A WORLD OF MUSCLE, BONE & ORGANS

RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP IN DANCE

A World of Muscle, Bone & Organs: Research and Scholarship in Dance

A World of Muscle, Bone & Organs: Research and Scholarship in Dance

Edited by Simon Ellis, Hetty Blades and Charlotte Waelde

In memory of Andrée Grau
(1954 – 2017)

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A World of Muscle, Bone & Organs contains 76 images. The following are collated lists of the performers shown in the images, the choreographers whose work is depicted, and the photographers responsible for the images.

Performers

Emilie Gallier, Andrea Buckley, Charlie Morrissey, Matthias Sperling, Emma Meehan, Marie-Louise Crawley, Dinis Machado, Bryna Pascoe, Erik Nevin, Alexander Standard, Rosalie Wahlfrid, Angela Falk, Iris Platt, Valeria Solomonoff, Juan Corres Benito, Frederike Doffin, Hana Erdman, Naïma Ferré, Jasmin Ihrac, Przemyslaw Kaminski, Roni Katz, Mathis Kleinschnittger, Inna Krasnoper, Zwoisy Mears-Clarke, Lea Moro, Benjamin Pohlig, Julia Rodriguez, Claudia Tomasi, Nir Vidan, Sunniva Vikør Egenes, Common Dance performers, Finchley Children's Music Group, Laura Dajao, Louise Dickson, Beth Gardiner, Sian Green, Kimberley Harvey, Gisele Edwards, Milton Lopes, Alesandra Seutin, Ben Stammers, Katye Coe, Maud Allan, Anna Pavlova, Birmingham Royal Ballet performers, Ruth Gibson, Deborah Hay, Catarina Carvalho, Alvaro Dule, Louis McMiller, Daniela Neugebauer, Fukiko Takase, Jessica Wright, Yoko Ando, Cyril Baldy, Francesca Caroti, Dana Casperson, Amancio Gonzalez, Sang Jijia, David Kern, Marthe Krummenacher, Prue Lang, Ioannis Mantafounis, Fabrice Mazliah,Roberta Mosca, Georg Reischl, Jone San Martin, Christopher Roman, Elizabeth Waterhouse, Ander Zabala, Jessica Wright, Barbara Meneses, Jeanine Durning, Ros Warby, Juliette Mapp, Shailer Kern-Carruth, Alison Liney, Ariel Zablocki, Susan Kozel, Tal Aronson, Maria Simone, Andrea Sproule, Laura Toma, Laura Boudou, Anne Bucchi, Bailey Eng, Lucy Fendal, Ryan Kelly, Elizabeth Lima, Abe Mijnheer, Kim L. Rouchdy, Manuel Shink, Shannon Bott, Simon Ellis.

Choreographers

Emilie Gallier, Siobhan Davies, Emma Meehan, Marie-Louise Crawley, Dinis Machado, Vicky Malin, Ilya Vidrin, Joe Moran, Isabelle Schad, Rosemary Lee, Rob Marshall, Simon Whitehead, Katye Coe, Maud Allan, Anna Pavlova, George Balanchine, Keira Greene, Deborah Hay, Wayne McGregor, Rebecca Weber, Ruth Gibson, Susan Kozel, Bruno Martelli, Teoma Naccarato, Shannon Bott, Simon Ellis, Colin Poole.

Photographers

Jamillah Sungkar, Alison Proctor, Christian Kipp, Eline Kieft, Emma Meehan, Ian Wallman, Ruth Campbell, Ilya Vidrin, Zbigniew Kotkiewicz, Sue Murad, Laurent Goldring, Dieter Hartwig, Susannah Stone, Sean Goldthorpe, Oliver Rudkin, Josh Tomalin, Jaime Fernández, Michael Brzezinski, Jonathan Shaw, David Surman, Jessica Schäfer, Marc Downie, Nick Rothwell, Luke Church, Thomas Lenden Joshua Fuller, Bill Herbert, Ruth Gibson, Bruno Martelli, Robert Zbikowski, Pepinopithecus, Jayden Stevens, Stephen Wright.

Preface

A World of Muscle, Bone & Organs: Research and Scholarship in Dance is a collection of twenty-three chapters about dance from twenty-three quite different people involved in dance research. Each contributor explores issues vital in contemporary dance scholarship and/or practice: from archives to the epistemic concerns of artistic research, through concerns about politics, community, philosophy, practice and dance as data.

It is an electronic book readable online and available by download. We imagine you reading it on a tablet or computer, or perhaps even on your smartphone.[1] There are internal and external hyperlinks to help you navigate its structure and sources. It is an e-book in which the text is free for you to share, "to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format" and to "remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially."[2] We have included photographs, many of which are directly relevant to the content of the chapters and capture moments during the research process. Others have been offered by photographers in response to requests by the author. All of them are an integral part of the collection. There are different layers of copyright ownership in these photographs: the copyright in the photograph usually belongs to the photographer while the copyright in the dance may belong to the dancer(s) and/or choreographer(s). Most photographs are made available to us for use in the collection under a copyright licence which allows you to copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format, adapt (remix, transform, and build upon) the material, but you cannot use the material for any commercial purpose.

A World of Muscle, Bone & Organs is an e-book conceived and completed at a time of considerable pressure on higher education in the UK. Following the global financial crisis in 2007-2008[3] the UK government implemented a programme of austerity that heavily impacted funding for universities and arts organisations. In 2012 universities were granted permission by the UK Government to triple fees for undergraduate students to fill the gap created by large-scale cuts to the public funding of higher education institutions. There remains palpable tension, competition for resources, and an ongoing tightening of purse strings particularly for arts and humanities-based subjects. As we started writing this introduction in April of 2018 there were

prolonged and highly visible strikes by HE union members over pension schemes.[4] There is a sense of confusion, instability, and even anger among many academics and staff working in higher education.

It is within this unusual collection of fiscal and public conditions in HE that in 2015 Coventry University allocated considerable resources to the development of Faculty Research Centres. The Centre for Dance Research (or C-DaRE) was a pre-existing centre, having been started by Sarah Whatley in 2011. But as part of the University's strategy and ambitions, in 2015 and 2016 C-DaRE expanded from an organisation with 4 core academic staff, 1 administrative staff and 6 PhD students to now having 16 research staff, 4 administrative staff and 27 PhD students.

Such growth is a unique and quite remarkable turn of events, and we think something to celebrate in these difficult times in HE; times that are even more difficult for dance research which is a field that is decidedly on the margins, even within the arts and humanities. These conditions – of change and opportunity – make this e-book, and the writing contained with it, a rather bold statement of Coventry University's strength in dance research. But you could also say that this edited collection is an advertisement for C-DaRE, or worse still, a vanity project; a showcase (as if a PDF has ever been called such a thing) of the dance scholarship and practice happening at the Centre. But as a group we also wanted to acknowledge how the expansion of C-DaRE has made possible the noteworthy scenario of an edited collection emerging from a single dance research centre. We believe this is something to be celebrated, particularly for dance scholarship, but we also acknowledge and understand the privilege that accompanies being a higher education dance institution focused solely on research and scholarship. And so, by publishing *A World of Muscle, Bone & Organs*, we are attempting to tread a fine line between serving the dance research community and, well, showing off. It is scholarly hubris and responsibility rolled into a PDF.

At the start of the process in the spring of 2016, we (the editors) decided to welcome submissions from all staff and postgraduate students at C-DaRE. We wanted to help build a spirit of openness in the editorial process, particularly as a way to counteract – or even contradict – the implicit and often explicit emphasis on competition in higher education processes and

bureaucracy. The spirit of this e-book reflects how we as a team value opportunities to communicate difficult ideas in dance scholarship, and to find direct ways to share these ideas with others. Whether it be through more conventional scholarship, poetic or narrative reflections on practice, or talks reengineered into text, these contributions reflect our work and our interests as dancers, choreographers, scholars and researchers.

The collection is also an experiment in self-publishing, and we certainly bumped into challenges and limitations. We received strong 'advice' from a number of quarters that self-publishing was simply not acceptable from the perspective of an HEI. This is because the Research Excellence Framework (REF) dictates that academics should publish in refereed high impact factor journals only, and that if we do not, our scholarship will not only sink without trace, but will not be eligible to be submitted to the REF 2021 exercise. We will thus have failed as academics. We scoured the literature but could find no trace to back up these assertions. What HEFCE does require is that academic journal articles that are to be submitted to REF 2021 should, within three months of being accepted for publication, be deposited in an open access repository, albeit that access to the article may be embargoed for a period depending on the contract with the publisher. Beyond that, all that is required is that an output should be published by 31 December 2020. Through being made available on an open access basis via the C-DaRE website, this e-book and its contents have been published. We also chose for every piece in this collection to be refereed by at least two referees, with some being 'blind' refereed.

