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What Are We Rehearsing?: Transforming the Carceral Logic of Drama-based Interpersonal Violence Prevention

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What are we rehearsing?: Transforming the Carceral Logic of

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by

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Abstract

What are we rehearsing?: Transforming the Carceral Logic of Drama-based Interpersonal Violence Prevention

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Get Sexy Get Consent's temporal limitations prevent systemic change. UT Austin boasts the interactive performance, *Get Sexy Get Consent,* as the crown jewel of Theatre for Dialogue, its campus interpersonal violence prevention program. Each *Get Sexy* performance follows a precise formula that adapts Theatre of the Oppressed practitioner and theorist Augusto Boal's forum theatre exercises. However, the *Get Sexy* performance formula upholds a linear, hypothetical framework for understanding sexual violence.

Over the course of an in-depth interview process with Theatre for Dialogue facilitators, trainers, and employees, I determine ableism and carceral feminism are chiefly responsible for *Get Sexy*'s limited understanding of sexual harm. In place of *Get Sexy*'s current structure, I argue for the program to transform its conceptualization of individuality and linearity. Chapter 1 identifies the key interventions *Get Sexy* makes. Chapter 2 conducts a social movement historiography on the *Get Sexy* Program. Chapter 3 imagines how a temporal shift would open the *Get Sexy* program up to support greater healing.

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Chapter 1: *Get Sexy* Intervenes

I did not foresee the position would fall under the auspices of Title IX. Despite the

requirements of federal guidelines, which carried penalties of arrest and/or termination if

not observed, I knew I could not be a Title IX Mandated Reporter. To elaborate, I was

hired as a Theatre for Dialogue Graduate Assistant the summer before I began graduate

school. The position description indicated that I would be directing and training

undergraduate actor-facilitators for *Get Sexy Get Consent*, an interactive theatre show. I

imagined a space that would need to honor experiential knowledge, offer resources, and

story share with audiences. Imagine the ethical dilemma of my first week when I learned

I was indeed obligated by Title IX to report any suspected incident of sexual harassment,

sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking.

I oppose mandated reporting on ethical grounds. I disagree with criminal justice

as the only avenue for resolution; more importantly, I fundamentally object to having

power over a survivor to initiate a Title IX process. In those instances, Title IX processes

exist to protect the institution from liability. Title IX processes convert sexual harm into a

transgression against the institution – as a microcosmic state – instead of the survivor.

The very architecture of Title IX is carceral: the policy deprives people of agency, it

establishes the means to surveil someone, and it initiates a process of trial and sentencing.

The decision to initiate a Title IX process should be up to the survivor. Survivors

do not need agency taken from them again in a Title IX "process [that] both harms

victims and deprives them of what they need: agency after the ultimate experience of powerlessness, and healing from trauma" (Bazelon 15). Survivors need agency restored. I have been devising theatre work specifically concerning interpersonal violence for about a decade. I have always been able to sidestep mandatory reporting by being hired ad-hoc as a contractor, guest artist/lecturer, director, or program assistant.

Except I learned Theatre for Dialogue has loopholes. Public awareness events do not require mandatory reporting. This applies to the Survivor Speak Out and Take Back the Night events run by Voices Against Violence, the larger organization that houses Theatre for Dialogue. In the case of Theatre for Dialogue university courses and *Get Sexy* performances, the possibility of fiction overrides mandatory reporting. If a student in class performs a solo project in which a character discloses violence, then it is not necessary to report. It is likewise unnecessary if an audience member speaks hypothetically about an experience of violence during a performance. Connection becomes predicated on fictionality, or hypotheticality.

Facilitating devised theatre as a mandated reporter requires anticipating and avoiding disclosure. You read the cues of when someone might disclose. You intuit when someone is dealing with something and needs to get some air. In past experience, these facilitation skills lend themselves to greater connection. Under mandated reporting, signs of vulnerability act like an opposing magnet. To need support means you have to leave the space. Cue a panic attack in the bathroom during rehearsal. Or an audience member exiting mid-performance, answering a nonexistent phone call. Polyvagal theory clinician

and lecturer Deb Dana asks of trauma activation, "How did I get here?". Under mandated reporting, your "here" must be over there.

Introduction

In this thesis, I argue *Get Sexy* must expand to allow for a more complex understanding of its intervention. Its current form thinks of sexual harm in predetermined hypothetical scenarios. *Get Sexy* then rehearses interventions into alcohol use and sexual health communication in order to prevent the predetermined scenarios. In this chapter, I examine how the scenarios rely on a concept of sexual harm that is perpetrated either by (1) bad people or (2) good people because of bad things, such as alcohol or lack of consent education. In Chapter Two, I investigate how this mythologization of sexual trauma allows institutions to justify carcerality by divorcing interpersonal violence from its historical weaponization; and in so doing, abandon the individuals to the carceral state's pathways for retribution. In this chapter, I focus on the ableist, and inevitably carceral, consequences of placing sexual trauma in a hypotheticality.

To identify these consequences, I apply a disability justice and anti-carceral feminist analysis of the Theatre for Dialogue program. I refer to anti-carceral feminism and not abolitionist feminism because of the latter's historical connotations as anti-sex work (Stabile). I then analyze how fixed-by-fixing vs. broken-bad and expert vs. harm-doer are the permitted dichotomies of belonging. I describe the dichotomies in the next section. I then notate how each dichotomy shows up within the Theatre for Dialogue ensemble and the *Get Sexy* audiences. I am guided by adrienne maree brown's

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observation of contemporary disposability culture, "Your hands become sharp and your words become sharp and the only move available, even with beloveds, is bloodletting" (*We Will Not Cancel Us* 354). I do not seek to bloodlet *Get Sexy*.

To undertake this analysis, I examine the three interventions *Get Sexy* rehearses: the crisis line, alcohol use, and consent communication. I then apply the dichotomies named above to those interventions to determine the carceral and ableist ramifications of each. How *Get Sexy* arrived at these interventions is the domain of Chapter Two. Dreams of where we go from here live in Chapter Three.

I note the institutional framework supporting *Get Sexy* has many layers. *Get Sexy* is a performance-based program. Theatre for Dialogue counts *Get Sexy* among its programs. Voices Against Violence and Theatre for Dialogue are sister programs, although Voices Against Violence is larger and technically houses Theatre for Dialogue. Two separate organizational bodies – the Longhorn Wellness Center and the Counseling and Mental Health Center – together house both Voices Against Violence and Theatre for Dialogue. All of the above programmatic and organizational bodies are located within the University of Texas at Austin.

Get Sexy must expand because trauma activation cannot happen in the *Get Sexy* rehearsal or performance space. If someone is activated, they need to manage their experience somewhere outside the space unless they want to be reported. I do not argue that *Get Sexy* needs to be a process group. Instead, I argue *Get Sexy* protects a binary between disclosure and nondisclosure. Former Theatre for Dialogue Specialist Lynn

Hoare specified, "Theatre for Dialogue programmes do not invite sharing of specific personal experiences" ("Challenging Facilitation" 144).

We need to develop more tools for healing sexual trauma that do not rely on disclosure. *Get Sexy* does not invite disclosure. Programs do not need to invite disclosure to be effective. I contend programs need to set a clear, decisive expectation regarding disclosure and resources in the space. Notwithstanding, there is a difference between not inviting disclosure and being utterly unprepared to respond when a participant does disclose. Hoare continues, "If a personal example or story is shared by a participant (which happens infrequently), the comment is acknowledged and the conversation is redirected to the entire group" ("Challenging Facilitation" 144). I pull these quotes from an article Hoare wrote in 2013 about training Theatre for Dialogue facilitators. The redirecting tactic was alive and well when I began working at Theatre for Dialogue in 2019. I observed redirection that ignored disclosures. Facilitators had been trained to robotically say, "thank you for sharing," and immediately move on. Not only were facilitators unprepared to respond to disclosure, facilitators were trained to avoid being present with disclosures. Facilitators were trained to simulate presence, but to actually detach themselves from audience members.

The uniquely collaborative nature of theatre begets presence. From my theatre background, I find participants are more likely to disclose experiences of being harmed or harming someone in devising-based programs. In devised theatre, I find participants often pull from their lived experiences to create work – knowingly or unknowingly. Devised theatre ends up towing a line of not being therapy, not being therapeutic. Who makes

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profit from devised material convolutes devised theatre's healing properties. *Get Sexy* sells short the healing potential of devised theatre; instead, through the program, UT Austin preserves systemic causes of interpersonal violence while getting credit for intervening in interpersonal violence. More so than most other interactive theatre forms, I think devised theatre participants have greater agency to revisit and create ways of being within devised theatre. Theatre can transcend temporal boundaries, but devised theatre participants can steer the time travel.

Many performance studies scholars before me have been just as enamored as I with performance's temporal superpower. Scholar and devised theatre artist Jaclyn Pryor's concept of "time slips" is especially constructive, because of how Pryor uses "time slips" to trace embodiments of cultural legacy and revision of trauma histories. Pryor theorizes time can slip in performance. In that moment of slipping, a temporality outside linear time is created, "where [simultaneously] traumatic injury is visible and 'another world [and another time] is possible'" (Pryor 9). I anticipate Pryor would accede time slips hold traumatic experiences, revisionist histories, and future imaginaries simultaneously. Multiple temporalities are made visible in special moments of slippage.

Multiple temporalities are always present. Performance has a superpower of making those temporalities present – or more accurately, of making us present for multiple temporalities. To contend with multiple temporalities requires we contend with multiple truths about a single event of sexual harm. Speaking of single events, we must simultaneously shy away from considering any sexual trauma as a singular or a time-limited event. Shawn Ginwright observes "current formulations of trauma informed care

presumes that the trauma is an individual experience, rather than a collective one." I apply Ginwright's expansion of trauma as a collective experience to temporality. Sexual trauma exists across temporalities. Its catalyst is rarely new. *Get Sexy* does not conceive of sexual trauma as collective, multitemporal, and ongoing. In Chapter Two, I historicize *Get Sexy*'s conceptualization of sexual trauma as an individual emergency committed by bad people or bad things.

How disappointing that *Get Sexy* spouts preordained solutions, considering devised theatre has the capacity to rehearse co-constructive futures. Audience participants and facilitators can level in power and time travel together. Theatre practitioner and theorist Augusto Boal might wag a finger at me and tease my using "audience participant" in place of the more apt Theatre of the Oppressed "spect-actor" (xxi). I maintain audience participant as my term of choice for the first two chapters because my case study, *Get Sexy,* invites little input from attendees. They are the audience, not co-constructors. I use the term "constituent" to acknowledge the knowledge each attendee brings. Mandated reporting obstructs multiple temporalities. Under mandated reporting, traumatic injury remains invisible to avoid invoking the carceral state.

I write specifically about the dearth of resources for responding to the "living legacy" of trauma. I borrow the concept "living legacy" from psychotherapist Janina Fisher. "Living legacy" gestures toward the innate multi-temporality of survivorhood (Fisher 47). When a wound made months ago, or years ago, or lifetimes ago, is visible and the only remedy available is crisis intervention. Supplication to the carceral apparatus of emergency thinking initiates the question: "did it happen?" There is no time to wade

into "what happened?" and "what is happening?" I use the present progressive not to refer to concurrent abuse, although that is happening for some, but to gesture towards the non-linearity of trauma, its existence as "living legacy," not a past event (Fisher 47).

Mandated reporting further isolates survivors and pathologizes any need for additional support. Survivorhood becomes more taboo and individualized under mandated reporting. All the while, mandated reporting protects the carceral state's response to sexual harm and the social model of disability's conception of survivorhood. While at the 2020 Creating Change conference about six months into working at Theatre for Dialogue, my suspicions about the effects of mandated reporting were confirmed. Creating Change is the largest LGBTQ activist conference on Turtle Island. Progressive leaders facilitated and attended workshop sessions and day long institutes. My realization about mandated reporting came between two sessions: the daylong Disability Justice Institute and "Sexy Survivor," a three-hour healing workshop dedicated to supporting the ongoing healing and sex positivity for sexual trauma survivors. Both programs centered storytelling more than any other workshop I attended. The spaces were for revisiting and sharing knowledge. Mandated reporting had me policing social connection instead of being present with each other's wounding.

The social model of disability conceptualizes disability as impairment. Mandated reporting empowers society to fix an impairment: survivorhood. Permit me to unpack that paradigm shift. Through mandated reporting society awkwardly, even recklessly attempts to fix survivorhood, as if it is a condition of brokenness, rather than a natural state – the body responding to its own archive. As social model, writer, and activist Nim Ralph

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adduces, when "we name something an 'impairment'" in the social model, writer and activist Nim Ralph adduces "we still place a value judgement on something that is thought of as 'abnormal'" (Ralph). By contrast, sexual violence is unnatural. The historical weaponization of sexual violence has perpetuated sexual violence. Systems of power have normalized sexual violence. Meanwhile, rape culture abnormalizes sexual violence. Consequently, rape culture deems survivors as abnormal while preserving the conditions normalizing sexual violence.

Under the social model, sexual trauma responses are impairments. In the Radical Model, disability "'is not a point of individual or social tragedy but a natural and necessary part of human diversity'" (Ralph). Again, sexual violence is **not** natural or necessary. I take issue with the pathologization, or conceptualization as impairment, of the ways a person tries to heal themself in the perpetual aftermath of sexual trauma. Survivorhood, the ongoing healing journey for survivors of sexual trauma, is pathologized as an impairment. Pathologization is markedly palpable for complex trauma survivors. I stress that trauma responses are not impairment. They are information and ingenuity.

Psychologists Pat Ogden and Janina Fisher exemplify this shift in de-pathologizing survivorhood. They reframe the traditionally shaming dual concepts of maladaptive/unhealthy coping mechanisms versus healthy mechanisms. Instead, Ogden and Fisher offer thinking about coping mechanisms as "survival resources" and "creative resources" (298). A survival coping mechanism like dissociation or self-injury is helping keep you alive. That survival mechanism does not give one the most options though.

There is likely a more creative coping mechanism that better supports one's sense of "increasing possibility" (Piepzna-Samarasinha 323). That shift in pathologization is more in line with a radical model of disability that "rejects the idea that bodies have impairments, because an impairment is defined as against the norm" (Ralph). Survivorhood is not the impairment to be fixed. Entities that have harmed – be they institutions, individuals, or somewhere in-between – felt entitled to dominate another body. Entitlement is the impairment.

This insight that institutions, not survivors, need fixing shifted my entire paradigm for *Get Sexy*. I realized *Get Sexy* conceptualizes survivorhood within two dichotomies: fixed-by-fixing vs. broken and expert vs. harm-doer. The first options, fixed-by-fixing vs. expert, describe the state of the individual. These options are identities based on what you do, i.e. fixing or knowing. The second options, broken vs. harm-doer, judge the individual's ability to respond to survivorhood or acknowledge a capacity to harm. These second options are an identity matrix based on the harm you have survived or the harm you are responsible for. *Get Sexy* unraveled into ableist constructs before me.

LINEAGE OF THOUGHT

The theoretical frameworks most at the heart of this thesis are disability justice and rehearsal. Survivorhood felt so medical and abstract in *Get Sexy*. To borrow a phrase from movement artist and scholar Erica Saucedo, "a portal was opened" when I read Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's application of disability justice. Piepzna-Samarasinha unpacks the ableism of mainstream conceptualizations of survivorhood. I learned from Piepzna-Samarasinha's lifegiving essay-manifesto "Not Fixed, Not Over It,

And Living a Life Worth Living" that there is a mythology of a good survivor to which all survivors are compared, and by comparison are labelled broken and bad. I applied this good/bad survivor to my thinking on *Get Sexy*. From there I developed the fixed-by-fixing/broken-bad and expert/harm-doer dichotomies.

