



## **“My Body as a Memory Map:” Embodied History in Ralph Lemon’s *Come Home Charley Patton***

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*I begin with the body, no way around it. The body as place, memory, culture, and as a vehicle for a cultural language. And so of course I’m in a current state of the wonderment of the politics of form. That I can feel both emotional outrageousness with my body as a memory map, an emotional geography of a particular American identity...*<sup>1</sup>

Choreographer and visual artist Ralph Lemon’s interventions into the themes of race, art, identity, and history are a hallmark of his almost four-decade-long career as a performer and art-maker. Lemon, a native of Minnesota, was a student of dance and theater who began his career in New York, performing with multimedia artists such as Meredith Monk before starting his own company in 1985. Lemon’s artistic style is intermedial and draws on the visual, aural, musical, and physical to explore themes related to his personal history. *Geography*, Lemon’s trilogy of dance and intermedial artistic pieces, spans ten years of global, investigative creative processes aimed at unearthing the relationships among—and the possible representations of—race, art, identity, and history. Part one of the trilogy, also called *Geography*, premiered in 1997 as a dance piece and was inspired by Lemon’s journey to Africa, in particular to Côte d’Ivoire and Guinea, where Lemon sought to more deeply understand his identity as an African-American male artist. He subsequently published a collection of writings, drawings, and notes which he had amassed during his research and travel in Africa under the title *Geography: Art, Race, Exile*. The second part of the *Geography* trilogy, *Tree*, took Lemon to Asia, where he investigated ritual, modernity, culture, and cultural practice. *Tree* premiered as an evening-length dance work in 2000, followed by publication of the journey’s collected ephemera in book form in 2004. The focus of this paper will be the final part of Lemon trilogy, *Come Home Charley Patton*, both the full-length dance, which debuted in 2004, and the volume of letters, photographs, notes, and drawings related to the creation of the dance, which was published in 2013. Performed by five dancers, and comprising six sections, *Come Home Charley Patton* is an artistic manifestation of Lemon’s travels to the Deep South, recreating the path of the Freedom Riders, the Civil Rights activists who protested racial segregation by riding integrated buses through the Jim Crow South in the summer of 1961.

*Come Home Charley Patton* is the nexus of Lemon’s identity and the history that he has both constructed and experienced of African-Americans in the rural South—the tension between past and present is palpably felt in the

multimedia performance through not only his choreography, but in Lemon's theatrical, musical, and cinematic choices. For this piece, Lemon's body acts as a literal map—charting, documenting, and archiving his journey through choreography and written accounts. Lemon's writings, which accompany this piece and document his artistic process, are an exploration of trauma, memory, and the human body as a site of history and a tool for historical preservation, and they highlight the burden of representing such a charged history on stage. This paper will document three techniques that Ralph Lemon employs to embody this history and to cultivate both kinesthetic and emotional responses to the work that prompt a renewed look at the status of African-Americans in present society: choreographic transference, “scriptive things,” and aural tradition and internalized rhythm.<sup>2</sup>

### **Choreographic Transference**

I propose the use of the term “choreographic transference” to help understand the ways in which Lemon was able to embody and recreate in-body traditions connected to the African-American experience in the South during the civil rights movement. Choreographic transference refers to the process of engaging in the tradition of learning or observing movement in an informal setting, the choreography of which may then be found in the body of the observer. Choreographic transference resembles, but differs from, mimesis in that this process demands a proximity to and relationship between the dancers. Performance studies scholar Diana Taylor, in her work *The Archive and the Repertoire*, writes: “repertoire...enacts embodied...all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge.”<sup>3</sup> Dance, embodied knowledge, and behaviors fit squarely within the repertoire, and choreographic transference requires kinesthetic intelligence to be able to see and then reproduce the movement patterns and cadence of another. Taylor further notes that “the repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by ‘being there,’ being part of the transmission...The repertoire both keeps and transforms choreographies of meaning.”<sup>4</sup> Indeed, a large portion of Lemon's project for *Come Home Charley Patton* is unearthing and reproducing “choreographies of meaning” from different geographies in the Deep South and from diverse histories within the framework of the African-American experience in the 1950s-60s.<sup>5</sup>

