and disciplinary prestige would indicate dance programs are likely to be unpopular with administrative leaders who are preoccupied with the bottom line. L. Green (2008) noted there is evidence to back up this assumption, stating, “For universities under pressure to make swift cuts, the most expedient option is generally to eliminate their lowest enrollment programs – and for many schools, those include the arts” (p. 74). Risner (2010) further contended that a highly competitive environment has evolved alongside professionalized undergraduate programs and noted a scarcity of resources is “exacerbated by the scrutinizing corporate value systems of
postsecondary education” (p. 125). Yet, despite looming deficits, budget cuts, and an uncertain economic climate, many dance programs continue to exist and expand.

L. Green (2008) asserted dance programs and leadership that espouse an “entrepreneurial spirit” (p. 78) are more likely to survive by seeking out and tapping external resources through innovative fundraising strategies. For example, at Wayne State University, dance students raised over $7,000 “through ticket sales, silent auctions, raffles and community classes” (L. Green, 2008, p. 78). Notably, the issue of fundraising surfaces ethical questions related to segmentation addressed later in this dissertation. Why, for example, should dance students, who are already paying heavily for their college educations, bear the burden of fundraising to sustain their academic programs, whereas science and engineering students do not bear a similar responsibility? The same issue faces dance faculty whose practice-led scholarship is often marginalized and who are already overloaded with heavy work portfolios. Schulze-Cleven and Olson (2017) noted that “when reformers have sharpened incentives for organizational (and individual) ‘entrepreneurship,’ their reforms have also tended to weaken checks on capitalist rule by undermining the power and collective identities of both academic professionals and student populations” (p. 826). The outcome is that both faculty and students in marginalized disciplines hold a weaker bargaining position when advocating for resources.

The Labor Market

Regarding the career prospects of undergraduate dancers, the professional model, as it is related to the current labor market for emerging artists, is of great concern to dance educators (Risner, 2010; Schupp, 2017; Watson et al., 2012). Given the pedagogical and curricular emphasis associated with the professional model, it may be surprising that Montgomery and
Robinson (2003) found a low percentage of dance majors actually secure employment as professional dancers or choreographers. Though ballet and modern training may prepare dancers for repertory companies, Watson et al. (2012) pointed to greater numbers of graduate dancers vying for limited performing contracts as an issue for postsecondary dance programs.

In addition, Montgomery and Robinson (2003) found that in 1998, mean dance earnings were $16,150. Adjusted for inflation, that is equivalent to $25,542 in the year 2020. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019) stated that, currently, professional dancers and choreographers are typically paid an average wage of $18.68 per hour and their annual median income is $39,810; however, these numbers do not distinguish how much of this income is related to teaching as opposed to creative work alone.

To that point, many professional dancers and choreographers belong to the gig economy, which is notable for its lack of financial stability. Montgomery and Robinson (2003) found many dancers supplement their income with non-dance work and the “total annual dance and non-dance earnings for those in the field in 1998 averaged $26,329” (p. 68). Adjusting for inflation, that would equal $42,002 in the year 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the economic challenges associated with creative work as well, and the advocacy organization Americans for the Arts noted that as of May 4, 2020, two-thirds of the nation’s artists were unemployed (Americans for the Arts, 2020). These statistics not only reflect cultural assumptions about the value of the arts in the United States, they also render university arts programs a good target for neoliberal criticism. It is easy to imagine that Akers and Chingos (2016) would see a dance major as a bad investment for students and their families.
The cost of attending college continues to rise, and yet dance graduates are increasingly expected to teach and produce work as independent artists rather than as salaried employees of professional dance companies (Watson et al., 2012). Scholars have posited that instead of cultivating performance careers, the majority of dance students will pursue “relevant and meaningful careers in . . . studio, community, presenting organizations, dance technology, production, advocacy, and administrative realms” (Risner, 2010, p. 125; see also Montgomery & Robinson, 2003). For example, Montgomery and Robinson (2003) found that in 1998, 62% of dance graduates were involved in teaching. Subsequently, Risner (2010) critiqued the narrowness of the professional model for its failure to prepare students with a diversified dance related skill set that is more aligned with liberal arts outcomes—outcomes that can also be linked with Gardener’s (2004) key competencies for global citizenship. Problematically, students’ unrealistic expectations about the labor market lead to “limited views and misrepresentations of liberal arts degree programs in dance and dance education” (Risner, 2010, p. 126).

The rise of the professional model accounts for the establishment and flourishing of collegiate dance programs; the model has also served the labor market in no small measure by training artists in disciplines widely regarded as foundational to concert dance (Schupp, 2017). However, the issue remains that though the professional model has allowed dance programs to thrive within university settings, its most common curricular traditions tend to undermine a communitarian vision of the public good, silence a plurality of voices, and prevent democratization of the field. This leaves graduates ill-prepared for transformative work in performance and other arts-related careers beyond the academy’s walls.
Risner and Stinson (2010) stated “dance educators have a role to play in creating a better world for their students to enter, and further, that failure to think about the larger social world is problematic for our students, ourselves, and our art” (p. 3). To that end, the tides are turning within college dance programs. Many educators are actively seeking ways to decolonize the curriculum and to embrace liberatory pedagogies that speak to the unity of the ouroboros. For example, Shapiro (2008) noted “globalization is creating new forms of dance expression that join the modern to the traditional, the urban to the indigenous and the secular to the spiritual” (p. xii). Fitzgerald (2017) argued that community-centered practices in dance technique classes that reflect the value of diversity are “essential in fostering the growth of a democratic community [and] can contribute to our students’ growth as responsible citizens who have a deep concern for the welfare of other individuals” (p. 7).
CHAPTER FIVE
RATIONALE FOR STUDIES

More empirical research is needed to determine where fine and performing arts disciplines are situated in the larger landscape of higher education as it relates to academic capitalist forces, learning for democracy, and the vision of the ouroboros. Moreover, an exploration of this topic is deeply personal and has implications for the ways in which my students, my colleagues, and I conceptualize the role of the artist in our institutions of higher learning, as well as in society more broadly. This three-study dissertation was designed to train the academic capitalist lens narrowly on the culture of specific dance programs to determine how they survive or thrive in relationship to neoliberal influences. In this case, the three-study model was ideal as it allowed for the exploration of multiple research questions and supported multiple modalities of knowledge generation that are unified in an aesthetic whole. This is significant because literature has yet to operationalize the conceptual framework of academic capitalism, explicitly and creatively, in the context of arts education programs that straddle both training for professional work and the critical study of humans’ lived experiences within a democratic society (Nur Amin, 2016).

To that end, I designed study I to look broadly at a group of 12 BA dance programs and study II to narrow the focus to faculty from five of the sampled programs that demonstrate an intentional balance of learning for professional work and learning for democracy. I used study III to narrow the focus even further by creating a dance film portrait of one program that captures
the spirit of the ouroboros given its particular synthesis of public messaging and faculty perceptions on academic capitalist forces explored in study II.

Together, through the three studies in this project, I was able to investigate evidence of the ouroboros as an emerging force in dance education—a force that might illuminate possibilities for other academic disciplines that straddle learning for professional work and learning for democracy. In order to determine how BA programs are both making and unmaking the professional dance world, I broadly explored several concepts/areas: (a) the professional model as an example of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime within dance education, (b) academic capitalist forces that faculty perceive to undermine an expanded vision for dance education and affect work life, and (c) the diversification of dance programs via the centering of non-Western movement practices as resistance to academic capitalism. I designed each study to look discreetly into ways in which the paradox of the ouroboros is reflected in the ambiguity, contradictions, and messiness of dance program operations. The following paragraphs detail further how these studies are linked.

**Study I - “Shaking it” Into Awareness: College Dance and Academic Capitalism**

To begin, I designed study I to investigate the ways in which dance programs adhere to and challenge the professional model of dance education by looking at curricular emphasis and representation. Though the professional model has furthered the expansion of dance programs within university settings, its most common curricular structures undermine democratization of the field. Common curricular traditions are reflected in stories II and III presented in the opening autobiography of this document. Furthermore, the professional model has set up an uneasy relationship between dance in higher education and teaching in private studios, which limits
students’ ability to diversify their careers or to supplement creative work with higher-paying teaching positions upon graduation (Risner, 2010). This leaves graduates underprepared for professional work and is a scenario again reflected in this document’s opening portrait. Story I demonstrated not only the failure of a 21-year-old dance student to fully grasp the value of a college dance education, it also highlighted the failure of a BA dance program to open that same 21-year-old’s eyes to a professional dance life beyond performance.

Alternately, I also used study I to look at dance program marketing materials that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, as many educators are actively seeking ways to reframe curriculum and promote liberatory pedagogies that are in line with the vision of the ouroboros. Specifically, I considered the recognition among scholars (Kerr-Berry, 2010, 2016; Nur Amin, 2016; Risner, 2010; Risner & Stinson, 2010; Schupp, 2017) that dance as an academic discipline must address learning for democracy as a public good via equity and inclusion. For example, West (2005) argued that as “powerbrokers,” dance educators must responsibly reshape “content and form in the dance classroom, as well as critical conversations about the look, feel, contour, context, and appropriateness of black and brown bodies in the application of dance technique and theory” (p. 66).

Programs demonstrate varying degrees of intentionality when it comes to promoting the values, norms, and expectations associated with traditional concert dance work versus messaging that supports the remaking of the professional dance landscape. These signals are co-located within texts and images and also appear as mixed or contradictory messages regarding the outcomes of program curricula when investigated at the course description level. The study was therefore necessary to help illuminate the ways in which dance programs embrace the ouroboros
in their responses to the pressures of academic capitalism.

**Study II - College Dance Faculty Perceptions of Academic Capitalism**

Building on knowledge generated by study I, I designed study II to examine faculty perceptions of academic capitalism in programs that are demonstrably intentional about communicating the value of both learning for professional work and learning for democracy. Literature shows the traditional faculty model associated with research specialization, teaching, and service is undergoing a distinct transformation (Jaeger & Thornton, 2005; Kezar & Maxey, 2016; Valsan & Sproule, 2008). In today’s colleges and universities, the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime is now evident in the norms and expectations that characterize faculty life. Given faculty’s roles in program development, teaching, and research, it is useful to explore academic capitalism from the faculty’s perspective.

This subject is particularly important when looking at disciplines in the arts and humanities that purport to teach the development of civic virtues. The polarization of research and instruction within the prestige economy reflects values that result in faculty’s dramatically shifting labor conditions, especially in low-resource units; notably, Rosinger et al. (2016) found stratification and segmentation have a disproportionate impact on humanities disciplines. Furthermore, tightening budgets and an increased dependence on contingent labor serve to deprofessionalize faculty by upending workloads with little financial benefit (Kezar & Maxey, 2016; Schulze-Cleven & Olsen, 2017). Stories III and IV from the opening portrait highlighted my personal experiences in this realm. Ultimately, the burdens of faculty life and attitudes about these burdens begin to reflect a ferment of fear and instability. However, Slaughter (2014)
identified this feature of academic capitalism as an under investigated area of higher education scholarship.

Study III - The Seeing Place: An Embodied Portrait of a Dance Program

I used study III to build on the traditional qualitative methods (qualitative content analysis [QCA] and interpretive phenomenological analysis [IPA]) presented in studies I and II. Specifically, I attempted to unify these approaches via critical scholarship rooted in feminist epistemology. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) described current developments in qualitative methods that transparently embrace notions of subjectivity, perspective, reflexivity, and messy texts as valuable elements of social science scholarship; portraiture is emblematic of this form of rigor. As Dixson et al. (2011) acknowledged, portraiture draws from critical and feminist epistemologies in order to marry aesthetics and empiricism within both the research process and the products that its processes produce.

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) contended that this blurring of boundaries allows portraitists to “record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions – their authority, knowledge, and wisdom” (p. xv). Specifically, I intended for study III to advance portraiture as a qualitative research method by linking it to dance as an embodied practice. I would also argue that portraiture provided me with the opportunity to extend my scholarly exploration of race (related in story II in the opening to this dissertation) via my first language: movement. In this case, I used dance film to profile a single BA dance program operating in a complex relationship with academic capitalism.
Together, all three studies are valuable because they illuminate dance as an underrepresented area of study in higher education scholarship; moreover, the studies focus on human capital narratives emphasizing the role of the individual, the linking of postsecondary education to private benefits, and education for the labor market in the new global economy (Cantwell & Kauppinen, 2014, p. 6). In addition, these studies center dance faculty experiences, which are at the heart of program design, delivery, and revision. Last, studies I and II are unified in study III. Study III is based on my expertise and training as a dancemaker as outlined in the paper’s first story and advances portraiture as a research method that embraces embodied practices as important and underutilized ways of knowing. In this regard, the metaphorical body politic is represented literally in corporeal form as the dancing political body.
CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH DESIGN AND LIMITATIONS

Research Design

I designed this project to explore academic capitalism in the context of collegiate dance education and drew on a qualitative approach so as to capture the richness and complexity of humans’ lived experiences more fully (Geertz, 1973; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The specific research objectives for this project included the following: (a) to provide insights regarding the values, norms, and expectations associated with the professional model; (b) to investigate dance faculty’s relationship to academic capitalism via perceptions of program culture; (c) to illuminate the professional model’s relationship to current labor market conditions for dance program graduates; (d) to explore dance’s relationship to learning for democracy as a public good; and (e) to advance portraiture as a research method by linking its processes to movement/choreography and dance film.

Qualitative research acknowledges the scholar’s positionality/spatiality as a mitigating factor in the research phenomenon, particularly as salient social identities influence various aspects of the investigatory process. It must be noted, given my identity as a White woman, that it was necessary to reckon with “seen, unseen, and unforeseen dangers” in the practice of my inquiry (Milner, 2007, p. 394). To apply critical subjectivity (Creswell, 2014) as a standard, I engaged with Milner’s (2007) framework of researcher racial and cultural positionality, which outlines the following interrelated features as a guide to help “researchers serious about interpreting and representing people and communities of color in ways that honor those
communities and in ways that maintain their integrity” (p. 397). The framework includes the following, which I address within the research designs of the individual studies: (a) researching the self, (b) researching the self in relation to others, (c) engaged reflection and representation, and (d) shifting from self to system (Milner, 2007).

Furthermore, credibility in qualitative scholarship supports the demonstrable rigor of the research process and establishes a path by which others can observe how the research phenomenon was explored (Creswell, 2013; Jones et al., 2014; Tracy, 2010). Credibility is achieved via the “trustworthiness, verisimilitude, and plausibility of the research findings,” which depend on “thick description, triangulation or crystallization, multivocality and partiality” (Tracy, 2010, pp. 842–843). To achieve credibility, I designed this three-study dissertation explicitly for triangulation in that each study drew on rich and varied sources that supported one another. All three studies also depended on self-reflexivity (a research journal/memos) and peer debriefing with an experienced research mentor whose social identities differ from my own, and who provided alternate perspectives on the work (Creswell, 2013).

As stated previously, the three-study dissertation model served the research phenomenon investigated here as it enabled me to engage several complementary approaches to knowledge generation. In addition, the studies provide a scaled and increasingly narrow focus on academic capitalism’s relationship to dance education and the final study ends with an empowered stance of resistance. Study I offers the widest angle by looking at 12 college dance programs that are navigating a balance between the traditional professional model and an expanded vision of dance education tied to learning for democracy. Study II zooms in to focus on faculty at five institutions so as to add human perspectives to units of analysis. Finally, study III spotlights one
program with a creative and embodied portrayal of all the complexity and contradictions inherently associated with collegiate dance in the image of the ouroboros.

**Limitations**

For the sake of consistency in comparisons, this dissertation involved an exclusive focus on BA dance degrees because these programs tend to be explicitly tied to the liberal arts and humanities, which themselves sit in tension with the vision of the ouroboros—education for both the labor market and for participation in a diverse democracy. BA students enter collegiate dance programs with a variety of formative dance experiences and a plurality of career goals that often lead to a double major. Double majors in dance are frequently accommodated by the BA, which tends to require fewer credit hours than the BFA. Thus, although the professional model guides the structure of many BA dance programs, the nature of the degree suggests a broader education that has the capacity to lead a student to multiple career paths upon graduation.

On the other hand, BFA and conservatory programs are intended to train elite artists who already possess advanced dance skills (in multiple movement languages, including ballet and modern) upon entering college. These students are largely committed to pursuing professional performance/choreography careers and are less likely to double major due to the extensive credit hours devoted to artmaking demanded within the BFA degree. Despite being identified wholly with professional development, what is unknown is how leaders of BFA programs are wrestling with diversity, equity, and inclusion as a public good.

Though program websites and faculty roles reflect significant crossover between degrees, in choosing not to include BS and BFA programs in this dissertation, I also eliminated a conversation on intra-disciplinary segmentation related to the professional prestige of a particular
degree. This choice was in line with my purposeful criterion sampling and search for goodness. 
It was further intended to drive attention toward the presence of the ouroboros in BA dance programs and the role of segmentation more broadly. Subsequently, there is an opportunity for further research into the distinctions between dance degrees at a granular level. Investigations of this nature are likely to shed light on other disciplines that straddle liberal arts and utilitarian functions.

The next sections, included as three distinct studies, provide more detail regarding the research questions introduced above and highlight the ontological and epistemological considerations driving the inquiry. Further, each study’s methods are outlined with subsequent site selections and sampling strategies. Data collection and analysis protocols are addressed, as are issues related to credibility, trustworthiness, and authenticity. Findings are presented and discussions of implications for practice and future scholarship are also included.
CHAPTER SEVEN

STUDY I

“SHAKING IT” INTO AWARENESS: ACADEMIC CAPITALISM AND COLLEGE DANCE

Introduction and Overview

Scene 1: A white seagull flies gracefully through a grey sky, undulating its wings to the sound of a slowly repeating beat. The image shifts to a closeup of a Black dancer’s hand slowly unfurling as a visual echo of the bird’s wing.

Scene 2: We see a young Black woman, naked from the waist up with her back to the camera. She has a tattoo across her cervical spine that reads “14:2” perhaps in reference to the bible verse found in the gospel of John, “in my father’s house there are many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you (NIV)?” The image of the dancer’s bare back conjures images of the Black body being flogged and perhaps reclaims that image in a new context. The dancer’s hair is styled in locs - wrapped and piled loosely on her head - and she wears gold hoop earrings and a ring on her left hand. She gracefully extends her arms in a classical ballet port de bras evocative of a 4th position allongé as we hear the words, “Dance is the fist, with which I fight the sickening ignorance of prejudice” (2:06).

Scene 3: Three women dancers of color in various shades of simple beige and brown costuming move through space using sustained and floating movements interspersed with percussive gestures that increase with speed and intensity. While the dancers do not make eye contact with each other, there is a clear symbiosis between them – a fluid unity of purpose – and
over the lilting music we hear, “The Black female body endures a love hate relationship to all
the cultures to which she belongs and yet she is not a victim” (2:20). The paradoxes of freedom
and its absence are reflected in the dancers’ bodies and the words of Black dance matriarchs
such as Pearl Primus and Brenda Dixon Gottschild, articulating a lineage of movement as self-
generated power and resistance.

My above description of Freedom Dances, the dance film conceived and co-created by
student dancers featured on the Duke University Dance Program’s website
(https://danceprogram.duke.edu/news/courtney-liu-freedom-dances), speaks directly to the
purpose of this study, which was to shed light on how dance programs balance the competing
purposes of higher education as represented by the ouroboros. Specifically, I explored BA dance
programs’ websites in order to illuminate values associated with the professional model and its
relationship to diversity and equity as part of the remaking of the labor market (Montgomery &
Robinson, 2003; Watson et al., 2012). Two primary questions about program values guided the
study and demonstrated the breadth of materials that can be accessed online: (a) What do
websites communicate about dance programs’ commitment to the professional model? and (b)
How do dance programs support additional messages about learning for democracy in terms of
diversity, equity, and inclusion?

These questions foreground discipline-specific values around employability that dance
programs communicate to various audiences. Because the rationale for this endeavor was
partially rooted in exploring paradox, each question took on a distinct aspect of the ouroboros.
The first question was intended to sus out the ways in which dance programs train students for
professional work in traditional concert dance settings in the United States—a preservation of
systems that are already in place. The second question related to how programs are redefining professional work through expanded curricular approaches—a deconstruction of those venerated and well-established systems. In advance of a detailed analysis, the following synthesis of literature provides the context for the study in two ways. To begin, I address the ways in which higher education scholarship focuses on websites to provide semiotic evidence of marketization within the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime. I then explore values tied to dance curricula that reflect the professional model.

**Academic Capitalism and Institutional Websites**

Related to the ways in which members of collegiate dance programs both embrace and resist academic capitalism are communication practices common to commercial enterprises. A typical theme in higher education scholarship is how marketization has led to a redefining of the value of roles and relationships in the academy (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). For example, promotional materials for higher education regularly include the discourse of corporate advertising, which relies on terms such as “clients,” “markets,” “strategic plans,” and “mission statements” (T. Zhang, 2018, p. 65). These lexical choices appear on college websites and ultimately shift the rhetoric from simply providing information about university programs to selling a college education as a product (T. Zhang, 2018). The term marketization in relationship to higher education emerged as early as 1993 with Fairclough’s (1993) study that highlighted the increasing salience of promotional texts and has been furthered by additional scholars (Cantwell & Kauppinen, 2014; Rhoades, 2014; Rhoades & Slaughter, 1997; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997).

As Tomlinson (2018) noted, marketization transforms students into “consumers,” a status that fits neatly into the neoliberal argument that higher education is a private good. Sophisticated
marketing, advertising, branding, and mass media campaigns also reflect competition for students and thus tuition dollars (Saichaie & Morphew, 2014). Ultimately, the capital investment in website construction and maintenance, to the tune of $3 million annually, indicates institutions are deeply invested in developing strategically crafted messages that will attract student customers to their academic programs (Saichaie & Morphew, 2014).

Ruffalo Noel Levitz and OmniUpdate’s (2018) trend report emphasized that “the college website is everything” and that these sites “continue to be the top focal point” (p. 3) of student searches during the college choice process. Yet, as scholars have noted, little research addresses how colleges and universities are presented on websites (LePeau et al., 2018; Saichaie & Morphew, 2014; Wilson et al., 2012; T. Zhang, 2018; Y. Q. Zhang & O’Halloran, 2012). Moreover, what is known has more often than not been produced by advertising and higher education consulting firms rather than higher education scholars (Saichaie & Morphew, 2014). Ruffalo Noel Levitz and OmniUpdate (2018) is one such organization, touting itself as the “leading provider of higher education enrollment, student success, and fundraising solutions” (p. 24). One thing that remains unclear is whether schools presenting structural diversity on their websites are reflecting institutional realities around racial equity (LePeau et al., 2018; Lewin-Jones, 2019; Wang & Sun, 2021). Even more opaque is how specific disciplines within higher education, particularly those on the margins such as dance, communicate their multiple purposes to an external audience.

Academic capitalism scholarship on websites tends to focus on advertising and its profound impacts in relationship to the marketization of the academy. However, I would argue that institutional websites, especially when explored at the program level, offer insights into
paradoxical values associated with the ouroboros. These are values that support the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime and learning as a private good, as well as values that support learning for democracy as part of the public good knowledge/learning regime. I explore the conflicting nature of these values as they relate to the professional model in the next section. Importantly, curricular structures that prepare students for the concert dance world are intrinsically tied to values within embodied practices (Nur Amin, 2016). Many of these structures continue to undermine dance’s role in educating for democracy as a number of scholars have noted (Kerr-Berry, 2010; Nur Amin, 2016; Risner, 2010; Risner & Stinson, 2010; Schupp, 2017).