Fixed-by-fixing/broken-bad most closely resembles Piepzna-Samarasinha's theoretical framework of good/bad survivors. I deviate though in my attention to the story of cure that survivors are told about their employment in the "non-profit industrial complex" (INCITE 3). This is a story of directions to what Piepzna-Samarasinha calls the "mythic 'cured place'" (231). A survivor can be fixed, can be a good survivor, by dedicating their time to underpaid, nonprofit-housed cause work. I am employing "nonprofit industrial complex" in reference to the term theorized by radical activist organization INCITE! Women, Gender Non-Conforming, and Trans People of Color Against Violence. Broken-bad shows up in this context in elucidations that if the survivor is unable to do the work, they are not fixed. They then fall into the category of broken-bad.

The expert/harm doer is an extension of Piepzna-Samarasinha's good/bad survivor dichotomy too. However, this dichotomy applies to non-survivors. The expert is absolved of their capacity to harm. The expert holds at least some dominant identity markers. They are not primary survivors themselves, although they may be secondary or intergenerational survivors. The expert offers   an archetype for non-survivors to participate in interpersonal violence prevention without acknowledging or interrogating their capacity for harm, which I believe resides in us all regardless of survivor status. The harm-doer role shows up as a category for any potential perpetrator of harm, preferably of an identity group that is not represented in the space.

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What I write in this thesis is connected to the work disability justice advocates, artists, and dreamers have been doing for a long time. Piepzna-Samarasinha's application of survivor hood to disability justice is a major impetus for this thesis. The visionary work of disability justice performance troupe Sins Invalid, which counts Piepzna-Samarasinha as comrade, has given this thesis its ideological backbone. I intentionally invoke disability justice, not the radical model of disability, because I owe so much to Piepzna-Samarasinha's application of disability justice to survivorhood. In Chapter 3, I press on temporalities in a manner that no longer fits a model framework, so disability justice provides a better through line. As noted by AJ Withers' chronology of the radical model, "the term disability justice is used, largely on the West Coast of the United States, to radically respond to the disability rights movement" (119). The radical model and disability justice share a rejection of the socio-medical model. I link the social and medical model in this phrase because the social model preserves many tenets of the medical model. The tenets most applicable to this thesis are (1) the considerations of impairments; (2) the necessity of intervention, i.e. fixing, which the medical model places on the individual and the social model places on society.

Illustration 1: Social versus Medical Model of Disability

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New ways of being outside of the socio-medical model(s) are in the imaginations of many disability activist collectives and individuals. Nim Ralph illustrates the multiple imaginaries like that of Cachín Cachán Cachunga, Sisters of Frida, and the Disability Justice Collective. What Withers notes is a collection of shared, "fundamental tenets of the model — the necessity of recognizing and relating to intersectionality, that disability is a social construction, that the disability label is imposed as a tactic to retain power and social control and that we have to create space for each other both in terms of acknowledging our lived experiences and ensuring accessibility — remain intact" (119). While these models exist in parallel, I choose to lean more on disability justice because of Piepzna-Samarasinha's expansions of the concept into realms of survivorhood and madness.

In addition, a theoretical framework of rehearsal is integral to this thesis. I invoke Augusto Boal and Jill Dolan's theorizations of rehearsal as a praxis of collectively imagining new worlds and practicing new ways of being. Performance has a profound ability to rehearse new ways of being. Performance can also be just as easily, perhaps more easily, used to rehearse and calcify old patterns of harm. That being said, I believe that being in rehearsal is a more generative way of being. Thinking about rehearsal expands the conversation about interpersonal violence prevention beyond individualism to system theory. Rehearsal opens up an alternative to cancel culture without forgoing individual responsibility. Rehearsal also opens up gray areas between poles of expert and harm-doer. Cancel culture stokes a pestilence of disbelonging and rehearses binaries of agree/disagree rather than rehearsing more livable ways of being together. My thoughts on cancel culture heed reproductive futurist Lorretta Ross's perceptions that cancel culture is "wherepeople

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attempt to expunge anyone with whom they do not perfectly agree, rather than remain focused on those who profit from discrimination and injustice" (Ross). Cancel culture fosters experts; experts foster cancel culture.

#MeToo has been so incredibly important in effacing taboos of identifying publicly as a survivor as well as expanding the conversation about what sexual harm is and why the legal definitions are so tight. I do however want to note, as many have before me, that #MeToo offers guilty verdicts as a way to heal, or to fix acts of harm. #MeToo, while revolutionary in part, still perpetuates carceral feminism as a solution to violence. In the wake of what #MeToo has given us, it is ever more important to pay more attention to how call-outs acts like behavior instead of tactic.

Returning to *Get Sexy,* its contemporary version rehearses dichotomies of fixing/broken and expert/harm-doer. The capitalist allure of creating a finished product of applied theatre to then tour has sticky risks of pre-packaging solutions. Instead, I advocate throughout this thesis for ongoing rehearsals toward new ways of being in relationship. That does not mean I think applied theatre should never tour or be a "finished product," as in Augusto Boal's interpretation of George Ikishawa's "bourgeois theater is the finished theatre." To me, Boal's interpretation brings up connotations of putting solutions upon constituents: "The bourgeoisie already knows what the world is like, *their* world, and is able to present images of this complete, finished world" (Boal 120). In the case of Get Sexy, experts are Boal and Ikishawa's "bourgeoisie" Boal (120). Rather, I argue that if an applied theatre program is to tour a "finished product" for social change, then they must create avenues of ongoing co-construction, revision, and retirement. In this way we still cultivate possibilities of theatre as "rehearsal of revolution," not proselytization of

solutions (Boal 135). Still, I agree wholeheartedly with Jill Dolan's belief that "theatre and performance and the academic departments in which they're studied are ideal places to rehearse for participatory democracy" (2). At the same time, I question just how radical – or even simply democratic – our rehearsals can be inside higher education institutions with long legacies of domination. We are best poised to "create new visions" in the classroom, more so than any other location inside higher education institutions, however limited those visions might be by their institutional location (hooks 12). I learned the radical potential of the classroom from author and professor bell hooks, who deems that, "The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy" (hooks 12). hooks argues the classroom is the most radical space, and yet the classroom is limited by its location. The potential of programs like *Get Sexy* to "create new visions" is restricted by their institutional location. Even so, as I explore more in *Get Sexy*'s perpetuation of carceral feminism in Chapter Two, creating new visions is not the same as perpetuating old ones. *Get Sexy*'s concessions and its radical possibilities coexist in tension.

The tension haunts my thesis argument in the form of a larger question: to what extent, at this moment, can we make these conditions more survivable without investing in the longevity of the institution? One of Sins Invalid's Disability Justice principles, "Interdependence," comes to mind. "We meet each others' needs as we build toward liberation, knowing that state solutions inevitably extend into further control over lives" ("10 Principles of Disability Justice"). A disability justice analysis of survivorhood within Get Sexy will inevitably be diluted by its programmatic location. Meanwhile, I feel so palpably Jaclyn Pryor's argument concerning how the "college/university structure" can be "a site that inherently facilitates intergenerational contact (such as between faculty and

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students)...particularly in the case of queer and performance studies, result in the formation of meaningful, nonfamilial, queer kinship structures organized around the circulation of subaltern knowledge" (70). Facilitated intergenerational contact is paramount to cultivating new ways of being, especially for queer and trans folks who are disproportionally affected by interpersonal violence. Ever more so, young queer and trans people frequently seek self-determination when they are in undergraduate programs. Skill sharing and collective healing intergenerational manifests more livable futures beyond fixedness. But my original question of survivability and investment remains: to what extent can we make current material conditions more survivable without investing in the longevity of the institution?

Organizational behavior scholar Debra Meyerson's theory of tempered radicals surreptitiously salves my question. In an interview with education consultant Dennis Sparks, Meyerson defines tempered radicals to be people "who want to succeed in their organizations yet want to live by their values or identities, even if they are somehow at odds with the dominant culture of their organizations." This rings true for likely many people, especially those of us stretching multiple marginalized identities. However, this theory feels more like a pep-talk-meets-salve. Tempered radicalism absolves complicity. This is particularly clear in Meyerson's elaboration that: "Tempered radicals are likely to think 'out of the box' because they are not fully in the box. As 'outsiders within,' they have both a critical and creative edge. They speak new 'truths'" (Sparks). Invoking tempered radicalism, which I have heard often in spaces at UT Austin, prevents a rehearsal of greater nuance. I am reminded of my neighbor who offered a tired joke – "there's no ethical consumption under capitalism!*"* – on their way to Chick-Fil-A. In other words, if we can comfort ourselves by believing we are exceptions from complicity because of our politics,

we evade a transparent conversation about what has been taken or given up to participate in any institution. Archiving complicity is critical because concession is so easily and inaccurately recorded as a victory.

Embracing tempered radicalism, like *Get Sexy* does, undermines the program's goal to work toward a world free from interpersonal violence. I determined *Get Sexy* produces an exceptionalism that evades our individual culpability for investing our energy in this institution. As an alternative, I propose transparency over evasiveness about our complicity. Sometimes this means grappling with the potential mootness of the change I hope to see; by that I mean the potential mootness of transformational change inside massive institutions like University of Texas at Austin. In the face of nihilistic mootness, because I believe in hope as a praxis, I turn to Pryor's analytical orientation. They most succinctly expound the claim rippling throughout performance studies "that performance—like history—is non original, and always already haunted by improperly buried ghosts as well as liberatory futures not yet performed" (3-4). I am sustained by a curiosity of how theatermakers and applied theatre practitioners might push on rehearsing new ways of being. This requires us to simultaneously rehearse unwavering transparency about the limits of our social imaginary and how it is constrained by our positionality and/or social location.

Before reviewing the methodology of this thesis, I wish to dedicate time to citing terminology as that is also a form of lineage. I rely on terminology of "survivor" and "the responsible person" from restorative justice facilitator sujatha baliga [sic]: "we use the word 'survivor' because it honors that a person is in the process of transcending something painful or unjust. We also use phrases like 'the responsible person' or 'the person who

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assaulted the survivor' to show that people are more than the worst thing they have ever done" (baliga). Echoing this, I use phrases like survivor, person who has been harmed, person who harmed, and responsible person. I must stress that none of these phrases are mutually exclusive. Within us we contain the multitude to harm and be harmed.

Frequently, this thesis analyzes the notion of individual healing and the imposition of carcerality within *Get Sexy*. Individualism prioritizes self over collective. Carcerality uses incarceration to solve interpersonal violence. I push against individualism and carcerality. Instead, I advocate for theatre to shift temporalities and conceptions of harm. These are not new ideas. These are conceptions of time and conflict that predate white supremacy and criminal justice. Restorative justice[1] has its origins in numerous indigenous communities such as the "Palava Huts in West African nation of Liberia," "Jirga councils in Afghanistan," "Navajo peacemaker courts," "Maori justice in New Zealand," and "Hoho pono in Hawaii [sic]" among many other iterations (Umbriet & Armour 4).

There has also long been a call for restorative responses to sexual assault within BIPOC communities that have had long, traumatic histories with state-sanctioned, carceral violence. "Black survivors, who are often reticent to report sexual assaults to the same officers who criminalize their family and friends, and Native American survivors, who are often barred from pressing criminal charges against non-Native perpetrators in tribal courts, have long argued for alternatives" (Karasek). However, universities remain reticent to provide alternative options for healing sexual harm, despite Title's IX continued

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[1] I do contend that the rhetoric of categorizing these practices as restorative justice or origins of restorative justice might itself be a form of colonialism; I look forward to the creation of more responsive language.

inadequacy which I detail in another paper.

Moreover, I specifically invoke restorative justice, not its more popular sibling, transformative justice. This choice is in direct conversation with the tension of complicity I discussed earlier. I do not pretend that transformative justice is possible within a higher education institution. Here I draw guidance from Shira Hassan:

> "I don't actually think TJ can be practiced in social work, because so much social work is inherently complicit with the state. And that is the difference between TJ and restorative justice, that TJ is inherently outside the state. I think we can use the values of TJ to guide our practice. And, we can turn to RJ [restorative justice] practices, which can be really useful for social workers, who are already complicit with the state. So there's no risk of co-opting the TJ movement—because we can reach for RJ.
> A lot of what we talk about is when to reach for RJ because it reduces harm in that system. And then how do we hold our larger values so that we are not in conflict with the radical practice that brought us to social work, but instead like trying to figure out how to stay sustainable in the work, while holding the value of not being complicit with the state." (Hassan 303)

Harm reduction comes at a cost of complicity. Hassan's point raises questions of: To what extent is restorative justice possible inside higher education institutions? How might we be utterly transparent about how desperately we need alternatives to criminal justice? I am not advocating for Get Sexy to be a victim-offender dialogue. That is only one form of restorative justice. It is beyond the scope of this thesis, but I am interested in how drama-based programs like *Get Sexy* might be expanded, revised, or surrogated to support a Tier 1 community building circle process. By Tier 1, I am referring to the tiered approach that more successful restorative justice programs have implemented in higher education and grade schools. A student body unilaterally participates in Tier 1 processes. Tier 2 only involves about 15% of the population. Tier 2 is for restorative processes, like

family-group conferencing or mediation. Tier 3 is dedicated to supporting the re-entry of 5% of the student population, after expulsion, truancy, or another measure, "in a manner that provides wraparound support and promotes student accountability and achievement" ("Restorative Justice").
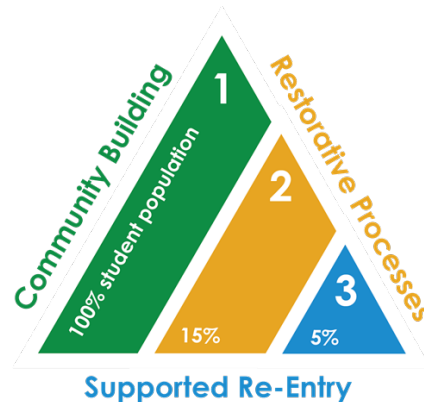

Fig 1. Restorative Justice in OUSD from "Restorative Justice".

www.ousd.org/restorativejustice

Imagine if *Get Sexy* mobilized its ensemble of actor-facilitators to be peer circle keepers to rehearse new ways of being in conflict. For example, Oakland United School District has a Tier 1 that planned to "train approximately 400 youth across the district at all age levels to be RJ circle keepers" during the 2019-2020 school year ("Restorative Justice"). The goal was for these circle keepers "to facilitate circles to build community in their classrooms and schools as well as for healing harm and responding to conflict among their peers" ("Restorative Justice").

I conduct a case study on *Get Sexy* using qualitative survey analysis combined with interviews. The primary sources of information are: thirteen anonymous interviews with participants and co-creators of *Get Sexy*; survey questionnaire analysis of

approximately two hundred former audience members; and close comparative analysis of the *Get Sexy* script versions from the last decade. *Get Sexy* is housed inside a public university. Because of this, anonymity was an important component of the interviews so as to not either jeopardize staff employment or violate FERPA legislation which protects the privacy of educational records. The interview participants' identities ranged widely, most notably to me by their positions of power inside the university. The survey questionnaire analysis polled over two hundred undergraduate students who had observed the show as audience members. There were a small portion of survey results from staff and faculty.

Get Sexy is not uniquely problematic. I spent significant time analyzing *Get Sexy* because of my proximity to the program. I believe the program has potential to do good work. The core issue to me is that *Get Sexy* has not been permitted to evolve much nor expand to a more comprehensive model. *Get Sexy* was a product of its conditions, promptly calcified by policy changes, and ultimately narrated as a solution. We can learn so much from *Get Sexy* about if, when, and how to do work inside universities. This thesis is not secretly an argument to extinguish *Get Sexy*. Rather, it is a caution that our work not become heralded as a solution.

INTERVENTIONS

Through its rehearsal process, GS makes three contributions: it embodies conflict, models engagement with the issue, and encourages intervention on sexual violence To do this work, GS uses scenarios, which I define as predetermined, scripted case studies.