From the beginning of his documentation of the creative process for *Charley*, one can see that Lemon is deeply invested in and preoccupied with honoring the choreography of his ancestors and their contemporaries. In a letter to his sister dated February, 1999, he writes, “Dear Anita, I dreamed last night that I was dancing with Papa Satterwhite. It was the second time. He had a wide-legged step, low to the ground and rhythmic. I danced alongside him, and here's the strange part, I was invisible. Interesting, right?...Love, R.”<sup>6</sup> The base movement of *Charley*, as seen in almost all of the group section, has traces of Lemon's dance with Papa Satterwhite. The unison section of “Mississippi/Duluth” could very well be a direct citation of Lemon's dream—the dancers' movements are weighted, originating in the hips. Their steps are wide, mimicking the description of Satterwhite, and their lower bodies are extremely expressive.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, their footfalls create distinct rhythms in conjunction with their breath. The dancers execute the movement in unison; however, none of the dancers are

facing the same direction and their eyes never meet. The dance occurs at the same time, and yet there exists a bodily and emotional distance between the performers, a parallel to the “invisibility” between Lemon and Satterwhite. Though Lemon’s dream was a private, internal encounter, the connection between past and present through the physical embodiment of this exchange provides a clear example of how the body can become a site of history and transgenerational knowledge. In re-creating the gestures, phrases, and qualities performed by his ancestor in *his* body, in public and onstage, Lemon honors the history and movement traditions of his past in the present moment.

For Lemon, the journey to the South with his daughter was of immeasurable importance, not only because of the people he encountered, whose stories they shared, but also for the physical act of reclaiming sites historically fraught with trauma in African-American history. Dance theorist Susan Leigh Foster postulates that each body is imbued with history. It is built in every act we perform—our muscle development, our posture, our interactions, and our identities are inextricably linked to our physicality. To better understand our history, she writes, “[A] historian’s body wants to inhabit these vanished bodies for specific reasons. It wants to know where it stands, how it came to stand there, what its options for moving might be. It wants those dead bodies to lend a hand in deciphering its own present predicaments and in staging some future possibilities.”<sup>8</sup> In reenacting the route of the Freedom Riders, Lemon’s journey charts locations of trauma and provides an opportunity to literally walk in the footsteps of those who came before him, placing him in the role not only of a choreographer, but also of a historian. Lemon as a choreographer-historian uses both embodied and written knowledge to document his experience through dance, writing, and drawing. Susan Foster notes that “if writing bodies demand a proprioceptive affiliation between past and present bodies, they also require interpretation of their role in the cultural production of meaning: their capacities for expression, the relationships between body and subjectivity they may articulate . . . the notions of individuality and sociality they may purvey.”<sup>9</sup> For Lemon, it seems, his mode of “cultural production of meaning” relies on movement that oscillates between the individual and the social—the desire to embody dance and physicality on an internal, almost psychic level, coupled with the need to share that in-body knowledge and engage with it on the level of the communal. The internalization, on the level of the individual, and the externalization, on the social level, of movement generated by Lemon’s journey presents itself throughout the work and will be highlighted throughout this paper.

In many instances, particularly in sites of direct violence against African-Americans, Lemon began to dance. Whether as a way of reclaiming the space or as a way to physically internalize the landscape and submerge him into an immersive experience, Lemon turns to physicality to memorialize the past. He writes of his pilgrimage:

“I found confused and fleeting ways to make my presence known in these highly charged spaces that are not the same spaces of forty years ago. That have elusive memories...Capturing evidence that these personal events/actions did happen, and with some specificity...The self-consciousness of these private acts created

a radical pedestrian quality. I did not want to disrupt the communal ecology of these spaces.”<sup>10</sup>

The “radical pedestrian quality” infuses the stage performance as well. The vast majority of the work can be characterized as pedestrian, with variations of walking, standing, sitting, and other quotidian and ambulatory movements compose significant sections of the piece. The unassuming and ordinary nature of such movements expands the audience’s ability to connect to the performers on stage. Because they can imagine themselves conducting those same gestures, walking those patterns, or sitting on that table, the spectators are able to develop more empathy with the dancers and the narrative created by Lemon.