Dance Curricula and Values Associated With Embodied Practice

Stewart (2017) reflected on how institutions’ historical enforcement of discipline and normative judgements produces “docile student bodies” (p. 1042) that are cooperative with a White supremacist status quo. Interestingly, this training of “docile bodies” is perhaps even more evident in a dance context. One issue with the professional model and its failure to uphold democratic ideals is that, as H’Doubler feared, traditional training in ballet and modern disciplines often emphasizes silent conformity rather than offering students the opportunity to co-create or to critique knowledge (Risner & Barr, 2015; Stinson, 2005; Wilkinson, 2019). J. Green (2002), in fact, used a similar Foucauldian analysis to Stewart’s (2017) to examine surveillance used as a technique to train “docile bodies created to produce an efficiency, not only of movement, but also, a normalization and standardization of behavior in dance classes” (p. 3).

Ross (2002) contended that dance training, for women specifically, regularly disciplines the very bodies it sets in motion, a process that reflects yet another paradox. In applied technique
courses, which require the physical repetition of complex movement combinations, students are generally expected to stay on task, to avoid discussion, and to leave personal needs “outside the door so that they may put all their energy into doing what they are told” (Stinson, 2005, p. 53). The result is, as Ross (2002) noted, “liberation with strict limits [and] physical freedoms with social constraints” (p. 115). Moreover, as many scholars have acknowledged (Barr, 2009; Rimmer, 2013; Stanton, 2011), students themselves “associate rigor with traditionally structured classes, in which the rules of success are clearly defined” (Fitzgerald, 2017, p. 6)\(^1\).

In another nod to Stewart (2017), dance curricula within the professional model do not necessarily support learning for democracy when it comes to racial equity and access; courses regularly reinforce professional norms that marginalize non-White movement disciplines (McCarthy-Brown, 2014). Primarily it must be acknowledged that the professional model emphasizes a White Western canon that is shaped by the values of White Western thinkers as Hill’s words illustrate:

> Good dance is good dance, therefore you don’t water it down for education. You teach the top of music for music—Bach, Beethoven, Mozart . . . and so in dance . . . we had to give [students] a glimpse into the best in the world. (Rizzuto, 2014, p. 72)

The “best in the world” to which Hill referred were the White artists retained at Bennington who defined the modern era in dancemaking. Despite the fusion of dance styles that has exploded in popular media across multiple platforms, my own professional experience and that of graduating students shows that many of the most recognizable contemporary dance companies providing the most stable and highest paying jobs within U.S. concert dance generally still require dancers who

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\(^1\) Some scholars have begun to challenge earlier feminist writing on the oppressive nature of ballet and classical modern training. For a more detailed discussion of the liberatory possibilities of these techniques see McRobbie (1997), Banes (1998), and Fisher (2007).
are exceptionally skilled in ballet, modern, and post-modern styles. Often, the implication is that to dance professionally, one must be extensively trained in Eurocentric ways of moving.

McCarthy-Brown’s (2014) study supports the contention that college programs continue to preserve professional standards that were established in the 1930s and that uphold White Western aesthetics. McCarthy-Brown, who looked at over the mission statements of 100 dance programs and focused on those with a clear commitment to diversity, found that many institutions were still “bound by curricular requirements to uphold Eurocentric programming” (p. 126). In two of three non-conservatory style departments investigated on a deeper level, degree requirements were structured via course credit distribution so as to privilege Western-based dance forms like ballet and modern. McCarthy-Brown argued that this antiquated system prevents non-Western dance languages from attaining academic legitimacy in collegiate programs.

I designed this study to embrace a transitional moment in dance education, extend McCarthy-Brown’s (2014) scholarship, and look at BA program websites for evidence of shifting values that reflect a linkage of professional values with DEI initiatives. The two questions guiding this investigation were: (a) What do websites communicate about dance programs’ commitment to the professional model? and (b) How do dance programs support additional messages about learning for democracy in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Research Methods/Modes of Inquiry

This study was crafted to interrogate a common narrative in academic capitalism scholarship that assumes institutional websites exist primarily as commercial discourse and serve as evidence of the broader phenomenon of marketization. In fact, websites might also be viewed
as archeological material in a kind of living stratum; natural scientists bore into the earth’s onion-like layers to reveal the planet’s geological history in the chemical compounds of sedimentary rock. I was not preoccupied with temporal rendering as is often the case with geology; however, an ability to sample program websites at various “depths” speaks to both the vast amount of material available via online platforms as well as the various audiences for which it is intended. For example, at the surface level, a prospective student involved in the college choice process might visit a dance program’s landing page, scroll through images and videos of past performances, and peruse faculty bios. At a deeper level, a current dance major might be more likely to access course descriptions for the purposes of registration or refer to an online student handbook to confirm a policy related to casting. Although few prospective students are likely to drill into program elements such as credit hours tied to specific dance disciplines, assessing the totality of the materials with a geological metaphor in mind helped me to determine whether the messages conveyed on the most visible surface-level web pages were born out in the deeper, more embedded curricular structures that McCarthy-Brown (2014) analyzed.

Inquiry Paradigm

I knew early on in planning for this dissertation that I would be investing deeply in a qualitative research paradigm informed by interpretivism, which supports my general ontological assumptions. As Gray (2013) contended, scientific laws, or natural reality, differ from social reality and therefore require different kinds of investigation. Crotty (1998) stated, “Whereas our interest in the natural world focuses on more abstract phenomena, that is, those exhibiting quantifiable, empirical regularities,” research exploring the social world “tends to focus on exactly those aspects that are unique, individual and qualitative” (p. 68). Based on the
acknowledgment that data related to social phenomena can be understood in multiple ways, I used an interpretivist approach to look for a “culturally derived and historically situated” understanding of the social lifeworld (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). At the macro level, interpretivists recognize that “meaning emerges through interaction and is not standardized from place to place or person to person” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 31); this was an important touchstone as I began designing the study.

Research Approach

Although I initially considered using critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the method for this study, by the Fall of 2020 I had selected qualitative content analysis (QCA) as it provides abundant guidance for systematically reducing data of a symbolic nature, such as texts, photos, and video, via a process that assigns “successive parts of the material to the categories of a coding frame” (Schreier, 2014, p. 170). Key to the approach is that every aspect of data relevant to the research questions is examined through a sequence of prescribed steps. Within this iterative process, meaning goes beyond specifics and reaches a level of abstraction that offers a sense of how different units of analysis can be compared and are related to each other. As Mayring (2000) emphasized, I analyzed both the manifest and latent content of material in a process that is detailed further in the next sections. QCA was additionally appealing as it allows for flexibility and offers the opportunity to combine “varying portions of concept-driven and data-driven categories within any one coding frame” so as to ensure the coding frame is “matched to the material” (Schreier, 2014, p. 171). This feature of QCA was particularly important for this study.
Sampling Strategy and Data Sources

Initial efforts at identifying institutions to investigate for this study involved snowball sampling. Twenty years of my own professional experience and contacts in the field equipped me with some of this knowledge, so tapping into other expert professionals’ impressions was a way for me to address my own blind spots and to check my biases as part of a search for goodness (Jones et al., 2014). In January 2021, I sent an email soliciting the names of BA programs to 12 faculty and dance professionals from around the country (See Appendix A). Of these emails, seven went to artistic directors or artistic associates affiliated with notable professional dance companies and five went to higher education faculty. Racial diversity and some gender diversity were represented among this initial group as evidenced in Table 1.

Table 1. Professional and Dance Faculty Recommenders for Studies I and II.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dance Program Director (SK)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Faculty (DR)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Director (EV)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Latinx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Director (JN)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Faculty/Artistic Associate (GS)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Faculty (SF)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Associate (MG)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Latinx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Director (VR)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Latinx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Director (KB)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic Director (VW)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Faculty (KS)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Faculty (JR)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The email was forwarded by the original recipients to multiple unknown parties beyond my initial communication and, in total, by late February 2021 I had received a list of 33
institutions that were perceived to fit my criterion of “reputable BA in dance programs producing diverse dance artists skilled in multiple movement vernaculars (including and beyond classical ballet/modern) that are valued in concert/commercial dance.” I cross-referenced these institutions with program descriptions on the website danceparent101.com, which named approximately 545 institutions in the United States as having dance programs as of early 2020. At least 227 of the programs on danceparent101.com are listed as offering BA degrees. Following this cross-check, I compared my original list of recommended programs to the NASD member institutions. NASD is the primary accrediting agency for higher education dance programs, and it is important that I intentionally did not only sample NASD accredited institutions in order to cast as wide a net as possible.

I wanted to capture data on a range of BA programs in an attempt to confirm the speculation that regardless of institutional type, size, geographical location, and degrees granted, leaders of dance programs wrestle both with questions related to professional preparation and questions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As an example regarding geography, I was keen to sample programs that are proximate to major hubs for professional dance work. For instance, New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Las Vegas are historically known to have thriving arts communities that support vast networks of professional dance artists. On the other hand, I was also interested in looking at programs that are geographically remote from urban environments that continue to engage meaningfully with the professional dance world.

After assembling the list of 33 recommended dance programs, I explored each program’s website to determine a variety of characteristics, including (a) institutional type based on Carnegie classification, (b) degree(s) offered, (c) curricular emphasis, (d) geographical location,
(e) NASD accreditation status, (f) whether an audition to the program is required, and (g) whether imagery and messaging spoke to a vision of the ouroboros. By late March 2021 I had culled 12 programs from the original list of 33 for more intense scrutiny; my decisions were based on a desire to maintain as diverse a group as possible (See Table 2).

Table 2. Characteristics of Sampled Institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Curricular emphasis</th>
<th>Degrees offered</th>
<th>Accreditation</th>
<th>Audition required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnard College</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>No curricular emphasis</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brenau University</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>Ballet/Modern/Jazz&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke University</td>
<td>Private R1</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>No curricular emphasis</td>
<td>BA/MFA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson C. Smith University</td>
<td>HBCU</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>Ballet/Modern/African</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyola University Marymount</td>
<td>Private/Jesuit</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Ballet/Modern</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montclair State University</td>
<td>Public R2</td>
<td>NJ</td>
<td>Dance education</td>
<td>BA/BFA/MFA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slippery Rock University</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>BA/BFA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana</td>
<td>Public R1</td>
<td>IL</td>
<td>No curricular emphasis</td>
<td>BA/BFA/MFA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Iowa</td>
<td>Public R1</td>
<td>IA</td>
<td>Ballet/Contemporary</td>
<td>BA/BFA/MFA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nevada, Las Vegas</td>
<td>Public R1</td>
<td>NV</td>
<td>Production</td>
<td>BA/BFA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of San Francisco</td>
<td>Private/Jesuit</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Social justice</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas State University</td>
<td>Public R2</td>
<td>TX</td>
<td>No curricular emphasis</td>
<td>BA/BFA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Curricular emphasis reflects the division of credit hours assigned to program elements. In the tradition of the professional model, most institutions emphasize embodied practices. Exceptions to the professional model include Montclair State University, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the University of San Francisco whose programs encourage professional tracks distinct from performance and choreography. Where “No curricular emphasis” is noted, programs allow students to choose which dance disciplines to pursue from a menu of Western and non-Western options.

<sup>a</sup> Jazz is considered a non-Western movement practice; however, some scholars argue that much of the jazz dance we see today has been shaped by Whiteness so that the African roots of jazz have been oppressed and obscured. For further reading on jazz dance, see Thomas (2019).
I prioritized programs that offered a wealth of online content in this stage of purposeful criterion sampling. I drew units of analysis for the study from material that was readily available via the schools’ program websites and included the following: program mission/vision statements, other textual program descriptions, curricular requirements, course descriptions, program images/video, faculty lists/demographics, guest artist lists, and additional program projects.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis for this study began in late March 2021 and concluded in mid-May 2021. Importantly, Renz et al. (2018) asserted QCA allows the researcher to be “close” (p. 825) to the data. Further, QCA is notably reliable as the researcher follows systematic procedures and is also considered “unobtrusive as it does not require direct interaction with study participants for analysis” (Renz et al., 2018, p. 825). Data analysis in this case involved a series of steps outlined by Schreier (2014) as follows: “1) building a coding frame, 2) segmentation, 3) trial coding, 4) evaluating and modifying the coding frame, and 5) main analysis” (pp. 174–175). Schreier also contended that the coding frame, “which is at the heart of the method” (p. 175), must be constructed through a series of additional steps that include (a) structuring and generating categories, (b) defining categories, and (c) revising and expanding the frame.

For the first steps, I created two main unidimensional and non-hierarchical categories that were concept-driven in order to analyze mission statements, imagery, and other website texts: (a) BA dance programs’ emphasis on career preparation, and (b) BA dance programs’ emphasis on the diversification of dance practices in service to the public good. As I moved into steps 3–5, I primarily employed an inductive and data-driven strategy, as Elo and Kyngäs (2008) noted that “inductive content analysis is used in cases where there are no previous studies dealing with the
phenomenon or when it is fragmented” (p. 107). Codes expanded and collapsed as the inductive approach allowed for the observation of particular instances that were then combined into a “larger whole or general statement” (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p. 109); thus, I moved from the specific to the general. As an example of how I operationalized this process, the next few paragraphs outline how I wrestled with the specific data analysis of visual imagery.

Dance engages the visual as part of the sensory input a viewer uses to evaluate the aesthetic experience; subsequently, the visual imagery dance programs present on their websites supports values associated with curricular emphasis and pedagogy. For example, Saichaie and Morphew (2014) noted “students associate academic quality with traditional campus architecture and landscape features, such as large open quads. These types of images are linked with notions of legitimacy and credibility, such as institutional longevity and traditions” (p. 505). In a similar way, an image that captures a distinct moment from Martha Graham’s masterwork “Night Journey” (See Figure 2) might convey a reverence for a classical form synonymous with the professional model’s assumed rigor.

Figure 2. Example of Classical Modern Dance Performance.

Source: (The Chorus from Night Journey by Martha Graham, 1947 performed by unknown Montclair State University dancers, https://www.montclair.edu/theatre-and-dance/be-heard/).
For this study, I selected at least three photographs from each dance program. I then wrote brief descriptions of each photograph, concentrating on the following questions (See Appendix B) for guidance: (a) What dance techniques are represented? (b) What technical proficiency is evident? and (c) Whose bodies are featured? Simultaneously, I used a strategy that is common in dance observation, informally referenced as the “eye see, mind see” method. When viewing a performance, one might first concentrate on what the eye sees: a soloist versus an ensemble of performers, fast-paced percussive movement versus slow sustained gestures, bright colored costumes versus a muted palette. These visual cues convey messages about a dancework’s theme or the choreographer’s intent; however, what the “mind sees” is commonly expected to require a degree of interpretation on the part of the viewer. In the case of choreography, what the mind sees might be represented as a double hermeneutic—the performing artist interprets the choreographer’s intention and the viewer of the dancework then interprets what is communicated by the performing artist. In analysis, Saldaña (2016) would refer to eye-seeing as descriptive coding or “cataloguing a detailed inventory of contents” (p. 57), whereas mind-seeing involves affective coding to “investigate subjective qualities of human experience (e.g., emotions, values, conflicts, judgements)” (p. 124) by directly acknowledging and naming those experiences.

In consultation with my faculty mentor, I realized I would need to employ a distinct process that included recognition of both eye-seeing and mind-seeing for my coding of visual imagery. Ultimately, I used the prefix “V” to indicate eye see data such as “woman’s body,” “bare feet,” “racial diversity,” and “unbound hair.” I used the prefix “A” to indicate mind see data such as “intimacy,” “conflict,” “cooperation,” and “refinement,” thereby reflecting my
interpretation of the affective aspects of the photographic imagery. According to Saldaña (2016), “Repeated viewings and analytic memo writing about visual data,” both of which I engaged in, are most appropriate to qualitative research paradigms “because they permit detailed yet selective attention to the elements, nuances, and complexities of visual imagery, and a broader interpretation of the compositional totality of the work” (p. 60).

**Limitations**

I designed this study to explore semiotic evidence of marketization as well as divergent trends in the development of dance curriculum. Fully analyzed linkages between the two of these elements via distinct sets of influences, primarily local versus field level conditions, were outside the scope of the investigation but might be significant factors in how individual dance programs develop. In other words, faculty/student composition, institutional culture, and geopolitical environments are likely to influence decision-making about program operations. Though I incorporate these considerations more robustly in study III’s artistic rendering, they remain areas that warrant future study, as does the investigation of how dance programs’ websites are situated within the larger ecology of institutional websites.

Another limitation of this study is that I designed it to specifically address the *designed* curriculum rather than the *enacted* curriculum. Again, study II is meant to address that particular limitation, but in the narrow realm of faculty voices rather than with the addition of students and administrators as study participants. My choice to narrowly focus on dance websites, rather than the contextual factors leading to their design, was expressly intended to expand academic capitalist literature on marketization and to provide a point of departure for studies II and III.
Considerations for Trustworthiness

In rendering my research process for study I, what seems most salient is to revisit the concept of “spatiality,” which required significant reflection and was introduced in the first part of this dissertation. I am a White woman whose training in classical disciplines manifests in visceral responses to imagery that goes against the grain of this aesthetic. For example, if I saw a photo that indicated ballet being poorly performed, in what I consider to be my expert opinion, I intuitively questioned the quality of the instruction/curriculum. Also, I needed to fully acknowledge my Whiteness when I viewed imagery related to dance styles that lie outside of my embodied experience.

Added to this challenge in data analysis was the process of distinguishing or artificially ascribing gender to certain bodies in the images presented. It was useful in terms of acknowledging representation to use shorthand here. Meaning, when I saw an image of a figure with fair skin, long blond hair in a ponytail, and wearing makeup and what would traditionally be considered women’s costuming, I noted this figure as a White woman. However, in acknowledging the complexity of race and gender as social constructs, it felt superficial to describe various figures in the images in this way. Further, with the degree to which race and gender are tied to identity, I also wondered about my power in choosing what to ascribe to whom. Based on name and image, is it actually possible for me to decide (lacking pronoun markers) someone’s gender and race/ethnicity? If “spatiality” represents a dance in relationship to various positions, my movement related to visual imagery would convey tension, dissonance, and a sense of being unresolved.
Peer debriefing sessions with my mentor and self-reflection in the form of journals and memos that provided an audit trail of research activities were crucial to the unfolding process of inquiry in this case. Tracy’s (2010) criteria for excellence in qualitative research informed trustworthiness in several areas, particularly with rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, and resonance. Further, Milner’s (2007) framework of researcher racial and cultural positionality informed this content analysis in that negotiations of my own racial and cultural selves in relationship to data were foregrounded. To that end, shifting from self to system was an essential component of this study as I investigated how race, racism, and culture factor into dance education at the collegiate level (Milner, 2007).

By collecting a variety of material, both text-based and visual, from dance program websites, I was able to address scholarly rigor by gaining a nuanced understanding of program values that periodically exist in contradiction to one another. Regarding sincerity, in applying Milner’s (2007) framework of researcher racial and cultural positionality, I consistently addressed self-reflexivity about subjective values and biases. Transparency regarding methodological challenges was also extensively detailed. In terms of credibility, this study depended upon the generation of “rich, thick descriptions” of dance programs’ website materials that speak to learning for professional work and learning for democracy; these descriptions enable readers to determine whether the research findings can be transferred to other settings based on shared characteristics (Creswell, 2014, p. 263). I again discuss my treatment of visual imagery in order to provide an example of how these concepts manifested in my process.

To begin, I coded both the visual images themselves as well as my descriptions of these images. In so doing, I struggled with my role as a researcher scrutinizing images of bodies when
I myself am divorced from the practice out of which those images arose. In my teaching, during normal non-COVID conditions, I physically share the studio space with dancers and our relationships are built on trust and mutual respect. When I give feedback or provide constructive criticism on movement or dance technique, it is in the context of those relationships. With this form of QCA I was a distant observer of students’ bodies in space. This terrain felt very distinct from the more equal power dynamic that exists when I respond critically to professionally curated work in theatrical settings. Of course, as a performer, I also know all too well that the process of making an artistic work can often be much more satisfying than the audience’s experience of the product (performance), and so my descriptions of images and videos on dance program websites felt limited in terms of their ability to capture the essence of what a program was attempting to convey, making the necessity of studies II and III in this dissertation feel all the more acute.

**Findings**

The research questions that guided this study focused on collegiate dance program websites as locations where institutions promote two interconnected value systems: (a) career preparation as a private good and an element of academic capitalism; and (b) diversity, equity, and inclusion as an element of learning for democracy that serves the public good. Fundamental to this work is the conceptualization of the ouroboros, which reflects a symbiotic process of destruction and re-creation. Beyond preserving a historical professional model rooted in the value of White Western aesthetics, the institutions profiled in this study demonstrate ways in which DEI initiatives are redefining what a dance education means both in terms of professional artmaking careers and work beyond theatrical performance. The findings presented here focus
specifically on the following: (a) the colocation of values in visual imagery and mission statements, (b) the redistribution of curricular emphasis via applied skills credit hours, and (c) language that either reinforces or challenges the professional model at the course description level.

Of note, the next section re-engages the metaphor of geological strata (See Figure 3) to emphasize how access to institutions’ online materials can reveal more than evidence of marketization. In this case, each layer of access represents a deeper level of program identity that highlights various elements of the ouroboros. In stratigraphic terms, visual imagery and mission statements represent the earth’s outer crust. Curricular emphasis determined by credit hour distribution represents the earth’s mantle. Last, course descriptions can be viewed as the earth’s liquid outer core. To extend the metaphor to its final level, faculty experiences can be identified as the earth’s solid inner core and are addressed in study II in this dissertation.

Figure 3. Layers of the Earth.

It must be noted that the stratigraphy metaphor itself has limitations in the sense that websites (unlike geological data imprinted in rock and soil) are impermanent records of a particular program. Similar to dance performances, websites are fleeting and ephemeral, being overhauled and retooled as program offerings, student populations, and values shift in relationship to internal and external forces. Nevertheless, when divorced from a temporal rendering, the stratigraphy metaphor is useful for conceptualizing how the mining of websites reveals programs’ mission alignment across structures.

**The Colocation of Values in Images and Mission Statements**

As Saichaie and Morpew (2014) noted, prospective students navigating the college choice process use institutional websites to provide clues to the on-campus experience. At the surface level, potential BA dance majors are likely to scroll through program imagery and performance videos, like Duke University’s *Freedom Dances*. These visual cues reflect a variety of espoused values. For example, most programs sampled for this study clearly emphasize performance, the racial diversity of the student population, and a plurality of movement languages. These three elements speak to both sides of the ouroboros—the side that feeds into well-established professional standards (the professional model) and the side that remakes those standards with input from diverse voices (both in terms of student population and movement languages).

To begin, most program imagery and videos feature staged performances or professional studio photography and videography rather than in-process practice, rehearsal work in the dance studio, or work in the community. For example, a promotional video on Slippery Rock
University’s website includes a sequence of various on-stage works. I initially described one clip featuring the following:

A solo dancer of color in a short dark dress accented with sparkling sequins. She takes two chaîné turns upstage left and reaches with her left arm strongly on the diagonal with a corresponding thrust of her left hip, her facial expression communicating a direct focus into the distance. Movement and costuming suggest jazz and/or contemporary influences. The dancer articulates her body with a confident joy and sensuality.

The costumes and stage lighting contributing to the dancer’s performance reflect professional norms associated with Western concert dance—norms that were replicated across all sampled institutions’ websites.

Though several schools feature performance imagery of iconic modern masterworks, Montclair State University (See Figure 2) and Texas State University most notably, the dance programs included here primarily highlight a more generalized contemporary aesthetic that references advanced training in classical disciplines. Examples of that training might include elongated lines, pointed toes, demonstrations of abdominal strength, references to verticality, and extensive control over the movement of the torso (See Figure 4). In the affective domain, images that show multiracial casts engaged in cooperative physical tasks also have the power to convey racial unity or harmony (See Figure 5). Again, these highly stylized images convey both the value of Western concert dance aesthetics inherent to the professional model as well as dance as a social practice that engages somatic hermeneutics and has a plurality of functions such as challenging political injustice.
Figure 4. Solo Dancer Demonstrating Classical Western Technique.

Source: (University of Nevada, Las Vegas – Choreographer and dancer unknown, https://www.unlv.edu/dance/academic-programs).