Theatre made up of a series of scenarios is "finished theatre," meaning that it is largely scripted. Circumstances and solutions are predetermined. Scenario theatre rehearses foregone problems and interventions (Boal). Forum theatre is "rehearsal theatre:" scenes are constructed with audience members and solutions are discovered and experimented with together. In forum theatre, participants find and rehearse a new way of being. In scenario theatre, participants are taught what they should do and then instructed to practice, or rehearse, the predetermined intervention.

The institution uses scenarios to decide what kind of violence we do or do not acknowledge. During *Get Sexy* scenarios, audience members are invited to offer a suggestion to either the character who might be harmed or the character who might harm. Audiences are given the opportunity to replace one of the characters. However, since the scenes are entirely predetermined, there is an overwhelming connotation that there is a correct way of doing the scene which the audience members must guess and model.

In forum theatre, and to some extent in successful simultaneous dramaturgy, the spect-actor "exists in the scene and outside of it, in a dual reality" (Boal xi). Scenarios bear some resemblance to Boal's simultaneous dramaturgy, wherein "spectators 'write' simultaneously with the acting of the actors" (Boal 102). Simultaneous dramaturgy might look like audience members improving dialogue for the actors while the actors gesture and move onstage. However, *Get Sexy*'s scenarios offer very little leeway for audience members to create new dialogue. Scenarios do not reflect audience members' questions. Instead, the reality of the scenario is an imaginary determined by systems of power, and

proselytized by actor-facilitators. Audience members have little agency or say the dual reality of scenario theatre.

Get Sexy centers alcohol use and sexual health communication as two key factors for preventing interpersonal violence. Get Sexy's interventions target both bystanders and potential survivors. As previously discussed, both interventions assume interpersonal violence is perpetrated by good people because of bad things or bad people. Such limited ideas of causality force participants and facilitators to occupy a role of either expert or harm-doer. *Get Sexy* offers little room between the poles.

The third intervention is the crisis hotline. Unlike the previous two, the crisis hotline rehearses how we respond to activated survivors. Relying entirely on the crisis hotline to respond to survivors implies that only fixed-by-fixing survivors are in attendance - Broken-bad survivors must go elsewhere. More so, survivors who are employed or in attendance are restricted to fixing others or being broken-bad.

Alcohol & Communication

Get Sexy contains five vignettes. What strikes me is the script's framing of the vignettes. "Each facilitator will be playing a character in these scenes, not ourselves," one facilitator says before the vignettes occur (Hoare and Snyder, 2019, p. 5). There is nothing particularly alarming about that, except it is immediately followed by another actor-facilitator advising the audience it is "important to remember...that throughout this performance when someone is acting, facilitating, or discussing they don't necessarily agree with the actions of their character or even their way of thinking" (Hoare and

Snyder, 2019, 5). Considering the scenarios are completely pre-determined with no input from the audience, it is even more striking that the script stresses actor-facilitators do not agree with their characters' actions, because the script implies that actor-facilitators would not take these actions, or possibly not even think the same way as people who do take these actions.

The vignettes abstract harm. Harm is not done by us, the actor-facilitators. We are safe. Actor-facilitators are making a line in the sand: we are experts, not harm-doers. We are only *acting* like bad people. There is no entry point for responsible persons who are in recovery or could be introduced to recovery. The only entry point is to be an expert. The audience's desire to be seen as experts is obvious in the post-performance surveys. Numerous respondents wrote responses to the *optional* Qualtrics survey to say they already did everything in the performance, they have been always getting consent for a long time, or they do not need this but maybe a friend does.

The five vignettes decide what kind of violence is up for discussion. In "Hug," two characters greet each other enthusiastically with a mutual, friendly hug. "Locker Room Photograph" features a character who takes photos of another, unbeknownst character changing in a locker room (Hoare and Snyder, 2019, 5). A character joins another without asking in "Can I sit with you?" "Drunk at a Party" follows a character at a house party who comes onto another character who seems more inebriated. In "Unwanted Kiss," a character tries to kiss another; the kiss recipient is surprised and uncomfortable (Hoare and Snyder, 2019, 6). After the vignettes, facilitators ask audience members to identify ambiguous, clear, or non-consent in the vignettes. The term "clear

non-consent" further abstracts harm (Hoare and Snyder, 2019, 9). The category "clear non-consent" in *Get Sexy* refers to any act that is neither clear nor ambiguous consent (Hoare and Snyder, 2019, 9). "Unwanted Kiss" exemplifies how "non-consent" collapses conflict and abuse. (Hoare and Snyder, 2019, 6).

Rather than flat, or pat understandings of harm, I imagine that rich conversations could emerge from these vignettes. Does someone need to get consent for the above behaviors? Why or not? When or how is that taught or learned? Instead, audiences are instructed to guess if each scene is clear, ambiguous or non-consent. Shoeing vignettes into clear, ambiguous or non-consent removes nuance. We confuse conflict and abuse. "Unwanted Kiss" reads as non-predatory to me. Someone tries to kiss someone else, but they don't want to. The kisser has misread the signals and they stop their behavior immediately. Yet *Get Sexy* names this behavior as non-consent, rather than a misunderstanding or misread cue. In "Unwanted Kiss," facilitators lost an opportunity to discuss verbal and non-verbal consent and explore what a healthy initiation of physical intimacy looks like to us.

Identifying "Unwanted Kiss" as non-consent does not account for how one's socialization and traumatization can shape our sexual health communication. Sarah Schulman's theorization of persuasion narratives offers a provocative insight into such circumstances. Constraining women to a binary of yes or no demonizes actual experiences of desire or confusion, or gendered pressures for women to be attractive but not attracted (Schulman 63). Schulman argues against our reliance on Believe Women rhetoric that "insisting that women are telling 'the truth'" that we are in fact not allowed

to tell can deny them the possibility of more nuanced, complex stories about themselves, which may be the only thing that can help them get closer to leading integrated lives" (63). *Get Sexy*'s intervention misses inquiries of *why do I communicate like this? How else can I communicate?* Instead of offering practical guidance on consensual, pleasurable intimacy, GS reverts to a simplified and flat abstinence approach: Don't kiss the other person at all.

The intervention reeks of victim blaming. "Drunk at a Party" best encapsulates the victim blaming embedded in *Get Sexy*'s intervention on alcohol consumption and influence. The vignette is less than 30 seconds long. The brief time starts with two characters dancing. One wants to get more shots, the other wants to call an Uber. A third character enters and "whisks" the shot-keen character "home with them" (Hoare and Snyder, 2019, 6). The Uber-calling character stays put while the shot-keen and third characters exit. "Drunk at a Party" wants audience members to be more cautious about their friends' and their own alcohol use. Else a random predator might "whisk [you] home with them" (6). The suggested change is for the girl to be less inebriated or to have listened to their friend. The vignette name alone – "Drunk at a Party" – signals something bad will befall the character because they are drunk at a party. The intervention reeks of victim blaming.

With additional context, we might even discover that no harm occurred in that scene. "F2, still clearly drunk, happily leaves with F3" (Hoare and Snyder, 2019, 6). It is unfathomable to *Get Sexy* that Facilitator 2 did in fact leave their friend, drunkenly and happily, and went on to have a marvelous night. I am not encouraging that choice, but I

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am concerned that *Get Sexy* demonizes F2's sexual agency. F2 is typically played by performers assigned female at birth, and almost always cisgender women. "Drunk at a Party" muddles sexual agency, predation, and alcohol use. The mudding distracts us from a much-needed discourse about sexual harm.

In addition to restricting femme sexual agency, the vignette assumes interpersonal violence is perpetrated by definitive harm-doers, bad people, who are not present in *Get Sexy*'s performance space. "Drunk at a Party" has the potential to question to what degree we can consent to sexual activity when inebriated. Unfortunately, none of these questions are answered or even troubleshooted via sexual health communication strategies. A 2017 version of the script cites the UT Austin Cultivating Learning and Safe Environments study: "Most sexual assaults are perpetrated by someone the survivor knows, a friend, a study partner, someone the survivor has dated or is dating" (Hoare and Snyder, 2017, 9). The statistic contradicts the vignettes. "Drunk at a Party," "Unwanted Kiss," and possibly "Locker Room Photograph" feature unknown bad people perpetrating harm. I earmark this contradiction for deeper discussion in Chapter 2 as a carceral feminist concession.

Drunk at a party intervenes in a peripheral variable that can be changed and blamed on a potential survivor's actions. The vignette avoids any conversation about the power differentials in positionality that might inform the potential survivors' agency. In the 2017 version of *Get Sexy*, two facilitators tell the audience:

> **FACILITATOR 3:** Sexual assaults reported at UT often involved alcohol.
>
> **FACILITATOR 2:** 84% of the time in fact. *(displays number on visual aid* **84% + alcohol***)*

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According to *Get Sexy*, there is a recipe for being an offender. Alcohol is the key ingredient.

 One interview respondent said that in the initial development of *Get Sexy*, they were most interested in examining "the scripts for intimacy," specifically the script used by young heterosexual men to find women who consume alcohol and then try to get lucky, a behavior the interviewee referred to as a recipe for being an offender. What I find so fascinating about this articulation is that firstly the capacity to harm is restricted to young heterosexual men. Secondly, alcohol becomes a magical pardon for harm someone has caused. Like a secret ingredient, alcohol transforms a good boy into an offender.

Get Sexy believes alcohol forms the harm-doers. They were good people until they were made bad by alcohol. I think it is intentional that alcohol is an entry point for people with dominant identities to participate in the conversation without any complicity. Sarah Schulman articulates "the power of negative groups—that there is pleasure being in negative groups, in deflecting blame and pretending that someone who has done nothing is the problem" (Schulman "When Trauma Becomes Dominance: An Interview with Sarah Schulman"). Fixating on an imaginary harm-doer somewhere else rehearses a negative group dynamic. In *Get Sexy*, alcohol is the someone, as are racialized criminals the someone(s).

Any capacity to harm is deflected only onto "incomprehensible monsters who must be exterminated" (Thom 75). *Get Sexy* avoids acknowledging the very real possibility that "abusers are also our heroes, lovers, friends, family," and, most importantly, ourselves (Thom 75). What I hear beneath the interviewee's recipe

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articulation is a personal fear of becoming an offender, of becoming an offender because they followed a recipe they were taught. I want to see *that* show.

The 2019 version of the *Get Sexy* script added a PowerPoint slide that features a lot of gender and a little of race.
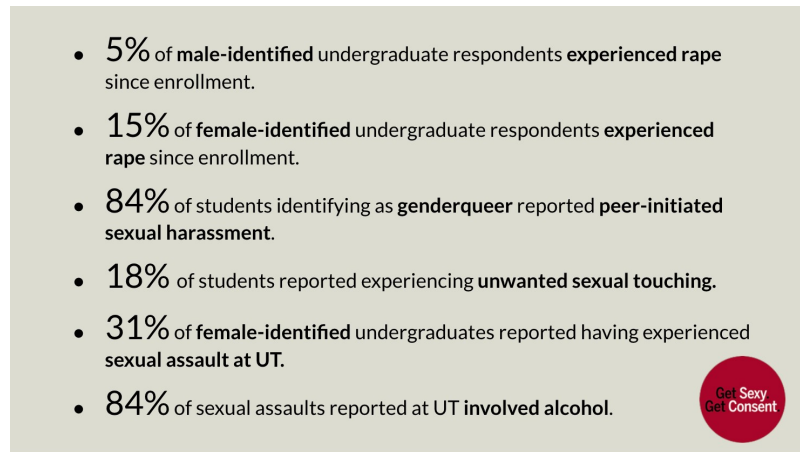

- **5%** of **male-identified** undergraduate respondents **experienced rape** since enrollment.
- **15%** of **female-identified** undergraduate respondents **experienced rape** since enrollment.
- **84%** of students identifying as **genderqueer** reported **peer-initiated sexual harassment**.
- **18%** of students reported experiencing **unwanted sexual touching.**
- **31%** of **female-identified** undergraduates reported having experienced **sexual assault at UT.**
- **84%** of sexual assaults reported at UT **involved alcohol**.

Illustration 2: *Get Sexy Get Consent* Statistics

Evading racialization does not make Get Sexy anti-racist; the evasion translates *Get Sexy* from a more overt to a more covert racism. G*et Sexy* evades race. Expert vs. harm-doer are implicitly racialized categories. *Get Sexy*'s location in a predominately white institution ensures the majority of audience members and ensemble members will invariably be white. Harm-doers are not present in the space, so the category is distinctly racialized. Donald Trump's comment to *Fox News* in July 2015 is pertinent: "The Mexican Government is forcing their most unwanted people into the United States. They are, in many cases, criminals, drug dealers, rapists, etc" (Lee). Trump, himself a person who has harmed, is indexing criminality to racialization. It is not a coincidence that *Get Sexy* sorts sexual harm based on narrow conceptions of gender.

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Get Sexy, due to inattention, proselytizes carceral feminist visions of sexual violence. *Get Sexy* values certain groups of people more than others. Gender is the only identity marker used to refer to survivors. No identity marker is employed in reference to responsible persons. I don't think the solution is to use every existing identity marker, but I think it is worth questioning why *Get Sexy* still only acknowledges the construct of gender, not race. Dolan's argument for rehearsing civic engagement within academic theatre settings underlines the possibility of unearthing democracy's exclusivity by rehearsing it in the classroom. "My argument that we should rehearse democracy through our productions and teaching, then, requires a deep understanding of its exclusivity, of the fact that some citizens are apparently more valuable than others" (Dolan 9). *Get Sexy* fails to interrogate its implicit exclusivity. Instead, the performance rehearses a dominant narrative about who is harmed and who harms. *Get Sexy* is hardly unique in its exclusivity.

In a 2019 era revision of *Get Sexy*, an anonymous ensemble member inserted the following statistics into the script:

- Individuals with a disability are 3x more likely to experience sexual assaults than those without a disability.
- 64% of transgender people experience sexual assaults in their lifetime.
- Trans people of color are 1.8 times more likely to experience sexual assault than the general population.
- Indigenous persons experience sexual assault at a rate that is 2x higher than that of any other race in the U.S. (Hoare and Snyder, 2019, 16)

Get Sexy is systems evasive. The statistics never made it into the final script. A conversation occurred the in google documents comments. A then-director stated they should leave the statistic of 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men. Naming binary gender

categories in place of any other identity category consequently genders sexual violence. Additionally, Get Sexy both upholds binary gender and evades the causal role of all other systems. Neglecting to name systems of power involved in sexual harm overemphasizes the influence of peripheral variables like alcohol. *Get Sexy* perpetuates systems-evasive scenarios of interpersonal violence.

Get Sexy does not interrupt pre-existing apparatuses for criminalization. Audience members practice the tired, evasive interventions they learned in a final scenario. The scene functions as a sandbox for audience members to identify consent and suggest different actions. Two characters who already know each other have a misreading of signals. The scene changes slightly depending on which actor-facilitators are performing – a "come over" text is misinterpreted, a character changes their mind about desiring sexual activity, or someone does not want to hook up but has not said so. There might be coercive dynamics, but usually not.

The long form scene confuses conflict and abuse but does not try to untangle them. The long form scene tries to validate a certain kind of coercive sexual harm, but backfires. There is no conversation about what might have been harmful in the scene. The audience is also left to guess if there was harm, instead of us hearing from characters what was or wasn't harmful. The long form scene confuses conflict and abuse but does not try to untangle them. Conflict and abuse are not always cleanly separate. However, *Get Sexy* mis-categorizes *all* conflict as harm. *Get Sexy* is missing advocacy around finding one's enthusiastic yes. Conflicting sexual desires are represented as bad. *Get Sexy*

misses an opportunity to explore how we respectfully and joyfully discuss, listen to, and respect each other's wants and needs.