A connection can be drawn between the walking, running, and other pedestrian movements found in *Charley* and Diana Taylor’s notion of “trauma as a durational performance.”<sup>11</sup> Taylor, in writing about her experiences visiting a concentration camp in Chile, describes the need to reenact through walking and revisiting a site of trauma as necessary for the preservation of history, for the “instruction” of others, and possibly to “externalize the pain associated with a place.”<sup>12</sup> For Lemon, the reenactment of the Freedom Rides allowed him to gain perspective into the physical environments and sites of societal trauma and transformation. In many ways, the journey was also an act of redemption and reclamation. The act of walking in the path of his forbears was moving and intriguing for Lemon, and he writes “Ground (Hallow?)/ Memorial (Counter)” as “keywords to generate movement.”<sup>13</sup> Lemon uses the body to investigate the embodiment of trauma not only by visiting sites of memorial, but also through the physical act of walking and dancing on hallowed ground. Using his experience in the South as a genesis of certain movement phrases in the piece, Lemon once again connects geography with the dancing body. Here, André Lepecki’s notion of the “will to archive” provides another constructive tool in understanding Lemon’s process of retracing the steps of his forbears, Lepecki notes that the will to archive is a “will to re-enact, thus indicating the body as *the* privileged archival site. In its constitutive precariousness, perpetual blind-spots, linguistic indeterminations, muscular tremors, memory lapses, bleedings, rages, and passions, the body as archive re-replaces and diverts notions of archive away from a documental deposit or bureaucratic agency dedicated to the (mis)management of the past.”<sup>14</sup> Lepecki’s theorization is particularly fascinating and apt in the context of a past that involves the ultimate act of disempowerment and submission: slavery. The reclamation of sites and histories fraught with pain and trauma, then, occurs not only in the form of creating different associations with a place (i.e., through dancing at the site of Medgar Evers’ home), but also in the form of taking one’s history out of the hands of the system that encouraged slavery and segregation and into the domain of one’s own body where it can be guarded, preserved, and honored.

In addition to the influence of the empowering act of revisiting physical sites, Lemon’s encounters with individuals along his journey greatly influenced his choreography. One example can be found in his notes of a conversation with a man named Walter Carter. Here, Lemon recounts that Carter explained:

“We’d go to [Skippy James’] place to frolic...Frolickin’, jukin’, dancin’, havin’ a good time...dancin’. The waltz...the one step...two

step...the slow drag.' He gradually stands, unexpected, surprising everybody. Standing still for a few seconds, outside of remembering, and then he starts to move, mostly his legs, sliding without bending any limbs, announcing then moving from step to step. First the one-step, then the two-step, then the slow drag. His body thin as a rail and light, stiff, shining. Arms rounded...<sup>15</sup>

By watching Carter dance like he used to decades before, and by learning his movements through observation and repetition, Lemon becomes privy to a new brand of corporeal knowledge. The particular flavor of the “frolickin” and the “jukin” was necessarily unique, as it had never been taught to him before and it had been developed in a completely different milieu. The section “Nigger Story” includes phrasing and sequences that look to be inspired by Carter. At this point in the piece, dancer Okwui Okpokwasili has just recounted to the audience a story in which a classmate of hers called her a nigger. This emotionally charged term paired with video footage of a man’s home and his gun collection cements the relationship between race and violence for the audience. It is in this context that the quintet for Carter begins.<sup>16</sup> Okpokwasili begins onstage with a video of a man playing the drums behind her. She repeats a rhythmic one-legged chug and is joined by two male dancers. They perform a series of embellished pedestrian dances and are gradually joined by two more dancers; then they all break into a circle with high-energy clapping and stomping, this rhythm providing the music for the male dancer in the center. His choreography—high legs, bent knees, a lightness of body and extended limbs—reminds the spectator of energetic, twentieth century social dances such as the Lindy Hop or the Jitterbug. The quintet looks to be “having a good time...dancin”—they then break into a stylized unison phrase also marked by rhythm and punctuated with pauses. The group’s limbs are heavy as they glide and shuffle across the stage, in some phrases with their “arms rounded,” the last section with extended arms and legs that trace the space around them. It is in this performance learned from Carter that Lemon translates and transposed history from one location to another, from the South to Brooklyn, from aging, laboring bodies to professional dancers. Through the weight of the limbs, the arc of the arms and the configuration of bodies in space and in time with a rhythmic beat, Lemon takes the audience to a particular location and moment in time and forces us to recall a specific point in history.