Figure 5. Ensemble Dancers Demonstrating Racial Harmony.

Source: (Barnard College – Choreographer and dancers unknown, https://dance.barnard.edu/).
Duke University proved to be an outlier regarding the value of performance as an element of the professional model, as several still photographs on its dance program website depict students taking classes. Significantly, these images feature BIPOC dancers and celebrate non-Western curricula (See Figure 6). An image of an older Black woman celebrates the wisdom of elders in a teaching context rather than the kinesthetic virtuosity of a young body in performance. The dancer’s t-shirt, colorful head scarf, large gold earrings, and bracelets are also a clear departure from classical Western technique classes where jewelry is discouraged, and body-hugging attire is uniform. The background of this photograph reveals other dancers of color wearing brightly colored clothes surrounding the central figure in a circle. Again, this represents a practice that diverges from classical Western technique classes that spatially position the instructor as an authority at the front and center of the dance studio with students in straight rows following behind.

Figure 6. Solo Dancer Demonstrating Non-Western Studio Class.

Source: (Duke University – Choreographer and dancers unknown, https://danceprogram.duke.edu/).
If prospective students look beyond the imagery to textual representations of dance program values, they are likely to find nuanced statements designed in an attempt to capture the complexity and depth of a collegiate dance education. In a nod to the professional model, all 12 of the institutions investigated in this study emphasize the applied study of dance and the rigor of technical training in their mission statements. These statements evoke the language of career preparation by highlighting words like “studio courses,” “performance,” and “choreography.” However, consistent with McCarthy-Brown’s (2014) findings, all 12 institutions present easily accessible formal or informal statements that tout a commitment to diverse movement practices with words like “non-Western” or “intercultural.” This value of diversity is often contextualized within programs’ liberal arts or humanities identities, which emphasizes the life of the mind and underscores a broader connection to learning for participation in a diverse democracy.

Similarly to many institutions, Barnard College Department of Dance’s (n.d.) mission statement emphasizes values around dance praxis:

The Barnard College Department of Dance, located in a world dance capital, offers an interdisciplinary program that integrates the study of dance within a liberal arts setting of intellectual and creative exploration. The major builds upon studio courses . . . as well as a rich array of dance studies courses, allowing students’ creative work to develop in dialogue with critical inquiry into the history, culture, theory, and forms of western and non-western performance, typically enhanced by study in other disciplines. (para. 1)

Echoes of connections among professional work, the liberal arts, and diversity can also be seen in the University of Iowa Department of Dance’s (n.d.-d) mission:

The University of Iowa Department of Dance provides an environment conducive to comprehensive training in performance, choreography, and theoretical studies in the framework of a liberal arts education . . . The Dance program is based upon the central premise that both art and education are extensions of the total humanistic endeavor, and that by developing creative artists and nurturing the art of dance in higher education, individuals may be empowered to enrich and further the arts in our society in relevant, diverse, and meaningful ways. (para. 1)
In contrast, the University of Illinois Department of Dance (n.d.-b) makes a more subtle reference to its liberal arts ethos while directly emphasizing the program’s commitment to anti-racism:

The mission . . . is to contribute to Dance’s positive impact on the world, as a distinctive generator of new knowledge and as a vital cultural agent and signifier. We activate the power of Dance to root out historically unbalanced, hierarchically oppressive perspectives and are committed to investigating the dynamic intersections between research and teaching in academic, professional, and community settings. We promote ethical, anti-racist, and progressive practices, operating from a deeply held belief that diversity and inclusion are critical for the advancement of the artform and for humankind. (para. 1)

Whereas the University of Illinois’s mission statement highlights anti-racist language and emphasizes the humanistic nature of dance scholarship, other institutions articulate the value of diversity more in terms of skill acquisition. Slippery Rock University (Slippery Rock University Department of Dance, n.d.-b), for example, links intellectual rigor and intercultural experiences directly with capitalist language as follows:

[The program] promotes dance as an art form through creative, technical, expressive, and intellectual development . . . Superior education in performance, choreography, and teaching with additional components of wellness for dance, dance technology, and intercultural experience, prepares students for their chosen profession and entrepreneurial role in society. (para. 1)

Language that directly links creativity in dance practices with 21st century business skills is not uncommon. For example, the website for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (University of Nevada Las Vegas Department of Dance, n.d.-a) program claims “a dance degree opens the door to many of the skills that numerous Fortune 500 companies look for in their executive recruits” (para. 5). A detailed discussion of the co-opting of creative practices for work outside the arts was beyond the scope of this study; however, it is notable that designers of programs seemingly distant from the new global economy attempt to argue that a dance education can translate to
substantial financial gains in unrelated fields. This approach has the potential to answer Risner’s (2010) as well as Akers and Chingos’s (2016) critiques of the higher education enterprise.

For the purposes of this study, program websites’ images and words broadly represent surface-level (outer crust) advertising that is most associated with the college choice process, institutional marketization, and the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime. However, the images and words used on dance program websites also clearly speak to the ouroboros, which acknowledges a balanced perspective of higher education as both a private and a public good.

Moving into the second strata (mantle), represented by curricular structures, allows us to see continuing evidence of the ouroboros in action.

As McCarthy-Brown (2014) noted, digging into curricular structures can help determine how dance programs are reflecting values conveyed through imagery and mission statements; accessing curricular data allows for a deeper analysis than a comparison of images and mission statements alone. In the next section I revisit McCarthy-Brown’s study of dance curricula credit hour distribution to determine whether programs that adhere to the professional model are also creating more space in students’ 4-year plans for non-Western movement practices.

**The Redistribution of Curricular Emphasis via Applied Skills Credit Hours**

Program imagery and mission statements continue to emphasize Western concert dance norms such as performance and rigorous technical training in ballet and modern. Imagery and mission statements also serve as advertising for prospective students looking to pursue professional artmaking careers. Mining curricular structures goes beyond surface-level advertising and speaks to the ouroboros at a deeper level. Specifically, the curricular structures of the 12 institutions profiled here support a broader conceptualization of dance education than the
traditional model. This is a distinct departure from McCarthy-Brown’s (2014) findings and is reflective of the purposeful criterion sampling I employed in this study. New curricular models reflect the paradox of the ouroboros in that they support both professional work beyond college and learning for democracy. Among the programs investigated, three curricular themes emerged: (a) the distinction of specific professional tracks for BA dance majors, (b) curricula that support the attainment of certifications in movement or arts-related fields, and (c) the balance of credit distribution between Western and non-Western dance styles.

Several BA dance programs in this study offer specific career preparation tracks that extend beyond the narrow focus of the professional model. For example, Brenau University offers several concentrations geared toward professional work in its BA; these include dance teaching, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. Taking another approach, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, admits all BA students into its Dance Production and Management program, which requires extensive coursework in lighting, stage management, costume, and scenic design. The University of Iowa launched a new Dance Pedagogy and Instruction Track as of Fall 2021 and Slippery Rock University encourages BA dance majors to pursue a dual degree with a Master of Science in Adapted Physical Activity on an accelerated 4 + 1 track. Last, the University of San Francisco houses its dance concentration within a social justice major that emphasizes arts activism and management with coursework that focuses on community engagement.

In a similar vein, several schools also offer pathways to professional certifications in movement or arts-related fields. For example, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (University of Nevada Las Vegas Department of Dance, n.d.-b) grants a “Pilates trainer’s certification
allowing students employment opportunities in the global Pilates field as trainers, teachers, rehabilitation therapists, and practitioners” (para. 1). The University of Illinois offers a 200-hour Yoga Teacher Certification program. The University of Iowa (University of Iowa Department of Dance, n.d.-a) provides its dance majors both a Certificate in Public Digital Arts and a Certificate in Arts Entrepreneurship, which “combines entrepreneurial coursework in accounting, marketing, and financial management with courses focused on arts management and leadership practices in both commercial and non-profit arts organizations” (para. 1). Last, Montclair State University’s BA program presents two options: a concentration in private studio teaching, which includes four business courses (two short of a business minor), and a Dance Education PreK-12 Certification. Certifications of this kind link a dance education directly to careers beyond college—careers that extend beyond the performance and dancemaking tracks associated with the traditional professional model.

Representing the other side of the ouroboros, credit hour distribution among diverse dance disciplines reflects programs’ emphasis on equity, inclusion, and learning for democracy in dance. Of the 12 institutions included in this study, only Loyola Marymount University has a clear curricular emphasis on ballet and modern; the program requires students to take up to 2 credit hours of ballet and modern every semester. In contrast, the University of Iowa requires 10 credit hours of ballet and 10 credit hours of contemporary movement practices, which includes both intermediate jazz and hip hop as options. Departing even further from the professional model’s emphasis on ballet and modern, many schools do not demand a specific number of credit hours in any one dance discipline. For example, Barnard simply requires that majors take eight technique courses, which may include Afro-Cuban dance, multiple levels of tap, classical
Indian dance, and hip hop, as well as ballet and modern. The BA programs at Duke and the University of Illinois are even more adaptable. As the University of Illinois’s BA program website (n.d.-a) states:

The Bachelor of Arts (BA) program in dance is an interdisciplinary curriculum in dance studies that empowers students to examine performance, choreography, and/or history from varied epistemological lenses. It is designed for students who want to pursue more integrated approaches to art making and/or students who want to use dance to interrogate larger social, cultural phenomena . . . Because of the flexibility of the BA program, students are empowered to dance and perform as much or as little as they want, and they have the space in the course allotment to pursue either minors or second majors in other fields of study. (para. 1)

Duke University (n.d.-a) invites students to “turn the world into magnificence” and “shake it into awareness” (para. 2) through four pathways of Dancing Cultures; Being and Healing; Process, Practice, and Research; and Social Issues and Social Action (Duke University, n.d.-e, Pathways section, para. 2). Duke also allows students to choose from a variety of diverse technique courses rather than prescribing a specific adherence to one or two dance disciplines. Programs that allow students to self-design a curriculum around these diverse physical practices represent a distinct shift from McCarthy-Brown’s (2014) findings and reflect a more pluralistic approach to the acquisition of kinesthetic knowledge that has the potential to recreate professional standards in the field.

A consistency of narrative regarding the ouroboros begins to emerge when looking at program imagery/mission statements as well as curricular structures. Dance programs are simultaneously adhering to and breaking away from the traditional professional model that aligns with the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime. Old structures are eroded by new voices that act like water, wind, and heat to reshape educational landscapes. A third level (earth’s outer liquid core), represented by the program coursework, allows us to see the ouroboros in yet
another context. Excavating information on specific courses provides further clues to dance program values that either challenge or are in line with the professional model. The next section sheds light on how the ouroboros works in collegiate dance education at the course description level and clarifies how students are being prepared for both professional work and participation in a diverse democracy.

**Challenges to the Professional Model at the Course Description Level**

Course descriptions, similar to imagery, mission statements, and curricular structures, can reflect program values and reveal the tensions and inconsistencies related to balancing a dance education as both a private good and a public good. Within the 12 institutions’ courses I explored for this study, two themes emerged. First, courses that emphasize career preparation evoke the language of academic capitalism particularly in their emphasis on the development of entrepreneurial skills and dance as a business. Second, descriptions of dance disciplines traditionally associated with the professional model mostly fail to reflect learning for democracy in a cultural context, whereas non-Western movement courses robustly emphasize this aspect of dance.

In an attempt to connect dance and entrepreneurialism, a number of institutions offer courses that help students develop skills that are more commonly associated with work in the new global economy. For example, the University of Iowa’s dance program includes a Foundations in Entrepreneurship course that teaches students “basic core business concepts faced by entrepreneurial managers in small business accounting, marketing, and business planning” (University of Iowa Department of Dance, n.d.-c, para. 5). Loyola Marymount offers a Careers in
Dance course and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, offers a Business of Dance course that highlights company management, grant-writing, and public relations.

Other institutions, however, make a leap to connect business to social change. Duke University’s (Duke University Department of Dance, n.d.-b) Arts Entrepreneurship course description is as follows:

Student teams work on specific arts-based entrepreneurial projects. Teams comprised of students from different backgrounds (arts, engineering, economics, computer science). Goals include creating business plan and launching ventures in areas of the arts. Structure an adaptation of Fuqua Program for Entrepreneurs. Ideal projects have real/positive impact on society. Students learn to situate artistic creativity within projects that meet societal need. (para. 1)

This course features interdisciplinarity and is a clear representation of the ouroboros—it prepares students for both work outside the university and for participation in a diverse democracy in service to the public good. The University of San Francisco offers a similar course that engages students in hands-on learning activities that are intended to prepare them for arts-based social justice work in settings such as senior centers, schools, and prisons. Courses are constructed specifically for community sites that serve as “labs” where students participate in and lead workshops.

In terms of other program curricula, all the dance programs included in this study offer a number of experiential learning or theoretical courses that address dance in socio-political contexts. Many of these relate to the public good knowledge/learning regime and programs’ liberal arts/humanities roots. Slippery Rock University (Slippery Rock University Department of Dance, n.d.-a) offers a Dance in the Political World course in which students attend dance events off campus. Another example is Duke’s Dance Service-Learning course, which is based on an arsenal of liberatory theater techniques developed by Brazilian director, writer, and activist,
Augusto Boal. In this course, students work in service-learning teams “with community non-profit organizations to lead workshops and/or develop and perform interactive Forum theater” (Duke University Department of Dance, n.d.-c, para. 9). The University of Iowa offers a course entitled Performing Power/Performing Protest: The Body, Identity, and the Image that centers the body in investigations of historical and contemporary issues of power, social equity, and dissent that is similar to the University of Illinois’s course, titled Black Dances of Resistance. For the purposes of this study, the focus in the next section is exclusively on discrepancies between descriptions of movement-based coursework, which has traditionally been the focus of the professional model in dance education.

In addition to supporting the professional model, program imagery, mission statements, credit hour distribution, and a number of curricular offerings support that dance programs value diversity and learning for democracy. However, course descriptions of specific movement practices reveal inconsistencies in the ways in which Western versus non-Western aesthetics are valued. Whereas descriptions of courses like hip hop, folklórico, or African recognize movement’s cultural context, courses like ballet and modern tend to ignore cultural context altogether and focus on the development of the professional skills associated with more traditional concert dance settings.

A comparison of these types of course descriptions is necessary to illustrate this point. An advanced ballet class at the University of Iowa describes “physical and mental skills necessary for professional work” (University of Iowa Department of Dance, n.d.-b, para. 70). By virtue of ballet’s Western roots, these statements normalize Whiteness in the dance world and reinforce the notion that ballet is foundational to professional concert dance. Only one outlying class at
Duke University (Duke University Department of Dance, n.d.-f) offers an advanced pointe and variations class that recognizes “training in and analysis of the principles of classical and neoclassical variations and their historical and aesthetic context” (para. 1). Similar language focused on professional training is used to describe modern dance courses. For example, Slippery Rock’s modern technique at the advanced level demands a “a clear understanding of dance as a profession and demonstrated professionalism and maturity” (Slippery Rock University Department of Dance, n.d.-a, para. 41). Advanced modern offered at Johnson C. Smith University indicates the course is an option “for those students with a strong desire for a career in modern dance” (Johnson C. Smith University Department of Dance, n.d., para. 1).

Ballet and modern course descriptions continue a narrative that is in line with the traditional professional model whereas course descriptions for non-Western movement disciplines emphasize dance’s connection to learning for participation in a diverse democracy. For example, the University of San Francisco’s (University of San Francisco Department of Dance, n.d.-a) Folklórico, Danza, & Culture class explores, how danza (dance) shaped Mexican history and continues to impact contemporary culture in both México and the United States. Special emphasis will be placed on the role of dance as a bridge between the foundations of Mexican heritage and spaces of belonging that affect Mexican communities today. (para. 1)

The same institution’s hip hop course explores hip hop “as a form of cultural politics and activism toward social justice through the body” (University of San Francisco Department of Dance, n.d.-b, para. 1). Similarly, at the University of Iowa, students in intermediate hip hop are encouraged “to understand and apply historical and practical knowledge of hip hop” (University of San Francisco Department of Dance, n.d.-b, para. 4). Duke University’s (Duke University Department of Dance, n.d.-d) Dance and Dance Theater of Asia course explores the cultural
aesthetics that inform Asian dance theater performance genres and introduces the “mythology, legends and symbolic interpretations that underlie the thematic core of these performance traditions; [as well as] the spiritual importance of disciplined training; the intercultural translation and adaptation of Asian performance disciplines to the West” (para. 1). By acknowledging the cultural context in which these movement traditions developed, non-Western dance courses are offering students the opportunity to experience learning for democracy through embodiment; students experience diversity literally in the body. In this regard, the body itself becomes a landscape that is the site of political values negotiation.

The findings in this study represent three stratigraphical levels that lead increasingly deeper: (a) the outer crust or the colocation of values in visual imagery and mission statements, (b) the mantle or redistribution of curricular emphasis via applied skills credit hours, and (c) the liquid outer core or challenges to the professional model at the course description level. All three levels together provide a nuanced picture of the ouroboros and dance programs’ relationship to higher education as a private or public good. The findings presented here also have implications for theory and practice as addressed in the following discussion.

**Discussion**

As higher education scholarship indicates, relatively little is known about how institutional websites communicate the function of higher education to a variety of audiences (Saichaie & Morphew, 2014; T. Zhang, 2018; Y. Q. Zhang & O’Halloran, 2012). The findings in this study extend the literature by illuminating how a process of exhumation, requiring various levels of online access, revealed values alignment or dissonance throughout programmatic structures; institutional websites can be mined for data far beyond examples of branding and
marketing strategies designed to attract prospective students. Furthermore, findings reveal how dance program developers are wrestling with the forces identified by Schulze-Cleven (2015) that drive higher education policy: market competition and democratic citizenship. When unified, these forces are represented by the ouroboros and, in the context of this study, speak to learning for professional work as well as learning for civic engagement in a diverse democracy.

The purpose of this investigation was to examine how dance programs strategically balance the competing functions of higher education. To that end, the remainder of this discussion highlights ways in which the ouroboros operates within these dance programs to (a) preserve traditional practices associated with the professional model, and (b) create new models for dance education that emphasize DEI initiatives as an element of the public good knowledge/learning regime. I define this practice of the ouroboros as “disciplinary re-marketization strategies.” Specifically, the next sections address the ouroboros in terms of website imagery, changing curricular emphasis, and course descriptions.

**Website Imagery**

The professional model in dance education has come to define narrow parameters for art-making careers post-graduation as Risner (2010) noted. Although relatively few dance majors go on to secure performing contracts with professional arts organizations, dance program websites continue to emphasize performance and choreography in imagery and videos. Professionally shot and edited photographs that depict dancers in costume under stage lighting perpetuate aesthetics linked to Western concert dance norms. Ironically, these images beautifully advertise associations with rigor in ballet, modern, and post-modern styles as part of the professional
model while doing little to acknowledge the realities of the labor market for most students who will earn a BA degree in dance.

On the other hand, performance photography and videos have the capacity to communicate racial diversity in a visible and meaningful way. For example, featuring Black dancers performing in a variety of movement disciplines exceeds tokenism to challenge racist perspectives on what BIPOC bodies communicate through embodied practices. Furthermore, beyond acknowledging what the “eye sees,” performance photography and videography represent the affective domain and can thus suggest racial cooperation if not harmony among members of diverse ensemble casts. Program imagery captures the ouroboros in that traditional values associated with the professionalism of dance degrees are represented but no longer reflect the world students will encounter upon graduation. At the same time, dance program leaders are embracing the value of diversity, which speaks to learning for democracy.

One way in which the developers of dance programs might remake the professional model and reshape the professional landscape through disciplinary re-marketization strategies is to include more program imagery and video selections that depict students in studio classes. Highlighting the “process” of embodiment as equal in value to the “product” of performance acknowledges dance as a heuristic method and way of knowing. Programs might also feature photographs of dancers engaged in their communities, thereby demonstrating that dance has the capacity to meaningfully exist beyond the stage. All of the programs investigated for this study offer curricula that situate dance within socio-political contexts. Providing imagery that emphasizes this important element can potentially help expand students’ understanding of dance’s role in society and help recast the dancer as a committed participant in civic activity.
Changing Curricular Emphasis

This study followed McCarthy-Brown’s (2014) investigation of curricular structures. Findings demonstrate ways in which dance programs have begun to balance traditional Western and non-Western movement languages. Loyola Marymount University takes a more historical approach to the professional model, though most in line with the ouroboros are the majority of programs that offer students the opportunity to self-select from an extensive menu of applied skills courses beyond classical ballet and modern. These programs continue to embrace embodiment as a key feature of a student’s professional development, but also acknowledge that professionalism today means moving past White Western aesthetics. By emphasizing the study of diverse movement practices, programs provide students the opportunity to experience diversity kinesthetically. As Wilkinson (2020) noted, processes that are playful and embodied can engage students’ political identities in ways that involve compassion and empathy, thus providing a counterbalance to polarized discourse in the United States. The study of dance thereby serves the public good knowledge/learning regime.

Challenges to re-marketing curricular offerings in order to create more balance likely have to do with time, financial resources, and personnel. For example, one consideration for programs is how to encourage technical proficiency in a particular dance discipline when proficiency requires consistent repetition of physical tasks. Students can only be required to take so many credit hours of dance to fulfill their degrees, so to address this issue, administrators often assign dance courses artificially low credit hours despite high contact hours with faculty. For example, a 1-credit hour advanced-level African class might meet for 90 minutes four times a week. If instructors are paid by the credit hour rather than the contact hour, exploitation issues
emerge that are related to workload. Faculty experiences with curricular structures are an important and underexplored area of research and are addressed in study II of this dissertation.

**Course Descriptions**

One of the primary findings related to course descriptions is that language around classical forms (associated with the professional model) is divorced from the socio-political context. With the exception of Duke University, ballet and modern are regularly referenced in relationship to their applicability to professional performance careers. On the other hand, language referring to non-Western movement disciplines is divorced from professional work but situates embodied practice within multiple layers of history, culture, and social distributions of power.

In terms of the ouroboros and additional disciplinary re-marketization strategies, the preservation of classical forms should be reconsidered not only in terms related to students’ professional pursuits but in terms that interrogate the ballet/modern knowledge hierarchy that has traditionally prevented democratization of the field both in higher education and beyond.

Language around ballet and modern practices should subsequently acknowledge the art forms’ storied histories and cultural relevance along with more problematic elements related to Whiteness, misogyny, authoritarianism, and elitism. Problematizing these disciplines creates openings throughout the curriculum for more conversations about diversity, equity, and access, which ultimately have the potential to serve the public good. Similarly, the language around non-Western dance can begin to address how these forms fit authentically into professional work, whether in teaching, production, commercial, or concert dance contexts. Legitimizing diverse
movement practices in professional terms represents the side of the ouroboros that acknowledges the importance of a dance education as career preparation.

**Conclusion**

For the most part, humans perceive the earth as a solid mass. Rarely do we have cause to question its stability unless there is a cataclysmic event, such as an earthquake, to remind us that what appears to be concrete and unyielding is actually in a constant state of flux. For example, earth’s crust floats on the somewhat soft plastic-like mantle a layer below. Though mantle decidedly initiates changes in the earth’s crust, there is an ongoing debate as to whether these changes are “driven by a push or pull mechanism” (Nace, 2016, para. 10).

In a similar way, we often perceive structures in higher education, particularly when viewed through the lens of bureaucracy, as concrete and unyielding rather than in flux or involved in push/pull relationships with a variety of forces. Seemingly stable values and organizational structures belie churning at the program level that speaks to academic capitalism and institutional responses to political arguments about the purpose of higher education.

This investigation of dance programs’ websites revealed much about geological ruptures within training systems that have historically prepared students to work as artmakers post-graduation. Program websites also show that training systems are being remade in the image of the ouroboros, a mystical process of creation and destruction that reflects paradox—a dance education serves both the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime and the public good knowledge/learning regime. Importantly, looking at dance program websites allowed me to broaden the scope of higher education research as it relates to market forces. Ultimately, this
study can serve as a model for investigations into other disciplines that educate for career preparation as well as participation in a diverse democracy.