Get Sexy offers its undergraduate audience members one simple solution to the complexities of consensual sex – abstinence. Do not initiate sexual activity. Do not express interest. Of course, initiation requires an awareness of power dynamics, but that's not anywhere in the script. Where is the rehearsal of respecting that someone does not want to engage with you in sexual interest? Where is the rehearsal of reading signals and apologizing if you misread them? Where is the rehearsal of check ins, making sure someone is enjoying your joint activities? Where is the rehearsal of finding one's enthusiastic yes? Where is the rehearsal of saying no?

Survivors must be fixed or abstinent. The long form scene does not grapple with how socialization affects our more direct or indirect predispositions. More so, negotiating consent as a survivor can be a whole new skill to learn as it frequently requires a negotiation of multiple temporalities. If there are characters who are survivors in the six scenes, they need to be "fixed" survivors because of the finite categories of clear, ambiguous, or nonconsent.

The long form scene believes interpersonal violence happens because responsible persons simply did not know to ask for consent. The person who harmed is not an expert. They are not a harm-doer, either. Like alcohol, their lack of sexual health communication education is the bad thing. *Get Sexy* approaches sexual health communication as if undergraduate students have no knowledge of consent. *Get Sexy* only acknowledges formal consent education that students had in high school. From 1997 to 2020, Texas was

an abstinence-only state. *Get Sexy* came into existence to fill a gap in sexual health communication education. In other words, until 2020, Texas State Board of Education maintained abstinence only as the sex education policy for minimum standards taught statewide. The 2020 overhaul still does not mandate learning about consent, or sexual health communication (Swaby). *Get Sexy* sought to fill in the gaps. This is noble and necessary – my issue is that *Get Sexy* pretends undergraduate students' heads are empty. *Get Sexy* embodies what Freire calls the "banking model of education." The performance sloughs correct answers into audience members' heads. *Get Sexy* lacks curiosity about what audience members already know about consent. Everyone in the space *has* learned consent – sexual or not – from relationships, TV, porn, literature, social media. Consent that may be coercive, harmful, or something else. I want *Get Sexy* to be more curious about the education audiences have already had by norms, culture, socialization, media materials, and more. It reads as solipsistic to not weigh heavily how much young people go to the internet to learn about topics labelled taboo. *Get Sexy* conceptualizes experts as holding very specific knowledge. Without it, they are harm-doers. *Get Sexy* starts from a place of assuming the audience members are harm-doers that must prove themselves to be experts.

512-471-2255 (Crisis Hotline)

Get Sexy presents itself as a resource for good survivors, but sends its bad survivors to the hotline, separating them from the group and from a space of open, honest discourse. The script nods to the mythic good survivors at the close of the show, "We

want to acknowledge that there are likely people who have been impacted by sexual violence in this room" (Hoare and Snyder, 2019, 14). The UT Telephone Crisis Line number is written on a whiteboard during all performances. Audience members are encouraged to contact that number, "if you realize you would like to talk to someone further or if you have someone in your life who needs support around experiences related to sexual violence" (Hoare and Snyder, 2019, 3). *Get Sexy* thinks survivorhood is an unexpected emergency. Survivorhood is not a sudden crisis. Survivorhood is a condition consistently produced by oppressive systems.

Anyone who needs extra support is diverted to the crisis line. They need to leave the space. *Get Sexy* is unprepared for anyone to have more of a response in the space. If anyone is activated, they must go elsewhere. The crisis line is the only resource available. Occasionally, trained peer crisis counselors will be available for ten minutes after *Get Sexy* performances. That occasional resource is still a crisis intervention. Making survivorhood strictly legible as a crisis disregards the special knowledge and dreams survivors themselves have.

The paradox is that student and staff facilitators know survivors are in the room. The statistics tell us it is highly probable for there to be survivors in attendance or in employment. In addition, I learned from my interviews that Voices Against Violence clinicians will often suggest to survivor clients that they work with VAV in more ways, following the thinking that involvement in related activism and/or artistic work can be a source of healing. And yet the only way we refer to them is via crisis intervention. The

lack of resources dedicated to supporting survivors implies a good survivor, a fixed survivor, would be able to stay through the performance.

The false promise to be fixed-by-fixing continues in the expectation for all employees to operate as good survivors, since good survivors are undetectable as any different than non-survivors. If you can't do this work, i.e. be fixed-by-fixing, then you are broken-bad. If you can't be an audience member of this work, you are broken-bad because you cannot participate in fixing your peer norms. You are not healed sufficiently to act out or spectate a scene in which you are either experiencing, perpetrating, or watching interpersonal violence. I do not discount that this can be healing for some survivors of primary, secondary, or tertiary trauma. *Get Sexy* assumes we are all healed the same way. *Get Sexy* If you cannot do or watch the scenes, you are broken-bad.

Multiple people who identified as survivors responded to the post performance Qualtrics survey to share they felt uncomfortable. One audience member said *Get Sexy* was a sketch comedy about rape and that they needed to leave halfway through. One ensemble member did say in an interview that their participation in the Theatre for Dialogue was really healing. That interviewee never performed *Get Sexy* with the ensemble. If *Get Sexy* scenes are difficult to perform or witness, we need to ask ourselves for whom and why we are presenting them.

The Qualtrics survey responses inspired an interview question of mine: To what extent do you think *Get Sexy* serves survivors? Overwhelmingly, respondents stated *Get Sexy* did not exist to serve survivors. An interpersonal violence prevention program must

place survivors in decision-making positions. From 2017 to 2019, Building Movement Project staff member Noelia Mann managed and facilitated the organization's Tools2Engage website and webinar series "to offer 'living case studies' for those seeking to address root causes and engage constituents more effectively" (Mann). A theme emerges from the webinar series that nonprofit organizations need to support social change by increasing the agency and power of their constituents. That praxis of social change directly contrasts the traditional top/bottom solutions of the nonprofit industrial complex. Noelia Mann's work with Tools2Engage trains service providers to engage their constituents in addressing root causes.

Get Sexy does not serve or center the agency and power of survivors. Survivors who are involved in *Get Sexy* are encouraged to feel empowerment via preexisting carceral framework. *Get Sexy* is a place to issue solutions, "to want dominance to feel comfortable," to control a hypothetical scenario of potential violence (Schulman 230). Employees and audience members might feel validated as fixed because they can control hypothetical scenarios. Control of those scenarios relies on carceral narratives of interpersonal violence.

Multiple interviewees were defensive that *Get Sexy* did not serve survivors. One core creator brushed this off. The respondent joked they weren't going to ask the survivors in the audience to stand up, out themselves, and give feedback. Another frequent defense was that there were survivors among the ensemble even if *Get Sexy* may not have served survivors. Indeed. Yet I argue that the avenues of involvement available to survivors propagated carcerality.

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Before conducting my interviews, I wrongly assumed that mandatory reporting was something Theatre for Dialogue always contended with. Interviewees from the programs' earlier days were completely unfamiliar with mandatory reporting in the Theatre for Dialogue space. I hypothesized that it was tied back to the Obama era 2011 Dear Colleague memo. That theory did not hold up because mandatory reporting was not an issue under Lynn Hoare's leadership.

I thought maybe it was an issue of MasculinUT, a Voices Against Violence program led by Lauren White promoting healthy masculinities. In 2018, MasculinUT had an inviting description on its program website:

> By addressing masculinities and gender expression, we are not trying to incite defensiveness, fear or anger, or suggest that all masculine people are violent. They aren't. We want to provide students with the language and concepts to understand who they are and how our culture, particularly ideas about gender, influence our everyday thoughts, feelings, and behavior. (Clark-Flory)

On April 27th, 2018, PJ Media ran an article headlined "University of Texas to Treat Masculinity as a 'Mental Health' Issue" (Airaksinen). There was no evidence that the university was treating masculinity as a mental health issue. The Healthy Masculinities Coordinator would be located in Voices Against Violence, which at that time was under the branch of the Counseling and Mental Health Center alongside many other interpersonal violence programs. UT's official statement on MasculinUT explained exactly this, "Like other UT programs related to sexual assault and interpersonal violence, MasculinUT is housed administratively in the university's Counseling and Mental Health Center" (UT News). The reporter Toni Airaksinen came to the conclusion:

While many schools now have similar programs, this appears to be the first run directly out of a Counseling and Mental Health Center. Though the school seems to justify this by claiming that masculinity can cause men to lash out at other people and themselves, the school did not respond to a request for comment to clarify (PJ Media).

On the contrary, the school did respond. On Thursday April 26th, the media contact scheduled an interview with Airaksinen for Monday April 30th. Misleading readers that the school did not respond permitted Airaksinen to preserve her claim that UT was treating masculinity as a mental health issue.

The PJ Media article was picked up by Rush Limbaugh. A segment of *Fox and Friends* focused on MasculinUT. Glenn Beck brought it up on his talk show. Voices Against Violence was put through two weeks of hell. Interviewees informed me that Conservative Legislators and Senators in Texas were reaching out to UT President Fenves. He was instructed that he must end the program, regardless of whether the story was true or not.

VAV's programming is under more scrutiny now. A few interviewees related that there were more channels of approval and veto for VAV programming than existed before MasculinUT. It is very possible that the forced retirement of MasculinUT is partially to blame. Whatever the exact influence of MasculinUT on *Get Sexy*, it is clear that *Get Sexy*'s survival depends on its regurgitation of state-approved depictions of interpersonal violence.

The expert vs. harm-doer dichotomy evades an acceptance of our capacity for harm. None of us are experts, all of us are culpable. I think back to a restorative justice teacher of mine, Marilyn Armour, who said that if we were ever to practice restorative justice, we needed to re-examine how punishment shows up in our daily lives. Growing past an expert / harm-doer dichotomy requires the uncomfortable work of acknowledging that my capacity to harm is omnipresent. Relegating survivors to a fixed-by-fixing vs. broken-bad dichotomy is punitive, too. Survivors are either productive, aka fixing others, or they do not belong in this space.

I am left with big backwards-facing questions: where do these simplifying dichotomies of expert/harm-doer and fixed-by-fixing/broken-bad come from? *Get Sexy*'s alcohol use, sexual health communication and crisis hotline interventions rehearse systems-evasive narratives of interpersonal violence. For whom are they strategic? Who or what does their simplification of sexual harm protect?

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

This thesis will ideally offer the beginnings of a pedagogy for applied drama programs to begin shifting away from a carceral, neoliberal medical model to a disability justice model of survivorship. This thesis will not offer a programmatic plan for this imagined model. Rather, this thesis will investigate the programmatic changes needed in order to transform the present socio-medical model to a disability justice analysis of survivorship.

In this chapter, I have argued that within *Get Sexy*, participation in interpersonal

violence prevention sells two promises: (1) to be fixed through fixing, or (2) to be deemed an expert and thus fixed of your own capacity to harm. Along the way, I have laid out the lineages of thought this thesis invokes as well as the theoretical framework of disability justice that this thesis relies and expands on. I hope to have situated myself not as original nor expert, but as one who is documenting their inch wide, mile deep.

Chapter Two undertakes a historical accounting of how the forum theatre scene within *Get Sexy* has been revised and documented over the last fifteen years. I investigate why and how *Get Sexy* came into being. What needs was *Get Sexy* developed to meet? To do so, I compile interviews transcripts, survey responses, and script excerpts. My eye is on identifying how *Get Sexy* has come to its contemporary conceptualization of survivorhood. I emphasize evidence of constituent engagement and co-construction throughout this section. This emphasis provides a portrait of development to which later versions of *Get Sexy* can be compared, demonstrating that the contemporary script is a fossil. This historical account pays special attention to the adapted forum theater model over the course of *Get Sexy*'s development. I spend significant time on the forum theatre model because of its primacy as a site of intervention within the performance. A site of intervention that becomes more and more restricted as *Get Sexy* comes up against policy changes in mandated reporting and co-construction. I investigate these policy changes as traceable moments of bottleneck when the program began to calcify.

Building off this historical account, this chapter then conducts a two-layer historiographical analysis of the forum theatre scene. I draw on a study of policy to show the role of carceral feminism in the calcification of *Get Sexy*. Like the previous section,

this historiographical analysis utilizes interviews, surveys, and scripts but at this level of analysis will pull more on interview-based evidence.

Chapter Three offers a critical imagining of an applied drama pedagogy that applies disability justice to survivorhood. The linear positioning of Chapters Two and Three could imply a binarization of problem | solution. Rather, Chapter Three is not a solution to Chapter Two. I do not pretend to alone have the solutions to what I outline in Chapter Two. Such individualism would undermine the system theory analysis I apply to harm. Instead, Chapter Two is intended as a generative assessment of *Get Sexy* while Chapter Three serves as an imagining of how *Get Sexy* evolve.

Chapter Three reviews and investigates deep time as a more generative temporality for conceptualizing survivorhood. Chapter Three begins to lay a foundation for considering trauma healing beyond an individual, event-based temporality. I spend significant time applying geological deep time to sexual trauma. This application questions our investment in single lifetime healing as modes of complicity in white supremacy and capitalism. I conclude the chapter and thesis with an imagining of pedagogy.

Chapter 2: Historicizing *Get Sexy* Within Carceral Feminist Social Movements

THE CONCESSIONS WE REHEARSE

Social movements make concessions. Concessions are strategic compromises. As social movement and community organizing scholar Mimi Kim affirms, "radicalmovements are not immune to contested and puzzling pathways toward their intended liberatory ends" (311). I use this chapter to investigate the conditions that prompted *Get Sexy* as a solution. Social movements behind the 1994 Violence Against Women Act made significant concessions to the carceral state. Those concessions are evident in *Get Sexy*.

Get Sexy proselytizes carceral concessions as strategies to prevent interpersonal violence. We encounter the concessions as forms of criminality – alcohol use is criminalized, certain people are criminals i.e. bad people, even sexual agency is criminalized. In Chapter One I established *Get Sexy* thinks interpersonal violence is committed by (1) bad people or (2) good people because of bad things. I invoke criminalization so to name the process of illegalizing certain people or things to maintain or establish social control. Criminalization is one among the carceral state's matrix of tools.

Get Sexy focuses on peripheral variables. According to two interviewees, *Get Sexy* was first developed as a method for interrogating the root causes of interpersonal violence. Both cited sexual health communication and alcohol misuse as root causes. I disagree. I dedicate time to historicizing why two factors which seem peripheral to me

were enthusiastically accepted as root causes. I discovered in my research that their mistaken identity as root causes was a strategy of the carceral state to protect and propagate specific historical understandings of domination. In my third chapter, I propose a shift in temporality is required to attend to historical, intergenerational patterns of sexual harm. This chapter provides a crucial dramaturgy for *Get Sexy*'s interventions.

I argue *Get Sexy* avoids scrutinizing restrictive masculinities, socialization, and historical patterns of harm. Instead, *Get Sexy* criminalizes alcohol use and sexual health communication. Drawing on Kim's application of Marxist contradiction within social movements, I analyze how *Get Sexy* rehearses – likely unknowingly – the carceral concessions of the Violence Against Women Act. My end goal is to contextualize *Get Sexy*'s dichotomies of expert vs. harm-doer and fixed-by-fixing vs. broken-bad. I am ideologically disappointed with takedown approaches listing what is wrong with a program like *Get Sexy.* I am more interested in learning why and how *Get Sexy* seemed a viable solution to previous conditions.

Get Sexy is a descendent of the anti-violence movements, affirmative consent advocacy and alcohol misuse policies that partition the most recent decades of feminism. Most obvious is its descendance from the overwhelmingly white anti-violence movements that backed the now-epochal 1994 Violence Against Women Act. Sociologist Nancy Whittier contests the intonation of carceral feminism by anti-violence advocates in support of the 1994 Violence against Women Act "did not reflect a simple embrace of the punitive state, but a strategic attempt to gain sufficient votes" (32). Making their victory legible within the carceral state was a strategic concession.