The requirement to deposit journal articles in an open access repository is one step that has been taken to try and make scholarly publishing open and accessible. The open access in scholarly publishing movement has had a lengthy history. It developed in part as a response to the price charged for access to journal articles once these were made available by publishers online and the decrease in library budgets (one outcome of austerity), and in part in response to a desire to make publicly funded scholarship more freely accessible (in the sense of free at the point of use). The movement gathered traction at policy level with this deposit requirement one step on the way.

In this spirit of openness, we wanted not only to make our e-book open access, but in addition, we wanted to link to as many open access sources as possible making the body of scholarship visible to the reader. This has proved difficult in a number of ways. We mentioned the licences we have used above for the text and the photographs. Because there are different licences for different elements of this collection, someone who wanted to use the content for a purpose that had a commercial end, would need to remove many of the photographs. Our e-book would have 'holes' in it. We have also found that some contributors had difficulty finding open access sources. Bearing in mind that the HEFCE deposit policy applies to journal articles and conference proceedings but not other outputs such as book chapters and monographs, does this mean that dance as an academic discipline is mostly found on library bookshelves and/or hidden behind pay-walls? Or does this affect other disciplines equally? What does it mean for the development of the discipline of dance beyond the confines of academia? A further troubling issue is that of the 'validity' of the journal article in the repository. Because the 'copy' that is deposited is most often not the publisher's proof (in which the publisher has copyright in the typographical arrangement) the text is often not (exactly) the same as the published article and will generally not have published page numbers. What does this do for the quality of scholarship when it comes to referencing?[5]

In terms of how we chose to publish this collection, we decided to produce the work as a PDF because it is a format that is familiar to academics and artists all over the world. It supports hyperlinks and a clear and stable structure including fixed page numbers to aid citation. But such a closed design also limits the responsive[6] capacity of the pages when viewed on different platforms. But who would have thought generating automatic internal hyperlinks between citations and endnotes would be so difficult in the transition from Microsoft Word to PDF? And as much as we would have liked to embed video in certain sections of the PDF, the challenge of producing cross-platform video – able to be played back on iOS, Android, MacOS and Windows OS – was not worth the pain. Nevertheless, the structure and format of the e-book is familiar and accessible, and we trust that its design – and the way it is shared – will help you to navigate the book's content.

A World of Muscle, Bone & Organs has six sections. In *Section 1: Spaces of Practice*, Siobhan Davies, Scott deLahunta, Emilie Gallier, Emma Meehan, Marie-Louise Crawley and Kate Marsh explore and communicate their artistic research, and the ways in which their work is shaped by environments, people and place. Scott and Siobhan discuss the idea of the dance archive in relation to the embodied nature of dance practices, drawing on Siobhan's experiences of making and working with her own archive. Emilie considers reading in her performance work, describing it as an act of imagination that might bring us into dialogue with other people's imaginations when enacted in a performative context. Emma's contribution draws on her exhibition *Home Practice* to explore somatic perspectives on cultural embodiment and questions around gender, home and the Irish diaspora. Marie-Louise's chapter reflects on her practice of performing the durational triptych *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, examining how dance performed in the archeological museum might reframe understandings of history, time and presence. Kate's chapter shares her experiences of observing Dinis Machado's choreographic process, reflecting on the relationship between the maker and observer. In *Section 2: Philosophy*, Hetty Blades, Ilya Vidrin and Susanne Foellmer each grapple philosophically with diverse ideas. Hetty takes a wide-angle philosophy of art perspective on how choreographers understand their work to be political. Then Ilya locates his thinking in the practice of partnering, considering how rhetoric theory might shed light on the ways people move together. Susanne explores the materiality and presence of the body, exploring some of the challenges posed by speaking and writing about moving bodies. *Section 3: Communities* includes chapters by Sarah Whatley, Rosemary Lee, Rosa Cisneros and Sarah Whatley, and Karen Wood. Sarah's contribution reflects on the worth and work of 11 *Million Reasons*, addressing questions raised by the project about the perception and representation of disability in dance, nostalgia, and the agency of the performers. Rosemary discusses her work *Calling Tree*, a collaboration with Simon Whitehead, reflecting on how situating the work within a public space gave rise to a series of ongoing exchanges with members of the public. Rosa and Sarah's chapter reflects on the Hidden Spire project, which worked with homeless people to consider ways of engaging with digital cultural heritage. Karen discusses the concept of community in

relation to screendance audiences and the role of kinesthetic empathy in the perception of dance on screen. In *Section 4: Politics*, Jonathan Burrows, Victoria Thoms, Charlotte Waelde and Katye Coe discuss how dance interacts with current and historical political structures. Jonathan's contribution explores how we might think of dance as political. Victoria considers the cultural trauma of anxieties around femininity in relation to Maud Allan and Anna Pavlova. Charlotte examines the potential of a collecting society for dance, describing how copyright functions in dance, what a collecting society might offer and its potential contribution to dance in the current socio-political content. Katye speaks of the political potentials of dance and the potency of the dancer's voice. *Section 5: Data and Thinking* includes contributions from Scott deLahunta, Rebecca Stancliffe, Rebecca Weber and Ruth Gibson. Scott reflects on recent digitisation projects to critically examine the transition from dance to data. Rebecca Stancliffe also discusses recent examples in dance digitisation, focusing on video annotation as a form of dance analysis. Rebecca Weber offers a critical review of work in creativity in relation to dance, drawing on perspectives from cognitive science, dance studies and somatics. Ruth's contribution discusses her work *The Bronze Key: Performing Data Encryption*, a collaboration with Bruno Martelli and Susan Kozel, discussing how her previous practice led to this work and a curiosity about cryptography and encryption. In *Section 6: Epistemology*, Teoma Naccarato, Eline Kieft and Simon Ellis explore how dance might give rise to various forms of knowledge. Teoma offers a genealogical account of practice-as-research and examines different interpretations of PaR. Eline explores ways of knowing that arise through her movement practice. Simon examines the relationship between dance research and knowledge production, and considers the epistemic qualities of PaR and its potential to reconfigure current paradigms in higher education.

Together these sections reveal much of the work that is happening at C-DaRE since the Centre expanded in 2015-16. But as you can imagine, in any situation involving change or growth like here at C-DaRE, there is a certain amount of associated hand-wringing: who are we to ourselves? Who are we to others? How has our identity changed? *A World of Muscle, Bone & Organs* thus has become an opportunity for members of C-DaRE to understand our new identity and responsibilities, and to attempt to

communicate these through our work as artists and scholars. Of course, we want to capture the breadth and the nature of the work happening at the Centre, but more importantly we want to use our privileges to help build and sustain new and critical dance thinking, practice and scholarship. How might these open access contributions extend out into the world of dance research? What conversations might they provoke?

We imagine you sitting quietly with your screens: flicking, swiping, zooming and tapping; we imagine you scanning, skimming, scrolling, highlighting and copying; diving more deeply into particular areas, and making new and vivid connections between seemingly unrelated ideas. We trust that within these pages there will be a world of muscle, bone and organs for you to take, absorb and rethink.

<div align="center">Simon Ellis, Hetty Blades and Charlotte Waelde, May 2018</div>

[1] You could of course choose to use a widely available print-on-demand service to create an analogue edition of the collection.

[2] creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/%3E

[3] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Financial_crisis_of_2007–2008

[4] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2018_UK_higher_education_strike

[5] medium.com/advice-and-help-in-authoring-a-phd-or-non-fiction/academic-citation-practices-need-to-be-modernized-6eb2e4a44846

[6] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Responsive_web_design

SECTION 1: SPACES OF PRACTICE

Table of Contents. *Leopold Museum. Photo: © Alison Proctor (2016) CC-BY-NC*

IN CONVERSATION ABOUT ARCHIVES TO COME

SIOBHAN DAVIES
SCOTT DELAHUNTA

Keywords

collaboration
archiving
embodied knowledge
visual arts
digitisation

Abstract

This text is an edited version of a conversation between the authors that took place in Vienna in 2016. The focus of the talk is on tensions and possibilities that lie somewhere between the idea of the dance archive and the question of how an archive can contain the deeply embodied processes in dance. The conversation includes reflection on the challenges of creating a digital archive for dance and on the visual arts as a context for questioning dance's relation to itself and its audiences. Some specific strategies for accessing past processes in the creation of new works are shared.