Lemon’s use of choreographic transference does not solely manifest in learned movement phrases; it can also be located in movement stemming from particularly moving encounters that created in Lemon a profoundly emotional response. A recurring motif throughout the piece has Okpokwasili, clad in a red dress, spinning with her arms extended wide to her sides. While this movement elicits different responses at different points in the work, the image itself resonates with an entry in Lemon’s notes from his sojourn. Towards the beginning of his quest, Lemon realizes that he needs to reorient himself in relation to the means by which he obtains information and the substance of what he is searching for. In a conversation that was less fruitful than expected with some folks in Virginia, Lemon writes:

“I distract myself into another dreamy revelation...an affirmation really, for full-blown racial injustice or integration as I see it, and my confusion with what to do with this modern-past inequality and

faux-freedom, what I witness, right here, better to create concepts that I can play with, ideas mythical, empowered, distracted...like flying back to Africa with wings, real ones that sprout from the shoulder blades..."<sup>17</sup>

Particularly in the final section of the work Okpokwasili seems to embody the strong, empowered woman Lemon describes, her arms outstretched and her body spinning out of control as if she might take off in flight for a distant place and time.<sup>18</sup>

### Scriptive Things

While the choreography of *Charley* allows the audience a view into Lemon's Freedom Ride by giving us a visceral and kinesthetic connection to his travels, he further deepens this connection through his carefully curated use of "scriptive things" during the performance. In her essay "Dances with Things," historian Robin Bernstein discusses the powerful agency afforded to material objects and how these inanimate objects elicit animated responses from the living body. At least part of the object's agency, Bernstein asserts, comes in the form of historical context and socialization; in essence, the history of an object helps to script our relationship with, reception to, and usage of that object in the present. Lemon's intentional use of props in *Charley* shows his recognition that "when a thing scripts actions, it manifests the repertoire of its historical moment."<sup>19</sup> A particularly poignant example of a "scriptive thing" in *Charley* is the horseshoes that Okpokwasili uses at different points throughout different monologues in the piece. In the horseshoes' first appearance,<sup>20</sup> Okpokwasili walks towards center stage with a Western-style shirt buttoned up over her dress and the score of old cowboy movies playing over her walking. At first, it seems as if the horseshoe is alluding to a campy, Western scene. With one move of the arm, however, the horseshoe becomes metonymic as she places it around her neck, a stand-in for the shackles worn by Africans and African-Americans during slavery. Bernstein notes:

"[O]ne gains performance competence not only by accruing contextualizing knowledge but also, crucially, by holding a thing, manipulating it, shaking it to see what meaningful gestures tumble forth. Ultimately, historians must place our living bodies in the stream of performance tradition. The archive then becomes a ghostly discotheque where things of the past leap up to ask scholars to dance; and we listen, accept the invitation, and, hearts pounding, step onto the floor."<sup>21</sup>

Okpokwasili does step onto the floor. The monologue she delivers is the aforementioned "Nigger Story," and the symbolism of her sharing her experience with a racial epithet while literally bearing the weight of her ancestors in the form of a metal horseshoe is not lost on the audience. The horseshoe not only scripts the audience's response to its presence, perhaps through a feeling of discomfort, an aversion of the eyes, or a more careful listen to the words of the monologue; it also dictates Okpokwasili's movement and choreography. Later in the work, the horseshoes appear again and their impact on the body is more pronounced.<sup>22</sup> As she layers four horseshoes upon her neck, the weight of them causes a shift in

her posture and cadence. Both she and the spectators immediately revert back to a particular historical moment in which African-Americans were not able to walk free from the confines of slavery and oppression, and, in this way, the use of props dictates not only a response from the performer, but also a distinct and predictable response from the audience.