I rely on theories of contradiction, carcerality, and rehearsal to build my argument in this chapter. The 1994 Violence Against Women Act holds many contradictions pertaining to the carceral state. I derive the concept of concession from Kim's contradiction theory. I define a concession as a contradiction organizers lost track of. When we pull apart those contradictions, we find pathways of concessions that bloodline the 1994 Violence Against Women Act to the *Get Sexy* we know today. Kim forewarns the "impending ascendance of restorative justice as a potential accommodation to the carceral state" (311). *Get Sexy* accommodates the carceral state.

Get Sexy, like the Violence Against Women Act, is a product of carceral feminism. Carceral feminism looks to incarceration, a form of punishment, as a solution to interpersonal violence. For example, the anthology *Yes Means Yes: Visions of Female Sexual Power and A World Without Rape (2008),* co-edited by writers Jaclyn Freidman and Jessica Valenti, asks readers to join in imagining "a world where rape is rare and punished swiftly" (9). The terms of imagining imply rape will be rare once it is punished consistently and immediately. In carceral feminism, only punishment – or the possibility of punishment – can create a world free of interpersonal violence. Carcerality is not simply jail. English and Women's Studies scholar Ruby Tapia expands carcerality to the "possibility/solution of incarceration" (Documenting Criminalization and Confinement). Carceral feminism looks to incarceration, a form of punishment, as a solution to interpersonal violence.

Correspondingly, *Get Sexy* looks to criminalization as a solution to interpersonal violence. Within the carceral state, when someone or something is criminalized, they

deserve punishment. Criminalization justifies punishment. Criminalization is a tool of the

carceral state, and a tool of carceral feminism as well. I ground my analysis of

criminalization in Tapia's systems theory approach to carcerality:

> Yes, the carceral state encompasses the formal institutions and operations and
> economies of the criminal justice system proper, but it also encompasses
> logics, ideologies, practices, and structures, that invest in tangible and
> sometimes intangible ways in punitive orientations to difference, to poverty, to
> struggles to social justice and to the crossers of constructed borders of all kinds.

> Tapia uses a framework of investment to trace how the carceral state propagates. I

modify her framework to one of rehearsal.

HISTORICIZING SCENARIOS PART 1 (VAWA)

There is a legacy behind *Get Sexy*'s scenarios. The scenarios exist as a

practicum for audiences to improve their ability to identify and communicate consent and

boundaries. Considering that the scenarios are preformulated without audience co-

construction, I am drawn to understanding why *Get Sexy* developed the scenarios as what

it deemed the most essential representations of sexual violence. To understand the

scenarios' origins, I will examine the socio-political climate coalescing before and during

Get Sexy's development. My examination offers context for *Get Sexy*'s scenarios as

artifacts of concessions.

I begin with the legal ramifications of the 1970s anti-violence movement. *Get*

Sexy's is informed by structural issues of social stratification and racial capitalism that

stretch back many more hundreds of years. However, I am specifically interested in the

influence of mainstream white anti-violence activism on *Get Sexy*; beginning in the 1970s

follows that timeline. Anti-violence activists at that time campaigned in opposition to the

spousal exceptions in state laws against rape.

Martial rape is at the root of the anti-violence movement – so it follows from state sanctioned relationships. Nebraska was the first state in the U.S. to make marital rape illegal in the 1976 (Bishop). It was not until 1993 that marital rape was illegal in all fifty states, although spousal exceptions still persist in certain states. For example, it was not until 2019 that Minnesota ended its marital rape exception almost entirely due to the advocacy of private citizen Jenny Teeson. The modernity of advocacy against marital rape signifies a shift in legal understanding of sexual violence.

Marital rape laws solidify a legal distinction that wives are not the property of husbands. Marital rape was not previously illegal because rape was only outlawed under the pretense of property law. In other words, influenced largely by Chief Justice Sir Matthew Hale, the early legal codes opinionated "it was legally nonsensical that a man could commit such a harm by forcing sex upon his wife" (Ake 4). Furthermore, laws against marital rape redefined rape as a crime against a person instead of a crime against property.

On the imperial scale, United Nations General Assembly issued the 1993 "Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women". This resolution identified widespread "gender-based violence" against women in the forms of "Physical, sexual and psychological violence" (UN General Assembly 3). The narrative that establishes itself here is that sexual violence is a crime against women, motivated by their social location in the gender construct of woman. The centralizing of binary gender makes peripheral the additional power structures, especially structural racism and colonization. Narratizing

sexual violence as a crime against women also sets the scene for allegations to be contested based on a woman's performance of gender.

In 1994, the Violence Against Women Act arrived on the U.S. Senate Floor. Advocates for the original act long before conceded to narratize sexual violence as a gender-based crime, as the law's introductory text reads it exists "To combat violence and crimes against women on the streets and in homes." As previously invoked, Whittier analyzes the concession to carcerality as not "a simple embrace of the punitive state, but a strategic attempt to gain sufficient votes" (32). The marital rape law activism reverberates resoundingly in the "in homes" phrasing (Violence Against Women Act 1994). Anti-violence advocates additionally conceded to carcerality as a solution to sexual violence in order to secure enough votes. As sociologist Alison Phipps identifies, "colonialism relied on a circuit between bourgeois white women's tears and white men's punitive power," so did carceral feminism. Violence against women became legible to congress by reliance on the carceral language of "white men's punitive power" which is justified by "bourgeois white women's tears." The 1994 Violence Against Women Act passes because its intervention is "increased enforcement against violent crime" (Wittier 18). Advocates made this "strategic" concession to the carceral state for the purpose of classifying violence against women as a civil rights violation.

Making sexual violence legally legible came with a hefty cost. The victory was a loss, too, though. Power structures, especially the carceral state, fueled by restrictive masculinity and white supremacy received greater investment under the guise of paternalism.

In 2000, the Office on Department of Justice Violence Against Women's

expanded their "Grants to Combat Violent Crimes Against Women on Campus" program

(13-14). As reviewed in the 2003 federally funded grant report, the campus program

goals were:

> ". . . to develop and strengthen effective security and investigation strategies to
> combat violent crimes against women on campuses, and to develop and
> strengthen victim services in cases involving violent crimes against women on
> campuses, which may include partnerships with local criminal justice authorities,
> and community-based victim services agencies." (Dupree, McEwen, Spence and
> Wolff, 14)

The campus grant program encouraged partnerships with local criminal justice

authorities. In its idealization of a coordinated community response to sexual violence,

the program prioritized grant applications that created partnerships with community

organizations serving survivors. However, the grant included "local prosecutors and law

enforcement agencies" in their definition of community partners (Dupree, McEwen,

Spence and Wolff, 15). The grants imagined a coordinated community response that in

actuality was less of a holistic approach to survivorhood and more of a unilateral

activation of the carceral state on campuses.

Jane Bost was the Associate Director of University of Texas at Austin's

Counseling and Mental Health Center at the time. She wrote a Campus Grant proposal

for Voices Against Violence in 2001. The proposal was awarded roughly half a million

dollars to fund the Voices Against Violence program at UT Austin "to reduce violence

against women" (Saypol 27). The federal grant covered funding for the Voices Against

Violence Counseling Team, Outreach Program, Survivor's Fund, and School of Social

Work course. Jane Bost hired, supervised, and collaborated with VAV Program Coordinator Pam Cook, Counseling Specialist Christina LeCluyse, and Education Director Geeta Cowlagi to lay the groundwork for the Voices Against Violence program we know today. Cook was "to administer the grant," LeCluyse "saw clients," and Cowlagi was "charged with searching for the best methods to engage the campus in dialogue around issues of interpersonal violence" (Saypol 27).

An interactive theatre program was on both Cowlagi and Bost's radars as a potential best method. Cowlagi had recently attended a forum theatre performance by Students Advocating for Voices and Equality from University of Northern Iowa at a conference in the Midwest. Bost had exposure to a similar program out of Rutgers University called Students Challenging Reality and Educating Against Myths (SCREAM).

In 2002, Geeta Cowlagi "founded the Voices Against Violence Peer Theatre Program" (Jones et al. 49). The first action of the program was to secure "the sponsorship of the Psychology Department (Educational Psychology) and offered a course for college credit called "Theatre for Social Change" to teach the student peer educators" (Saypol 28). The course itself was started by Cowlagi with a focus on prevention outreach and performance scholar Omi Osun with a focus on Theatre of the Oppressed. The undergraduate course ran from 2002-2004, co-taught by Cowlagi and Osun (Saypol 28). Students in the course would prepare and present improvisational peer theatre presentations outside the class, mainly for interpersonal violence prevention. Interviewees describe these presentations as interrupting acts of violence in the moment.

The emphasis was on bystander intervention.

From a 2003 study on which Cowlagi was co-investigator, the course sought to use peer-led improvisational theatre presentations "to depict scenarios of interpersonal violence to positively affect attitudinal and behavioral changes among undergraduate college students" (Bost et al.). These scenarios became interactive theatre presentations that Cowlagi and her students were "frequently invited to present at national and regional conferences" and were recorded to "have presented to over fifty thousand individuals" over a period of six years ("Geeta Cowlagi"). It is difficult to divorce the aim to "depict scenarios of interpersonal violence" from the narratization of sexual violence as a gender based crime within the Violence Against Women Act.

The course's location inside the School of Social Work implies that the use of scenarios is directly tied to the social work educational function of case studies. This implication is important as case studies are predominately decontextualized fieldwork examples or hypothetical. In social work schools, case studies serve a few main purposes: an example "on which to practice their skills of critical analysis and assessment;" "practicing a particular skill set;" practicing "application of theory into practice;" or most ominously in the context of interpersonal violence prevention, providing "students an opportunity to accept responsibility for their own learning" (Adelphi). Scenarios follow a template of being assigned by an instructor, then analyzed by course students. This notion of hypotheticality, or at least decontextualization, appears to be more intrinsic to *Get Sexy* than previously thought. In this early ancestor to *Get Sexy*, interpersonal violence is eluded strictly within a scenario frame.

Scenarios operate as a peer norming strategy, or "health behavior prevention approach that focuses on correcting individuals' overestimations of unhealthy behaviors" (Connell). This strategy operates according to a logic that "individuals tend to imitate others' behaviors based on the reasoning that if others are doing it, especially when many others do it, it might be a good or wise thing to do" (SPSP). By setting a tradition of negative examples that require bystander intervention, there is the possibility of overinfluencing undergraduate conceptions of what interpersonal violence looks like. As Dolan offers, theater and performance educators are "training our students to enter an industry whose representations structure our national imagination" (5). This extends to scenarios of interpersonal violence as well, especially for the most taboo subjects. Peer norms operate according to a logic that "individuals tend to imitate others' behaviors based on the reasoning that if others are doing it, especially when many others do it, it might be a good or wise thing to do" (SPSP). By setting a tradition of negative examples, there is the risk that we overpopulate student imagination with negative rather than positive examples. In other words, we rehearse interpersonal relationships in a strictly negative social imaginary sans positive representations. When we over-rehearse unhealthy relationships dynamics, we neglect to rehearse healthy dynamics.

Moreover, the core goals of this first program was "emphasizing the importance of intervention from bystanders" (Bost). The narrative strategy in this early form of *Get Sexy* was to redirect introspection by placing oneself in the place of the bystander, not the responsible person or person who might be harmed. However, it seems a trend to dodge personal responsibility through hypotheticality.

Scenarios roughly follow the lineage of Boal's Theater of the Oppressed format of simultaneous dramaturgy. In this format, wherein "the spectators 'write' simultaneously with the acting of the actors" (Boal 102). In an ideal world, this might look like spectators communicating for the actors while the actors move through their motions. The scenario format is more distanced. Audience members are invited to offer suggestions to the bystander character. They are not asked to replace the actors or act in their stead as in forum theatre. The line between realities is wider when examining scenarios. In forum theatre and to some extent in simultaneous dramaturgy, the spect-actor "exists in the scene and outside of it, in a dual reality" (xi). In the case of scenarios, that reality is pre-determined and an audience member's ability to intercede, or rehearse revolution, is limited.

The early scenario model showed how interpersonal violence is rehearsed through a series of escalating dynamics. The scenario model did not perform any specific moment of sexual assault. As per the invocation of rehearsal, scenarios did enact dynamics that might lead to sexual assault. For example, a scenario might focus on more subtle dynamics of power and control, like an escalation into verbal abuse. Scenarios serve as education of how to identify how a violent dynamic can move. One interviewee observed the model assumed "most people are conditioned to see the most escalated form of interpersonal violence." A sole focus on escalations between intimate partners in scenarios neglects the more insidious forms of interpersonal violence learned through socialization inside dominant identities.

What is most noteworthy about the scenario format is that a small group of

students involved in the course would decide the representation and content of these scenes for wherever they toured. As Coleman observed, every time the course ran from its earliest form until Coleman began working as Theater for Dialogue Specialist, the course required all students to register for both semesters. This greatly limits whose imaginations are enlisted to think critically about contemporary harm and rehearsals for intervention. The limitation is along socially stratified lines. Undergraduate students who can pay for the credits of a course twice – while only counting it once, and even then likely as an elective – is very small.

Upon moving onto another program, Omi Osun recommended Lynn Hoare to replace her. Hoare was hired as a part time consultant. When Cowlagi left around 2005-2006, she recommended Hoare for the full-time position, which she held until 2016. In 2008, Hoare renamed the course and program "Theatre for Dialogue," according to my interviews. Taught by Hoare, the course syllabi largely continued its previous formulation for the next three or four years. For facilitators and teachers, the model became more challenging, or problematic, as it did not "focus so much on the prevention." Its scope was more on showing what interpersonal violence looks like so that students could identify its presence, not so that audience members were equipped to prevent it.

As previously noted, the course took place over a full year, with required fall and spring registration. In the fall semester, students engaged in studies related to the dynamics of intimate partner violence. Their curriculum engaged both theories and resources. The syllabus was broken up into modules that focused on toxic masculinity,

power dynamics, critical race theory, institutionalized racism, theatre for social change, and other elements from the lineage of Theater of the Oppressed. The desired effect was peer norming, or a trickle down of helping those students understand the dynamics of IPV. A syllabus from the 2007 run of the then-named Peer Theatre Performance course tells students they are leaders: "Students must understand that they are selected into this class as leaders and ambassadors for the Voices Against Violence Program" (Hoare "Syllabus for Theatre for Social Change" 2). The framing plants seeds for the expert dynamic. While I appreciate the empowerment intended, I wonder the benefit of raising up individual "experts" at the expense of more egalitarian, community-minded approaches. I am curious about what the inside of the classroom looked like then. Expertise is an elemental issue of peer norming, if left uninterrogated.

In the second semester of the course, students engaged less module-regulated studies. Students moved into creating, implementing, and facilitating workshops around campus. Over the years, the students performed and facilitated on different grounds on campus. Today's *Get Sexy* cannot perform off campus. Students of the earlier program era visited courses, athletic departments, high schools, and jails in Travis County.

Up until this point, ensemble students had been taking on roles of responsible person or survivor. For example, one forum theatre scene at the time involved a bystander character asking the audience for advice as to how to help their roommate who was assaulted at a party. For that scene, two students needed to take on victim and perpetrator roles. Hoare was itching to alter the model to be more preventative, less harm reducing. She found the trickiest scenarios to prepare and perform were the ones that focused on

sexual violence.

> Whether we called it the person who has control, these were exhausting roles to take on. How do we educate for prevention? I don't want to ask people to keep playing this out, rehearsing these dynamics in these bodies. There were often a lot of survivors enrolled in this class. Some people came in knowing they were survivors. Some realized they had patterns after looking at power and control. Some people didn't have any history.

This intonation of "rehearsing these dynamics in these bodies" fascinates me. If we consider that for many people who have survived trauma, especially sexual trauma, time exists in multiple temporalities. There is a serious consequence of rehearsing certain dynamics in bodies that are disproportionately belonging to survivors. One temporality becomes over-rehearsed, prioritized, dominant.