This conversation between Siobhan Davies and Scott deLahunta took place on 24 April 2016 as part of *Archives to Come* in the frame of the SCORES No. 11 symposium (21-24 April 2016) at the Tanzquartier Wien. *Table of Contents*, a live movement installation co-created by Siobhan Davies, Andrea Buckley, Helka Kaski, Rachel Krische, Charlie Morrissey and Matthias Sperling,[1] was presented in the same context from 22 April to 24 April 2016 at the Tanzquartier Wien in co-operation with Leopold Museum. Some of those presenting workshops and performances in the symposium programme[2] are mentioned in the following conversation including Martina Hochmuth, presenting a film based on the work of Boris Charmatz,[3] and Claudia Bosse and Arkadi Zaides, both artists who work on with the concept of the body as archive. *Replay* is the name of a project that began in 2007 as the Siobhan Davies Archive. With funding from the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council, the project was a collaboration between Coventry University and Siobhan Davies Dance. The aim was to bring together all of the documentation associated with Davies' choreographies into a single digital on-line collection. The first version of *RePlay*, published in 2009, is structured around nearly 50 performances and related projects.[4] The idea was that it would continue to grow and develop as the company and Davies created new works.

Scott deLahunta
I would like to ask you to share a few observations about *RePlay*,[5] what you had imagined and some of the realities of making this archive. I know *RePlay* was an opportunity that came along at a certain point in time when you were moving into the new building.[6] A colleague of ours, Sarah Whatley (Director of Centre for Dance Research, Coventry University, UK), approached you about putting together a digital archive. Can you say something about how that initial meeting came about?

Siobhan Davies
I've known Sarah as an academic and a companion in appreciating how the academy sees choreography. So we had a long-standing relationship. And one day she said, they (Coventry University) would like to create a digital archive of my work. Sarah said this would be the first digital archive in dance and choreography, certainly in Britain. At that moment we were moving into the new building after ten years of preparation, moving was a

huge task so I was very occupied with that, and I simply said yes to the archive without thinking about what it actually might mean. At the time, it felt like a good opportunity to develop another platform for work, a chance to programme something new. In fact, Sarah and the University were offering me something with huge potential, but I didn't appreciate that potential fully until later. Then the initial effort of actually making the archive turned out to be an enormous undertaking. Not technically, but finding all the material, getting all the permissions, and trying to filter all that material into a digital structure or back-end was something I didn't grasp at the outset.

Scott deLahunta

On the first day of SCORES NO. 11, Lejla Mehanovic presented the Tanzquartier Wien *Online Mediathek*[7] project and discussed some of the challenges when developing something of that scale, and you have just mentioned these too, finding the content you want to include, and making technical and practical decisions about the back-end or the content management system, which in the case of *RePlay*, was a proprietary system. Another decision to be made is what metadata system to use. Metadata helps make the material searchable by people, but also allows computers to automatically link to other related material on the network. There are lots of decisions that have to be made that are practical and technical and very resource-heavy, and at some point they can seem to take over a project. The challenges are unavoidable at a certain scale, and I think it is essential to draw attention to these challenges and the amount of sheer work involved. Also to understand that these are the kinds of decisions that once made are not easy to change.

Siobhan Davies

Imagining the archive without appreciating its parameters was swiftly taken over by the reality that involved taking a series of our choreographic ideas, our processes of making as well as the different ways of thinking and doing in the body and transporting all of this into a conceptual architecture for the archive. And as you said, how this architecture was technically organised meant that once built it was hard to adapt it to our evolving practice. The archive set up as it was could not adequately represent the layers of physical experience that contribute to both choreography and performance.

I became increasingly aware that we could not get close to what actually happens in both the making and what is finally made. Not being able to reach what I think matters in dance-making and performing ended up being somehow damaging. I don't mean that as bad as it sounds; but the technical architecture of the archive produced a lot of hard limitations that, while understandable, also felt very constraining. There were limits on how we could rearrange and reorganise material, so when new connections revealed themselves, technically they were not possible to achieve. That said, the beauty and the potential of it is that we are entering into a digital age with different possibilities to present what I think of as the "mulch" of the work. The matter of it. Not necessarily the finite moment. What I mean is that a live work comes into being and it consists of a constellation of live decisions between something known and something invented. No moment is repeatable. So how can we honour that in such a way that a dance-based archive can be layered enough to reach the grist of each distinct work without corralling it into a fixed state? We should not need to borrow too heavily from visual art or written archives when we can explore the very different potentials of archiving performative work.

Scott deLahunta
It's interesting how *Table of Contents* is a kind of response to what *RePlay* means to you. But before talking about *Table of Contents* in relation to the archive, there is another interesting connection to what Martina Hochmuth was presenting yesterday from Boris Charmatz's work in the museums and the transgressing of certain borders when dance enters the visual arts space. You felt similarly compelled and have been going in that direction, starting perhaps with your background in visual arts? Can you say something about that?

Siobhan Davies
My family were modest collectors of post-war British art and I went to art school. The surge in the visual arts, design, music and theatre of that time was a subject of much conversation, which I listened to from a young age. I looked at our paintings on the walls for ages, but only recently have I understood the impact that might have had. I wonder if in my naive state at the beginning of studying dance I used what I had experienced studying art. I do remember enjoying that instead of being one stage removed from

what I was making, for example working on a drawing set on a table in front of me, something I could stand up and leave behind, while in a dance studio I was the drawing. And I attempted to arrange my actions and thoughts at once, similar to the act of drawing, but I was not aware of that until later. I gradually grew to utterly love the fact that working in dance meant the movement and the mind is in constant and immediate feedback. The more I worked the more I understood how questioning the complexity of thought, feeling, action and environment was the stuff of both dance and choreography. The dancers and I were constantly researching these connections while making the work, asking ourselves: "What is actually going on?" "Why are we moving?" "What am I feeling?" "What are we showing?" "What is the purpose?" And then finally we would put it on stage and to me it looked like bloody cinema. The magnificence of being on stage with the lighting and the production values and the space was all great, but I couldn't see any of this thinking and the detail I had seen in the studio. I couldn't see the matter of movement. So I had to unplug from the theatre, return to the studio and ask myself: "Where else would that kind of closeness to the audience and the idea of reciprocity between the audience and the doer/the performer happen?" The answer: in visual art spaces and in galleries. These places bring their own problems, but at least in these spaces it felt like I was in the same territory with the audience who were visiting. And they could see the detail, see the thinking and potentially talk to us.

Scott deLahunta
You told me once you are also interested in how the visual arts relationship with the idea of an archive might rub off on dance.

Siobhan Davies
Another reason I have felt compelled to move more into visual arts and galleries is to meet up with how their history works for them and find out what our relationship can be to how their work is documented and archived. With visual arts, there is always the potential of looking at all this work via its documentation through books or literature about the work, and often quite good copies of work would be available to study. All of that information is there within the visual arts and is a constant resource for discourse.

Table of Contents. *Foreground: Charlie Morrissey and Andrea Buckley. Leopold Museum. Photo: © Alison Proctor (2016) CC-BY-NC*

So the discourse that builds up around the art form from decade to decade, from century to century, it can change the art form as the work is presented in the different mediums over a period of time. Dance does not have that now. There'll be plenty of people who'd raise their hand and say, "Yes, there is an archive in dance," but nowhere near to the scale or level of detail that I'm talking about. So, when introducing our practices into a conversation with visual art practices, dance has remarkably little discourse developed around documentation and archives, and visual arts has a lot. I needed to understand this difference more fully and, in part; *Table of Contents* was a beginning to address this. We did have our digital archive and a long history of dance practice. We wanted to meet a situation in which the curators, and probably the audience, had many more references to call upon and see if could we intrigue and inform them with ours, even though they come in such a different shape.

Scott deLahunta
Do you think bringing dance as the body or the corporeal into the art gallery is something that can shake things up and create transgressions there, in this more conceptual discursive space with their long history of documentation and archiving?

Siobhan Davies
In relation to the concept of archive, I think it gave us an opportunity to turn around and ask ourselves: if we make an archive of dance, what does our art form bring to the idea of an archive? What can be distinctive rather than borrowed? In dance, we are constantly in process, in movement, so should we not try to get the idea of movement, or even movement of thought to be somehow present within the archival architecture? How can we archive the substantiality of a choreographic thought even when it is translated by different performers, in different times and contexts? As I mentioned earlier, I think we have not been successful so far (with *RePlay*), but this should be the aspiration.