Of note, websites serve as rich sources of information on academic program structures. However, websites remain somewhat divorced from the complexity of personal narratives and the lived experiences of those who must engage with an institution’s stated values. I designed study II in this dissertation to address this disconnect and shed light on how faculty, the individuals responsible for administration, teaching, and knowledge production in dance programs, navigate the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime as well as the paradoxes associated with the ouroboros.
CHAPTER EIGHT

STUDY II

COLLEGE DANCE FACULTY PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC CAPITALISM

Some students were stretching a professor on a medieval torture rack. He had offered himself to show them how an academic might be stretched beyond his wildest dreams like a piece of chewing gum.

And as they turned the wheel the professor was getting longer and longer.
Don’t make me too long, or I’ll look kind of goofy, sighed the professor as he grew longer and longer.

Suddenly something snaps.

– “The Academic Sigh” by Russell Edson

Introduction and Overview

Kezar and Maxey (2016) acknowledged that over the past 200 years, there has been a dramatic shift in faculty roles in the United States “from itinerant tutors, to pastoral and ministerial leaders, to purveyors of the classical curriculum” (p. viii). Furthermore, the “traditional” research specialization, teaching, and service model, recognized as a hallmark of today’s institutions, can be associated with the incredible expansion of higher education post-World War II through the 1970s (Kezar & Maxey, 2016). Although this model is rapidly changing as funding structures shift, aspects of faculty life born of this model have long been associated with the three-legged stool of tenure, academic freedom, and shared governance (Kezar & Maxey, 2016). Regarding the image of the ouroboros, this model establishes the academy as a public realm where “individuals practice the art of critical thinking, participate in spirited debate, exercise an engaged thoughtfulness” (Giroux, 2009, p. 669), and learn the
necessity of speaking truth to power. Faculty, through its disciplinary diversity, contributes to the making, unmaking, and remaking of society; in a healthy system, teaching for the labor market and teaching for democracy are equally represented.

Traditionally, tenure, academic freedom, and the principles of shared governance have empowered faculty in higher education to influence institutional operations at various levels (Jaeger & Thornton, 2005; Kezar & Maxey, 2016; Valsan & Sproule, 2008). However, in today’s colleges and universities, the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime is now equally evident in the norms and expectations that characterize faculty life. For example, Leopold (2007) contended that “finance, management, and marketing” are essential skills for faculty to develop and advised that “a brand identity (academic reputation) that is built on marketing (publications and presentations) of a high-quality product (new knowledge) is an essential part of an academic career” (para. 23). It will therefore be of value to determine the impact of academic capitalism on faculty who are still largely responsible for much of the teaching and knowledge transfer occurring in institutions of higher education (Jaeger & Thornton, 2005).

This subject is particularly important when looking at disciplines in the arts and humanities that are intended to teach for the development of civic virtues (Hanson et al., 2012; Mayhew et al., 2016; Pascarella et al., 2005; Siefert et al., 2008). Faculty across units are likely to experience the impact of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime differently as it relates to the traditional faculty model (Slaughter & Cantwell, 2012). Consequently, I designed this study to explore the experiences of collegiate dance faculty to shed light on strategies used to balance the forces of academic capitalism against learning for democracy in a divided discipline.
Although some of these strategies were introduced in this dissertation’s study I, their impact on dance faculty remains unclear. Thus, the research question for this study was aimed at teasing out the particulars of various dance faculty’s institutional lives. To that end, the primary question for study II was as follows: How do roles, responsibilities, and disciplinary status play into faculty perceptions of academic capitalism in dance programs that attempt to balance learning for the labor market and learning for democracy? As background to this question, the following sections present a review of literature surrounding the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime through institutional segmentation, faculty roles and responsibilities, and the privileging of the entrepreneurial professoriate.

**Institutional Segmentation**

Cantwell and Taylor (2013) described segmentation in two ways: (a) as resource asymmetries that divide academic disciplines from each other in terms of prestige and ability to attract external funds, and (b) as the restructuring of tenured and tenure-track faculty positions into non-tenure-track jobs that reflect neoliberal forces in the financing of higher education. Importantly, Torres-Olave et al. (2020) argued that segmentation affects faculty’s academic labor. Slaughter and Cantwell (2012) claimed growing internal segmentation denotes differential treatment of academic units within institutions in terms of resource allocation; competition and human capital narratives emphasize educational funding streams that prioritize productivity and innovation in the STEM fields (Rosinger et al., 2016; Slaughter & Cantwell, 2012). This scenario creates a prestige economy in which monies derived from research in the STEM fields are preferred to any other resource streams, as they connect higher education ever more deeply to the new global economy.
The arts and humanities generally supply institutional resources through tuition revenues but are excluded from the national discourse on “economic growth, health, environmental issues, and national defense” (Slaughter & Cantwell, 2012, p. 590). For example, the STEM fields account for approximately 96% of all federal research and development (R&D) funding, whereas the humanities are “excluded from US academic R&D statistics altogether” (Slaughter & Cantwell, 2012, p. 597). As a result, segmentation further implies that the arts and humanities are moved to the periphery of university functioning not just because they are perceived as distant from the new economy, but also because resources tied to undergraduate credit hour production go unrewarded (Rosinger et al., 2016; Slaughter & Cantwell, 2012).

Rosinger et al. (2016) further argued that segmentation serves to deprofessionalize faculty in both high- and low-resource units by “impinging on authority and independence” (p. 44). Regarding the humanities, Rosinger et al. found they are disfavored within the prestige economy; administrators are therefore unwilling to provide these units with resources. Instead, heavier instructional burdens are placed on non-tenure-track humanities faculty in order to generate revenue through credit hour production. However, tuition revenue is often administered by academic managers, unlike research funding over which faculty regularly have more control (Rosinger et al., 2016). The polarization of research and instruction within the prestige economy undergirds the shift in faculty’s labor conditions. Slaughter (2014) identified this feature of academic capitalism, which motivated this study, as an under investigated area of higher education scholarship.
Faculty Roles and Responsibilities

One of the biggest changes for leaders of colleges and universities over the past several decades is a nationwide increase in contingent faculty appointments (Jaeger & Thornton, 2005; Kezar & Maxey, 2016; Valsan & Sproule, 2008). Regarding academic capitalism’s profound sociopolitical implications, some scholars point to the rise of neoliberalism as a response to 1960s–1970s era political activism on behalf of marginalized groups such as women, minorities, the working poor, and youth (Chomsky, 2014; Valsan & Sproule, 2008). In order to re-establish a more familiar social order, organizations engage in market-like behaviors designed to reduce the cost of labor and to ensure labor is “docile and obedient” (Chomsky, 2014, para. 2). Ultimately, some colleges and universities are perceived to have responded by using “cheap and vulnerable labor” in the form of graduate students, non-tenured, and adjunct faculty (Chomsky, 2014, para. 10).

This grim take on organizational decision-making is countered in some ways by Kezar et al.’s (2016) study that showed great consensus among faculty of all ranks, deans, governing board members, provosts, state officers, and accreditors in higher education that professionalism should be returned to the faculty role. Professional faculty typically have job security, are involved in decision-making, have a degree of autonomy, and have the protections of academic freedom (Kezar et al., 2016). Professional faculty also benefit from “clearly defined expectations and evaluation criteria” (p. 48). Stakeholders demonstrate overwhelming agreement that the role of faculty should be a professional one and yet, Kezar et al. maintained that “our practices fall so short of what we believe should be occurring” (p. 48). One interpretation of the disconnect is that the economic and neoliberal forces associated with the academic capitalist knowledge/learning
regime are too powerful and vast to allow institutions and their leaders to pivot from the market-driven behaviors that ultimately have led to depprofessionalized faculty.

A 2018 report by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) indicated that at all U.S. institutions combined, 73% of instructional positions are held by contingent or non-tenure-track faculty (AAUP, 2018). Additionally, close to 50% of faculty positions are now held by contingent faculty at schools offering baccalaureate and masters’ degrees (AAUP, 2018). It is widely recognized that non-tenure-track positions are the least secure and lowest paid in the university hierarchy and Giroux (2019) contended many adjuncts belong to America’s working poor, “as they barely make enough money to afford basic necessities, have no or little health insurance, and are reluctant to speak out and be critical [of their employers] for fear of losing their jobs” (pp. 20–21). Beyond compensation, adjunct life is predictably unstable because faculty are regularly held to short-term semester by semester teaching contracts, have limited say in institutional or departmental decision-making, and do not have consistent access to support staff, professional development opportunities, office spaces, or additional teaching resources (Kezar & Maxey, 2016). When faculty lack a career path in the academic workforce, there is an erosion of community and relationships become transactional, a result that undercuts the academy’s ability to deliver an education that models and supports democratic ideals.

The academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime also has implications for full-time non-tenure-track, tenure-track, and tenured faculty. Further upending the balance of workloads that include research, teaching, and service, Kezar and Maxey (2016) suggested higher education leaders who espouse neoliberal values have developed a narrower view of faculty responsibilities and a desire to unbundle roles in order to promote productivity and efficiency. To begin with,
boards of trustees now challenge the utility of the traditional model that has allowed tenured and
tenure-track faculty to carry lower teaching loads so they might pursue research agendas (Kezar
& Maxey, 2016). Similarly, the rise of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime has led
to the devaluing of service and leadership work (Kezar & Maxey, 2016). In 2011, K. C. Green et
al. (2011) noted 35% of presidents would change tenure policies, with 34% increasing teaching
loads.

Kezar and Maxey (2016) argued that, given their diminishing ranks, tenured and tenure-
track faculty are showing signs of systemic strain, “as these individuals take on an increasing and
probably unsustainable level of responsibility for satisfying the multiple obligations of
conducting research and providing administrative leadership and other forms of service for their
institutions” (p. 3). Musselin (2007) stated that in addition to heavier administrative loads and the
responsibilities of grant hunting and writing, professors must stay up to date with technological
advancements in teaching and learning. According to Becher and Trowler (2001),

The demands on permanent full-time academic staff have multiplied: Academics find
they must, for example, not only generate new courses; they must cost them, determine
and stimulate markets for them, evolve new ways of delivering them and ensure they can
stand up to hard external scrutiny. (p. 17)

Kezar and Maxey (2016) echoed these findings and also pointed to tenure retraction, “increased
expectations for faculty productivity to obtain tenure, post-tenure review policies (in which a
faculty member’s productivity is evaluated even after he or she receives tenure), and more
frequent evaluation” (p. 14) as outcomes of academic capitalist influences in the academy.
Ultimately, the overburdening of full-time faculty has the impact of fomenting resentment and a
fear of professional instability that chips away at the democratic character of institutions.
Privileging the Entrepreneurial Professoriate: Implications for the Humanities

Torres-Olave et al. (2020) explicitly tied institutional segmentation to increased reliance on contingent faculty and Taylor et al. (2019) emphasized that this trend extends more deeply into the humanities, which are associated with “diminished institutional revenues” (p. 7). This is especially true at “resource-strapped, status-conscious, ‘striving’ universities” (Taylor et al., 2019, p. 3). For example, Ehrenberg et al. (2010) determined that a mere one third of humanities PhD graduates secured full-time tenure-track positions in the 1990s. These findings led Taylor et al. (2019) to sketch out particularly gloomy career prospects for humanists who must “utilize lower status peers, exploit weaker units within the humanities, and [form] alliances” (p. 20) in order to survive within the prestige economy; as the humanities decline, a hierarchy within the humanities also seems to grow.

Of note, in studies that looked discreetly at dance, findings show the typical dance faculty profile is “a forty-nine-year-old female, part-time, non-tenure-track instructor, teaching up to six classes per semester, reporting no creative activity during the past two years” (Risner, 2007, p. 18; see also Risner & Prioleau, 2004; Warburton & Stanek, 2004). Results of Duffy’s (2019) small study also showed dance faculty generally struggle to find a workload balance with participants having to “give up sleep and social life to work on research and creative artistry” (p. 79) in order to fulfill the requirements for tenure.

In terms of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime, U.S. dominance in scientific research over the last 60 years “is being replaced by a more multipolar landscape of science, technology, and innovation” (AAUP, 2017, p. 2). This changing landscape has implications for how scholarship is conducted and the way in which it makes its way to the
marketplace. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) suggested that in the new global economy, “Knowledge is a critical raw material to be mined and extracted from any unprotected site; patented, copyrighted, trademarked, or held as a trade secret; then sold in the marketplace for a profit” (p. 4).

In this regard, the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime leads to the privileging of some forms of research over others, divorces knowledge production from serving the public good via education for democracy and has implications for hiring practices as well. For example, in contrast to the cost savings provided by hiring adjuncts or increasing the workloads of humanities faculty, Schulze-Cleven and Olson (2017) suggested, growing shares of resources have been committed to attract highly regarded research faculty (who can generate external funding, commercialize their research, or improve the institution’s ranking) and academics that can claim to have lucrative exit options to employment in the private sector (most notably those in business and law schools). (p. 821)

Entrepreneurialism in fields like biotechnology, materials science, optical science, and cognitive science is based on the assumption that faculty “have the primary responsibility for obtaining their own research funds and running their own laboratories” (Mendoza, 2009, p. 71). Unsurprisingly, salaries subsequently reflect the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime, with faculty in innovative STEM fields “on average mak[ing] substantially more than faculty in the fine arts and/or humanities” (Slaughter & Cantwell, 2012, p. 601). As Slaughter and Cantwell (2012) stated, “Individual institutions and academics, as well as fields of study have entered new circuits of knowledge and have tapped into new funding streams while others have been left behind” (p. 601). Ironically, the institutional segmentation detailed by Slaughter and Cantwell
mirrors elements of America’s widening income gap—those who have, continue to get more, while those who have not, continue to get less.

Academic capitalism creates a substantially more pressurized environment in which low-resource faculty under intense scrutiny are expected to devote vast amounts of energy to teaching, service, and scholarship. Gonzales et al. (2014) noted these faculty must “outsmart time” by working as “rugged individuals with few resources [and] little sleep . . . sometimes at the cost of their personal/family lives to advance in their careers” (p. 1112). The great irony is that the neoliberal ideology and economic practices characteristic of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime lead to a deprofessionalization of the class of individuals who are meant to educate the next generation of new economy workers.

Noting “increased acts of incivility and a deepening concern that the spirit of community has diminished” (p. xii), Boyer’s (1990) critique of the academy rings true today, to the extent that education for democracy is weakened when the faculty is deprofessionalized. What Boyer called for is a “creative view of the work of the professoriate” (p. xii). This sentiment was echoed by Newfield (2016), who suggested that to solve today’s most vexing problems such as climate change, racism, wealth inequality, and international conflict, the world requires interdisciplinary cooperation and emergent methodologies that arise from faculty activity. In the absence of scholarship that examines how arts faculty navigate the pressures to become more entrepreneurial, I designed this study to delve into the issues raised by Boyer (1990) and Newfield (2016) in the context of dance education at the collegiate level and I asked these faculty to reflect on their experiences.
Similarly to the discussion of stratigraphy in study I, in this study I engaged a metaphor from natural science, *symbiosis*, to tell the story of dance faculty’s relationship to the ouroboros. Broadly defined, *symbiosis* describes how organisms in a particular ecosystem relate to each other in different ways. The five main symbiotic relationships of mutualism, commensalism, predation, parasitism, and competition provide characterizations of how living organisms interact. In this study, the institution at large was the shared ecosystem. The individual dance programs, represented by study participants, can be compared to “living organisms” that are in relationships with other “living organisms,” including departments, upper-level administration, or additional stakeholders that influence approaches to policy. For example, a dance program might partner with a psychology department to provide BA dance majors with a career path toward dance therapy. This relationship might be described as mutualism, in which both dance and psychology benefit from an association with each other. On the other hand, growing dance programs that are not robustly funded individually by university administrations but are housed within larger arts departments may be seen as parasitic—cannibalizing finite resources that have been designated for other low-status disciplines.

The participants in this study shared narratives related to segmentation, faculty roles, and entrepreneurialism that reflect complex relationships between dance programs and other institutional units; engaging the various aspects of *symbiosis* as a metaphor in this case helped me to conceptualize how these relationships revealed aspects of the ouroboros. The process by which I came to conclusions about the symbiotic relationships in which collegiate dance programs engage is outlined in the following sections that address research methods. Elements
related to inquiry paradigm, research approach, and data collection/analysis, as well as considerations for the study’s credibility, are discussed.

**Research Methods/Modes of Inquiry**

**Inquiry Paradigm**

This study involved a critical realist stance within an interpretivist paradigm. As in study I, the interpretivist paradigm acknowledges the impact of cultural and historical context on human interpretations of the social lifeworld and reflects a relativist ontology in which a single phenomenon—or data related to a single phenomenon—may be interpreted in multiple ways. Significantly for study II, a critical realist position allowed for the assumption that academic capitalism exists as an objective reality independently of any one person’s perception. Furthermore, as Oxley (2016) stated, “language is believed to reflect experience” (p. 57). This means a study participant’s reflections truly represent their lived reality. On the other hand, a critical realist perspective also acknowledges ambiguity in the relationship between a participant’s perception of reality and the objective reality being observed; in other words, there is an inherent subjectivity in the interpretation of data.

**Research Approach**

This study was guided by the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach (Smith, 2011). IPA fit with this study and the critical realist stance outlined above, as it acknowledges the “ontological independency of the research object from the researcher” (Jeong & Othman, 2016, p. 559). Further, IPA references Heidegger’s interpretive approach and draws on three theoretical foundations: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography (Oxley, 2016).
Regarding phenomenology, Oxley (2016) noted “IPA does not attempt to achieve the reductions, as suggested by Husserl, to unveil the very essence of a phenomenon but instead focuses on capturing the particular lived experiences of particular people” (p. 56). In IPA, the process of interpretation is noted as a double hermeneutic with the study participants’ perceptions of reality being further interpreted by the researcher. This double hermeneutic is an echo of the interpretative process introduced in study I that happens when movement is taught by a choreographer, performed by dancers, and witnessed by an audience. Last, elements of the idiographic approach were in line with this study’s focus on particular and individual details and commitment to a small sample of participants.

**Sampling Strategy**

In alignment with IPA, this study’s sample was purposive and homogenous (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011), drawing from an expert group of dance educators in BA programs for whom questions about the pressures of academic capitalism were meaningful. Additionally, sampling was motivated again by a “search for goodness.” As I engaged with data analysis in study I in mid-late March of 2021, I was able to identify a number of dance programs that were demonstrably wrestling with the implications of the ouroboros—dance education as both career preparation (private good) and as learning for democracy (public good). Information captured from program websites allowed me to prioritize institutions that offered unique pathways to a variety of dance or movement-related careers, and I eventually selected seven institutions from the original 12 included in study I for additional scrutiny. I assigned each institution a pseudonym to protect the anonymity of individuals associated with them (See Table 3).
Table 3. Characteristics of Sampled Institutions (Blinded).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Curricular emphasis</th>
<th>Degrees offered</th>
<th>Accreditation</th>
<th>Audition required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singer College</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>NY</td>
<td>No curricular emphasis</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burn Aurum University</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>GA</td>
<td>Ballet/Modern/Jazz</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everett B. Johnson University</td>
<td>HBCU</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>Ballet/Modern/African</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Queens University</td>
<td>Private R1</td>
<td>NC</td>
<td>No curricular emphasis</td>
<td>BA/MFA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Peak State University</td>
<td>Public R2</td>
<td>NJ</td>
<td>Dance education</td>
<td>BA/BFA/MFA</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright City University</td>
<td>Public R1</td>
<td>NV</td>
<td>Production</td>
<td>BA/BFA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of San Rafaelo</td>
<td>Private/Catholic</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Curricular emphasis reflects the division of credit hours assigned to program elements. In the tradition of the professional model, most institutions emphasize embodied practices. Exceptions to the professional model include Montclair State University, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the University of San Francisco whose programs encourage professional tracks distinct from performance and choreography. Where “No curricular emphasis” is noted, programs allow students to choose which dance disciplines to pursue from a menu of Western and non-Western options.

Upon selecting the institutions, I revisited dance program faculty website pages in an effort to identify individuals who might be a good fit for the study. Specifically, I wanted to speak with a group that represented various elements of diversity, including age, gender, race, degrees held, years in higher education, and rank. As in study I, I struggled with my own social identities within this process, knowing that faculty names, pictures, and biographies presented on program websites would not capture anywhere near the full picture of an individual’s ability to speak on the study’s themes. In total, I sent emails to 60 faculty members at the seven selected institutions. I received 30 responses and was able to secure interviews with nine faculty from five of the institutions initially targeted (See Table 4).
Table 4. Characteristics of Participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Degrees held</th>
<th>Years in HE</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Francesca</td>
<td>University of San Rafaelo</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>BFA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Adjunct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geneva</td>
<td>Burn Aurum University</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>MA/MS</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Adjunct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>Clear Peak State University</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Adjunct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josephine</td>
<td>Clear Peak State University</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>African American and European</td>
<td>MFA</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nia</td>
<td>Southern Queens University</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>BA/MA/PhD</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Professor of the Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>Burn Aurum University</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>BFA/MA/PhD</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonja</td>
<td>Bright City University</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>BFA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adjunct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Southern Queens University</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>BFA/MA/PhD</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taryn</td>
<td>Clear Peak State University</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>BFA/PhD</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of note, a number of faculty expressed interest in participating in the study but stated the intensity of their work responsibilities prevented them from being able to commit the time. The consistency of this type of response may reflect the very issues related to workload that this study raised; however, I also acknowledge that I reached out to individuals in late April and early May of 2021. This was at the end of an academic year that, for many, was incredibly fraught and burdensome due to the numerous pressures of COVID-19 and online learning. In other words, burnout may have contributed to a lower response rate. I also had one faculty member from Burn Aurum University withdraw from study in mid-July 2021 citing fear of professional retaliation for her and her institution. Though it was disappointing to not be able to include her interview
with the rest of the data, this participant’s withdrawal led me to reflect on the vulnerability and risk associated with this work. In the end, enough cases were included to enable a comparison of similarities and differences within the group.

**Data Source**

After obtaining informed consent (See Appendix C), phase I of data collection involved obtaining faculty demographic questionnaires (See Appendix D) from study participants that provided basic details about their social identities and institutional roles. Phase II involved conducting semi-structured interviews (See Appendix E) with dance faculty in the five distinct BA dance programs. These semi-structured interviews, which began in late May 2021, offered a flexible blueprint that allowed participants to give rich and detailed descriptions of their views and experiences. The interview protocol for this study was informed by Swaminathan and Mulvihill’s (2017) critical approach to qualitative research with its attention to “power and privilege; learning to eschew ‘absolute truth’ in favor of multiple or ‘partial’ truths; and using questions to challenge neoliberal ways of knowing” (p. 5). Interviews were recorded on Zoom, and I transcribed sections that were pertinent to the study with the help of transcription software. Transcriptions and recorded interviews were saved in Dedoose, an online qualitative data management tool.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis within IPA is suited to the pursuit of two independent lines of inquiry (represented by study I and study II) that are ultimately linked by portraiture in this three-study dissertation model. Data analysis was therefore inductive, data-driven, and thematic (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Saldaña, 2016). Smith (2011) broadly outlined a recursive six-step process to
IPA data analysis that includes the following: (a) reading and re-reading the data (in this case transcripts of the semi-structured interviews), (b) exploratory coding, (c) developing emergent themes, (d) searching for connections across emergent themes, (e) moving to the next case, and (f) looking for patterns across cases. Oxley (2016) further noted there are three levels to the exploratory coding phase. The first level is purely descriptive and stays close to the data, the second level is used to further investigate linguistic components of interview text and how language is used (looking for manifest themes), and the deepest level is conceptual and actively engages interpretation to examine meaning. Later stages of coding represent an analytic shift toward the clustering of themes as well as looking for latent themes that may initially be hidden from view.