Other instances of “scriptive things” might be less pronounced; however, the impact of the material on Lemon’s creative process manifests in the final performance. The concepts of architecture and the materiality of delineated space are particularly interesting to Lemon and he plays with the physical and emotional responses associated with spatial division. During the process of creating *Charley*, Lemon was inspired by the work of Bruce Nauman; he muses, “what specifically interests me about [Nauman’s] *Wall-Floor Positions*<sup>23</sup> beyond its obvious relationship to art and the body...is the not so obvious parallel realities of a period in time, of ‘a white art freedom’ and the black civil rights movement. Body as art material...And the invisible body as chattel. Where and how did these forces intersect beyond an inanimate sociology of walls and floors?”<sup>24</sup> In *Charley*, Lemon sets out to explore that “sociology of walls and floors”—what do walls divide? What do they support? In the piece, two male dancers interact with large sections of plywood siding, creating both divisions and support systems between the stage, themselves, and each other.<sup>25</sup> Given that Lemon’s sojourn was undertaken in the context of the Freedom Rides, the premise of which was to eliminate divisions of public space because of race, the walls do suggest a connection between the white boards and the racial segregation of black bodies. The section “No Room Story” begins with one of the male dancers balancing the wallpapered plywood on his back—and provide an example of how the physicality of the dancers is heightened by the scriptive props, even if the objects aren’t the focus of the scene.<sup>26</sup> The solo male dancer performs a series of gestures: grabbing and struggling against his wrists, as if fighting with his own body, followed by more effeminate gestures framing his face. His solo ends with a salute and then the collapse of his upper body. Another dancer replaces the first. He begins to use the wall as a backdrop for his own gestural sequence, starting with exaggerated laughing and followed by specific framing of the face and neck. The next series of movements mimics hair braiding, an image made more striking by the fact that the dancer’s head is shaven. These gesture phrases embody the “sociology of walls and floors” described by Lemon in his notes. Ranging from the mundane (hair braiding) to the violent (miming punching an invisible figure), the solitary black dancers set against the light wall evoke senses of vulnerability, confinement, judgment, and interrogation, as if each action in African-American daily life is under a new or specialized form of scrutiny. Similarly, the floral wallpaper creates the environment of a home, a safe and personal domain. The intrusion of a public audience into the private interactions and emotions of the dancers in the home provides an equally poignant statement about history and memory: that in order to share and remember one’s history, it is necessary to delve into the intimate, sometimes painful and private lives and stories of others.

## Aural Tradition and Internalized Rhythm

The collapse of the public and private spheres is presented, too, through aural traditions, such as storytelling and music, which Lemon uses throughout the piece to further connect his audience to a specific time and a particular African-American history. From slavery to the present day, music and storytelling have held a sacred place in the lives of black Americans. P. Sterling Stuckey, writing on the essentiality of music and dance in African-American history and culture, in addition to the role of art in African-American spirituality, notes: "Slaveholders never understood that a form of spirituality almost indistinguishable from art was central to the cultures from which blacks came. Distinguishing between the two for the African was like distinguishing between the sacred and the secular, and that distinction was not often made. . . . This quality of culture helps explain why, for the descendants of Africa in America, the sacred so easily satisfied the deepest 'secular' needs, and the two long remained the same when that which was sacred was labeled secular by outsiders."<sup>27</sup> For Lemon, highlighting aural traditions of music and storytelling, in addition to the internalized and embodied rhythm of music in the body, became a central component of the final production of *Charley*.