Table of Contents. *Foreground: Matthias Sperling. Leopold Museum. Photo: © Alison Proctor (2016) CC-BY-NC*

Scott deLahunta
Could you say something about how *Table of Contents* integrated the concept of an archive? You told me you brought together five performers / choreographers – Andrea Buckley, Charlie Morrissey, Matthias Sperling, Rachel Krische and Helka Kaski – went into an empty space and asked: "What do we have?"

Siobhan Davies
We started in this empty room, knowing we were going to perform in spaces that have visual art and performance work as part of their programme. So we looked at each other and said: "Why don't we just be us in this room, nothing else, just us, no other art to refer to. Use what we are and draw upon our library of actions from the past. So what is it that we can be in that room?" We started our work this way, but after a few days we introduced ourselves to *RePlay*, asking ourselves shall we use that as some kind of trigger? Then Andrea, Matthias, Charlie, Rachel and Helka looked at the archive, but in some ways it had nothing to do with them as they were not in those works. And I think it partially comes down to the format of the archive, which made it hard for them to find connections initially. The question became 'who were they?' in relationship to how the work could be experienced via the archive, with the limits we have already discussed? And I understood that completely. Yes there are images, films and facts but, for me, these fall very short of a good appreciation of a live work. How can we translate the qualities and intelligences of process and liveness into archival material and how can future users immerse themselves usefully into that material. I would love my future digital archive to address so much of what we found out when dipping into the present one. Matthias, Helka and Rachel did find ways of connecting themselves to the *RePlay* archive and emerge from it with something wonderful to experience, but I think it was their artistry rather than my archive that produced the goods. But what they did come up with gave us all clues as to how we might structure our future archive. They extracted details rather than taking out whole works, and they discovered something like the DNA of the work in that detail. From my perspective this DNA offered much better access to what I was aiming for in the finished work. They then entwined that DNA into their own and came up with something that made sense in the present, for now. During this time I coined the word "compost"

because the broken down elements of the works were more informative and generative than the one or two films of a finished work. Andrea and Charlie decided to use the word "archive" as an impulse to conduct archaeology of their own library of past experiences. Andrea looked at the heart as a source of information for exploring movement, and Charlie explored the movement histories of evolution, from primates to now as well as the future bodies we might become.

Scott deLahunta

The body as archive has been a key theme for the last four days of this event here. Arkadi Zaides' piece *Archive* last night, for example, explores the idea of the body transforming into a living archive. Claudia Bosse's workshop, *The archive as a body, the body as an archive*, was also dealing with it explicitly. It seems for dance this is an accepted way of approaching the past. One of the things that I have wondered is what happens when you collapse history into a single body, a single subject, and you have this sense of struggling, trying to tease out these things that are not only your own past, and bring them into some certain friction, some sort of relation with other images and forms from the past? I think there is a potential when it gets collapsed all into one body, the body of a dancer for example, there might be a danger there.

Siobhan Davies

If I can return to the word compost; what I am trying to get to is the fermentation that is needed to make anything. Those conditions cannot be collapsed into one body, because all situations of making for me are about the many. It's less about framing individual works and more about appreciating the works because of everyone who contributed to them. Each of them uses their individual histories, which brought them to that moment of making. I sense that all of us in that situation come away with nutrients for forming better questions and making the next works. These particles of learning can then travel in as many directions as the individual artists can connect with.

Scott deLahunta

Could you say something about the development of the three dancers who decided to work explicitly with the "scratch tapes" that reside in the *RePlay* database?

Siobhan Davies

The scratch tapes, mostly made during the 90s and early 2000s, were where individual dancers recorded phrases they were working on. Together we had decided on what might generate movement and then individually the artists came up with movement responses, recorded them and shared them with the others and me. They could be improvisations, or evolving repetitions in which the dancer was discovering movement through doing it and not having to remember them because the recorded tape would. The *Table of Contents* artists much preferred working with the scratch tapes because they are from the process part of making work rather than the finished dance piece. They are still in a state of becoming and for me they have become more important as part of the archive rather than the finished work, which traditionally takes a hierarchical precedence over the process.

Scott deLahunta

Can you say something about how Matthias worked with these scratch tapes? He described this to me once as "working with fragments."

Siobhan Davies

What Matthias did, and Helka also actually, was take a fragment of one of the tapes that mattered to him in some way. Something he could explore without attempting to dance like the original dancer in the tape. Matthias would take this material and bring himself to it, so there was this friction and fluidity between his own practice and what he was taking from the scratch tape. Once he collected and learned these fragments using the joined up thinking between him and the recorded material, he could start his performance by asking, "What's the right movement for now?" Not any other time but for now. Then he could begin. Sometimes he would maybe follow a fragment through, maybe do another one and then stop to ask the question again, "What's the right thing right now?" Or he would sometimes stop in the middle of a fragment, and ask the question and pick up on another fragment or return to a previous one. So, with quick decision-making, in dialogue with himself and the material, and adding the choice of exactly which part of this space in the gallery to be in, he was bringing live thought to the use of a past practice as one of the tools in that decision-making. This is when an archive, like *RePlay*, begins to make sense to me as a living archive.

Scott deLahunta

Listening to you describe not only how influences and ideas are passed from body to body, for example in the work of Matthias, but also how to think of the composting of the processes and products of past works – in this sense the hard work of building the archive, the actual technical architecture, the intensive labour of collecting, digitising, organising, making searchable etc. – all this offers up the past as potential compost. I am reminded of the installation *Transforming Acts*[8] upstairs. In the book that accompanies that project, Detlev Schneider writes that, "Remembering doesn't simply just bring the object back the way it was recorded, but rather overwrites it."[9] That seems like quite a good way of describing the process of Matthias working with the scratch tapes.

Siobhan Davies

The archive needs to be generative because our art form chooses the movement of thought and action as materials rather than trying to find as near to a conclusion as possible in stillness. So we need to archive those things that are precise enough to be rigorous and generative along the lines of the original enquiry, but not so finite that a future artist or user of that archive can't be moved or move with what they find. We would like more evidence of how we think, make and negotiate, fail and succeed to be more readily available to a far wider group of people. It can be isolating and self-referential if we can't be tested and tempered by others, and I think far more people would be engaged with what we get up to if we use our future archives in the way we are beginning to question. I believe dance and choreography archives could look like nothing else archived and some of the particular values of these arts could become increasingly understood and assimilated.

Notes

[1] www.siobhandavies.com/work/table-contents.

[2] Download the programme:
mediathek.tqw.at/uploads/pdf/ABENDPROGRAMM_SCORES-No11_07.pdf.

[3] For more on the concept of museum in the context of the work of Charmatz: www.museedeladanse.org/en.

[4] See Whatley "Archiving the dance: making Siobhan Davies RePlay."

[5] *RePlay* www.siobhandaviesreplay.com/ contains thousands of fully searchable digital records of the company's videos, images, audio and text.

[6] Siobhan Davies Studios, developed in collaboration with Siobhan Davies Dance, were built in 2006 by British award-winning architect Sarah Wigglesworth. www.siobhandavies.com/history-of-the-building.

[7] mediathek.tqw.at.

[8] Penelope Wehrli's and Detlev Schneider's media installation *Transforming Acts* seeks to show the processes of inspiration and transformation within contemporary dance in Europe in the last three decades of the last century in pieces by exemplary protagonists: Pina Bausch, Laurent Chétouane, Jo Fabian, Jan Fabre, Johann Kresnik, Thomas Lehmen, Heiner Müller, Einar Schleef, Meg Stuart, Robert Wilson and The Wooster Group.

[9] Wehrli and Schneider. "Transforming Acts: Publikation zum Projekt," 12.

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Biographies

Siobhan Davies is a British choreographer who rose to prominence in the
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Scott deLahunta has worked as a writer, researcher and organiser on a
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DRAMATURGY OF ATTENTION, FROM ABSORPTION TO DISTANCE. BEING IMPLICATED IN THE EVENTS OF OTHER PEOPLE'S IMAGINATIONS.[1]

EMILIE GALLIER

Keywords

documentation
participation
reading
imagination
daydreaming

Abstract

This chapter exposes my fragmented investigation of the structure of imagination in relation to variation of proximity and in relation to social forms. It presents the argument for documentation as performance and for the act of reading as an exercise of our imagination. By means of collages and insertions of choreographic practices for the page, I introduce the thought that the act of reading merged with the collective act of attending a performance might lead to a bridge to other's imaginations.