I began coding the data for study II immediately after transcribing the interviews, a process that started in early June 2021. In many cases I read the transcripts and simultaneously listened to the raw audio from the interviews to assess the tone, vocal inflections, and syntactic emphasis of the participants. I initially used in vivo codes to move quickly and to stay close to the data, looking for manifest themes as Smith (2011) advised. Examples of these codes included “make money,” “no protection,” and “boost enrollment numbers.” The initial coding process also led me to modify my interview protocol slightly by rewording questions so as to better access dance faculty’s perceptions of academic capitalism in operation.

After the initial round of exploratory coding, I began a more focused process of coding to develop emergent themes that began to take shape around issues related to career preparation for dancers; institutional segmentation; roles, responsibilities, and the division of labor; and entrepreneurialism. Examples of focused codes included “relationship to administration,”
“financial instability,” and “mission alignment.” Developing emerging themes allowed me to contemplate connections and patterns within the data and I also reflected on potential latent themes through the process of journaling and memo writing.

Limitations

The focus in this study was on faculty perceptions of academic capitalism in the context of BA dance programs that are educating both for the professional labor market and for participation in a diverse democracy. One of the primary reasons for the focus on BA dance programs is that they are often institutionally situated within the liberal arts and humanities. However, dance faculty do not consistently emerge from liberal arts and humanities programs themselves. NASD recognizes professional work as equivalent to a terminal degree (a norm that is not commonly replicated in other disciplines); therefore, dance faculty may be more familiar with the realities of the labor market than they are with the philosophical and democratic underpinnings of a liberal arts/humanities education.

Furthermore, because dance faculty tend to teach across degrees, with students in BA, BFA, and even MFA programs participating in the same courses, it can be difficult to parse out the nuances of curricular or pedagogical approaches that specifically relate to BA programs. That said, I employed a number of strategies to ensure this study was rigorous and credible. Although the intent was to focus on dance faculty’s general understanding of collegiate dance in relationship to the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime, literature on this subject would be furthered by an investigation of the nuances in faculty approaches to BA, BS, and BFA curricula and pedagogy.
Considerations for Credibility

Previously conducted semi-structured interviews with a broader sample of collegiate dance educators in a pilot study provided an opportunity to triangulate the data analyzed in study II and helped me to narrow the scope of my questions in the interview protocol. In addition, I used member reflections (Tracy, 2010) to provide validation of my interpretation of language. The concomitant nature of data analysis steps in IPA assured constant comparison of codes and emerging themes. Peer debriefing with my faculty mentor provided opportunities to process the messiness of data analysis. As per study I, reflexivity is central to IPA, and I thus used a researcher journal that provided an audit trail for high-level thinking on the study and its various elements.

In addition, two elements of Milner’s (2007) framework (i.e., researching the self and researching the self in relation to others) drove considerations of race, community, and culture in this study. According to Milner, researching the self involves a particular kind of reflexivity that centers a scholar’s racial and cultural heritage in the work so as to acknowledge the seen, unseen, and unforeseen dangers of replicating oppressive practices. To that end, I made consistent efforts to revisit my statement on spatiality referenced in the opening of this dissertation and used my research journal to engage on Milner’s guiding questions, such as, “How do I negotiate and balance my racial and cultural selves in society and my research?” (p. 395).

Summer 2020’s racial unrest as well as the denouement of the Trump Administration and the subsequent storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, all against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic that has disproportionately affected communities of color, led me to examine my understanding of privilege and Whiteness across my personal and professional lives.
in ways that regularly caused me to feel guilt and shame. At the best of times this research felt like my “imperfect offering” to a world in need of new voices—my way to “ring the bell that still can ring,” as Leonard Cohen so beautifully articulated. At other times, my scholarship felt like a poorly rendered and petty critique of systems too complex to understand or unravel. At these moments I was reminded (frequently by my faculty mentor) that the concept of paradox, which undergirded this entire dissertation, captures the very complexity I was intuitively resisting in an attempt to find stable ground in uncertain times. My inner conflicts also reflected a desire for concrete answers to questions that thwart us in our search for a more equitable and just society.

As is the case with researching the self, key to researching the self in relationship to others is critical race theory and the recognition of the researcher’s interests compared to those of the study’s participants. Specifically, researching the self in relationship to others engages a number of guiding questions, including the following: “How do I negotiate and balance my own interests and research agendas with those of my research participants, which may be inconsistent with or diverge from mine?” (Milner, 2007, p. 395).

One example of my research of self in relation to others can be seen through my experiences interviewing two faculty in particular that provided disconfirming evidence of themes that emerged in data analysis that are presented in this study’s findings. Sonja, from Bright City University, identifies as an African American woman and is a recent BFA graduate. At the age of 23 years old, this is her first university position. In speaking with Sonja, I was reminded of the buoyant enthusiasm I felt when I first began teaching as an adjunct at my own institution. At the time, I was so grateful to be “invited to the party” that I never thought to question the economic and socio-political forces that perhaps made me vulnerable to exploitative
labor practices. Subsequently, I have spent many years devoting unpaid “service” to my academic unit, although that service is not outlined formally in my contract and is explicitly downplayed for my rank in my faculty handbook.

These early experiences in the academy have been forefront in my mind 15 years later as the faculty at my institution recently unionized and have been going through contentious collective bargaining negotiations with upper-level administration. Discussions on faculty contracts have surfaced the very issues related to workload that I explored in this study. During my interview with Sonja and in my reflections afterward, I found myself projecting a youthful naïveté onto her responses to various questions and it was difficult for me to hold my cynicism of the perceived precarity of her position in check, despite the fact that Sonja herself did not convey any dissatisfaction with her position and in fact felt supported and empowered by her administration. Inextricably linked to this was my own understanding of Black and women faculty’s historical marginalization in institutional settings.

Ironically, I had similar feelings as I listened to Taryn, the Deputy Chair, BA Coordinator, and MFA Director of her program at Clear Peak State University. A mid-career professor, Taryn maintained that the 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% service division of her labor was a good balance. However, I found myself marveling at her ability to juggle the many roles she outlined, from advising incoming freshmen, addressing student and parent complaints, and coordinating the MFA, to managing faculty, teaching two or three courses each semester, grant-writing for guest artist support, and developing curriculum for the BA and BFA programs. I became particularly suspect of her institutional status when Taryn mentioned that despite attaining her PhD, publishing a book, editing a respected academic dance research
journal, and serving on the board of a notable dance foundation, she was initially denied full professorship for “not being [at the institution] long enough.” I could not suppress a sinking feeling that a similarly grueling pace—4 days a week on campus and one off-campus research day—must be the fate for any ambitious dance educator hoping for a leadership position. Taryn admitted that the past 2 years had left very little time for scholarship, and I found myself suspiciously wondering what other implications a workload like the one she described would have for personal relationships, motherhood, mental health, and burnout.

A Note on Institutional Prestige and Status

Moving into this study’s findings warrants a note on how I operationalized concepts related to prestige and status, as these ideas are complex. To begin with, in the neoliberal parlance, prestige and status have come to be associated with organizations external to higher education, such as U.S. News and World Report and the Academic Rankings of World Universities (ARWU). To some degree, these reporting agencies have replaced accrediting associations and have created ranking systems that reinforce the fusion of education and consumption by influencing funding resources, including tuition dollars (Bastedo & Bowman, 2010; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Although the arts are recognized as distant from the new global economy, a robust on-campus arts scene can signal a valuable type of cultural prestige that serves an institution’s image. Additionally, in the case of dance education, regardless of institutional rank, schools that maintain notable theaters such as The Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University; The Freud Playhouse at the University of California, Los Angeles; or the Henderson Auditorium at Anderson University in Indiana, can confer a degree of cultural prestige on academic dance programs that elevates their status within the dance community.
Dance programs may have significant financial resources simply because they are housed at wealthy institutions. On the other hand, many faculty regard dance programs as low-resource units despite other factors that determine institutional rank more broadly. In acknowledgement of this complexity and of the prestige economy that reflects institutional segmentation, I generally refer to dance programs as being either highly resourced or low/under-resourced, except in cases where faculty saw institutional rank as having a major impact. Disciplinary status and prestige are used interchangeably to articulate issues related to segmentation and dance programs’ internal relationships with other institutional units.

Findings

This study’s research question drove the investigation into dance programs attempting to educate students for both post-college employment and for civic engagement. I designed the study to specifically gather faculty perspectives on the varied contexts in which such programs operate and to focus on disciplinary status as well as faculty roles and responsibilities. Findings presented here first revisit evidence of the ouroboros found in study I through the lens of dance faculty. The sections following are used to explore (a) faculty perceptions of institutional segmentation/disciplinary prestige, and (b) common programmatic structures that affect faculty’s entrepreneurial role in furthering dance education at the collegiate level. Specific attention is paid to distinctions between highly-resourced and under-resourced programs. Findings further lead to a discussion in which I re-engage the symbiosis metaphor to make meaning of the data.

Revisiting the Ouroboros

This study’s findings extend an understanding of the ouroboros in that dance faculty generally confirmed that they saw themselves educating students with broad goals in mind. In
addition, programs that emphasize education for individuals pursuing dance-related careers post-graduation often do so in a way that diverges from the professional model’s singular emphasis on classical ballet and modern techniques. Sally, a professor and chair of the dance department at Burn Aurum University, stated:

Key words are “individual” and “artist.” [Our program] gives knowledge and enhances—you know—technical proficiency, no matter where [students] find themselves, whether it’s teaching, consulting, advocating, performing, or going to graduate school for research. But also, to add various elements . . . and information that’s funneled through various groups of people—cultural groups, racial groups, ethnic groups, socio-political groups—aids in the development of what we call dance.

Josephine, an assistant professor at Clear Peak State University, also acknowledged the broad functionality of a dance education:

The mission is yes, to create an artist that is infused with value, justice, confidence. That comes in a skill set that will allow them to navigate any scene . . . as a continued MFA PHD student, a performer, a maker, a supporter, a consumer—the breadth of the art community . . . I think there is an enormous amount of support and instruction that’s catered towards those who really actually are our administrators but might not know it yet, or really are our presenters and might not know it yet, or really are our producers, or really are our consumers and might end up being dentists, you know? So—I’d say that the mission is to give a broad range and support each person’s individuality—individual arc.

Whereas Sally and Josephine acknowledged the multiple post-college pathways a dance major might take, there are also those who see a reclamation of a liberal arts ethos in the future of dance education. Rather than producing highly skilled professional dancers in any context, educators in this group were more concerned with developing embodied thinkers.

Nia acknowledged the difficulty of dance work post-college, stating, “Dance has always been so undervalued in this culture, you know—as a career path” (Nia, professor of the practice, Southern Queens University). However, she went on to say:
Dancers have had to be incredibly creative. Dance—you know—sets you up for thinking creatively. Living creatively . . . I think that dance teaches us that embodied creativity is valid wisdom. You’re kind of setting a foundation to be able to problem solve. So, I feel like we’re kind of training the students who said, ‘Yes, I want a liberal arts education,’ to be able to use creative tools in whatever direction they end up going . . . You know, everyone needs this embodied knowledge . . . And we’ve got some pretty huge problems that aren’t just going to be solved by left-brained thinking. (Nia, Professor of the Practice, Southern Queens University)

Within these faculty comments are echoes of the public good versus private good debate over dance education that reverberate through the changing landscape of a more diverse professional field. Attempts to link these seemingly contradictory concepts continue to provide evidence of the ouroboros and I use the following sections on quasi-markets and entrepreneurialism to look more closely at the various dance contexts in which the ouroboros functions.

**Quasi-Markets: Segmentation and Disciplinary Prestige**

As a performing art within the humanities, dance programs are likely to exist on the margins in higher education as Rosinger et al. (2016) noted. This study illuminates the complexity of relationships between dance programs and other institutional units, extending Taylor et al.’s (2013) and Osley-Thomas’s (2019) research on quasi-markets introduced in the opening chapters of this dissertation. Regarding segmentation and disciplinary prestige, two themes emerged: (a) the performative nature of dance dovetails nicely with the academic capitalist value of marketing institutional values, which occasionally translates into increased dance program funding, but often does not; and (b) dance culture tends to perpetuate a subversive and sometimes problematic preference among faculty for existing on the margins of university life.

Data in this study show university administrations recognize that dance programs check many of the boxes required for effective marketing campaigns, such as diverse student and
faculty populations and engagement in dynamic activity. Dance performance, with its roots in the professional model, makes for glossy images that can convey racial harmony as well as an institution’s cultural spirit, as shown in study I in this dissertation. Furthermore, at high-ranking colleges and universities, dance’s visibility may represent core pieces of organizational identity and prestige that are secured by individual or private funding. This scenario can subsequently protect programs from quasi-market churning.

For example, Taryn described a scenario in which the university president deeply valued a particular work by the iconic modern choreographer Paul Taylor:

[The President] said, “You should be doing rep like this all the time.” And we said, “Well, it’s a $10,000 piece. We only did it because we had a [National Endowment for the Arts] grant.” So, then she began directing more money through the Dean’s office to support bringing in master choreographers. (Taryn, professor, Clear Peak State University)

The implication is that Taryn’s dance program operations are somewhat dependent upon the good graces of a particularly powerful individual. Susan, from Southern Queens University, stated:

[Our institution] is very wealthy. And I was surprised in 2017, when I applied—as other dance programs were disinvesting and creating these, like deeper contingencies—[We] built a $50 million dance space and launched a 3-year [major professional ballet company] residency and continued to boast a partnership with the [major dance festival] and were like very dance forward. And I was like, “Where the hell is this coming from?” You know? And of course, as one might expect, it is coming from private sources. (Susan, professor of the practice, Southern Queens University)

Susan went on to articulate the tensions that were inherently surfaced by this funding model as dance educators tried to dismantle hierarches and expand dance contexts beyond Western concert dance elitism:

This is a very specific kind of money . . . Because epistemologically, we’re trying to move away from the concert [patron/private funding] model, but the resources want to
protect that model, or at least protect those cultural values . . . Private money is tricky and private institutions can be sneaky. (Susan, professor of the practice, Southern Queens University)

Unsurprisingly, the relationship between program visibility and funding at lower-status institutions looks very different.

Sally acknowledged that though “recognition from the President or Provost makes [her work] worth it,” she was unlikely to get increased funding from her administration and needed to therefore devote considerable time and energy to building up the very patron base that Susan was more interested in dismantling (Sally, professor, Burn Aurum University). Sally went on to state, “You can’t solely focus on one stream of revenue, and you’re not guaranteed that. Like 30% of everybody’s budget is just to keep people employed. What I can do is continue with building that patron connection” (Sally, professor, Burn Aurum University).

Francesca, an adjunct from University of San Rafaelo, also cited a disconnect between her administration’s promotion of dance program values and resource allocation in relationship to an institutionally sponsored intergenerational dance company she runs. Although the program is directly aligned with the institution’s religious mission, the funding structure remains hidden and changes from semester to semester. For example, the dance company is sometimes run as a 4-credit hour course, sometimes as a co-curricular club, and sometimes as an independent choreography project. For each structural iteration, Francesca earns a different fee for her work. In addition, despite her adjunct status, Francesca is expected to maintain the company during the summer, which is outside the academic calendar. This work goes beyond her contract with the university, yet instead of being formally paid by her institution, she must solicit donations from the participating dancers in the ensemble. Francesca stated:
[The program] has been at USR for 14 years and it’s actually used so much as a poster child for our program because . . . it has this aesthetic—this visual aid—of all bodies moving together, right? And so, it can sort of be put on a platform that way. But then I’m getting paid very little money to do it right. (Francesca, adjunct, University of San Rafaelo)

The above findings support that the marketability of dance programs and the cultural prestige an institution might derive from them do not always translate to sustainable funding structures. Further, when a program’s visibility does result in funding, that funding is often expected to come out of the pockets of wealthy private donors external to the institution rather than from sources within the institution itself.

Another element of segmentation and disciplinary status is potentially related to the culture of professional concert dance itself. This is a culture that tends to idealize the socially marginalized “starving artist” archetype and romanticizes the notion of sacrificing all for one’s creative pursuits. Nia described this phenomenon as follows:

I am more of a rebel child. You know, I like kind of being on the outside . . . but it’s like a lifetime evolution. You can be the wild child teenager, but you know—at some point you might want to think about growing up and being a responsible adult . . . I liked being where we were. I liked carrying a little chip on our shoulder like, “We’re not appreciated here.” But then yeah—when you’re actually appreciated, then you have to kind of step up and deliver, you know? (Nia, professor of the practice, Southern Queens University)

Nia’s commentary suggests outsider status can provide a sense of autonomy and freedom while serving to build community within an individual dance program. Further, more visibility might bring with it unwanted institutional scrutiny and accountability.

On the other hand, an outsider identity valued among dance faculty might also undermine actual power within the bureaucratic structures of higher education. Francesca commented on this phenomenon:
This is normal from our world, right? It’s normal to just bend over backwards and make it work and not get worried about what [a job] is going to pay. And I’m just so over that cultural part of what we do. That’s not consensual boundaries. Those are non-consensual boundaries. That’s a toxic relationship because it’s a really inappropriate power dynamic. Because it’s also like, “Well, why do the sports teams have millions of dollars and we’re like struggling to get by as the arts department?” (Francesca, adjunct, University of San Rafaelo)

Susan further linked dancers’ outsider status and segmentation to academic freedom and scholarship, stating the following:

First of all, there has to be parity between artistic practice and academic work, which I still think we struggle so much with in our field. Then on top of it we need the flexibility of [financial] support, so you can actually be a practicing artist in ways that are about artmaking and not about the bureaucracy of assimilation. (Susan, professor of the practice, Southern Queens University)

Faculty comments here show that the academy continues, to some extent, to support archaic hierarchies of knowledge that privilege some disciplines/programs over others. Further, dance faculty can be complicit in this system to preserve a kind of renegade outsider status. However, segmentation can lead to different entrepreneurial behaviors that negatively affect faculty’s relationship to their home institutions by keeping dance siloed as an academic discipline and maintaining its marginalization on an institutional scale.

**Common Programmatic Structures and Faculty’s Entrepreneurial Roles**

This study confirms L. Green’s (2008) and Risner’s (2010) speculations about dance programs being expensive to run. This economic reality can open the door for exploitative labor practices and can also result in faculty embracing an entrepreneurial spirit in terms of student recruitment. A primary example of this was raised in study I and can be found in the common practice of artificially assigning low credit hours to applied skills dance technique courses. To illustrate, in many programs, a dance major will take an advanced contemporary technique
course 4–5 days per week for 1.5 hours per day every year they are in a BA program. Subsequently, applied skills courses involve a high number of faculty contact hours per week with students—contact hours that would normally imply 3 credit hours’ worth of labor in other academic disciplines. However, dance courses are commonly listed as half credit or 1 credit courses. The artificially low credit hours are assigned because students cannot be expected to continuously pay limited tuition dollars toward the repetition of high credit hour courses as many times as needed to achieve technical proficiency in dance; the physical repetition of movement tasks requires consistent practice (as in athletics) to result in the level of advanced performance touted within the professional model.

Nia described the decision to assign low credit hours to applied skills courses at her institution, stating, “It was kind of a practical decision because students could then fit in that technique class where we had this special category—a one half credit course. It was just—you know, a way of helping people to dance when they’re doing all these other things” (Nia, professor of the practice, Southern Queens University). Functionally, low credit hour dance courses are also attractive to students outside a dance major and serve to boost program enrollment. Francesca stated:

Full-time faculty members probably advocated for this within the university in order to get more enrollment because of the computer science major students. Students in any area of study—they might have one [credit] available, but not two. And they might be willing to fill that one [credit] with a hip hop class on a Friday morning. If we make [the course] two [credits] we’d be limiting ourselves. (Francesca, adjunct, University of San Rafaelo)

Dance program faculty have seemingly discovered that in order to attract and retain students, their courses must fit within a particular credit hour distribution regardless of the labor involved in delivering curricula.
One consequence of this system is that low credit hours artificially keep some dance
faculty at adjunct status. For example, Sonja, an adjunct at Bright City University, teaches up to
five courses per semester but is only paid for seven academic credits. Full-time faculty are
similarly affected by credit hour distribution:

We essentially got used to kind of teaching an overload, you know? So that just kind of
became the norm in the dance program, and so I think there’s—there’s still negotiation
happening around that. And, you know, the conversation still comes up on whether we
should make technique classes full credit. But then there’s always that fear that students
aren’t going to sign up because they don’t have space [in their schedules]. (Nia, professor
of the practice, Southern Queens University)

The pressure to boost enrollment numbers is related to a specific brand of entrepreneurialism that
has implications for different faculty ranks at institutions maintaining varying degrees of status
as the following paragraphs demonstrate. Specifically, across institutional type, a number of
comments echoed Leopold’s (2007) suggestion that faculty must be skilled in management,
branding, and marketing when it comes to course development.

For adjunct faculty or faculty in lower-status institutions, the pressure to successfully
market courses is motivated by a lack of job security. Mama stated, “[Protections] don’t exist . . .
there’s no security. So many things happen, I have a plan A, B, C—what I’m going to do and
how I’m going to do it” (Mama, adjunct, Clear Peak State University). Ultimately, the burden of
recruiting for courses can be overwhelming and has the capacity to create a somewhat
disingenuous relationship with students as Francesca discussed:

I feel like a car salesman. I’m like constantly trying to pull kids in and get more numbers
and get more numbers. It’s just like constant, you know? Constant, constant, constant . . .
I would say it’s a part of my unwritten administrative responsibilities as an adjunct—sort of
herding cats, getting butts into seats. That sort of thing. Since enrollment is how I get
paid, if I cultivate meaningful relationships with students and I really show up for them,
it’s more likely that either they or a friend of theirs will sign up [for a course]. So, it turns
everything into car sales—like really gross. (Francesca, adjunct, University of San Rafaelo)

Francesca’s commentary on the unacknowledged labor and the socio-emotional investment in students as a pathway to the necessary boosting of course enrollments was echoed in Sally’s statements:

Our workload is, you know, 10 times more than what is expected of our contract. I teach every day, 5 days a week, oh, my goodness. And you probably know that some of your professors teach, you know, twice a week. Yeah. And also, on top of that—recruiting. (Sally, professor, Burn Aurum University)

In under-resourced programs, entrepreneurialism appears to be driven by scarcity and a sense of precarity, whereas at high-ranking institutions programs are more likely to be well-funded by private dollars and more space is created for faculty’s practice-led scholarship, which often leads to robust DEI efforts. In those environments, faculty see entrepreneurialism differently—as a signal of professional prestige, a model for the real professional dance world, and a way to shape that world to reflect more diverse perspectives.

For many professional artists, teaching in institutions at which there are renowned presenting theaters on campus has become inextricably enmeshed with greater recognition in the field. Thus, achieving a tenure-track position at such an institution is itself an entrepreneurial endeavor that speaks to developing an individual brand, marketing one’s artistic value, and negotiating lucrative contracts. Josephine said:

And at some point, it was brought to my attention that as a maker, as a woman—though I am highly decorated in awards—the pay negotiations that my managers have to do for me were going to become harder and harder. And I had felt this coming as the American art-making community was becoming more and more distinctly tied with academia. I heard that advice very clearly. The corporate American dance training system is a contract that we’ve deemed important because our artists—the artisanal nature of making and preparing artists—has become folded into the academy for positive and negative reasons. (Josephine, assistant professor, Clear Peak State University)
Josephine’s comments suggest a new profile for dance faculty that is far removed from Risner’s (2007) description of the university dance instructor who is significantly isolated from the professional world and is more in line with Risner’s (2010) recognition of the highly productive faculty member who maintains close ties to the industry. Importantly, the hiring of entrepreneurial-minded faculty is intended to draw talent and funding to university dance programs. However, beyond the entrepreneurial clout associated with an elite well-funded dance program, there is the changing nature of work in the professional dance world itself.