Music and rhythm in the body is a recurring motif throughout the work and, though these phrases evoke differing emotions depending on the context, each iteration of the body as an instrument for rhythm provides the audience with a sense of grandeur—as if this body were connected to another body in another time. Although there are dramatic and moving moments of silence in the piece, Lemon's notes and the final work are full of references to and clips of diverse musical scores. But it is to the blues and jazz that Lemon keeps returning. The blues and jazz, two musical traditions steeped in and woven into the history of African-Americans, provide the backdrop for many instances of embodied rhythm through both improvisation and choreography in Lemon's work. During his research, he writes of a particularly memorable evening in which he found himself performing "[a] dance that had no steps or shape, like the music. No longer research. I disappeared, rhythmically, without discrimination. But not in the way I had dreamed a few years back, conjure-dancing with Papa Satterwhite. There were no grandfathers or great-grandfathers ghosting this dance . . . Just me, barely me. I danced, with bended knees. . . ."<sup>28</sup> While there are direct references to the influence of the jazz in the piece (such as Okpokwasili singing a rendition of "Little Girl Blue" by Nina Simone), there are other instances of rhythm that have evoke a more visceral kinesthetic response from the audience. In the section "Mississippi/Duluth," for example, following an acoustic accompaniment of the first quintet of the piece, the music drops off and the dancers begin to create the score with their bodies.<sup>29</sup> What begins with whistling quickly accelerates into a driving rhythm created primarily from gasped breaths and vigorous slaps of the hand on the body, which increase in intensity, and is punctuated with a body's collapse onto the floor. It can be difficult to separate the choreography from the image of a whipping, particularly in the case of the male dancer in center stage who uses his extended arm to beat his leg with tremendous intensity. In this way, Lemon creates a soundscape that both instrumentalizes the human body and preserves its history as a black body. To use Foster's logic, the effect of beatings on the African-American body can be seen through its history, which Lemon materializes on the stage.

“Nigger Story,” a full section of the work, also uses the body to connect storytelling, rhythm and history for the audience.<sup>30</sup> The opening scene, set to muted, bucolic music, morphs into a session in which the audience literally partakes in the transmission of history through Okpokwasili’s telling of her experience of being called a nigger in the fourth grade. The audience now becomes invested in not only the information the performer is conveying, but also the manner in which she tells the story. The spectators find themselves in a position that has historical roots: the receivers of knowledge through oral history and transmission. Okpokwasili moves from upstage-right to center stage as the music swells and she paradoxically cements herself as the protagonist (her body language suggests a comfort afforded to one who has told this story many times) and also as a victim (this is when she places the horseshoe on her neck like a shackle). Music, too, plays a huge role in this story and highlights the ambivalence that Okpokwasili embodies. Her fourth grade teacher is introduced as one who always plays the djembe, a traditional African drum, which irks Okpokwasili because all she wants to listen to is Verdi. The struggle between Western classical music and traditional African drumming symbolizes, perhaps, the uncomfortable and confusing identity of a young African-American child growing up in a primarily white, middle-class town. When discussing the incident of Dawn calling Okpokwasili a nigger, cymbals crash from a dancer upstage, muffling the sound of the word, although we all know what was said. As the tempo and frequency of the word “nigger” increases, so, too, does the rhythm of the cymbals creating a brass cacophony that drowns out the voice of the storyteller. Here, we see music’s ambivalent identity as an antidote to racial unrest. On one hand, music is a source of pride and empowerment for the African-American community, and on the other, its popularity and prevalence masks deeper, untreated issues that gnaw at the psyche of the black community.

## Conclusion

This paper analyzes Ralph Lemon’s work *Come Home Charley Patton* through the lens of choreographic transference, scriptive things, and aural tradition and internalized rhythm in an attempt to understand the ways in which Lemon is able to embody the painful history of African-Americans living in the South during and prior to the civil rights movement. The process for garnering material for the piece involved a retracing and recreation of the Freedom Riders in addition to engaging with members of the African-American community in the South to experience firsthand the sites and personal histories of this difficult past. *Come Home Charley Patton* explores the complexity of trying to parse out and make sense of the African-American identity as it confronts concepts of identity, history, memory, and trauma. Lemon uses the body as a site of memory and empowerment—through embodied traditions he explores the past and, by performing on stage, he brings the legacy of that past to life in the present, calling for a renewed look at the position of African-Americans in the United States through choreography. Watching *Come Home Charley Patton* in 2015, in the context of the #BlackLivesMatter movement and the epidemic of murders of unarmed African-Americans by law enforcement, the spectator revisits race, trauma, and identity through the lens of the present and through the embodiment of historical memory on stage. Over the past year, #BlackLivesMatter protestors have been staging “Die-In” demonstrations in which participants lie on the ground in silence for forty-five minutes, the amount of time that Michael Brown’s body lay