Among the audience, I enter the theatre room. I am offered different points of view to pick from. As I choose a seat, I select an angle; I select content and distance from others. Later, a book lands in my hands. I am invited to read. *A magician performs for me. I am invited to investigate his trick.* I turn the pages at a different rhythm from my neighbour. *I smile in sync with others seated at this table.* I read and I sense other things happen in this room. Further out, I hear some laughs at the table. I see islands of lights away from our table where spectators hold a book. I read and decipher the magician's trick. *I gobble the magician's trick.* Images appear in my imagination. *I contemplate the metamorphoses of a white pleated paper. Images appear in my imagination.* I distribute my attention between the book, other spectators, dream-like scenes happening for real before they evaporate in the obscurity, and my own dreams that only I can perceive. *What might other spectators imagine?*

In the text above, I write as a plural subject: spectators of *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible* (a performance that I collaboratively create with magician Tilman Andris and designer Jamillah Sungkar).[2] I speculate about the spectators' experience by bridging audience's feedbacks, heard in the after talks of our try-outs, with my intention as a maker and with my experience as a spectator of this work. 'What might other spectators imagine?' is the closing question. In a brief study of the structure of imagination, I gather writings by Wallace Stevens, Michael Taussig, Nick Sousanis and Michel De Certeau. How do changes in scale – akin to changes in proximity and distance – affect imagination? Can imagination affect the social relations between spectators playing the behavioural rules of theatre? I could conceive for instance that the imagination of one spectator might become something to contemplate at the same level as any action actually performed in the theatre. How might this work?

In this chapter, a first group of fragments addresses the structure of imagination in relation to social forms. A second part exposes the "performativity of performance documentation"[3] as a way to stimulate imagination in proximity of the reader-spectator and to enhance existing exchanges between spectators. Lastly, the movement of reading (in relation to performance documentation) is examined as an "exercise in ubiquity"[4] which nourishes distributed and elastic attentions.

Once the dinner starts, it becomes clear the magician knows his etiquette.[5]

ne gouttes
the
paper

POOF
the glass disappears
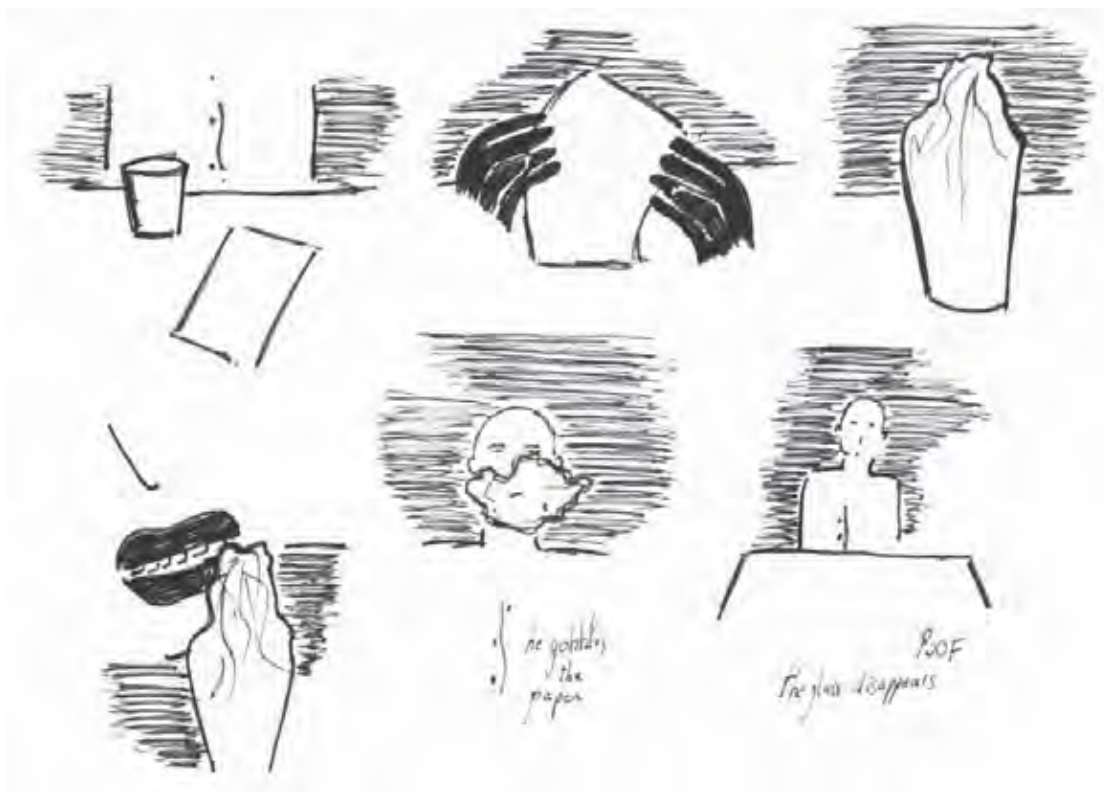
We will now perform Mademoiselle Patrice.[6]

POOF
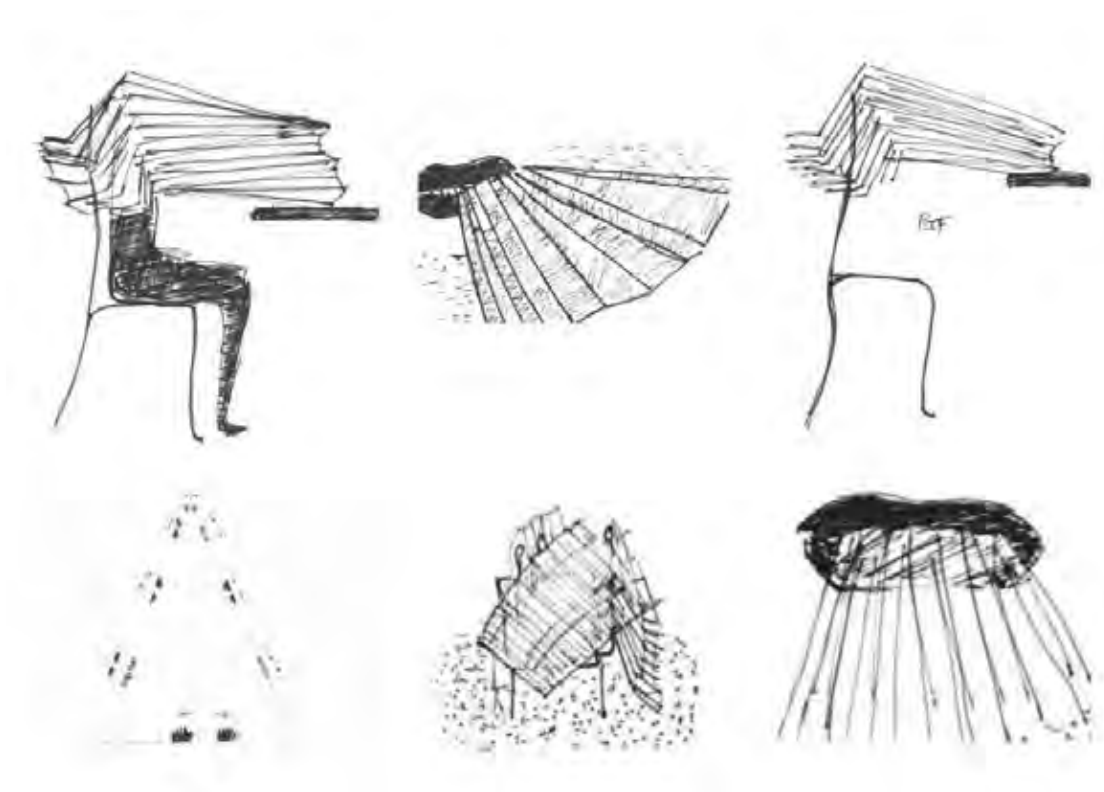
Between these depicted scenes (on the previous page) from *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible*, the structure repeats with a change in scale. In the first drawing – I call for your imagination – we see hands wrapping a glass in paper. In the second drawing, one spectator is being covered by paper. And in the last drawing, a whole table is being wrapped. When the action of wrapping paper repeats itself but at a larger scale, spectators are invited to perform vanishing tricks in their imagination. After witnessing the vanishing of a glass, the vanishing of a fellow spectator or of the entire table may take place in the audience's mind. On the stage of the spectator's imagination, much more can unfold: possible and impossible things. "The imagination is the power of the mind over the possibilities of things,"[7] writes poet Wallace Stevens; he continues:

> [Imagination] is an activity like seeing things or hearing things or any other sensory activity. Perhaps, if one collected instances of imaginative life as social form over a period of time, one might amass a prodigious number from among the customs of our lives.[8]

Stevens suggests imagination is a sensorial instrument that deserves attention because it infuses social forms beyond the social form we are familiar with (i.e. a ceremonious baptism, a wedding, a funeral, a dinner, a reading club, a dance performance). If imagination is a sense, it perceives and points out one reality that may at a first glance seem abnormal. But according to Stevens, un-familiar relational forms emanating from imagination unravel social complexity. Stevens trusts both the anthropologist and the imaginative life to unmask this complexity that might resonate with what Michael Taussig names the 'public secret.' The public secret is "*that which is generally known, but cannot be articulated.*"[9] It is a secret which is not really a secret. Taussig describes public secrecy as "the most mischievous and ubiquitous form of socially active knowledge there is," where subjects "know what not to know."[10] In my reading, Taussig would agree with Stevens when assigning imagination the power to deface a public secret. The defacement of the secret is an imaginative staging, a demystification that does not consist of merely exposing the secret but rather "does justice to it":[11] treating the secret as a secret. To deface the public secret is to write the coordinates of the negative space, or with Tristan Garcia's words the "nothing which is in fact something,"[12]

acknowledging the character of this nothing. Like Stevens who thinks imagination can unravel social complexity, Taussig thinks imagination plays a role in the operation of defacement, more particularly one's imagination of other people's imagination: chains of pretending, and chains of believing (i.e. the adult imagines the child's imaginative life in the example of Santa Claus, adults pretend that children are not pretending).[13] Defacement requires imagination and relation with others. The *public* of public secret reminds us that other people are implicated in concealing the secret and in revealing it. This *implicatedness* is at play in the social mechanisms of theatre, and it is very much at the core of magic which revolves around the unspoken rule 'I know that you know that I know.' Magic is the self-acknowledged performance of secrets.[14] The construction of a trick like the vanishing glass in *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible* – depicted on the first drawing of this chapter – rests upon getting people to believe that somebody believes in the glass disappearing. At the scale of the theatre, performance can be a practice of imagination in relation to others. Imagining what others might imagine or meeting others in the imaginative place inspire social forms and carry the potential to transgress these forms, to reenchant, to rename, and to arrive to the genesis of yet another social form.

> – He took his hand out at some point but there was nothing else on the table so I thought 'what should I do?' Maybe I should have given him my hand. That would have been pretty uncomfortable.

> – Or maybe you should! Another spectator responds. And then you would have disappeared under the paper. Whoa! For me as a co-spectator it would have been great.[15]

Nick Sousanis identifies imagination as the "fifth dimension."[16] Drawing from *Flatland*, a science-fiction novel by Edwin. A. Abbott, Sousanis proposes this fifth dimension as coming after the fourth (of thought), the third (of volume), the second (where squares can live), and the first dimension (of flat lines). In Sousanis' thinking, the structure of imagination connects to others:

> Imagination lets us exceed our inevitably limited point of view to find perspectives not in existence or dimensions not yet accessible. While we can no more walk a mile in another's shoes

than see through their eyes, a gulf between us will always remain. Reaching across the gap to experience another's way of knowing takes a leap of the imagination.[17]

SEEING THROUGH ANOTHER'S EYES – FROM WHERE THEY STAND AND ATTENDING TO WHAT THEY ATTEND TO –

– SERVES TO RUPTURE OUR VISION BEYOND THE ONE-DIMENSIONAL TO A MORE MULTIDIMENSIONAL VIEW.[18]
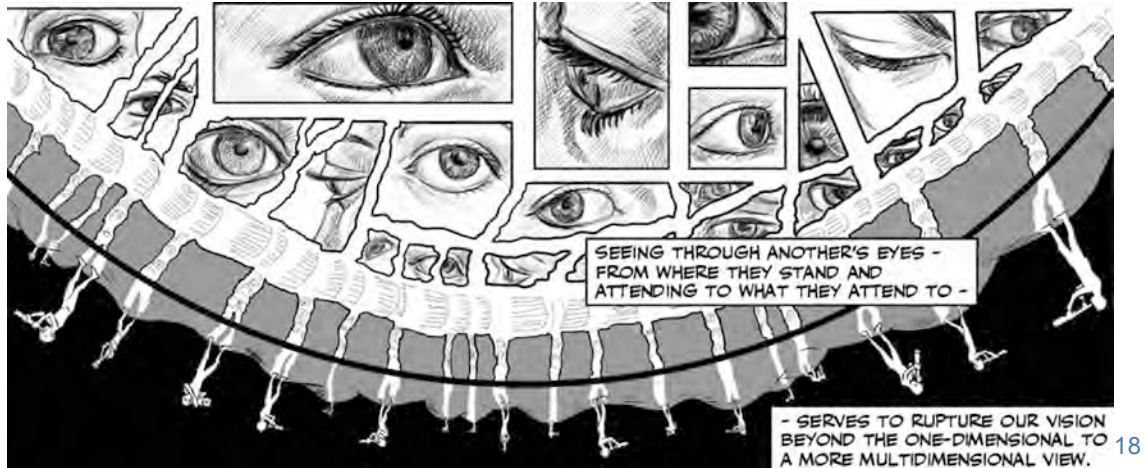
– The glasses and the plates didn't make sense to me at all. I don't understand why we had to give it to them.

– I think it was a way to invoke reaction. It was interesting for us in the audience to see you react to something we could not see.[19]
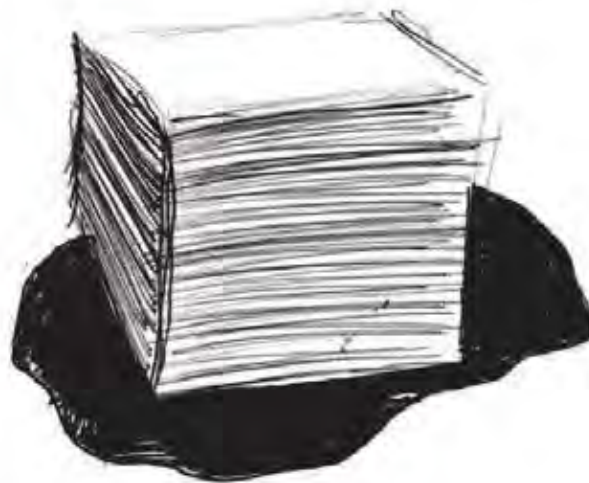
Papier comestible is a pile of edible pages
Therefore it is perfectly possible for it to disappear
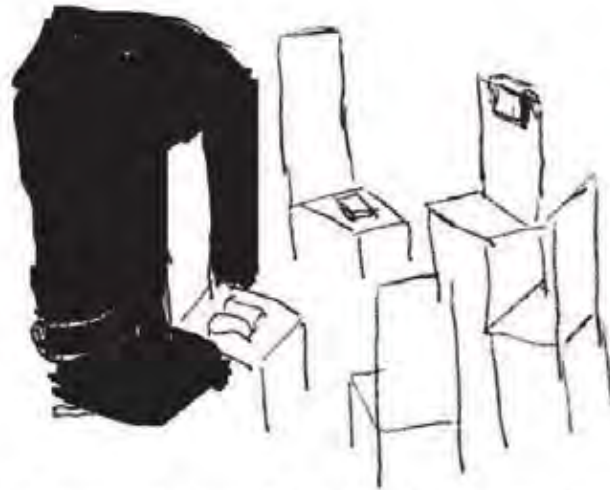
Its raison d'être is to be the focal point of today's book club
To allow you to see what you do not see

I have an other side over on this side

In *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible* spectators attend to how other spectators attend to the performance. Different vantage points given to the audience reinforce this chain of attention. Six spectators form a first group seated at a table where two performers – a magician and a

choreographer/hostess – play with a large pleated paper. Twelve other spectators form a second audience. They sit in a reading room where one performer enacts a crazy librarian; she distributes and orders loose pages from an edible book. Spectators from this group have an overall view of the events at the table and can read the pages they receive. In both groups one is never only directly related to the object of the performance. One is related to others who are related to it, imagining what others might imagine, imagining what others might believe. The spatial distribution of the audience generates contrasted variations of proximity for spectators: from absorption to distance. The spectators-readers seated in the reading area hold in their hands a book of edible pages and may experience a range of proximities: from their hands, to their throats, to their stomachs, to their imaginations, to their imaginations of their neighbour's imaginations.