Josephine went on to articulate how changes in professional dance must necessarily influence curriculum and pedagogy. The understanding is that a dance education prepares students to be independent contractors working project to project rather than as salaried employees of dance companies. As Josephine stated,

I’m extremely present in the industry in the commercial and in the nonprofit dance worlds, and so I see why I’m here. I absolutely understand what I’m offering to the students in terms of the reality of life in a COVID making world . . . I’m with very caring people and people that really believe in preparing these students to the best of their ability. We’re also preparing them for really, the very changed markets and making sure that everyone understands that the project and the piece-based model is the industry that they’re entering into. Companies are the minority and the most regulated. The freedom and the space to be a full performing arts person is within the project/film-based models. (Josephine, assistant professor, Clear Peak State University)

Mama agreed that “not many people get into a company,” but emphasized that as a teacher he wanted his students “to make money,” have a career, and pay the bills (Mama, adjunct, Clear Peak State University). The outcome of this philosophy is a shift away from the traditional professional model, with its curricular emphasis on ballet and modern, to a focus on more diverse entrepreneurial skills for students. As Sally stated:

I mean, we’ve always been taught to develop your brand. Not necessarily on social media because we didn’t have it at the time, but you’re developing yourself and how you want
to be presented. So, it has just become very natural to impose that type of development. (Sally, professor, Burn Aurum University)

Entrepreneurialism functions in myriad ways at various institutions and with a variety of implications for faculty. Commentary also supports that these skills are being passed to students as part of a holistic dance education. Implications for this trend toward entrepreneurialism are discussed in the next section. The following discussion revives the concept of symbiosis as a metaphor for bureaucratic relationships and specifically addresses circumstances in both highly resourced and under-resourced programs.

**Discussion**

Higher education scholarship is limited on the ways in which faculty in discreet disciplines experience and perceive academic capitalist forces. To that end, I designed this study to investigate dance faculty perceptions of roles, responsibilities, and disciplinary status in relationship to the dual function of higher education represented by the ouroboros. Of note, faculty are passionate about articulating both the necessity of career preparation and democratic outcomes as functions of dance education. That said, pragmatism rules with regard to particular structures that allow dance programs to recruit and retain students; this pragmatism often leads to entrepreneurial behaviors that reflect an emphasis on college as a private good.

Still, the findings in this study shed light on dance as a divided discipline that supports both learning for the labor market and learning for democracy as elements of the academic capitalist and public good knowledge/learning regimes. Dance programs also contain additional paradoxes. For example, dance programs are both expensive and considered low-status units within a variety of institutions; further, dance programs are distant from the new global economy and yet they signal cultural and institutional prestige. In addition, though faculty believe deeply
in the work they do, they also grapple with the common neoliberal stance that dismisses dance as an essential embodied practice. Subsequently, some educators operate by making do with what limited resources they are offered by their administrations—squeaking by on grit, sacrifice, self-reliance, administrative savvy, and the determination to survive. Given these factors, dance faculty’s lived experiences can contribute to our understanding of how complex systems of resource distribution and segmentation shape institutions.

To capture the significance of disciplinary segmentation in various contexts, I apply the metaphor of symbiosis to dance programs’ relationships with administrative bureaucracies. For example, entrepreneurial faculty in both high- and low-resource units engage in the symbiotic aspect of competition for visibility, status, and money. On the other hand, high- and low-resource units also perceive the entrepreneurial role of faculty very differently, so the remainder of this discussion focuses on what I am defining as the “entrepreneurialism loop” in high-ranking institutions and “enrollment entrepreneurialism” in low-status institutions. Included in this discussion are recommendations for practice.

**High-Ranking Institutions**

The visibility of dance programs at high-ranking institutions, whether in the centrality of physical structures (e.g., theaters, arts buildings/dance studios on campus) or the use of dance imagery in institutional marketing materials, can result in the symbiotic relationship of mutualism in which case both parties (i.e., the administration and the individual dance program) benefit. For example, at Clear Peak State University and Southern Queens University, the administrations use the dance programs for cultural visibility and prestige and the dance programs attract wealthy funders through institutional connections.
Entrepreneurial faculty work to secure teaching positions at high-status institutions in which their artistic prestige serves to re-secure private funding and to recruit entrepreneurial students. Students are then required to further hone their entrepreneurial skills so as to survive in a notoriously competitive and increasingly entrepreneurial professional world. This is the entrepreneurialism loop. Dance faculty at high-status institutions with robust funding embrace entrepreneurialism as an opportunity to build their own brands and to prepare students for the realities of the professional world, which is now beginning to reflect more diverse movement perspectives. Faculty and students’ individual career aspirations as a private good are undoubtedly addressed in this model and faculty are more likely to be protected as there is adequate program funding. Funding further provides stability for programs in high-ranking institutions to reckon with the democratic (public good) outcomes of a dance education through curricular and pedagogical innovations.

Recommendations for practice within these institutions have to do with the diversification of funding streams so dance programs are not dependent on the good will of a few wealthy patrons or individual administrators who happen to love dance. To that end, these programs potentially have the space to devote more energy to transdisciplinarity (Versluis & Nicolescu, 2018) and breaking down divisions between disciplines so that various financial sources, philosophical perspectives, and methods can be authentically brought to bear on the challenges of democracy. Rather than depending on dance faculty’s assimilation within existing bureaucratic structures, this approach allows for the unique power of embodied practices to gain a firmer foothold in the academy. It also speaks to the paradox of the ouroboros in that it has the
potential to shore up support systems for individual dance programs while also engaging the strengths of many working toward the betterment of society at large.

**Low-Status Institutions**

In under-resourced programs or at lower-status institutions, the relationship between dance and higher education administrations can look more like parasitism, which is in line with Slaughter and Cantwell’s (2012) findings. In these cases, such as at Burn Aurum University and the University of San Rafaelo, administrations benefit from dance program visibility and from tuition dollars related to course enrollments; administrations, however, also limit the flow of financial resources back to the dance programs as Rosinger et al. (2016) noted. This puts increasing pressure on individual faculty to sustain their own teaching positions through the practice of enrollment entrepreneurialism. Enrollment entrepreneurialism is triggered when faculty are required or compelled to spend considerable time and energy recruiting students for their classes and is related to practices such as paying adjunct faculty “per head,” or for a percentage of each student enrolled in a course, rather than a flat fee or per credit hour. Faculty in low-resource units are more likely to be forced into this entrepreneurial role that involves hidden or uncompensated labor and that also limits faculty opportunities to engage with curricular or pedagogical innovations that potentially serve the public good.

Practice in low-resource programs calls for a renewal of the principles of shared governance and the inclusion of the most vulnerable faculty in decision-making processes. Ideally, adjunct faculty and those working in under-funded units who participate in various activities related to the organization and governance of higher education would be compensated for this kind of work so as to not perpetuate systems that exploit individuals taking on additional
labor. Barring the intentional inclusion of marginalized faculty in these processes, I recommend that faculty consider unionization. Strong collective bargaining agreements have the potential to provide more protections for the most vulnerable faculty in the most vulnerable disciplines within our institutions and can address some of the political imbalances related to the power of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime.

I also recommend that dance program leaders re-examine the practice of artificially keeping credit hours for dance courses low, as this obscures the actual labor involved in delivering quality curriculum and perpetuates a system of disciplinary inequity. One option to address this issue involves developing credit hour equivalencies that reflect dance faculty’s contact hours with students. In other words, a ballet class that meets 5 days a week might continue to be listed as a 1-credit hour course but would be recognized administratively, by virtue of the labor involved, as a 3-credit hour course and the dance faculty teaching the course would be compensated based on that equivalency. I recognize that a shift of this kind would inevitably make dance programs more expensive and would therefore require significant buy-in from administrators up the chain of command.

**Conclusion**

This study supports the conclusion among scholars (Kezar & Maxey, 2016; Rosinger et al., 2016; Slaughter & Cantwell, 2012) that the nature of faculty life has changed considerably over the past several decades. Faculty experience academic capitalism’s multiple pressure points in myriad ways and it is useful to look at faculty in terms of their relationships so as to better understand the realities of the higher education enterprise. In the symbiosis metaphor, an institution serves as an ecosystem while various parties within that institution relate to each other
as living, evolving entities. Sometimes relationships among entities are agreed upon and are mutually beneficial, and sometimes the relationships appear to be predatory, coerced, and exploitative.

The health of the relationships within a given institutional ecosystem is often directly related to the abundance of resources. In the case of dance education at the collegiate level, when there are more financial resources available, an institution’s administration and dance program can serve each other. In doing so, the relationship allows for a more balanced flow between education for the labor market and education for participation in a diverse democracy. This kind of environment also supports the entrepreneurialism loop in which faculty and students embrace behaviors that serve them individually, serve the institutions in which they live and work, and serve a diverse dance community more broadly.

On the other hand, when financial resources are scarce, faculty are driven to entrepreneurial behaviors for mere survival. Programs are able to operate because contingent faculty are exploited by curricular structures that fail to acknowledge the labor involved in teaching dance as well as the labor involved in managing course enrollment. Simultaneously, full-time non-tenure-track, tenure-track, and tenured faculty must bear the burden of heavy teaching loads and increased service responsibilities to stay afloat. This raises questions about space for scholarship and work–life balance more generally.

With these considerations in mind, future studies on dance faculty life as it relates to academic capitalist forces should more fully interrogate the funding structures that support dance education. For example, it would be useful to understand how private money, grant money from foundations or government agencies, and institutional money, such as tuition dollars, are used
and whether these funding streams work to preserve or dismantle systems that prevent creative re-imaginings of our institutions. This knowledge would also benefit other liberal arts and humanities disciplines in both high- and low-resource units.

The conclusions of study I, a qualitative content analysis of dance program websites, and study II, an IPA involving dance program faculty, lead to a pivotal moment in this research narrative as it is now time to unify the complexities surfaced in the data collected during both studies within a singular portrait of one institution. This portrait demonstrates an intentional embrace of the paradoxical nature of higher education as represented by the ouroboros and presents data in a way that reflects the embodied practices that this dissertation has heretofore revealed as meaningful for knowledge production.
CHAPTER NINE

STUDY III

THE SEEING PLACE: AN EMBODIED PORTRAIT OF A DANCE PROGRAM

This is the seeing place.

Creatively existing in this moment of lived experience.
Conducting and documenting research that feels.

Rigor, subjectivity, aesthetics, and art are not contradictory ideals...

These representations illustrate life’s complexities while providing a critical examination of the portrayed events

We’re based in Western
We lay out Western
You know
Western, Western, Western
Foundational concepts and

TECH. NIC. AL. proficiency.

Know your voice (my voice)
Your voice and who you are (who I am)
What you can do (what I do)
What you can say (what I say matters).

Even when you’re choosing another life path (I have only one).

We get you. EMPLOYMENT. (deployment) READY.

Excerpt from The Seeing Place
Created by Amy Wilkinson & Ashely Crowe
Spoken word performance by Ashley Crowe,
Sound engineering by Spencer Green
Text curated from study I, study II, and works by bell hooks and Djanna A. Hill
Introduction and Overview

My academic mentor recently reminded me about the ancient Indian parable of the blind men and the elephant. The story involves six sightless men conceptualizing what an elephant is like by touching it. Each man runs his hands over a different part of the animal and then provides a description. The moral of the tale is typically related to the notion of absolute truth—No man can lay claim to the truth of the elephant because reality is filtered through each individual’s subjective experience. For the purposes of this dissertation, I would like to offer a feminist reimagining of the parable’s ending. Instead of the six men arguing over who is correct about the elephant’s nature, the men recognize that their individual embodied experiences in contact with the elephant have value, and learning is relational. The men engage in a dialogue in which each individual is able to speak to their own understanding of the elephant so the others may collectively “see” a larger truth that would otherwise remain hidden.

I envision this retelling of the parable of the blind men and the elephant as an apt reference for the value of portraiture in critical scholarship. To begin, it honors feminist epistemology. In addition, portraiture as a method records people’s lived experiences and filters them through an artistic medium so as to capture the essence of a phenomenon that is a whole greater than the sum of its parts. The previous studies in this dissertation are like two of the blind men feeling their way over different parts of the elephant, which in this case is the relationship of academic capitalism to collegiate dance programs as an example of the ouroboros in action. The following portrait fully represents the dialogue between study I and study II and provides a more integrated imagining of the elephant. This rendering yet again surfaces the ubiquity of paradox. As Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) stated, “A persistent irony recognized and celebrated by
novelists, poets, and playwrights is that as one moves closer to the unique characteristics of a person or a place, one discovers the universal” (p. 12).

This dissertation’s design, with its portraiture ending, enabled me to draw on two additional metaphors: protein synthesis and jazz music. Similar to the concepts of stratigraphy and symbiosis used in study I and study II, the first metaphor comes from natural science. In biological systems, protein synthesis is necessary to sustain life and requires a series of prescribed steps—amino acid transcription, translation, and post-translational events—that lead to the creation of functioning protein molecules. In brief, each step is an integral part of the process, with the first two steps resulting in a two-dimensional synthesis of genetic information. Notably, it is not until the third step that the protein becomes three-dimensional and is capable of full function. In the same way, studies I and II served as steps in my research process and provided the pivotal information needed for study III. Study III’s portrait in dance film, entitled *The Seeing Place*, renders the information 3-dimensional, literally in a physically embodied form. Of note, the title of the work engages the concept of sight in two ways: both as the “seeing” that is referenced at the end of the feminist re-telling of the blind men and the elephant parable and as an acknowledgement of the Greek translation of *theater* as a “place to behold” or to witness one’s own experiences as well as the experiences of others.

Significantly, portraiture is often produced as a text-based document as in Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (1983) seminal work *The Good High School*, or in Hill’s (2005) “poetic portraits of three academics as teaching afriographies” (p. 96). This study on dance and academic capitalism draws explicitly from Dixson et al.’s (2011) work, which links portraiture to a jazz methodology; “The notions of context, relationship, and emergent themes are related to the idea of ensemble
playing and improvisation” (p. 112). As Dixson et al. (2011) stated, jazz methodology is also “part of an epistemological turn toward research that is situated, contextual, and inherently and explicitly political” (p. 21). Importantly, study III positions dance film as kinesthetic poetry in that movement, as a language, is malleable and stylized so as to communicate something stripped down or essential about the human experience. As Snowber (2012) contended, dance connects “writing from the body, where the words dance, and we can dance our words, and ultimately the body is let out, opening a way of theorizing through flesh” (pp. 54–55).

Philosophically (the parable of the blind men and the elephant), in terms of research design (protein synthesis), and procedurally (jazz methodology), this dissertation, which concludes with portraiture, extends our understanding of the academic capitalist forces at work in undergraduate dance programs. Together, I used the studies to examine evidence of the ouroboros as it functions to promote learning for the labor market and learning for informed engagement with democracy. Funneling down through an examination of 12 dance program websites, to interviews with faculty from five programs, to a deeper dive into a singular program allowed me to pursue what Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) touted as the universal within the particular.

Study III’s research questions draw explicitly on data analyzed in studies I and II. These first two studies led to the identification of a BA dance program that exemplifies the vision of the ouroboros. This program demonstrates an intentional embrace of the paradoxical nature of higher education and data show learning for professional work while also supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion as a public good in opposition to the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime. The research questions driving this study were as follows: (a) How does one dance
program embrace academic capitalism in terms of learning for career preparation as a private good? and (b) How does the same dance program resist academic capitalism in terms of learning for democracy as a public good? The following sections emphasize elements of the study’s research design to demonstrate the rigor of the inquiry. Specifically, I introduce the study’s inquiry paradigm and research approach along with my conceptualization of “embodied portraiture” as a new form of critical scholarship. Following this section, I outline my sampling strategy and considerations for the data source. I discuss data analysis within embodied portraiture and share extensive thoughts on how I attempted to achieve authenticity throughout the research process. I address questions of authorship and provide a link to the final cut of *The Seeing Place*. I conclude with reflections on the potential future of embodied portraiture as an emergent research method.

**Inquiry Paradigm and Research Approach**

Regarding an inquiry paradigm, I used study III to unite the knowledge generated in studies I and II using a feminist stance. Ladson-Billings (2000) encouraged qualitative researchers to embrace epistemological perspectives that are “multiply informed and multiply jeopardized” (p. 273) by race, class, gender, and sexuality. The distinction is made that scholars who claim marginalized identities are not burdened by difference per se, but rather, that these positionalities provide insights that can “reveal the ways that the dominant perspectives distort the realities of the other in an effort to maintain power relations that continue to disadvantage those who are locked out of the mainstream” (Ladson-Billings, 2000, p. 263). My decision to use portraiture, the selection of study participants, and the formation of the production team that
created the dance film for this study were all directly related to my interest in wrestling with the power dynamics that traditionally exist in both qualitative research and dance/filmmaking.

Of note, embodied portraiture shares a feature with performance ethnography in that engagement with movement often includes a performative element. As Denzin (2018) claimed, “We inhabit a performance-based, dramaturgical culture” and “performance is always situated in complex systems of discourse where traditional, every day and avant-garde meanings of theatre, film, video, ethnography, cinema, text and audience circulate and inform one another” (p. 4). Further, Fischer and Marcus (1986) linked the role of scholar as performer to critical research, noting that “insights gained on the periphery [are] brought back to the center to raise havoc with our settled ways of thinking and conceptualization” (p. 138). There is also this. Conquergood (1992) suggested “an ethnographic fieldworker is nothing if not a radically contingent entity: open, flexible, adaptable, and sensitive to situation, circumstance, and nuance” (p. 81). With this in mind, holding truth and knowledge lightly is useful for embodied portraitists rejecting positivistic stances. Embodied portraiture, however, must be considered as distinct from performance ethnography in three significant ways: (a) the core of embodied portraiture is knowledge that is explicitly housed in the body; (b) performance may be an element of, but is not necessary to, embodied portraiture’s processes; and (c) embodied portraiture draws heavily on Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (2005) philosophical and procedural guidance on traditional portraiture.

In terms of research approach, I used embodied portraiture in the form of a dance film that profiles one BA program’s embrace of the ouroboros. Three things in particular are significant in the use of portraiture for this study: paradox, the search for goodness, and audience. First, portraiture’s artful rendering of generalizability provided balance to the more
traditional qualitative approaches I took with the first two studies—approaches that distinctly
downplay generalizability. Further, the concept of paradox was key to my understanding of
dance programs operating in resistance to the forces of academic capitalism, with the image of
the ouroboros serving as a metaphorical touchstone.

Second, portraiture is a departure from the deficit-lens “pathology and disease” thinking
that has traditionally undergirded social science research (Dixson et al., 2011, p. 18). Instead,
portraiture relies on a search for goodness that calls on the portraitist to maintain a stance of
41). It also acknowledges inconsistencies and vulnerabilities in the ways in which study
participants “meet, negotiate, and overcome challenges” (Dixson et al., 2011, p. 18). As an
example of this, I included contradictory elements reflective of different voices in the sound
score for The Seeing Place and intentionally ended the work on a hopeful note.

Finally, portraiture provides scholars a unique opportunity to synthesize an aesthetic
gestalt and to thereby capture the attention of an eclectic and diverse audience (Dixson et al.,
2011). It remains to be seen how The Seeing Place will be received by higher education scholars
and the academic community more broadly. As Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) noted, “In
welcoming the ‘restive risk takers,’ we must anticipate that there will be those who
misunderstand, misuse, and abuse the frontiers of innovation; those who make a mockery of the
emerging forms of eclecticism” (p. 9). That said, my hope is that this work reveals the potential
of embodied practices as valuable forms of knowledge production. Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005)
also contended that “if we want to broaden the audience for our work, then we must begin to
speak in a language that is understandable, not exclusive and esoteric . . . a language that
encourages identification, provokes debate, and invites reflection and action” (p. 9). To that end, the aesthetic form of dance film allows for presentation in a number of contexts typically closed to academic scholarship—namely film festivals and theatrical screenings.

**Sampling Strategy and Data Source**

This study’s sample was purposive, determined by data collected and analyzed in the first two studies within this three-study project. Specifically, the first two studies helped me to identify which institution served as the most appropriate site to profile based on my interest in dance programs that are balancing the forces of academic capitalism against learning for democracy (See Appendix F). As Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) noted, the data sets from the first two studies also provided the rich context necessary for fleshing out the gestalt.

By mid-May 2021, I had dug into enough data generated from this dissertation’s studies on dance program websites and dance faculty to discern that Burn Aurum University’s dance program provided a mix of contradictory elements that would not only speak to the ouroboros but would also allow for colorful depth in the artistic presentation of data. The school is a private institution located in the South, within a socioeconomically and racially diverse, if not skewing politically conservative, community. Further, the program would be considered low-status or striving and is directed by a Black woman who is interested in both preparing students for careers post-graduation and diversifying the kinds of voices participating in professional dance.

Because the body itself is politicized, the dance filmmaking in study III, with its focus on the dual function of higher education, is inherently political; one of my intents in making the film was to make kinesthetic knowledge regarding racial equity visible. Therefore, as Dixson (2005) noted, I paid particular attention to creating equitable relationships between the project’s
participants and myself as the researcher. This started with my investment in the community in which I was doing the research (i.e., higher education dance programs) and my acknowledged personal stake in the study’s outcomes (i.e., moving a conversation on equity forward). I drew data for study III from interviews and documents collected in studies I and II. Specifically, interviews with three of Burn Aurum’s dance faculty served to deepen my connection to the subject of my portrait, in acknowledgement of trust built, reciprocity authenticated, and intimacy negotiated within a feminist research paradigm.

Ideally, as portraiture emphasizes proximity to the subject portrayed, I would have been able to travel to Burn Aurum University in the Spring of 2021 to experience the campus more fully. In my mind, I imagined walking the grounds with its fountains and stately white historical buildings. I could picture the tree-lined quad being crisscrossed by students on their way to classes, and I could conjure the feeling of the sweet humidity in the air. I even fantasized about the Spanish brunch I would eat at the local tapas place. Unfortunately, with COVID-19 continuing to spread across the South, the shutdown of operations that the virus imposed almost universally on campuses across the United States, and the emergence of the Delta variant, I ended up scrapping my travel plans. Although a disappointment, studies I and II provided excellent visual and textual information about the campus and its environs that I supplemented with an additional review of internet materials related to Burn Aurum and the city in which it is located. These visuals are ultimately represented in the final dance film, which includes an animated drawing of Burn Aurum’s campus.
Embodyed Portraiture: Artmaking as Data Analysis

Throughout this dissertation I relied heavily on the use of metaphor, although I am aware that in their application of jazz as portraiture, Dixson (2005) warned of “haphazardly replacing one metaphor of methodology for another” (p. 109). Presenting dance film as an embodied portrait raises some similar concerns in terms of appropriateness and was one of the great motivations for my attempt at this study in the first place. The rigor of my process was therefore dependent on the quality of studies I and II, the application of my conceptual framework (academic capitalism), the research questions asked, and my ability to apply Dixson’s (2005) guidance on ensemble work and improvisation to dance filmmaking.

Ensemble Work

Regarding ensemble work, after selecting Burn Aurum as the institution to represent in the portrait, I was able to gather the production team together for the creation of the dance film in early July 2021. This team consisted of Ashley Crowe, a writing consultant/partner and professional actor; Alysia Johnson, a professional dance artist; Sydney Sullivan, a professional director of photography, editor, and animator; and Spencer Green, a professional musician and sound engineer. I selected each member of the team for their expertise, skill, and commitment to the project’s aims. Additionally, as the whole of this dissertation involved an attempt to wrestle with my own power in institutional and creative spaces, I made sure to secure a team of individuals whose social identities differed from my own in terms of race, gender, age, and sexual orientation. As the team members’ names and roles are revealed in the final cut of The Seeing Place, I am not including the particulars of each person’s social identities in order to protect their privacy.
Coding undertaken within the first two studies subsequently provided material for an impressionistic record (akin to memos in traditional qualitative research) that was first rendered into a curated transcript (See Appendix G) and was further concentrated in the spoken word poem that accompanies Alysia’s movement (See Appendix H). Although I selected the interview text material on which the sound score was based and wrote the initial draft of the spoken word poem, Ashley Crowe provided feedback and made edits that she ultimately incorporated into her performance. Spencer Green then manipulated Ashley’s voiceover work to highlight certain elements I wanted emphasized or to add atmosphere to the piece. Sydney Sullivan’s editing and animations were intended to do the same. The collaboration among the production team members ultimately clarified major themes of the portrait and strengthened the film overall.