In addition, the rehearsal of intervention is limited by a class or presentation time slot. In the case of the contemporary *Get Sexy,* one audience member might try an intervention. After one intervention, the forum theatre scene is over. As Boal states, "In the forum theatre no idea is imposed: the audience, the people, have the opportunity to try out all their ideas, to rehearse all the possibilities, and to verify them in practice, that is, in theatrical practice" (119). It is not temporally possible to build trust and rehearse ideas if time is determined by an institution. These scenarios and their interventions exist less to rehearse possibilities created by individual groups as they exist to deliver pre-determined solutions.

I am also struck by the implication of other dynamics, other bodies in the phrase, "these dynamics in these bodies." I do not disagree with the speaker's concern about rehearsing dynamics. I do however maintain a curiosity about the potential for presumed

innocence of these bodies. Harm feels like an abstract dynamic, instead of something that is very real and possible within a classroom. A need that becomes so obvious to me here is for students who are survivors to have multiple creative ways of engaging with their experience without rehearsing painful dynamics. Survivors continue to be drawn to enrolling in the class – then and now.

The enrollment trend tells us that there is a need for survivors to be able to engage with their experiences. Possibly aligned with arts advocacy, or aligned with storytelling in a trauma informed space that does not necessitate disclosure. The only opportunity they have to express and process their experiences is relegated to prevention work. Prevention, or hypotheticality, is perhaps one of the only socially acceptable ways of engaging with survivor related creative advocacy without publicly identifying as such.

Returning to the historical account, Ben Snyder began working with Hoare as a Teaching Assistant on the course in 2009-2010. In response to the increasingly problematic nature of the scenario model, Snyder and Hoare proposed a show for the 2011 Cohen New Works Fest: *The Sexy Sex Kind of Sex*. They co-directed a devising process with four MFA actors. What would become *Get Sexy* was at that point called *The Sexy Sex Kind Of Sex*. A core creator of the *Sexy Sex* remarked in an interview:

> There's a lot of questions, doesn't it kill the mood? Does it make me look inexperienced? Isn't that too clinical? And if you're drunk that's helpful? Consent is sexy, consent is sexual, it can enhance it for everybody. That was one of the motivations for how do you title it in the right way.

The narrative strategy to make consent sexy is outdated. As Andrea Levy notes, consent does not need to be sexy. I am reminded of Levy's critiques of *Yes Means Yes* and *Men and Feminism* wherein she identified: "the tension between getting the politics as solid as

you can and reaching as many people as possible can be a difficult one to navigate"

(Levy). The interview anecdote reads as justification for talking about consent. The larger

paradox is that making consent sexy is the title of the contemporary piece; However, a

conversation about consent being sexy does not actually occur anywhere in the piece.

What I do hear in the above interview anecdote is an expression of need for a new

approach to consent, one that adrienne maree brown would articulate ten years later as

pleasure activism; "us learning to make justice and liberation the most pleasurable

experiences we can have on this planet" (15).

This interview anecdote reads as an attempt to appeal to a larger audience who

might be hesitant as to how to ask consent. But to me, the need present in that hesitation

is one for positive, not negative, examples of how to ask for consent. As Shavonne

Coleman taught me, we need more representation of healthy relationships. To "rehearse

these dynamics" of asking for pleasurable consent. To rehearse "saying yes on your own

terms' (brown *Pleasure Activism* 209). This need to not just advocate for finding one's

enthusiastic yes, but teaching how to go about locating and saying an enthusiastic yes

without feeling stilted or "clinical" is a daunting task. I return to it more in Chapter 3 but

it is one that relates to undoing intergenerational trauma and decades of conditioning.

HISTORICIZING SCENARIOS PART 2 (AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT)

The Sexy Sex Kind Of Sex, and the later *Get Sexy*, is aligned with the late aughts

movement toward positive, affirmative consent. The movement is best exemplified by

Yes Means Yes: Visions of Female Sexual Power and A World Without Rape (2008). This

anthology of essays – which included a piece by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha –

formalized a burgeoning rhetoric that "yes means yes." The publisher's note praised the anthology for making a crucial "paradigm shift from the 'No Means No' model…while [which was] necessary for where we were in 1974, needs an overhaul today" (Seal Press). I want to lift up and echo the anthology's acknowledgement that a previous model was necessary in previous conditions. It may no longer be the solution, as per A.J. Withers' acknowledgement of previous imaginations, but we can still see how previous models made this moment's most radical social imaginary possible.

The outdated rhetoric of "No Means No" had become a weapon of rape culture. Rape culture stigmatized female sexual desire to excuse sexual violence against women. *Yes Means Yes* radically envisioned "how suppressing female sexual agency is a key element of rape culture, and therefore how fostering genuine female sexual autonomy is necessary in fighting back against it" (6). The Violence Against Women Act greatly influences the anthology.

 Carceral feminism was woven deeply into the *Yes Means Yes* rhetoric. Like the Violence Against Women Act, *Yes Means Yes* believes sexual violence is a gendered crime. In the introduction, readers are asked to "imagine a world where men treat their sexual partners as collaborators, not conquests" (9). A leftover from the Violence Against Women Act was that narrative strategy of sexual violence as a crime specifically against women to gain broader appeal in Congress. In the congressional hearing of the Violence Against Women Act, only the generically labeled "immigrant women" and "indigenous women" demographics entered the bill. To make sexual violence legibly traumatic and violent to legislators, or as Whittier states not "'dismissed as a matter of gender,'"

"Maryland legislator Connie DeJuliis stated directly in the 1994 U.S. House hearing: '[T]his issue …is not a woman's issue… It is a crime issue'" (Whitter 15, 16). DeJuliis redefines sexual violence as the domain of the carceral state instead of a private, women's issue. Additionally, the anthology asks readers to join in imagining "a world where rape is rare and punished swiftly" (Friedman, Jaclyn, and Jessica Velanti, editors, 9). According to this line, if there is swift punishment, rape will happen only infrequently. It was the predominant language of solution at that time.

"Female sexual agency" also delimits sexual violence as an exercise of male sexual agency (Friedman, Jaclyn, and Jessica Velanti, editors 6). Consider that "Three out of five rapists are also in consenting sexual relationships" (Valley Crisis Center). Rape is not sex; it is an act of violence. That being said, the impetus for continuing to conceptualize rape as a gendered crime was due to in part to a rampant survivor-blaming element of rape culture. This element paralleled alcohol use, private space, and women with a likelihood of sexual violence. So and so's statement that "young women need to be warned about the dangers of drinking in public spaces" exemplifies paternalistic risk avoidance (6). In this strategy, the preventive act was so that responsible persons were prevented from being held responsible because drinking had occurred. The implication being that their drinking made them responsible for the later sexual violence, i.e. blaming women for their assaults because they had been drinking[2].

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[2] It is oddly reminiscent of the rules Mike Pence followed during at least his twelve years in Congress "that he never dines with women alone, nor does he attend functions without his wife if alcohol is being served" (Abcarian). Here though Pence sets these rules " to avoid any infidelity temptations, or even rumors of impropriety" (Blake). Among other things, there is a carcerality there of being concerned with avoiding rumors of did/if something happened, less concern about what happened. The earlier interviewee anecdote

The *Yes Means Yes* co-editors note "the feminist blogosphere was in an uproar" concerning a *Women eNews* article published at the end of 2006. Reporter Liz Funk's "Underage Women Sidle Up to Barroom Risks" spends significant time surveying the behavior of young women at NYC clubs, as if levying the risks young women know they're taking by entering clubs. Funk consecutively cites Kate Morris, a then 19-year old, and Jennifer O'Connor, a University of Albany graduate student, stating: "Bars give away free drinks, then guys offer to buy girls even more drinks and then girls dance erotically with them…The bouncer knows if he turns down the two or three underage girls, he's going to lose a group of 12 patrons" (Funk). Funk's inclusion of these statements, among others, posits that young women in some way accept the likelihood of sexual violence when they enter clubs. Funk collapses desire for erotic pleasure with the risk of sexual violence. As *Yes Means Yes* essayist Jill Fillipovic summarized, Funk "claimed by going out drinking or engaging a certain way with men that women are putting themselves at risk for rape" (Simpson).

In *Yes Means Yes,* Jaclyn Friedman and Jessica Valenti " imagine a world where women enjoy sex on their own terms and aren't shamed for it" (Friedman 9). In other words, enjoying sex is not criminalized. I agree, heartily, but I also think the collapsing of sexual pleasure and sexual violence is a symptom of an outdated model. Yes Means Yes

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of the "recipe for being an offender" also comes to mind. For Pence, it is avoiding any possible rumor of that recipe. What is noteworthy about this is a fear of being perceived as a rapist and/or adulterer. This is a fear of both cancellation and false accusation. I note this because I see it as a symptom of carcerality: a fear of the very system you support turning on you.

follows from some recuperative impulses. Yes Means Yes was not perfect. Get Sexy could benefit from Yes Means Yes' imperfect model.

There is a relationship between sexual violence and gender constructs. Sexual violence cannot be summarized as a crime against women. More accurately, sexual violence is a crime facilitated by toxic masculinity. The *Yes Means Yes* anthology refers to survivors specifically as female or women. I take a cue from adrienne maree brown's generous footnote of the term "women-identified women" in "Uses of the Erotic" by Audre Lorde (brown, *Pleasure Activism* 38).

> "I am not able to ask Audre Lorde her intended distinctions here, but I can ask that you as readers consider the text through the lens of her time rather than ours—in this day and age, when I hear 'women-identified women...'" (39).

Yes Means Yes authorship was not limited to cis female authors. From that evidence and adrienne maree brown's praxis, I posit that the use of the words women and female in the context of sexual violence built coalitions across gender oppressed people, in the language of the day. While sexual violence is not a "gendered crime," toxic masculinity plays an essential role (Whittier).

Yes means Yes reclaims female sexual agency. What it also does is imply that a woman's partaking of alcohol does not translate into consenting for any sexual activity. So then there is this odd strategy in *Get Sexy* to try to help women know how much they have drunk and if that means that they can consent or not. Teaching partners not to assume consent when there is intoxication. Alcohol feels like a culprit, still. I appreciate what *Get Sexy* was trying to do, which is support female sexual agency through additional information about tracking one's intoxication and clarifying a narrative that imbuing does not mean consent. But the focus on alcohol seems to be a product of the larger medical narrative that alcohol was the reason to blame for sexual assaulting behavior, not power dynamics, predation, socialization. Why does this behavior show up in sex? Where is it coming from? The script talks strictly about consent when one is "getting sexy" or about to "get sexy." I argue alcohol is a shortcut that was embraced by carceral feminism, and

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eventually *Get Sexy*, because the shortcut isolated and criminalized a behavior: drinking. A behavior that could be corrected. It's distractive —a decoy, and a shortcut.

MASCULINITY SPELLED ALCOHOL

Social science criminalized alcohol as causation for interpersonal violence. In a 2011 literature review of "Dating Violence and Substance Use in College Students," the authors compiled a breadth of social science articles on the role of alcohol use and interpersonal violence in order to establish "the link between substance use and IPV" (Shorey).

> It is generally well established that substance use is associated with an increased risk for IPV among community and treatment samples of adult intimate partners (see reviews by Foran & O'Leary, 2008; Moore et al., 2008, Stuart, O'Farrell, & Temple, 2009; Temple, Stuart, & O'Farrell, 2009)...Additionally, research with adult substance use treatment samples show that reductions in substance use is associated with reductions in IPV perpetration (e.g., O'Farrell, Fals-Stewart, Murphy, & Murphy, 2003; O'Farrell, Murphy, Stephan, Fals-Stewart, & Murphy, 2004; Stuart et al., 2009; Stuart et al., 2003; Stuart et al., 2002)

Notably, PubMed categorizes aforementioned literature review and the majority of its cited studies with a National Institute of Health ID, indicating receipt of National Institute of Health governmental funding, "to demonstrate compliance with the NIH Public Access policy" (NCBI). Evidently, in the late aughts, the U.S. government sweepingly funded studies that linked alcohol use and interpersonal violence. The federal government invested in the creation of evidence that criminalized alcohol.

The attention paid to alcohol in the late aughts of anti violence organizing is apparent in *The Sexy Sex Kind of Sex*. Removing alcohol from a situation was deemed a way to prevent, or fix the problem of sexual violence. It is easier to say that young people

need to stop drinking than that we need to drastically reimagine our relationship to gender, intimacy, trauma, and property ownership.

Two hundred years ago the Temperance and later the Prohibition movements linked alcohol to domestic abuse. For example, an 1847 illustrated cautionary tale by George Cruikshank shows one man's transformation from loving husband and father to drinking, abusive terror. The first, "'The Bottle Is Brought Out for the First Time: The Husband Induces His Wife 'Just to Take a Drop,'" seems pleasant, although eerily white.

Illustration 3: The Bottle Is Brought Out for the First Time: The Husband Induces His Wife "Just to Take a Drop"

The second cartoon, "'Fearful Quarrels, and Brutal Violence Are the Natural Consequences of the Frequent Use of the Bottle,'" demonstrates a very different scene.

Illustration 4: Fearful Quarrels, and Brutal Violence Are the

Natural Consequences of the Frequent Use of the Bottle

These cartoons mythologize that the imbuing of alcohol flips a switch in men.

They become violent when drunk. They are not to blame. Fermented hops are.

In my first chapter, I mentioned Brock Turner is a contemporary example of

alcohol deployed to excuse interpersonal violence. Turner has company. In 2018 a *Vox*

op ed writer____Lopez announced that alcohol was the not-discussed-enough variable.

> In the accusations against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, many
> troubling elements in his high school and college circles have been detailed: a
> culture of toxic masculinity — including allegations of rape — a degradation of
> women as sexual targets, and a seeming lack of oversight, from private or public
> figures. But there's one other thing that's consistently come up: alcohol.

Lopez' narrative voice in "But there's one other thing" suggests he pronounces a new

idea. The consistency to which alcohol comes up is not evidence of causation.

Psychologist Antonia Abbey agrees, "There is a connection between alcohol and sexual

violence, but it's not one of cause and effect " (PAGE). Alcohol is overused as an excuse.

The focus on alcohol and sexual violence obfuscates the role of toxic masculinity in sexual violence as domination. While there is much to say on its weaponization to coerce or overpower someone, what about its personification as an independent entity that is to blame for acts of violence? Journalists Taylor and Raven abjure, "Alcohol may be used as a weapon, or an excuse for aggressive behavior" (Taylor and Raven). The correlation between alcohol and sexual violence is more pernicious than excusatory. Abbey discerns, "men may consciously or unconsciously drink alcohol prior to committing sexual assault to have an excuse for their behavior." It is tired to say alcohol causes interpersonal violence. The tired line blames a substance, not a system of social constructs. Masculinity is never implicated. And that is the point.

In my first and second chapter, I have stressed *Get Sexy* relies on a drama based pedagogy that placates problems of socialization with interventions that address alcohol use, consent communication, or expectations of survivor hood. The first chapter establishes which concessions *Get Sexy* rehearses. The second chapter investigates how dominant feminist social movements shaped those concessions. I sourced *Get Sexy*'s concessions to the anti violence and affirmative consent movements. Its continued rehearsal of those concessions is not intentional. I suspect the program lost track of its concessions to the carceral state. Maybe Voices Against Violence believed or forgot the losses implicit in a carceral feminist victory. Whittier offers nuance of the Violence Against Women Act organizers. She opinions their attempts to "expand VAWA and

promote intersectional feminist frames in Congress were limited primarily by the material

and discursive context of Congress, not their own goals" (Whittier 32). I have to wonder

how much of *Get Sexy* was limited by its organizational context. *Get Sexy* has always

been located inside the University of Texas; it is descended from Violence Against

Women Act frameworks and funding.