I open my eyes anew
I land back on the ground of images
on the page
my knee
strangers
darkness
an other side

The book which performs in *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible* grew from the understanding of performance documentation as performance per se. Philip Auslander writes:

> Perhaps the authenticity of the performance document resides in its relationship to its beholder rather than to an ostensibly originary event […] It may well be that our sense of the presence, power, and authenticity [of these pieces] derives not from treating the document as an indexical access point to a past event but from perceiving the document itself *as a performance* […] for which we are the present audience.[23]

The edible book which is a documentation of *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible* is a performance in the performance. It performs in the reading of its readers, on the stages of their imagination. Decentralizing the focus from the more spectacular actions of the performers this edible book responds to an attempt at stimulating exchanges between the book and the readers and exchanges between readers. These latter exchanges are rather invisible and not quantifiable nor measurable. They manifest at the level of imagination, vibrations, resonance, reverberation, a change of state, a quick sliding gaze. As this performance documentation – the edible

book – performs in the performance, the solitary act of reading and the collective act of attending a performance mutually enrich themselves. Reading brings responsibility in the audience's hands. This responsibility or perhaps this right of the spectator is like what Daniel Pennac calls "one of the joys of being a reader."[24]

Regarding reading, Michel de Certeau writes:

> I read and I daydream … My reading is thus a sort of impertinent absence. Is reading an exercise in ubiquity? An initial, indeed initiatory, experience: to read is to be elsewhere, where they are not, in another world; it is to constitute a secret scene, a place one can enter and leave when one wishes […] Marguerite Duras has noted: 'Perhaps one always reads in the dark. Reading depends on the obscurity of the night. Even if one reads in broad daylight, outside, darkness gathers around the book.[25]

As I read, I distribute my attention. I can be here and there at the same time. I can travel through times while I breathe in the present, I can tend to imaginative places to meet others and to meet an inclusive world that makes room for the oddity of dreams, for awkwardness, heterogeneity and differences. As I read in the company of others in the theatre, I exercise my capacity to be in a space of mesmerisation and even more when the trick is revealed.
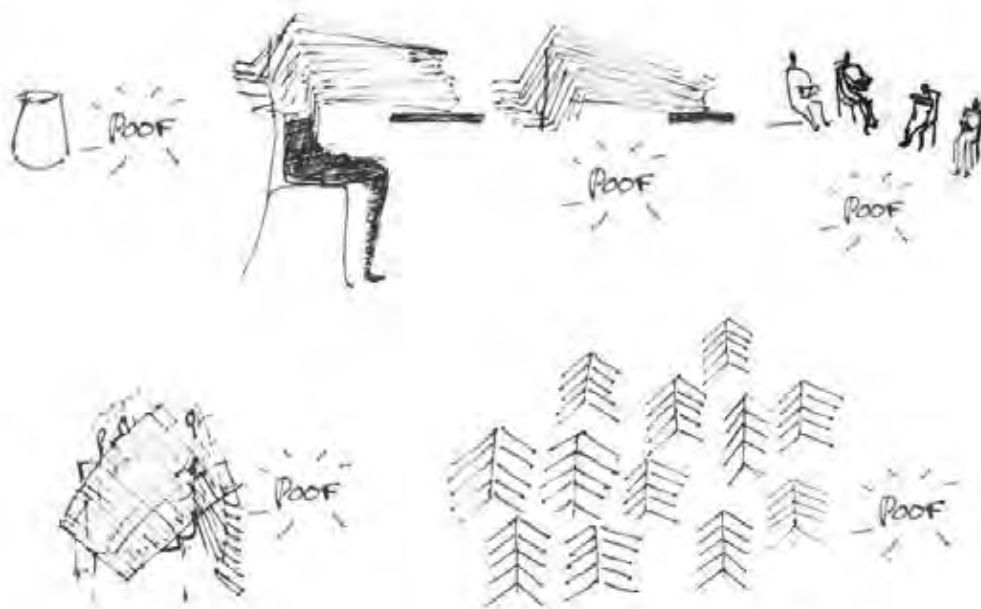
Notes

1 This article is the early version of a chapter in my PhD thesis *The Touch of Reading, Dance Documentation in Audience Participation*. I begin experimenting with ways of juxtaposing fragments of different natures in an attempt to offer an experience of reading which supports the content of my discourse. This article takes the form of a collage of fragments ranging from drawing to performative writing, excerpts of conversations, poetry, discursive texts, and graphic novel. I owe the title *Dramaturgy of attention: from absorption to distance* to choreographer Alice Chauchat. She articulated this title after attending the performance *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible* during one seminar of the research group *THIRD* in Amsterdam in September 2016. In the discussion following the performance, researchers of the group phrased the research question they imagined the artistic work posed.

2 *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible* was created together with Tilman Andris and Jamillah Sungkar through the process of several public try-outs given in the context of education programs (Utrecht University), conferences (Ljubljana, Coventry), a festival (Cherbourg) and research

programs (DAS Research, Amsterdam). See the full list of try-outs at post-cie.com/en/troublewit.php.

3 Auslander, "The Performativity of Performance Documentation." pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6f58/616233cfb8ddc6e2a14b2d95f8fef2ff9efa.pdf

4 De Certeau, "Reading as Poaching." monoskop.org/images/2/2a/De_Certeau_Michel_The_Practice_of_Everyday_Life.pdf.

5 On this page, lines that precede the images are texts pronounced by the performer of *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible*. The two sequences of images under the text were made for this chapter. They refer to two sequences of actions: the first sequence happens toward the beginning of the piece while the other happens near its end. The onomatopoeia *POOF* is repeated in the two sequences. It refers to the act of vanishing that is so specific to magic. The book that is distributed to spectators during the performance pretends being able to disappear in a few *POOF*. It is a reference to Chan Canasta's *Book of Oopses* which is a magic book that pretends to read the mind of its readers. Being edible, the book of *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible* is perfectly able to disappear.

6 Mademoiselle Patrice – referred to in the performer's text included here – was an accomplished female magician of the 19th century who performed the trick of the Vanishing Lady. Karen Beckman writes about Mademoiselle Patrice in her book *Vanishing Woman: Magic, Film, Feminism*. My drawings of the chairs from the side is a direct reference to the photographs of the Vanishing Lady that are used in the front cover of Beckman's book.

7 Stevens, "Imagination as Value," 136. archive.org/stream/WallaceStevensTheNecessaryAngelEssaysOnReality AndTheImagination/Wallace-Stevens-The-Necessary-Angel-Essays-on-Reality-and-the-Imagination_djvu.txt.

8 Ibid., 145.

9 Taussig, *Defacement: Public Secrecy*, 5, original emphasis.

10 Ibid., 3.

11 Ibid., 271.

12 Garcia, *Form and Object*, 49.

13 Taussig, *Defacement: Public Secrecy*, 269.

[14] Beckman, *Vanishing Women: Magic, Film, Feminism*, 190.

[15] This exchange is a fragment of conversation from spectators who saw the performance *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible* and discussed it afterwards. These spectators were bachelor students of the course *Audience and Spectatorship* (Utrecht University) led by Konstantina Georgelou and Liesbeth Groot Nibbelink. The transcript of their full discussion can be accessed here: writingreadingmovement.tumblr.com/post/151654750094/trouble-wit-in-utrecht-after-we-saw-the-theatre.

[16] Sousanis, *Unflattening*, 85.

[17] Ibid., 88-89.

[18] Ibid., 39. The image inserted here is a more complete citation from *Unflattening* which is the first PhD thesis published in the form of a graphic novel by Nick Sousanis in 2015.

[19] See endnote 14. This exchange is a fragment of conversation from spectators who saw the performance *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible* and discussed it afterwards.

[20] Drawings made by Jamillah Sungkar. These pages are the second and third pages of the book spectators read during *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible* (as of the version of the book dated of September 2017). They are printed on A6 edible paper. The book of loose pages was partly inspired by piles of recycled paper used by Nikolaus Gansterer, Emma Cocker, and Mariella Greil for their project *Choreographic Figures, Deviations from the Line*.

[21] Drawing made by Jamillah Sungkar. This page did not make it to the final version of the book. It expressed the division in the space of the performance between one side around a table and one other side in islands of chairs. "I have another side over on this side" is a citation from magician Sid Lorraine who used this line in his script when performing his Trouble Wit routine (see Morrissey, *Trouble Wit Simplified IDEAS ROUTINES PATTER*). Trouble Wit is a pleated paper, smaller version of the Papier Multiforme that we handle in *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible*.