**Improvisation**

Dixson’s (2005) operationalization of jazz as improvisation inspired my approach to movement development, which was achieved through discussions of the text, verbal prompts, and improvised gestures by Alysia Johnson. As Dixson (2005) stated:

> Although jazz musicians may use a written piece of music as a guide, the profundity and beauty of their performance is through the act of interpretation. The interpretation is demonstrated not only through changes in meter or harmony but also in the addition of improvised embellishments to the melody through the use of breaks and solo passages. These breaks and improvisations—emergent themes—manifest in the data. Through observational or interview data, themes come to the fore that either support and enhance the researcher’s initial hypotheses, hunches, and beliefs or contradict and refute them. (p. 114)

Dixson (2005) linked Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis’s (1997) concept of emergent themes to interpretation in a way that was useful for us; our movement practice in *The Seeing Place* used text and verbal cues as a blueprint but allowed for the spontaneous interpretation of material at the moment of filming.
The process by which I applied the above concepts to the making of *The Seeing Place* can be demonstrated with the following example. There is a section of the spoken word poem that emphasizes the diversity of the Burn Aurum community. Overlapping voices tumble around each other in a way that communicates building chaos and urgency. After filming a sequence of this section with Alysia spontaneously improvising movement, I used verbal prompts encouraging her to approach her movement “as a shaman performing a ritual blessing over the community.” In the final cut, the camera lingers on Alysia’s body as she moves with sustained tenderness and grace. Rather than quick cuts that match the intensity of the sound score, the extended shot highlights a movement quality that is performed in juxtaposition to the sound. These artistic decisions were meant to mirror the ambiguity, contradictions, and complexity that were inherently contained in the data. This approach also reflects the search for goodness that was forefront in my mind as we filmed the work. As Alysia commented in our debrief session about this moment in the film:

Something about that particular section that involved physically opposing the conflict—Um, I think sometimes in conflict we forget about the humanity in all of it—in all of us. And you were speaking about wholeness and wisdom. Although I can share with people, I also felt like I was listening. And making room to see the humanity during conflict. That’s what it felt like as I was dancing. That was a really important moment for me. In this project, but also in life in general . . . Let something else deal with the conflict—whether that’s the music or the camera—but my body doesn’t always have to take that on. It already does that so much in other parts of life.

Honoring Alysia’s interpretation in this context led to meaningful reflections on the nature of embodied portraiture and confirmed for me the value of the research approach in terms of ensemble work and collaboration.
Authenticity

Maxwell (1996) defined validity as “the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation” (p. 87). The standard for portraiture is more accurately reflected in authenticity than trustworthiness or credibility as was articulated in studies I and II. Authenticity, noted Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), captures the “essence and resonance of the actors’ experience and perspective through the details of action and thought revealed in context” (p. 12). The standard of authenticity further ensures the portrait resonates with readers’ experiences by finding the universal in the specific (Harding, 2005).

Unique to portraiture is the acknowledgement and importance of the portraitist’s voice in terms of authenticity. Voice in portraiture carries even greater significance than positionality in traditional qualitative research and is identified in the following capacities: (a) voice as witness (“stance as discerning observer”), (b) voice as interpretation (sense-making), (c) voice as preoccupation (social identities, disciplinary background, axiological, ontological, and epistemological stances), and (d) voice as autobiography (“the life story of the portraitist”; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, pp. 91–103). By nature, portraiture is highly congruent with Milner’s (2007) framework of researcher racial and cultural positionality in that a balance between the researcher’s voice and the subject of the portrait’s voice is at the core of the method.

Notably, researcher voice as it is emphasized in portraiture can be directly linked to my conceptualization of spatiality and applied beyond scholarship to pedagogical practice. Although an application of this concept was outside the scope of this dissertation, collegiate dance faculty should be encouraged to consider the ways in which voice informs the learning process in terms of its mobile relationship to specific curricular content. Further, voice/spatiality might be applied
to an assessment of the labor conditions in which dance faculty and students operate. In other words, the concept of voice offers language around which to frame the disciplinary peculiarities that serve narratives of power, individualization, marginalization, and resource distribution.

**Voice as Witness: Listening**

Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) encouraged portraitists to develop the skill of listening for the story rather than to the story. To that end, rather than waiting more passively to absorb information as I did in the study II interview process, in study III I recognized my own artistic choices as giving shape and form to the story I wanted to tell. Although I did not construct the narrative from my imagination, I embraced my own role in selecting material that was then filtered through my aesthetic preferences in a way that felt cohesive to me. As I think of movement as my first language, I, as the researcher, am perhaps more visible in the final dance film than I am in either of the other forms of qualitative scholarship presented in this dissertation.

**Voice as Interpretation: Trust**

The quality of listening described above is directly related to voice as interpretation in the sense that my training and professional dance experience have engendered within me a particular confidence when working in movement vernaculars. What I discovered via this research process is that I trust my interpretive voice when it comes to artmaking, which embraces procedures that elevate intuition and nonlinear progress. I have less confidence in applying my interpretive voice in traditional qualitative scholarship, where it feels like there are more rules with regard to “doing it right” and where I have less personal experience with the accepted methods of knowledge production. This project was a reminder that I must integrate my roles as a qualitative
scholar and artmaker so as to bring my unique perspectives to bear on the challenges facing my field.

On another note, the concept of trust also evokes the feminist stance that acknowledges learning as relational. As part of the search for goodness, it was important that the participants in study III trusted me. Significantly, one of the faculty members from Burn Aurum University withdrew from study II’s IPA; however, after seeing a rough cut of The Seeing Place, the same faculty member agreed to have her interview material included in the film. Interestingly, this shows the faculty member trusted the artistic process inherently associated with portraiture more than the processes associated with traditional qualitative scholarship. Trust was also an essential component to the relationships among the production team for The Seeing Place.

**Voice as Preoccupation: Aesthetic Orientation**

The processes associated with embodied portraiture inspired a reflection on the politics inherently connected to my own body as a White, cisgendered, heterosexual, temporarily abled woman in her mid-40s. My history with dance and my social identities inevitably influenced my artistic preferences; yet these preferences also required interrogation in terms of their relationship to power and equity. Subsequently, I found myself grappling with choices in the creative process that evoked personal experiences with socioeconomic privilege, White supremacy, misogyny, elitism, and ageism. As an example, some of the kinesthetic virtuosity I thoughtlessly enjoyed in my 20s as a professional dancer has been replaced by a preoccupation with kinesthetic subtlety and nuance. Age has limited my ability to move in certain ways; however, I have gained a physical wisdom that allows me to see others more clearly. The fact of my age was brought to bear on the creative process in that I elected not to use my own body as the standard for Alysia’s
movement but asked her to physically interpret my verbal cues. Although she is an elite and virtuosic dancer, my feedback to Alysia unequivocally emphasized the purpose of the portrait rather than showing off her technical dance skills.

**Voice as Autobiography and Movement as Life Story**

Dance is still a language I speak fluently, and with this project I was able to weave my own story in with the stories of others. My history with and value of classical training led me to work with an onscreen artist who shares that bodily knowledge. Subsequently, Alysia could translate this portrait’s narrative in a way that reflected my background as well as my aesthetics, while also adding her personal stamp. The translation process here again distinguishes embodied portraiture from performance ethnography, which emphasizes the role of researcher as performer. In the case of embodied portraiture, the researcher is not necessarily performing a role, but rather allows for the authentic inclusion of their own life story within a work that is translated by others.

The process by which we arrived at the final presentation again relates to feminist epistemology in that knowledge production depends upon relationships and, in this case, given the artistic contributions of Ashley, Alysia, Sydney, and Spencer, was totally collaborative. One particular moment in *The Seeing Place* that reflects the ensemble nature of the work comes toward the end of the film. I had included the word “history” in the original spoken word poem. In her edits, Ashley changed the word to “herstory,” a word Spencer chose to repeat as part of the score. When Alysia moves through a river of words animated by Sydney, we see the word “herstory” spiral up Alysia’s body. “Herstory” in this context might refer to me, to Alysia, to Ashley, to Sydney, to the dance faculty members who participated in study II, or to countless
other woman-identifying individuals who have a stake in the story we are telling with this portrait.

**Addressing Authorship**

Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) noted the practices associated with portraiture have led “to some vexing questions about the authorship of the work and the resonance and authority of the voices that get rendered” (p. 9). I took two approaches in addressing this concern. First, I was careful to share the research process with the study participants. I began by speaking with the director of Burn Aurum’s dance program. She sanctioned the project and approved the use of Burn Aurum’s website text as part of the sound score. I also asked study II participants for permission to use excerpts from their interviews in the spoken word poem that serves as part of the text. The other way in which I addressed authorship had to do with the professional norms associated with dancefilmmaking. Once I received approval for this study’s research design from my Institutional Review Board, I was able to secure payment, through research funding, for the professional artists associated with the work. In addition, as is common practice, the professional artists are identified in the final cut of the film.

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) also pointed to an iterative and generative process of bringing “interpretive insight, analytic scrutiny, and aesthetic order” (p. 185) to data. Searching for patterns, naming convergence, and defining forms are the primary means by which the portraitist makes meaning out of the data. Follow up conversations with the study’s participants, in which I asked them to reflect on drafts of the spoken word poem, were useful in teasing out important elements of data. These took place in late-July 2021. Further, participants’ positive responses to rough cuts of the film, shared in early August 2021, helped me to feel like I
was on the right track. I also engaged in recorded discussions with the production team that collaborated on the dance film. For example, during a break in filming, I made a statement about my resistance to hearing certain politically conservative viewpoints that diverge from my own. I was thinking about rigorous or “muscular” ways to check my own assumptions about those who embrace a neoliberal stance in relationship to racial equity. Alysia’s response was particularly salient for the goal of this project:

[Diversity] can be scary because it’s just a tool also. So, if you put a power drill in front of me and I’ve never used it, that can be potentially really dangerous or harmful for everybody including myself. It’s a muscular thing—I like how you said that—to almost like read the manual and take my time with it. Look at all the parts. And also have a little bit of faith. Because a lot of people have done it and are doing it. A lot of people use power tools.

Alysia’s comments revealed to me, at a specific moment in the creative process, the potential for embodied practices to produce knowledge and emphasized yet again the necessity of centering Black voices in this particular type of storytelling.

**Findings**

In lieu of a section on research findings that is the standard for many forms of qualitative research, I am including a link to the final cut of *The Seeing Place*, which can be found here: https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/636291069. Walt Whitman (1855/2010), in *Song of Myself*, famously said, “I contain multitudes” (p. 63). Inherent in this section of the poem is the continuation of the paradox theme—one person carries within them the vastness of human experience. This dance film, as embodied portraiture, provided me with a way to make manifest the paradox of the ouroboros. Rather than focusing on the tensions between education for the labor market and education for a diverse democracy, a single dancer’s body is a political body that becomes a metaphor for the integration of these concepts in a way that conveys beauty,
vulnerability, strength, and hope. Part of my intention with the development of embodied portraiture was to center the body as a site for knowledge generation. This document is intended to serve as context for the processes associated with the method; however, reading about this form of portraiture cannot replace the experience of engaging with the embodied practice itself.

Discussion

Embodiment practitioners are preoccupied with experiences housed in the physical self. Embodiment further implies a devotion to examining bodily sensations as a way to discover awareness, vulnerability, strength, balance, connection, and empowerment. Portraiture is a research method that draws on both social science and artistic practices to produce new knowledge within a critical paradigm. In terms of artmaking, portraiture embraces an awareness of the universal within the specific. Regarding critical scholarship, portraiture roots its processes in a search for goodness and centers voices that have traditionally been silenced.

Epistemologically, embodied portraiture bridges these distinct approaches by explicitly linking the power of bodily wisdom to the values and procedures associated with traditional portraiture in a new form. As this practice develops, I expect to wrestle with the conventions of both artmaking and qualitative scholarship that might prevent embodied portraiture’s acceptance within a traditional taxonomy of research methods. Undergirding this exercise are axiological considerations of value that are applied to emergent forms of scholarship. To that end, in the remainder of this discussion I explore the implications of meaning-making associated with embodied portraiture and outline how I envision it being operationalized by other scholars.

As a point of departure, it is culturally accepted that dance artists, painters, and sculptors engage the human body as a medium through which to communicate. There is also a long history
of writers (women in particular) from Virginia Woolf to Margaret Atwood, from Leslie Jamison, Roxane Gay, and Porochista Khakpour, to Rachel Eliza Griffiths, for whom the body is a site for excavations related to the human condition. Whereas artists in many disciplines have permission to center the body in meaningful ways, much qualitative scholarship seems to insist on a hierarchy of knowledge that renders the body’s wisdom trivial. Sir Ken Robinson (2006), in his famous TED talk about education and creativity, made the following joke about university professors:

There’s something curious about professors. In my experience—not all of them—but typically they live in their heads. They live up there and slightly to one side. They’re disembodied in a kind of literal way. They look upon their body as a form of transport for their heads, don’t they? It’s a way of getting their heads to meetings. (9:44)

With embodied portraiture I am asking qualitative scholars to “get out of their heads.” Why is this important? My thought is that bodies make manifest proof of our humanity and thus have the capacity to speak in a particular way against oppression.

To state this ontological assumption another way—our bodies are the most obvious evidence of human life and actual human lives are at stake when it comes to equity and justice, as events like the Pulse nightclub shooting, the murder of George Floyd Jr., and recent anti-abortion legislation in Texas make abundantly clear. Moreover, recognizing the centrality of the body has implications for scholars in higher education specifically. As hooks (1994) noted, “Once we start talking in the classroom about the body and about how we live in our bodies, we’re automatically challenging the way power has orchestrated itself in that particular institutionalized space” (p. 137). Higher education is a place where the challenges of democracy are engaged, as I have suggested within this dissertation; given that bodies are sites where
democracy’s politics are enacted, my feeling is that there is an urgent need for higher education scholars to wrestle with the implications of bodily knowledge in multiple contexts.

Regarding the operationalizing of embodied portraiture, I see three considerations for scholars to address going forward: (a) attention to aesthetics, (b) the articulation of process as evidence of rigor, and (c) accessibility. To begin with, as portraiture intends to span the divide between art and science, it is important that embodied portraitists grapple in some way with the principles of form and design that are related to a pursuit of beauty. In dance performance, for example, these principles are regularly associated with tempo, use of space, line, musicality, and energetic dynamics or performance quality. This attention to aesthetics does not imply that embodied portraitists must adhere to the standards of critique associated with a particular artistic discipline without interrogation, only that they have a responsibility to consider how artmaking shapes epistemology.

The consideration of aesthetics brings me to the second point. Artists often tend to be reluctant to provide explanations of process alongside works of art, opting instead to let the art speak for itself. Furthermore, the procedures and outcomes associated with practice-led research can be difficult to articulate and quantify in terms of traditional scholarship. The ephemeral nature of embodied practices makes them especially difficult to investigate as the transformative experience is fleeting and cannot be replicated from one moment to the next. That said, the success of embodied portraiture is contingent upon some form of exegesis accompanying whatever creative process is used to produce knowledge. The articulation of process is important in terms of holding ourselves accountable for the intellectual rigor of our work. It is also necessary in terms of providing diverse audiences access to our thinking so that we might
provide an opportunity for more robust dialogue and calls to action in contexts where academics meet the world outside the ivory tower.

Finally, process leads to a discussion of accessibility for scholars themselves. For this study, dance film and the principles associated with jazz methodology made logical as well as intuitive sense in terms of the subject matter being explored and my own background as a dancer/choreographer. On the other hand, the study was made possible with substantial funding that I used to pay the professional artists who contributed to the film. The desire to honor the labor of working artists with fair financial compensation for their efforts raises questions about the accessibility of this form of scholarship to other embodied practitioner/scholars. This concern is particularly salient in light of the issues this dissertation raises around segmentation, disciplinary prestige, and dance faculty workloads. Though a potential hurdle to clear, my feeling is that the possible use of embodied portraiture warrants an examination of potential practice-led research funding in higher education scholarship more broadly.

**Conclusion**

This study involved a critical research paradigm with embodied portraiture serving as the primary research method. I designed the project to confront some of the challenges laid out by practice-led research that locates the origin of praxical knowledge in the act of artmaking, or in this case, in the creation and performance of a dance film. Moreover, the film itself profiles a particular institution wrestling with the forces of academic capitalism as they relate to the vision of the ouroboros, or learning for the labor market as well as learning for democracy. As an emerging discipline, embodied portraiture emphasizes the ability to use artistic processes to draw on subjective, interdisciplinary, and unexpected methodologies to generate new knowledge
(Barrett, 2004), but acknowledges the wisdom of the body in doing so. The question should continue to be, what new understandings about truth, consciousness, memory, and storytelling does work in the body produce that cannot be revealed through other research approaches?
CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

In Western political thought, the body politic has often been evoked as a metaphor through which to examine the complex organization of a society’s governing structures. For the purposes of this dissertation, the body politic also refers to the corporeal political body and the ways in which democracy acts upon or is manifested in our physical forms. Dance is the perfect place to situate an investigation of the body politic, as artistic practices draw from rich source material for expressions of the human condition and dance furthers this premise by using the body as the medium for communication. Moreover, the identification of structures that support dance as artmaking reveals much about whose bodies have worth, and what knowledge is prized, in our society. The study of higher education often illuminates the same values and yet very few scholars have attempted to link dance as an artistic medium, dance as an academic discipline, and dance as form of knowledge production in a way that speaks to the socio-political forces that are foundational to life in the United States.

In this dissertation, I endeavored to make those connections explicit by drawing on academic capitalism literature and investigating dance education at the collegiate level. Furthermore, the inquiry was driven by an interest in identifying synergistic links between education for the labor market and education for the cultivation of civic virtues. In that regard, this research was personally motivated by my own experiences as an undergraduate dance major and professional performance artist, as well as my recognition of the challenges facing students and fellow dance faculty colleagues as we navigate the realities of artmaking and academic life.
Last, the subject has taken on new significance in light of the political turmoil of the Trump era and social movements (Black Lives Matter in particular) that have moved equity and justice to the center of public discourse.

This dissertation reflects my attempt to weave together multiple interests related to the phenomenon of academic capitalism and to present them as an aesthetically unified whole. I used a three-study model to engage multiple research modalities in the pursuit of a number of questions as follows.

Study I:

- What do websites communicate about dance programs’ commitment to the professional model?
- How do dance programs support additional messages about learning for democracy in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Study II:

- How do roles, responsibilities, and disciplinary status play into faculty perceptions of academic capitalism in dance programs that attempt to balance learning for the labor market and learning for democracy?

Study III:

- How does one dance program embrace academic capitalism in terms of learning for career preparation as a private good?
- How does the same dance program resist academic capitalism in terms of learning for democracy as a public good?
I employed QCA and IPA as specific methods of inquiry for the first two studies. Subsequently, this document provides a multi-dimensional picture of how dance as a discipline reflects forces associated with the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime and balances those against a desire to promote the public good knowledge/learning regime. Findings show dance programs use a number of tactics, including disciplinary re-marketization strategies, enrollment entrepreneurialism, and the entrepreneurialism loop, to survive and thrive. Of future interest is the application of these concepts to other disciplines that embrace both utilitarian and liberal arts practices.

Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1913) stated, “The body politic, as well as the human body, begins to die as soon as it is born, and carries itself the causes of its destruction” (p. 60). This notion captures the spirit of paradox that governed the entirety of this dissertation and is captured by the image of the ouroboros. The ouroboros specifically represents two sides of the debate about the function of a college education and unifies market competition and democratic citizenship in a cohesive whole. My intention in part has been to critique the neoliberal intellectual campaign that includes a moral defense of free market capitalism. That said, this dissertation does not decry capitalism entirely; I am not interested in throwing the baby out with the bathwater by abandoning the value of individual rights and the pursuit of happiness. Still, capitalism within the vision of the ouroboros must be radically re-envisioned to support entrepreneurial practices and behaviors that serve those who have been historically oppressed. As Novogratz (2020) contended, this revolution in thinking must shift us from consumerism to connection, from profits to purpose, and from me to we.
My sense is that the paradox of the ouroboros can be applied in multiple higher education contexts as a way to acknowledge the messiness of institutional relationships more broadly. As Rousseau (1913) and the ouroboros suggest, paradox in this case implies a process of creation and destruction that is necessary for the transformation of our institutions, with the ultimate goal being a more just and equitable society within the academy walls and beyond.

The final piece of this work, an embodied profile of a singular college dance program, re-centers the body as a site for meaning making and knowledge production through portraiture as critical scholarship. In embracing a critical perspective, hooks (1994) stated:

The person who is most powerful has the privilege of denying their body . . . The erasure of the body encourages us to think that we are listening to neutral objective facts. Facts that are not particular to who is sharing the information. We are invited to teach information as though it does not emerge from bodies . . . We are compelled to return to the body to speak about ourselves as subjects in history. We are all subjects in history. We must return ourselves to a state of embodiment in order to deconstruct the way power has been traditionally orchestrated (pp. 137-139).

The neoliberal philosophy associated with the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime is particularly problematic for critical and creative scholars because neoliberalism tends to reduce nontraditional ways of knowing to identity politics while labeling emergent methodologies as corrosive to long-held values of objectivity and rationality (Barrett, 2004; Pakes, 2009). However, the undermining of these approaches ultimately dissolves trust—the linchpin of academic freedom—between institutions and the U.S. public. As recent events have shown, a cancer of systemic racism continues to wreak havoc in American lives, resulting in violence perpetrated against Black and Brown bodies. If, of all things, the academy ceases to be a place where oppression is discussed and dismantled through dialogue and scholarship, a place where equity and justice can be creatively forged within the fires of academic rigor, and a place
where the bodily repercussions of social trauma can be healed, it can no longer be an institution that serves the public good.

Consequently, another implication of this dissertation is the elevation of embodied practice as research, which potentially has implications for how scholars define mixed or multiple method approaches. Though I did not set out to attempt a mixed methods research design, the emergence of embodied portraiture here supports that the traditional qualitative/quantitative binary, like so many binaries, may be outdated. In other words, the exploration of embodied portraiture begs the question, “Is knowledge produced through numbers and text somehow more valuable than the knowledge produced by our bodies?” The body may be sublimated within an academic culture that adheres to a hierarchical (and one might argue racist and patriarchal) approach to knowledge production, but one must think of the poet Mary Oliver (2017) who so beautifully stated, “The body is – the only vessel in the world that can hold, in a mix of power and sweetness: words, song, gesture, passion, ideas, ingenuity, devotion, merriment, vanity, and virtue” (p. 80). Subsequently, not only is more empirical research needed to fully assess the current state of practice-led arts scholarship and the experiences of critical scholars, especially those of color, in performing arts programs, but new methods like embodied portraiture should be embraced and pursued as valid forms of inquiry that can shed light on the experiences of the most vulnerable among us. If research is a form of storytelling, these are the stories that must be told.
APPENDIX A

DANCE PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION REQUEST EMAIL TO IN-NETWORK DANCE PROFESSIONALS
Dear <INSERT NAME OF DANCE PROFESSIONAL>,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to you today for assistance on a study I’m pursuing as part of my dissertation for a doctoral program in higher education at Loyola University Chicago. The study looks at Bachelor of Arts in Dance programs (distinct from BFA or conservatory programs) and explores how BA dance programs balance classical training for a traditional professional performance career with diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. My goal is to determine how BA programs are helping to reshape the professional dance landscape through an expanded vision of dance education.

I need your expertise in helping me to identify reputable BA in Dance programs that are producing diverse dance artists skilled in multiple movement vernaculars (including and beyond classical ballet/modern) that are valued in concert/commercial dance. Would you be willing to send me a list of 5-10 programs you think would fit these criteria?