on a Ferguson sidewalk after his death—a somber memorial to the teenager and a stark portrait in light of the racial violence steeped in which America’s history is steeped. While Lemon’s work highlights energetic movement, storytelling, and music, the focus of both *Charley* and of the Die-Ins remains fixed on the physical black body. Through the process of creating *Charley*, and through its performance, Lemon investigates the black body as a site of history and as a memorial, while also acknowledging the body’s resilience, freedom, and importance as a vehicle for storing one’s culture and identity.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ralph Lemon, *Come Home Charley Patton* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2013), 207.

<sup>2</sup> “Scriptive things” are material objects which prompt or “script” specific actions on the part of humans. Bernstein proposes that “agency, intention, and racial subjectivation co-emerge through everyday encounters with the material world” and that the racialized history of Americans can be viewed through our performance (i.e., interaction) with material objects. Robin Bernstein, “Dances With Things: Material Culture and the Performance of Race,” *Social Text* 101 Vol. 27, No. 4. (2009): 67, accessed 24 November 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 20.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Although much of the choreography and the history of *Charley* stem from the South, the piece is inherently intranational and extends far north of the Mason-Dixon. Lemon himself is a native of Minnesota, and the piece ultimately concerns the lynching of a man in the North. The section of the piece entitled “Mississippi/Duluth” provides one example of the ways in which Lemon suggests that African-American culture and identity share an inescapable history stemming from slavery in the south.

<sup>6</sup> Lemon, 10.

<sup>7</sup> Ralph Lemon, *Come Home Charley Patton* (2004) in *Geography*, (New York: Cross Performance, Inc., 1997), 13:47- 14:01.

<sup>8</sup> Susan Leigh Foster, *Choreographing History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 6.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 8

<sup>10</sup> Lemon, *Come Home Charley Patton*, 27.

<sup>11</sup> Diana Taylor, “Trauma as Durational Performance: A Return to Dark Sites” in *Rites of Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory*, ed. Marianne Hirsch and Nancy K. Miller, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 276.

<sup>12</sup> Taylor, 275.

<sup>13</sup> Lemon, *Come Home Charley Patton*, 186-7.

<sup>14</sup> André Lepecki, “The Body as Archive: Will to Re-Enact and the Afterlives of Dances,” *Dance Research Journal* (2010), 34.

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- <sup>15</sup> Lemon, *Come Home Charley Patton*, 132.
- <sup>16</sup> Lemon, *Geography*, 36:55 - 39:49
- <sup>17</sup> Lemon, *Come Home Charley Patton*, 34.
- <sup>18</sup> Lemon, *Geography*, 1:26:32.
- <sup>19</sup> Bernstein, 89.
- <sup>20</sup> Lemon, *Geography*, 25:53.
- <sup>21</sup> Bernstein, 90.
- <sup>22</sup> Lemon, *Geography*, 1:16:06.
- <sup>23</sup> *Wall-Floor Positions* (1968-9) is a sixty-minute video performance piece exploring the variations of the connection the human body can have with walls and a floor.
- <sup>24</sup> Lemon, *Come Home Charley Patton*, 167.
- <sup>25</sup> Lemon, *Geography*. 41:43-45:10
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 42:42.
- <sup>27</sup> P. Sterling Stuckey, "Christian Conversion and the Challenge of Dance" in *Choreographing History* ed. Susan Leigh Foster, 55.
- <sup>28</sup> Lemon, *Come Home Charley Patton*, 134.
- <sup>29</sup> Lemon, *Geography*, 12:26.
- <sup>30</sup> Lemon, *Geography*, 24:27.