The third chapter asks what kind of pedagogy is needed from applied theatre

practitioners right now. Regardless of why *Get Sexy* was limited, one thing is clear: *Get*

Sexy did not install avenues for reevaluation. Get Sexy is a teaching tool. It was hijacked

to rehearse carceral concessions. Paulo Freire's manifests "a pedagogy which must be

forged *with,* not *for,* the oppressed" (Freire WHICH 48). What then is a *Get Sexy "*forged

with" constituents?

Chapter 3: Deconstructing the Temporal Politics of Victory in Theatre for Dialogue Programming

THE TROUBLE WITH LINEARITY

The *Get Sexy* program once commanded respect, but its merit has not been tested for some time. *Get Sexy* is held up as a model for a university to responsibly respond to interpersonal violence on campus for interpersonal violence prevention. One interviewee described attending a *Get Sexy* performance in the mid 2010s that toured to Huston-Tillotson University. Audience members "were shouting in their seats to talk about sex." The interviewee, who later went on to be involved in the Theatre for Dialogue ensemble, was amazed at the energy brought in by the facilitators and audience. In the moment, they remember thinking, "I love all of these comments. I can't hear what everyone is saying!" That portrait of *Get Sexy* contrasts with the *Get Sexy* I know of today: a program that has not been supported or permitted to tour or create any new content. In the mid 2010s, the program visited Stanford University. By contrast, when Coleman successfully proposed that Theatre for Dialogue facilitate a session at the 2019 Theatre of the Oppressed conference, there was no administrative nor fiscal support. But the accolades continue. *Get Sexy* received the national student affair administrators' organization, NASPA's 2017 Grand Silver Excellence Award (Adeline). Investigative journalist Jessica Luther lauds the *Get Sexy* program in her debut novel *Unsportsmanlike Conduct: College Football and the Politics of Rape (2018)* for its "student actor-facilitators [who] lead students through a series of scenarios in which they can see how consent, boundaries, and communication

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work in real-time situations (Luther 162)"

In this chapter, I argue that intervening in *Get Sexy*'s temporal politics, or its sense of time and the associated power dynamics, is a key step to constructing a programmatic self-criticality. The accolades portray a successful program, which it is institutionally. The issue at hand is that *Get Sexy* is not self-critical yet. What might have been a tactical reform became a forgotten concession that evolved into a new norm. Organizer and legal theorist Dean Spade dissects the pitfalls of reform as tinkering, but not reaching root causes (Spade). *Get Sexy* lacks the criticality to revise its strategies. Specifically, *Get Sexy* is not critical of its carceral feminism.

Get Sexy serves the state through its linear progression. *Get Sexy* tells time according to a linear progression. How we tell time is deeply political. *Get Sexy*'s linearity allies its understanding of violence and healing with capitalism. The carceral state is a machine – it is capitalist machinery. The carceral state operates on a calendar system of sentences that criminalize but do not rehabilitate. The carceral state offers binaries in exchange for illusions of comfort. Binaries like good / bad, expert / harm-doer, fixed / broken. Carceral feminism only became more codified in *Get Sexy* with the layering of Title IV as solution. *Get Sexy* now acts like marketing for Title IV, the carceral process I detailed more in Chapter 1 which transforms administrators into legislators in a microcosmic criminal justice system. *Get Sexy* proselytizes a carceral feminist reform-based approach that make people want the illusion of safety instead of changing conditions. In short, *Get Sexy* tinkers.

In *Get Sexy*, survivorhood also exists strictly in linear temporality. Interpersonal

violence in *Get Sexy* lives in an if. *Get Sexy*'s hypothetical scenarios are perfect examples of the if. Interpersonal violence happens if cultural norms are not followed. In other words, interpersonal violence will occur if you disrupt the linear progression of norms. Survivorhood is unexpected.

Get Sexy scenarios fit into Boal's category of "finished theatre," meaning that they offer repeatable, predetermined solutions that avoid and maintain root causes (Boal THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED 20). In other words, the scenarios are products. The scenario-products in *Get Sexy* wrench survivorhood from history and lived experience. As scenario-products, survivorhood becomes linear, individual, and containable. Linear temporality confines survivorhood to a carceral and ableist conception: *if* it happens or happened, the survivor has done something wrong.

Trauma resists temporal linearity. Sexual trauma does not translate to linearity. In her poem "Rape Joke," Patricia Lockwood articulates that for survivors, "time is different, becomes more horrible and more habitable, and accommodates your need to go deeper into it" (59). Applying capitalist linearity to sexual trauma reduces survivorhood to an experience that can be definitively fixed, solved, or, in other words, made legible in linearity. More so, containing sexual trauma survivorhood to linearity denies survivors the agency to "go deeper into" time, which I interpret as to approach healing as an ongoing process of "increasing possibility (Lockwood 59) (Piepzna-Samarasinha 232). *Get Sexy* relies on a plotline that *if you take this action, this negative experience will happen.* If you desire sex and go home with someone you don't know, you will be taken advantage of. If you drink alcohol and are a man, you will take advantage of someone. As

stated by one interviewee, *Get Sexy* relies on a cause and effect recipe for being an offender. There is no time for healing in *Get Sexy*. There is no time for collective healing from historical domination. There is no undoing. Peace studies scholar Mona Lilja interprets Foucault's technologies of self "as a political practice" involving "remembering the past and narrating the present, as well as embracing ethical considerations that involve the future" (Lilja). These are temporal technologies for world building. Opening up capitalist linearity is how we build a world liberated from interpersonal violence. Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha likewise turns to time to build a new world:

> And I ask the dangerous question: What if more survivors—and the therapists and healing spaces available to us—had a Mad, crip idea of healing, one that was not about cure but about increasing possibility, about learning, about trying to love all our survivor madness, and about shifting our communities to ones where crazy was really okay? (232)

Deconstructing linearity permits us to imagine where *Get Sexy* might grow.

Survivorhood requires a temporal shift, from a linear model to something that is more expansive and embracing of past, present, and future. *Get Sexy* needs to revise its temporal politics. Placing survivorhood in a linear context reduces the experiences to individual events with clear beginnings and ends. Such linearity counters the inherent multi-temporality of survivorhood. Trauma bleeds into the present, future, and past all at once. As Janina Fisher describes, "When asked, 'How long ago was the last traumatic event you experienced?' Most trauma survivors are surprised at how much time has gone by because they are still 'there,' wherever 'there' was'" (Fisher 51). Supporting survivors of sexual violence should involve supporting their ability to hold multiple temporalities, not cultivate a false sense of safety inside individual scenarios. If there "is revolution in survivors remembering the omnipresence of rape," how then is a confinement of sexual

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trauma to the individual and hypothetical not a "denial of abuse's omnipresence?" (Piepzna-Samarasinha 229). In *Get Sexy*, survivorhood denies history, and the validity of multiple truths.

Not only does linearity misunderstand survivorhood as fixable, containable, and ahistorical, linearity refutes the special survivor knowledge of holding multiple temporalities. Piepzna-Samarasinha pinpoints, "Traditional ideas of survivorhood think of 'remembering' as a time-limited process that happens upon recovery of abuse memories and then is over" (234). In other words, traditional ideas of survivorhood mis-categorize survivorhood as linear. Survivors teach us so much about multiple temporalities. Honoring survivor temporalities makes patterns of harm visible. Instead of misconstruing interpersonal violence as unexpected, multi-temporality allows us to trace historical patterns of harm instead of focusing on peripheral variables. Making patterns visible is what is possible in "another survivor universe," as Piepzna-Samarasinha dreams, where "we are continually expanding—we are always remembering, and remembering again, and thinking about what our wounding means. We are mining our survivor experiences for knowledge" (Piepzna-Samarasinha 234). Piepzna-Samarasinha's idea of "another survivor universe" is lifegiving – I expand on it to say the ingenuity of survivors holding multiple temporalities creates a multiverse, not just an alternative "survivor universe" (PAGE). Our ability to survive a world that tells us something did not happen explodes dominant versions of events.

I opened this chapter arguing for Theatre for Dialogue to wrestle its programming out of capitalist linearity. In place of linearity, I propose Theatre for Dialogue shift its

temporality to deep time. As a result of this temporal intervention, I begin the critical imagining of a rehearsal-based pedagogy.

THEORIZING TEMPORALITIES AND PEDAGOGY

In this section, I root my third chapter in theoretical frameworks of deep time, capitalist linearity, and pedagogy of the oppressed.

Deep Time

Deep time opens up causation. Deep time is a geological form of time-telling. I define deep time as a multi-temporality that allows one to consider past, present and future in order to maintain a multi-faceted recognition of an experience. Nothing gets completed or taken away in deep time; layers of evidence merely get added. I define and use deep time as a container for multiple temporalities that finds wholeness in contradiction.

I choose deep time as my optic of multiple temporality, or the presence of many times. I learned deep time from performance studies scholar Jill Lane who borrows the concept from geological sciences. Lane experiments with using deep time to historicize the hemispheric Americas. What I love most about her application of deep time is how it opens "a window onto the pre-human, as in naming an experience of time that exceeds the limitations of European mono-chronic temporality" (Lane 389). I interpret mono-chronic as a dominant linearity. In the context of Theatre for Dialogue, deep time makes visible the multiple temporality of survivor experiences while simultaneously making visible the multiplicity of state sanctioned, carceral narratives about survivorhood and

interpersonal violence. The tension between "Traditional ideas of survivorhood" and "another survivor universe" is tangible in deep time (Piepzna-Samarasinha 234).

Capitalism emerged as an extension of Christian time in economic organization. In contrast, deep time emerged as a refutation of Christian theological time in the natural sciences. In the sixteenth century an Irish archbishop named James Ussher calculated biblical lifetimes to date the earth, "saying that it was created in 4004 B.C" (McPhee 2). In the seventeenth century, geologist James Hutton challenged Ussher's calculations with his "theory of the earth." When he visited Siccar Point in Pease Bay, Scotland, Hutton found his best evidence in a sandstone formation.

The cracks suggested a process of "horizontal sedimentation except that the layers were standing vertically like a set of encyclopedias on a shelf" (Wood 157). Ussher was under the assumption the earth he knew was just as it was six thousand years ago when first created by God. Siccar Point, for Hutton, gestured to a world constituted of prior worlds, "a succession of worlds" (Hutton 200). Measuring a geological formation like Siccar Point requires letting go of a temporal orientation reliant on individual lifetimes – or individuality at all. Nonfiction writer John McPhee termed Hutton's theory as deep time, offering, "Numbers do not seem to work well with regard to deep time" (McPhee 23). The individual as a unit of measurement falls away in deep time. Likewise, when we really begin to apprehend the "living legacy" of sexual trauma across generations, "we find no vestige of a beginning, – no prospect of an end" [sic] (Fisher 49) (Hutton 200).

Hutton looked to the cracks in sediment to find mechanisms of "erosion,

deposition, and uplift" (2). We must look for the cracks in mechanisms of domination. Hutton documented the geological "...processes and cycles that shaped the Earth" (2). Confining interpersonal violence to hypothetical, linear events negates its historic weaponization to assist in shaping constructs of race and gender that we believe to be intrinsic. Shawn Ginwright "By only treating the individual we only address part of the equation leaving the toxic systems, policies and practices neatly intact" treating survivors as unexpected, their harm as contrary to how things should be, pretends a safer reality than exists to the point of shaming survivors and disguising domination mechanisms (PAGE).

When harm happens; not if harm happens. We pivot away from formulating prevention strategies that conceptualize sexual harm as unexpected, individual anomalies that break norms. We pivot towards being present with patterns of sexual harm. Incidents of sexual harm are tethered to their historic weaponization. The historiography of transracial studies scholar C. Riley Snorton illuminates how the intonation of crisis, or emergency, concerning events of violence against trans people of color invalidates histories of violence. Snorton invokes the philosophy of Walter Benjamin: "[T]he tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the excep- tion [sic] but the rule" (Snorton *Black on Both Sides* viii). Interpersonal violence is a consistently used tool of domination. Narrating interpersonal violence as an emergency denies interpersonal violence is enforcement of a rule: rule as in reign of select dominant identities. Interpersonal violence is state sanctioned violence. Snorton's work formulates temporalities of emergence to conceptualize trans existence. Snorton

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uses emergence in place of emergency. The latter "gestures to the limited frames that have come to represent anti-trans violence" (Snorton, LAMBDA). Anomaly, as in unexpected, individual events, is a limited frame shed in deep time.

We need to cultivate presence in multi-temporality. We need to leave behind anticipatory anxiety and fictions of safety. I am arguing for a more comprehensive approach than binaries of harm reduction and prevention. How are we preparing ourselves and each other to embody impact? Our work deepens when we leave behind worth dichotomies like fixed-by-fixing/broken-bad and expert/harm-doer, "When we are able to admit that the capacity to harm lies within ourselves—within us all—we become capable of radically transforming the conversation around abuse and rape culture" (Thom 77). We need to cultivate presence with how we have been and are both weaponized and traumatized. As Schulman describes the "two impulses" of trauma and supremacy that "can co-exist in the one body" (230). We need spaces that support our cultivation of presence. As facilitators and teachers, we need to employ something like the engaged pedagogy of bell hooks wherein we do not exploit the emotional labor of our students, but simultaneously "students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess" (21).

I learned this idea of embodying impact from cultural worker, bodyworker, and writer Susan Raffo. She hones the concept of embodying impact, writing that we must:

> "...find, deepen and make cracks in the congealed thickness of generations of harm, of generations of impact that started as violence and then, over time, became normalized into the way things are, held in our bodies as internalized oppression and internalized supremacy" (CITE).

Systems weaponize our bodies. Only deep, loving presence can make cracks.

Conceptualizing survivorhood in deep time opens up causality and increases possibilities for ongoing rehabilitation and healing. Deep time supports a rehearsal-based pedagogy process over finished product-oriented pedagogy.

Capitalist Linearity

Numerous understandings of time preceded coloniality. Deep time is not a new idea. Shifting temporality to prioritize relationships across generations over individual productivity is not a new idea. To name a few, yuga cycles in Hindu cosmology, Aboriginal Dreamtime stories, Tzimtzum in the Lurianic Kabbalah, and Lakota seven generation thinking predate and continue to co-exist with deep time. By contrast, capitalism uses linear time to organize society into individuals. Capitalism adapts Christian moral thinking to justify linearity. I pull from Journalist Helene Snyder's argument that capitalistic linearity is derived from Christianity. "Living is carrying out commands that assure salvation" (Snyder). An individual secures their salvation by carrying out commands from an authority. I suspect Snyder would be amenable to a small edit: "Living is carrying out commands that assure..." productivity. Capitalist linearity measures productivity in individual lifetimes. Like Snyder articulates, "Capitalism will duly turn any remaining time on our hands into a productive investment, even if at the end, whatever its returns, the production chain will stop" (Synder). Every individual is a separate production chain.

Separate production chains permit a few elites to generate capital from mass labor. Individuals with the most power are most likely to have their accomplishments made legible – or to have the accomplishments of those below them misattributed to

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themself. In campus theatre programs, student creative labor is informal labor. Student accomplishments go unrecorded. Directors and instructors – who have likely done an enormous amount of work – are falsely credited (and compensated) for all the labor.

For example, according to the credit line in the script, *Get Sexy*, "was originally created as *The Sexy Sex Kind of Sex* in 2012 by Lynn Hoare and Ben Snyder as part of the VAV Theatre For Dialogue program" (Hoare and Snyder, 2019, p. 1). Yet, *Get Sexy* was devised with four actors. Where are their names? What about all the students who worked on *Get Sexy* in the years following? When the script made another round of revisions in 2018-2019 under then Graduate Assistant / Get Sexy Director Laura Epperson, Coleman advocated that the current ensemble of students' names be listed in the script to recognize the labor of revisions. The names never made it into the final version of the script.