I know that you are likely very busy during this time, so any assistance you can provide would be greatly appreciated. More information about the study is attached to this email for your reference and I’m happy to talk more if you have any questions or concerns. I look forward to hearing from you and deeply appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Amy M. Wilkinson  
Doctoral Candidate, Loyola University Chicago  
Awilki1@luc.edu  

http://www.amywilkinsondance.com/
APPENDIX B

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING VISUAL MATERIAL FOR STUDY I
These questions about imagery/video are designed to clarify the degree to which programs are adhering to the traditional professional model and/or valuing the diversification of the field.

1. What dance techniques are represented in images/video?
   - Classical ballet
   - Classical modern
   - Post-modern
   - Jazz
   - Tap
   - Folkloric/Social dancing
   - African
   - Other non-Western styles

2. What technical proficiency is evident in images/video?

   Note - my training and background equips me with specific disciplinary knowledge so that I can look at a picture/video of a group of dancers and discern if the image represents ideals associated with excellence in training certain styles. These elements include body postures or "lines," musculature/joint articulation, qualities of movement integration/athleticism, musicality, degree of unity among the group, etc. An apt metaphor would be a writer critiquing another’s work for the mechanics of writing (grammar, spelling, punctuation, syntax, cohesion, etc.).

3. Whose bodies are represented in images/video? Are dancers of color prominently featured?
APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT
Academic Capitalism: An Arts Perspective on the Public Good

Information to Consider Before Taking Part in this Research Study
You are invited to participate in an independent research project conducted by Amy Wilkinson, a Ph.D. candidate at Loyola University Chicago under the supervision of Demetri L. Morgan, a professor in Loyola’s Graduate School of Education. Research studies only include people who choose to take part in them. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher to discuss this consent form with you, please ask them to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. We encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

Researcher: Amy Wilkinson
Faculty Sponsor: Demetri Morgan

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to learn more about how dance faculty perceive and understand academic capitalism on dance programs in university settings.

Procedures

If you agree to the study, you will be asked to:

1. Fill out an online questionnaire that captures basic information about your demographics/social identities and background (5 minutes).
2. Participate in a video interview in which you will be asked about your perceptions of academic capitalism in the academy if selected (No more than 75 minutes).
3. The research will be conducted through video conferencing software at a mutually agreeable time.
4. Read through an initial summary of the findings in a process called member-checking. This will happen during the later stages of drafting the final study. It will take no more than 60 minutes to read the findings and potentially provide written feedback (via email) or verbal feedback (via telephone) to the researcher for purposes of clarity.

Potential Benefits

You will not benefit directly from your participation in this project beyond having the opportunity to share your experiences with the interviewer. However, your work you will be expanding the literature on college dance programs. There is also the intrinsic benefit of knowing that your contributions to knowledge will be used to enhance how dance programs operate within college and university settings. Therefore, the primary beneficiaries of your
participation are other faculty and students since information gained from this project will be used to inform research and practice on campuses across the country.

**Potential Risks or Discomfort**

The potential risks involved in this project are minimal. You may experience some emotional discomfort recalling and answering questions about topics such as your experiences at your institution as well as questions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Furthermore, participation in this interview also requires you be recorded, which may create some anxiety and discomfort. If you begin to feel uncomfortable during the study, for any reason, you may discontinue your participation either temporarily or permanently without any consequences.

**Confidentiality**

- Each participant in the study will choose a pseudonym so that information gathered will be confidential.
- No individual other than the researchers will have access to information gathered.
- Information gathered (including audio taped interviews) will be saved on an external hard drive and then destroyed after transcription is complete.
- Peer debriefing is a strategy used by qualitative researchers to address bias in the research process. In this study, peer debriefing will take place after the initial round of coding and again after data analysis. Demetri L. Morgan, the faculty sponsor for this study, will serve in a peer debriefing capacity and will have access to transcribed interviews as well as drafts of the writing, so as to provide feedback to the primary researcher.
- Member-checking is a way to address participant validation. For this study, member-checking will involve providing the study participants with a summary of the findings. This will happen during the later stages of drafting the final study and will take no more than 60 minutes.

**Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Participation in the study is not expected or required. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

**You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints**

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study, or experience an adverse event or unanticipated problem, call Amy Wilkinson. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, general questions, or have complaints, concerns, or issues you want to discuss with someone outside of the research team, call the Loyola University IRB at 773-508-2689.
Consent to Take Part in this Research Study

It is up to you to decide whether you want to take part in this study. If you want to take part, please sign the form, if the following statements are true.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Have you read the study details above?  _____Yes  _____No

Do you consent to participate in this study?  _____Yes  _____No

_________________________________________________________________________ Participant Signature/Date

_________________________________________________________________________ Printed Name of Participant
APPENDIX D

FACULTY DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE
Academic Capitalism: An Arts Perspective on the Public Good

Study Information:
You are invited to participate in an independent research project conducted by Amy Wilkinson, a PhD candidate at Loyola University Chicago under the supervision of Demetri L. Morgan, a professor in Loyola’s Graduate School of Education.

Purpose of Project:
The purpose of this project is to learn more about how dance faculty perceive and understand academic capitalism and its impact on dance programs in university settings.

Potential Risks and Discomforts:
The potential risks involved in this project are minimal. You may experience some emotional discomfort recalling and answering questions about topics such as racial equity or your experiences at your institution. Furthermore, participation in this interview also requires you be recorded, which may create some anxiety and discomfort. If you begin to feel uncomfortable during the study, for any reason, you may discontinue your participation either temporarily or permanently without any consequences.

Potential Benefits:
You will not benefit directly from your participation in this project beyond having the opportunity to share your experiences with the interviewer. However, your work you will be expanding the literature on college dance programs. There is also the intrinsic benefit of knowing that your contributions to knowledge will be used to enhance how dance programs operate within college and university settings. Therefore, the primary beneficiaries of your participation are other faculty and students since information gained from this project will be used to inform research and practice on campuses across the country.

Voluntary Participation:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Participation in the study is not expected or required. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

Questionnaire Procedures:
The information you provide on this questionnaire is being collected to help me sample a diverse group of dance faculty for follow up interviews. Identifying information will only be seen by me and faculty mentors. Once you submit the questionnaire, which should take no more than 5 minutes, a number of steps will be taken to ensure your confidentiality (e.g., data will be stored on an encrypted hard drive).

I have read and understand the information above. Do you consent to participate in this study?

_____ Yes  _____ Yes  _____ No  _____ No
Please enter your information below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Middle Initial</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
<th>Phone number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Age

What is your gender identity?

What is your race/ethnicity?

What is your sexual orientation?

Do you have a disability? (e.g., physical, learning, mental, emotional, etc.)

State in which you reside

Of which country are you a citizen?

At what kind of institution do you teach?
In what kind of dance program do you teach? (BA, BFA, Master’s, Doctoral, etc.)

What degrees if any do you hold?

How long have you been teaching in higher education?

Do you currently, or did you in the past have a professional dance career?

What is your faculty rank?

What courses do you teach regularly?

____________________________________________________________________________

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.
APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Academic Capitalism: An Arts Perspective on the Public Good

Introductory Script (to be read to each participant)

Hello, my name is Amy, and I am a doctoral student in the higher education division at Loyola University Chicago. I am working on a research project that is seeking to explore how dance faculty perceive academic capitalism, or the influence of market forces, in higher education. For the purpose of this study, I am interested in how your experiences teaching dance in a college or university setting inform your understanding.

I would like to record this interview if that is ok with you? The interview will be no longer than 60 minutes and your name, or any identifying information will not be used in any reports or publications that result from this study. In addition, please note that your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary. If at any time during our interview, you want to end the conversation, please feel free to do so.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

In order to protect your identity in the study, I am asking all participants to select pseudonyms that I will use to refer to you during the study. Do you prefer an alternate name? So, now I would like to briefly give you an understanding of how the interview is going to move forward. I am curious about your teaching experiences, so my questions will help you guide me through your academic career. I’ll start with some questions about your background and then we will transition for the majority of the interview to questions about the program in which you teach – its mission and how it’s organized; your experiences with teaching, service, and creative production; and trends related to academic capitalism. Lastly, we will end with some questions that will try to bring everything together. Is that clear? There are no right or wrong answers, and this should feel like a conversation.

Great, so we will begin then:

1) Opening Questions

1. How did you come to teach dance at a college/university?
2. What were the significant experiences that led you to teach?
3. How did your training, schooling, or professional career influence your decisions to teach at the college level?

2) Questions on mission/vision/purpose

1. What is the mission of your university?
2. What is the mission of your dance program?
3. Are the university mission and program mission explicitly linked?
4. What do you think is the purpose of college dance education?
5. How does the dance program curriculum reflect what you think is the purpose of a dance education – or not?
6. What kinds of jobs/careers are your dance students being prepared for?
7. What kinds of experiences in your dance program are preparing students for those jobs/careers?

3) Reflections on organization and governance

1. How is your program organized/structured?
   a. How many dance faculty?
   b. To what extent does your program rely on contingent/adjunct faculty?
   c. What roles/ranks exist in the program
   d. In what school/college does your program exist?
   e. Does the program exist in a stand-alone department or is it linked with other disciplines?

2. How are administrative and program decisions made within your program?
3. What is your chair/director’s relationship to upper-level administration? Deans, Provosts, Presidents, etc.
4. What is your relationship to upper-level administration? Deans, Provosts, Presidents, etc.
5. Do you see these relationships as typical within your school or college? How so?
6. Can you describe how your program is funded?
7. Have you experienced budget cuts or a tightening budget in the past 5 years?
8. If so, can you describe the impact those cuts have had?
9. Have you experienced budget increases in the past 5 years?
10. If so, can you describe the impact those increases have had?
11. Does your university administration support the arts?
   a. In what ways is this evident?
   b. How visible are the arts on your campus?
   c. How popular are arts courses on your campus?

4) Workload

1. Please describe your workload - What are your responsibilities within the program?
   a. What classes do you teach regularly?
   b. How does service play into your workload?
   c. How does research/creative output factor into your workload?
   d. Has your workload changed significantly over the past 5 years?

2. How is your workload similar/different to faculty of similar rank in other departments or programs?
3. Do you have opportunities for advancement/promotion/professional development?
4. Do you belong to a union?
5. How is your contract negotiated?

5) Questions on diversity, equity, and inclusion
1. How diverse is the dance faculty in your program?
2. How diverse is the student population in your program?
3. What efforts are being made to recruit BIPOC into the faculty and student populations?
4. What dance disciplines are required courses for dance majors?
5. What dance disciplines are elective courses?
6. How does curriculum in your program reflect non-White/Western voices and bodies?
7. How does the co-curriculum support diversity, equity, and inclusion in your program?
8. What conversations around racial justice are happening in your program?

6) Reflections on academic capitalization
1. What do you see as the purpose of a college/university education?
2. Do you see your college or university as a business? Why or why not?
3. In what ways, if any, do you see your college or university in competition with other educational institutions?
4. In what ways, if any, do you see your dance program in competition with other programs or other forms of dance education?
5. Do you see the students you teach as consumers? Why or why not?
6. Are there benefits to seeing your college as a business and students as consumers? Why or why not?
7. In what ways, if any, do you see your college/university administration trying to ‘cut costs’ in order to become more profitable?
8. Do you support these efforts? Why or why not?
9. Should college/university programs that remain static in terms of growth be cut? Why or why not?
10. Do you agree with the idea that a college dance education should lead graduates to a professional performance career? Why or why not?
11. How do you see the values of capitalism or commercial forces at work on your campus?
12. How do these forces impact your program?
13. How do these forces impact your teaching?
14. How do these forces impact your creative production/scholarship?
15. How do these forces impact your students?

7) Reflections on Climate and Culture
1. How do your goals and beliefs about dance education align with your university administration’s goals?
2. What, if anything, is your university doing right to balance commercial interests with the mission and values of your college/university?
3. What are the biggest barriers to achieving your goals as an educator?
4. What are the biggest challenges facing the students in your program?
5. How do you think your program will change administratively over the next 5 years?
6. How do you think your teaching will change over the next 5 years?
7. How do you think your students will change over the next 5 years?
APPENDIX F

CRITERIA FOR SITE SELECTION FOR STUDY III
Portraiture Site Selection

The institution selected as the site for study III will be determined as data from studies I and II are collected and analyzed. The intention is to identify at least one program, of those sampled, that is intentionally working to remake the professional dance landscape in the image of the ouroboros. Criteria for site selection includes the following:

1. Dance program will be identified as high quality by recognized experts in the field.
2. Dance program will demonstrate intentional balance of educating for professional work and educating for democracy via diversity, equity, and inclusion in its messaging to the public. Evidence of this balance will be determined by study I and the examination of easily accessible materials (dance photography and performance videos, program mission or vision statements, curricular requirements, and course descriptions) housed on program websites.
3. Faculty interviews will demonstrate evidence of the program’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, regardless of pressures associated with the academic capitalist learning/knowledge regime.
4. Key dance program personnel/leadership will consent to participation in study III, will be willing to engage in follow up interviews, and will potentially provide increased access to program components.
APPENDIX G

ORIGINAL SCRIPT FOR *THE SEEING PLACE* WITH THEMES
MISSION AND EVIDENCE OF THE OUROBOROS

We’re based in Western concert dance. We lay out Western - you know foundational concepts that we know are going to provide knowledge and enhance - you know technical proficiency, no matter where they will find themselves whether it’s performing, teaching, consulting, advocating, doing research. We also sponsor other forms of dance including hip hop and various world dance offerings -

So - we really try to focus on developing the individual artist and the key words are INDIVIDUAL and ARTIST, because we feel that it’s very important especially nowadays - because the arts are ever changing. But still there are great connections to the past. And it’s important that they know their voice, who they - who they are, and what their voice can do and say and create.

Incorporate solid and demanding dance training.
Prepare for success as a creative artist, a skilled technician, and an independent thinker.
Strengthen and broaden your technique and command of the stage
While discovering the relationship of dance to other fields of study.

Some of them want to be performing artists. There are some that come in and they want to be professional dancers. Some of them want to be choreographers some want to join companies as well - quite a few people want to teach, but I would say that there are quite a few that really don’t want a professional dance career. There’s quite a few people that also want these other - other life paths.

They may not perform, but we get them employment ready. We try to focus on each individual being employable in the capacity that fits them at that moment.

I mean I’ve always been taught to develop your brand. Who you are – who you want to be presented as. Everybody has a different path.

They need to rework their Instagram. Do a whole Instagram facelift.

But I think it depends on the person and the person’s training, because one of the issues I think, is that we don’t always allow time for the body to transition into what it looks like to be a scholar and a dancer or a performer and a choreographer. That process takes time and it’s different for everyone.

I don’t think the program knows that. I think that there were no meetings about trying to figure out a mission statement since I got there. I personally brought that up several times. Like, this is something that needs to happen. But there has been a lot of transition in the leadership, kind of like right when I got there. So - I know it’s in transition and that changes happen. But I don’t
think they currently have a mission that is being communicated, you know, well. That hasn’t been super clear. It hasn’t been super clear to me.

**DIVERSITY AND LEARNING FOR PARTICIPATION IN A DIVERSE DEMOCRACY**

We’re situated in a conservative part of town, but with a mixture of racial and cultural communities and experiences. So, one thing I know that I’ve done is working on how to engage all of that community. We have prominent areas that have gotten congested, we have your new money, we have your Black side of town. That is notable – you have some really notable Black civilians. But you know – the Black side is on the other side of the railroad track literally. And you have your White population that is very much for the orange-headed guy.

And then you have a huge Hispanic population.

It’s a unique population. A lot of socio-political diversity in a small area.

We have a diverse body – racially diverse and economically diverse and internationally diverse. And their previous backgrounds. Some of them who’ve never had formal training may have a really good eye for choreography, for consulting, for directing, for managing.

Unfortunately, I think that certain programs, you know kind of put a cap on how many dancers of color that they take.

She has a grandmother that still lives there in Africa. She’s facilitated diversity and she has been welcoming of it and we’re you know, offering diverse types of movement, I mean there’s world dance, there’s African dance pieces. So especially I would say African American dancers, you know, probably like half our dancers almost. I thought this was different.

I think one of the White dancers said she liked the Black dancers better. That’s you know – the only kind of negative racial thing that I’ve heard of.

There can be a little conflict over - I would say maybe like conservative Christian thinking and some of these other issues that that’s more likely to run into that. Like I think I did a psychology workshop once, where it was on Carl Jung and “Moving the Shadow” and I - I did have like a group of students sit down and say that that was evil.

We’re just like doing some movement activities from this framework today and someone needed to sit out because it didn’t feel Christian enough.
We also did a workshop on privilege, and it was challenging. I mean it did upset – there was a mixed reaction to it. It brought up privilege in education. It brought up gender. It brought up race – financial privilege. You know some people really appreciated it and others – you know – maybe felt like it was too challenging.

But embodied practice has the capacity to break down some of those barriers on the whole. Absolutely. Overall, I’d say it’s been overwhelmingly positive.

Like our spring piece we took her piece, I mean she’s Muslim and her piece had you know just a beauty to it and, like was saying something about what it is to be human and just connections and respecting each other, and I mean I’d say that particular piece - a bunch of students who came in, with a Christian faith - You know, and just together we kind of jelled as a group that was supporting everybody’s separate causes.

We created like five pieces out of their poems because you know - and one of them was on everything that’s been going on with like the marches and the civil rights and injustice and policing and all of that. It was very personal and powerful – it came out in art.

**EMBODIMENT**

Why is it that the person who is most powerful has the privilege of denying their body?

The erasure of the body encourages us to think that we are listening to neutral objective facts. Facts that are not particular to who is sharing the information. We are invited to teach information as though it does not emerge from bodies.

We are compelled to return to the body to speak about ourselves as subjects in history.

We are all subjects in history.

We must return ourselves to a state of embodiment in order to deconstruct the way power has been traditionally orchestrated (bell hooks).

I think there’s hope.
And I think that there will be change because.
I think this is a ticket.
It’s a ticket to becoming more you and whatever that means, and the world needs more people who light up when they talk about what they love.
APPENDIX H

FULL SPOKEN WORD POEM FOR THE SEEING PLACE
This is the seeing place.

I am place. I am person.

I’m searching for goodness.

I’m searching for goodness.

Creatively existing in this moment of lived experience. Conducting and documenting research that feels.

Rigor, subjectivity, aesthetics, and art are not contradictory ideals…

These representations illustrate life’s complexities while providing a critical examination of the portrayed events (Hill, 2005).

I think well, the idea is to grow - but you need more support, and you know we’re growing.

We’re based in Western
We lay out Western

You know

Western, Western, Western

Foundational concepts and

TECH. NIC. AL. proficiency.

Key words are INDIVIDUAL and ARTIST
Because nowadays…. 

Still. There are great connections to the past.


Know your voice
Your voice and who you are
What you can do.
What you can say.
Even when you're choosing another life path.

We get you. EMPLOYMENT. READY.

Be employable.
Build your brand
Do a whole Instagram facelift.

One of the issues is - we don’t always allow time for the BODY
To transition into

Scholar
Dancer
Performer
Choreographer.

We don’t know that.
I don’t think that’s clear.
That hasn’t been super clear.
That hasn’t been super clear to me.

Everyone has a different path.

We’re in a conservative part of town.
Congested.

But it’s unique. Diverse.

She has a grandmother that still lives there in Africa.
HUGE Hispanic population.
Chicken factory.
There are really notable Black civilians.
But you know – The Black side is on the other side of the railroad track.
Literally.
Then the White population that is very much for…
There can be a little conflict over maybe conservative Christian thinking.
Like Carl Jung and “Moving the Shadow.”
They said that was evil.

It didn’t feel Christian enough.

And privilege is challenging.
I mean it did upset.
It brought up education
It brought up gender
It brought up race

But embodied practice?

I mean we took her piece – She’s Muslim – and it had you know just a beauty to it. Something about what it is to be human.

Just together we kind of jelled as a group that was supporting.

Everyone
Everyone
Everyone’s

Separate causes.
Powerful.
Personal.

It came out in art.

Why is it that the person who is most powerful has the privilege of denying their body?

The erasure of the body encourages us to think that we are listening to neutral objective facts. Facts that are not particular to who is sharing the information. We are invited to teach information as though it does not emerge from bodies.

We are compelled to return to the body to speak about ourselves as subjects in history.

We are all subjects in history.

We must return ourselves to a state of embodiment in order to deconstruct the way power has been traditionally orchestrated (hooks, 1994).

Research that breathes individuality, hears context, and sees subjects’ Lives.
Research that speaks.
Aesthetic research for a living moment (Hill, 2005)

I think there’s hope.
And I think that there will be change because.

I think this is a ticket.
It’s a ticket to becoming more you
And the world needs more people who light up when they talk about what they love.
What they love
They love
Love.
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https://doi.org/10.22545/2018/00098


VITA

Amy M. Wilkinson is a Doctor of Higher Education (PhD) at Loyola University Chicago where she is also a Senior Lecturer and was recently named a Magis Faculty Leadership Fellow. She was awarded the 2018 Transformative Education Award, the 2016 Langerbeck Faculty Mentorship Award, and was also nominated by the student body as one of eight finalists for Faculty Member of the Year. Additionally, she is the executive director of IN/Motion, Chicago’s International Dance Film Festival, now in its eighth year. IN/Motion’s mission is to celebrate diverse dance/film artists working within digital media platforms and the festival enjoys a number of partnerships with various arts organizations, including Chicago’s Harris Theater for Music & Dance, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, and the Kri Foundation in New Delhi, India.

Dr. Wilkinson began her professional performance career with the Open Door Theater in Boulder, Colorado, after graduating from the University of Iowa where she double majored in Dance and Communications. She has performed with numerous Chicago companies, including Luna Negra Dance Theatre, Same Planet Different World, and Thodos Dance Chicago, for whom she also served as the educational outreach coordinator. In this role, Dr. Wilkinson wrote, directed, and produced a physics-based touring performance, The Science of Motion - The Art of Dance that was performed as part of Urban Gateways’ programing for Chicago Public Schools. Dr. Wilkinson also served for 10 years as the founder and co-director of the Gallery 37/After School Matters Dance Ensemble, running three programs annually and serving hundreds of Chicago teens.
Dr. Wilkinson was a long-time artistic associate with CDI/Concert Dance Inc., where she collaborated on several Ravinia Festival commissions, including *Lincoln Letters* and *Salon de Mexico*; and she played a featured role in the Emmy nominated performance of *Billy Sunday*, Ruth Page’s classic ballet re-envisioned by Venetia Stifler. A solo performance as part of the Out of the Woodwork series was named one of *Rescripted*’s “best of 2018” list.

Dr. Wilkinson has choreographed many musicals, including *The Music Man*, *Oliver!*, and *Guys and Dolls*, and has set original works on contemporary companies CDI/Concert Dance Inc., Thodos Dance, Inaside Dance Company, Impetus Dance Theater, and Instruments of Movement among others. She has also choreographed numerous operas for DePaul Opera Theater and her work has been performed at local, national, and international venues, including the Ravinia Music Festival’s Rising Stars Concert Series, Dance Chicago, The New Prague Dance Festival, Nanjing China Normal University, The Istanbul Festival of Music and Dance, and a performance with the International Choir and Orchestra of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Recent projects include a cultural exchange in Havana, Cuba; numerous performance collaborations with Mandala Dance Company, under the direction of Paola Soressa, in Rome, Italy; and a dance film entitled *All* that was an official selection at more than a dozen national and international festivals.

A published author, Dr. Wilkinson’s scholarship can be found in the *Journal of Dance Education* and *Student Activism, Politics, and Campus Climate In Higher Education*, edited by Demetri L. Morgan and Charles H. F. Davis III. A recent OpEd Public Greenhouse Fellow, Dr. Wilkinson’s essays have been published in *The Hill* and the *Los Angeles Review of Books Blog* amongst other publications. Dr. Wilkinson’s research interests include political identity development, arts education, and academic capitalism.