The practice of documenting certain leaders does not adapt well to devised work. It operates from a capitalist logic of owning private property. I understand a common practice with playbills is to list the lead creators such as director, playwright, or composer on the front. Scripts for primarily educational purposes that are co-devised should not follow that logic. And I have my own bone to pick with playbills. In higher education contexts, I suspect the need to claim or credit a theatrical production or genre as individually created comes from a longer history of theatre studies departments being taken less seriously than their counterparts, as per Stephen Bottoms' work. We need to do better. More so, codifying individual expertise with our record keeping simultaneously limits credibility to a select few. We ensure our programs are underfunded when we consistently delimit credibility and do not construct more equitable record keeping. I lift

up how Austin-based theatre company Rude Mechs' mapped contributions in the playbill for their devised performance, *The Method Gun* (Rude Mechs). Many collaborators wore many hats. The gloriously messy map complicates assumptions that theatre is made by a few core creators. The map attempts to embody the vast invisible labor fueling the creation of devised performances.
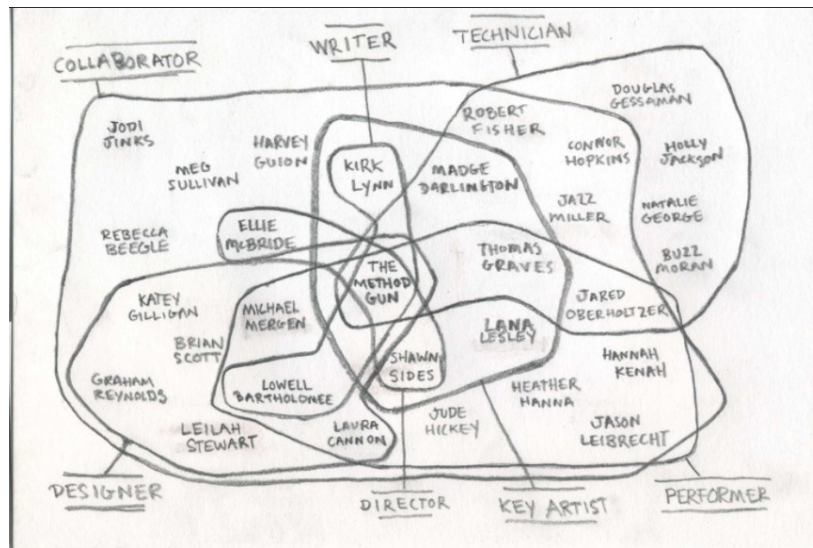
Illustration 5: Method Gun Map

Deep time temporalities make visible the systemic and historic institutions shielding interpersonal violence from any real intervention. If capitalist linearity uses the individual as its unit of measurement, deep time uses relationships. Understanding survivorhood in deep time opens up harm and causation beyond individual actors. In deep time, we see more clearly how individual actors are weaponized by systems. Linearity prioritizes individuality. Individuality steers "current formulations of trauma informed care" which presume "trauma is an individual experience, rather than a collective one" (Ginwright). Surviving trauma is not an individual experience, and neither is perpetrating

sexual trauma. The recent research findings of sociologists Richard Gelles, Lori Heise, and Jennifer Lawson determine the culprit is systemic, not individual. As Lawson describes, "violent behavior as a function of social structures rather than individual pathology" (PAGE). Capitalist logic of individuality consequently obfuscates the larger norms encouraging and preserving patterns of sexual abuse. Conversely, deep time prioritizes interconnectedness. Deep time highlights patterns, some of which are historical mechanisms of domination, like interpersonal violence.

Get Sexy has succumbed to capitalist production. Get Sexy was once malleable, more interactive. Now *Get Sexy* is an example of "finished theatre," an easily repeated formulaic performance does not honor relationships nor hold multiple truths. A temporal shift opens up where a program like Theatre for Dialogue could go next in recentering itself in "rehearsal theatre," or collaborative processes of collective performance-based visioning. Boal marvels that of rehearsal theatre, "One knows how these experiments will begin but not how they will end" (*THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED* 120). I see the potential pedagogy of rehearsal in Dolan's imagining of a "classroom...suffused with the potential of transformative politics, in a however utopian vision for a better future which, through our criticism, our theory, our art, we all participate in shaping" (11). Rehearsal is "shaping" (Dolan 11). Shaping our future –which for *Get Sexy* is a future free of interpersonal violence – requires a recognition of temporalities. The future is not a solution. The future is a temporality we are constantly, perpetually, co-constructing. Linear temporality means only a single, dominant narrative calls the future into being. Multiple temporality, however, calls a richer, truer world into being. Truer, to me,

promises the presence of multiple truths.

Applying Temporality to Pedagogy

The last theoretical orientation I invoke in this section is Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed. I pay special attention to his pedagogical theories of problem posing education and banking education. I define problem posing education as a process of inquiry. I define banking education as memorization of allowed facts. Banking education "attempts, by mythicizing reality, to conceal certain facts which explain the way [people] exist in the world [such as the facts of power and inequality];" in contrast to "problem-posing education [which] sets itself the task of de-mythologizing" (Freire PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED 71-72). In the context of *Get Sexy* scenarios, banking education manifests in the solving of peripheral variables that supposedly form "a recipe for being an offender." On the other hand, problem posing education requires participants to work through situations. Freire's pedagogical theories of banking and problem posing education operate like dramatic foils, paralleling (or more accurately influencing) Boal's finished theatre and rehearsal theatre. Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* guides my temporal intervention.

I opened this chapter declaring time is political. *Get Sexy* needs to revise its temporal politics so that the program can revise its pedagogical approach. Shifting temporalities mobilizes Theatre for Dialogue to evolve its pedagogy. *Get Sexy*'s scenarios rely on a banking system of education. In my first chapter, I categorized the scenarios within Freire's banking system of education, a pedagogy that regards students as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge. Bitingly, Freire describes knowledge in the

banking system as "a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (Freire "Banking Concept"1-2). It is clear Freire influenced Boal in the latter's articulation of "finished theatre" and "rehearsal theatre." Freire's problem posing education is "the practice of freedom" (PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED 80), prioritizes critical thinking and a flexibility of roles between teacher and student. The teacher can learn from the student and the student can teach the teacher. Freire explains "through dialogue," the teacher "is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is him [or her]self taught in dialogue with the students, who in their turn while being taught also teach" ("Banking Concept" 71). In problem posing education, the teacher and student exchange and build knowledge together.

Interpersonal violence prevention confined to the banking system of education stops participants from placing themselves in larger patterns that transcend their lifetimes. Freire elaborates that "implicit in the banking concept is the assumption of a dichotomy between human beings and the world: a person is merely in the world, not with the world or with others" ("Banking Concept" 76). Similarly, capitalist linear temporality assumes a person is an individual separate from the rest of the world, not constituted of patterns and generations. A person is merely an individual, "not with the world or with others" ("Banking Concept" 76). Deep time provides "a window onto the pre-human" and so very easily a window onto the pre- and post- individual (Lane 389).

Shifting from a capitalist temporality propels participants to imagine their healing and rehabilitation beyond fixing in the now. That temporal shift is a pedagogical shift. From the banking concept of education, shifting temporalities moves us toward what

Freire calls "problem-posing education" which affirms people "as beings in the process of becoming" ("Banking Concept" 76). Such wisdom counters the militant, impossible perfection of call out culture today. I best witnessed Freire's line that people are "in the process of becoming" implemented in one of Shavonne Coleman's collective agreements:

> "Screw it up, circle back, clean it up, try again.
>
> *Treat this as an act of preparation not just information.*"

What I love most about this framing is that it does not in any way discount potential harm that might occur. But the framing acknowledges that, to some extent, we have all been weaponized to further fracture and silo our individual selves. Such fracturing prevents the development of consensual, respectful, life-loving coalition building.

Freire connects the unfinishedness of people to the unfinishedness of reality. Opening up linearity invites experiments in rehearsal theatre. Boal marvels of rehearsal theatre, "One knows how these experiments will begin but not how they will end" (THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED 120). The carceral approach does not allow for the rehearsal of such joyful, livable worlds. Freire offers people are "unfinished, uncompleted beings in and with a likewise unfinished reality" (THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED 76). Scenarios are slices of finished reality. Rehearsal-based pedagogy emphasizes the role of collectively experimenting in how we co-construct better futures. Dolan applies Boal's rehearsal theatre to her vision of a classroom which hosts a democracy-in-the-making – made by and with students (11). She dreams, "I want the classroom we share to be suffused with the potential of transformative politics, in a however utopian vision for a better future which, through our criticism, our theory, our

art, we all participate in shaping." A rehearsal-based pedagogy is collective world building.

REHEARSAL-BASED PEDAGOGY

This section conducts a critical imagining of a rehearsal-based pedagogy.

I saw a glimmer of a rehearsal-based pedagogy during one Theatre for Dialogue rehearsal in March 2019. Coleman encouraged me to work with the ensemble to devise material towards a potential interactive piece for Voices Against Violence's upcoming Take Back the Night at UT Austin. I left my *Get Sexy* script at home.

I blended the devising rehearsal with collective visioning strategies to rehearse what we "imagine a world that supports survivors would be" like (Looney 1). After facilitating a drama-based sensory memory exercise that my supervisor Shavonne Coleman had guided me through developing earlier in the week, I asked the actor-facilitators to work in small groups to draw what a world that supports survivors might be like. The images were beautiful, but one sticks with me the most. A group had connected a survivor to sources of support and joy with an un-ending line. Survivorhood is not linear. Healing is not linear. The group had found a way to bend linearity.
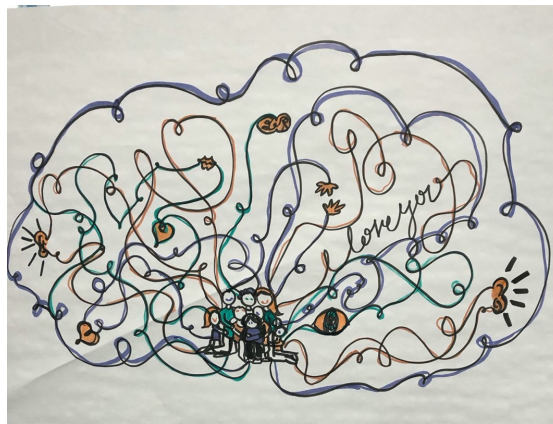
Illustration 6: Rehearsal Drawing

I want more rehearsals like that day. Linearity loosened. Finished theatre made way for rehearsal theatre. We were not trying to fix something or make something that could be easily recreated again and again. Finished theatre, in the context of participatory education theatre, counteracts the special elements of performance to bend time. Pryor celebrates performance "as a necessary site of repetition, recognition, and reparation" (9). Finished theatre constricts performance to a site of production. In line with Pryor's claim, that day in rehearsal opened up a site of process.

Making cracks for survivors means making cracks *with* survivors. We get through each day and celebrate what is possible. We revisit wounds with attention and care. The now becomes less sharp. Freire manifests "a pedagogy which must be forged *with,* not *for,* the oppressed" (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 48). A pedagogy cannot be a product for consumption. A pedagogy must be in a constant state of forging.

ELEMENTS OF A REHEARSAL-BASED PEDAGOGY

Below I identify six elements that lay the groundwork for a rehearsal-based pedagogy.

1. Emphasize experiment

A rehearsal-based pedagogy prioritizes two main forms of rehearsal theatre: workshopping dreams and workshopping conflict. Workshopping dreaming is rehearsing finding one's yes. It is rehearsing what feels good, what feels healthy,

and locating one's sense of what that is. I am not speaking sexually here. I am thinking of the early devising rehearsals Shavonne Coleman led the Theatre for Dialogue ensemble through in order to build a new performance on healthy relationships. Coleman observed that there was a dearth of examples of healthy relationships. How might a rehearsal-based pedagogy support dreams toward healthy relationships? Workshopping conflict is most akin to Tier 1 restorative justice processes in school systems. Coleman developed a program called Work It Through Shops for Theatre for Dialogue, but the program was never advertised by Voices Against Violence. Instead of predetermined problems and solutions, a workshop based program like Work It Through Shops invites participants to work through present conflict.

2. **Center survivors**

In the case of *Get Sexy,* a rehearsal-based pedagogy is survivor-centered, led, and reviewed. How strange to me that *Get Sexy* is about survivorhood but does not center survivors. Theatre for Dialogue could easily install a review board comprised of students in conjunction with Voices Against Violence's student organization. The board could be anonymous.

3. **Coalition-build cross-programmatically**

A rehearsal-based pedagogy encourages connections across university programming, organizations, and affiliations. Rehearsal-based pedagogy programs

resist expert and savior complexes. Instead, a program actively seeks out co-conspirators. Theater for Dialogue is missing alliances with other campus theatre performance programs like Peers for Pride or the Campus Issues Play. Changing campus culture requires collective action, not siloed experts.

4. Keep records collectively and consensually

The transient nature of campuses facilitates knowledge and achievement being made legible in individual tenure faculty or otherwise affiliated prominent experts. Dean Spade urges students to act as archivists. Active archival practices resist the amnesiac tendences of institutional memory. A rehearsal-based pedagogy encourages participants to decide collectively how they will keep records of their work. A Voices Against Violence staff member gorgeously models a new kind of record keeping in how they would have the outgoing and incoming co-presidents connect without the staff member being there so that they could speak candidly. The staff member would reserve an office space for the student leaders to use if need be.

5. Embrace revision

Programming must not calcify its rehearsal processes into products. bell hooks' engaged pedagogy mandates, "There must be an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic, that everyone contributes. These contributions are resources" (hooks 8). As a student body changes, so too should the programming. When I remarked to Coleman that I wondered what a program might look like that lets itself

revise over time, they proposed an idea that a program could write in an expectation that it would revise itself every two years. A revision process led by constituents, of course. New York University's musical theater piece *Reality Show*, first conceived and directed by a late mentor of mine, Liz Swados, was re-devised from scratch every year. *Reality Show* colluded with carceral state, too, with its repetitive lyrics to call the crisis line whenever there is trouble. What Reality Show models well is its annual complete revision.

6. Welcome organizational demise

We rehearse toward organizational demise. A rehearsal-based pedagogy integrates the nonprofit industrial complex adage often spouted but rarely enacted: *We want to put ourselves out of a job – the sooner the better.* If we want the work we're doing to make us obsolete, we must be vigilant and transparent about when any concessions we make stop us from doing the work. We cannot be precious about programs we develop. Anti-capitalist, rehearsal-based pedagogy allows itself to be in a constant state of revision – one that makes room for organizational demise. We must value and honor revision in our programs. To such an extent that we promise our organizational demise to ourselves and our constituents. We actively welcome our obsolescence and cultivate transparency about the gradient of our complicity, hence ushering in the end of our programs. That intentional slow pacing of rehearsing demise is inspired by Kim's interpretation of the "feminist wisdom of emergent strategies" which urge "a slowness but not a hesitation—a reflection on what feels connected and right rather than a reaction to what is going wrong" (323). Rehearsal based theatre, more so

than finished theatre, offers a space to continuously reflect "on what feels connected and right" (Kim 323). We start finding a better balance between world surviving and world building.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Throughout this thesis, I make a case for an anti-carceral, disability justice centered approach to survivorhood. In my first chapter, I examined the scenarios in *Get Sexy* in order to identify what interventions the program makes. In the second chapter, I historize the scenario content within carceral feminism. My third and final chapter examines the multiple temporalities of survivorhood that scenarios render a product at the expense of more nuanced and expansive experiences of individual and community healing and well-being. I argue shifting temporalities is a generative step to imagining futures. Simultaneously, I argue punishment is not our vehicle to livable futures. I join the ranks of anti-carceral feminist cultural workers who are dreaming towards a world free of interpersonal violence and carcerality.

I end this thesis with three dreams.

I want more drama-based programs that regard undergraduates as neither receptacles nor mouthpieces of preordained solutions. I want more classrooms that respect young people as makers of knowledge. And I want more scholarship that looks to performance as a vital way of knowing.

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