[22] Drawings by Jamillah Sungkar. The number 1089 cites the *Book of Oopses* by Canasta; it is a magic trick of transformation, when turning the page the number 1089 becomes 6801.

23 Auslander, "The Performativity of Performance Documentation," 9, original emphasis.

24 Pennac, *The Rights of the Reader*.

25 De Certeau, "Reading as Poaching," 173, quoting Marguerite Duras "Entretien a Michele Porte," in Sorcieres, (1978): 47.

26 I made this drawing to end the edible book of *Papier multiforme et Papier comestible*.

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Biography

Emilie Gallier is a choreographer and a researcher. Primary concerns of her work are: the relation between people, how do we script our lives and what scripts us. She makes slightly participatory performances designing landscapes for performers to evolve and for the audience to actively contemplate and read.

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Home Practice *at* a shrine to women's work. *Hope Mill. Photo: © Christian Kipp (2016). CC-BY-NC*

HOME PRACTICE:
IRISH WOMEN, DIASPORA AND
SOMATIC PRINCIPLES OF HOSTING

EMMA MEEHAN

Keywords

somatic
Irish
hosting
diaspora
exhibition

Abstract

In this article, I discuss my exhibition of *Home Practice* on matrilineal heritage in Manchester in 2016 and 2017. The article unpicks somatic perspectives on cultural embodiment which informed the work, as well ideas of mobile cultural affiliation from Irish diaspora studies. I explore changing women's roles in Ireland across generations and what the idea of practicing at home might mean in different times and locations, whether through moving, writing, baking, making crafts or hosting events. The latter concept of hosting supported me to engage people with the exhibition, and also stimulated a wider dialogue about migration.

Following a move from Ireland to England five years ago, my attention was drawn to the ways in which culture is expressed through the body. Questions began emerging from my ongoing somatic movement practice, including: How can somatic movement practices help in understanding the embodiment of cultural heritage? What ways can a somatic perspective on cultural embodiment be shared? In this article, I discuss these questions in relation to my piece called *Home Practice* presented as part of the group exhibition *a shrine to women's work* in Manchester in August 2016.[1] The *shrine* offered a space to explore and share aspects of my cultural heritage, in particular the idea of 'home practice' linking my creative and familial female lineage. I later re-presented *Home Practice* at the Theatre and Performance Research Association (TaPRA) Gallery at the University of Salford in August 2017 to further develop methods of 'hosting' the exhibit.[2]

This article is set within the field of somatic movement practices, which examines how the body and mind work together to bring awareness to habits and open up the capacity for movement expression. However, few researchers in somatic practices have dealt in depth with how culture is embodied, or how somatics can be of value in reflecting on migration. Studies about somatic practices could be critiqued for the location of formative historical narratives and descriptions of practice that are largely rooted in America and Britain. Although such scholarship has been ground-breaking as a means of articulating the history and value of somatic work, there is a danger that these narratives could be understood to represent wider world histories and practices of somatics. Andrée Grau and Sylvie Fortin articulate some relevant threads of discussion in the field at the Dance and Somatic Practices Conference 2011, commenting that "many felt that it [somatics] had the potential to transcend these bodies rooted in history, language and culture. Others, however, felt that the narratives used to constitute somatics in different locations or spaces had not been sufficiently articulated."[3] On the one hand, somatics could raise shared questions across cultures about embodiment, and on the other, there is a need to more fully bring different cultural perspectives into somatic scholarship.

As an Irish researcher, questions about cultural perspectives in somatic research come up for me when scholars describe the flourishing of somatic practices in the 1960s and 70s, and suggest that this happened in revolt against dance techniques such as ballet. For example, Emilyn Claid notes in relation to British somatic dance history that: "Over the past twenty years somatic practices have come to form the foundation of contemporary dance training, disrupting competitively attained acquisition and achievement of spectacular technical skill."[4] On the contrary, in Ireland, a wave of somatic work did not emerge in the 1960s and 70s, but rather much later, and only now can a somatic influence be clearly felt in contemporary dance in the country. In addition, traditional conservatoire training was not and is still not available in Ireland, and therefore the narrative of revolt does not fully represent the stories of the Irish somatic pioneers who found alternative routes through movement training. As I researched, I found a more extensive range of layered reasons for the development of somatic work in Ireland, only some of which I can mention here – as a response to a repressed physicality associated with Irish Catholicism and nationalism; as a return to localised, community oriented site-based practice following a period of intense globalisation during the 'Celtic Tiger' financial boom in Ireland in the 1990s to 2000s; and more generally as a reaction against a disciplinary culture not just embedded in dance techniques but in schools, hospitals, and society at large.

Further, the topic of cultural embodiment and migration came up for me as an Irish person moving to live in England. To my knowledge migrancy is a topic which has not been rigorously addressed in the field of somatic practices, and one which I am attempting to unravel in this article. Glenna Batson and Margaret Wilson identify qualities of somatic embodiment such as phenomenological knowing and the "capability to intuit, infer, empathize, mimic and be at one with others."[5] In this sense, embodiment unfolds from felt sense experience in relationship to others, relevant to the idea that identity is called into question when changing context and interacting within new social and cultural networks. Martha Eddy defines somatic embodiment in relation to "knowing how to perceive the body, how to stay aware during daily activities, and how to make the connections to derive meaning and purpose from these sensations."[6] Daily encounters shift during migration and can therefore lead to reflections on how identity,

home and culture changes when moving country. I build on the theories of these authors to further an understanding of culture as a facet of somatic experience. Practically, I work with two forms of somatic practice called Authentic Movement and Amerta Movement, and therefore these inform my writing on cultural embodiment and the process of creating *Home Practice.* Authentic Movement includes reflective awareness through attention to sensation, thoughts, feelings and so on and how these can be articulated in language, which supports methods for tracking cultural embodiment. I draw on practitioners and scholars such as Joan Davis, Simon Whitehead, Eila Goldhahn, and Amy Voris whose work also reflects on creative formats for sharing Authentic Movement practice as well as developing ways of facilitating the relationship between the artworks and the audience – informing the creative practice I describe later. Amerta Movement has been particularly beneficial in helping me to sense my relationship with my environment through developing a responsiveness to where my movement is situated. The work of practitioner-researchers Paula Kramer and Sandra Reeve helps me to describe aspects of Amerta movement embedded in the project, and interrogate context, environment and materials in somatic movement.

I write as a person coming from Europe, with associated privileges that many migrants may not have. Karen Barbour notes "in discussing mobility, I suggest it is important to remember that we may be referring both to those for whom mobility is a choice made as a 'global citizen,' and to those for whom mobility is a necessary response to catastrophic local upheaval."[7] As a student and worker during the period of the 'Celtic Tiger,' I have had greater access to educational opportunities, work and travel than previous generations of Irish people. At the same time, the global recession which hit in 2008 resulted in a further wave of emigration from Ireland, a country which suffered greatly as a small economy reliant on external investment for growth. Likewise, the recent Brexit negotiations have compounded feelings of insecurity for Irish immigrants in the United Kingdom, in relation to their rights but also in attitudes to 'foreign' groups living and working in the area.[8] Barbour articulates how the "experience of being a foreigner can be unsettling, disorientating and distressing,"[9] which is felt due to personally embodied cultural dislocation, and exacerbated by continually shifting contextual and political relationships between nations. My writing

aims to start from first person somatic knowledge to point to experiences of cultural difference, colonial histories and the mobility of identities that arise in migrancy. I do not attempt to speak for migrants who move under circumstances of war, disaster or persecution, but my methods try to address wider questions about how somatic practices can help to understand cultural embodiment during migrancy. In the hosting practice described later, I also propose how somatics can support dialogue starting from one's own cultural positioning and extend out to converse and exchange with those from other backgrounds and places.

To develop my arguments in relation to my own cultural positioning, I include literature from the area of Irish diaspora studies, with key authors such as Breda Gray, Mary Hickman, and Bronwen Walter addressing the experiences of women migrants. In research on Irish abroad, "women's experiences remain marginal in many accounts of migration and diaspora"[10] despite the fact that Irish women "emigrated in greater numbers than men in most decades since the mid-nineteenth century."[11] To this field, I add research on Irish women diaspora through creative arts practice integrated with somatic movement theory, which can contribute an understanding of less visible aspects of cultural identity such as the sensed relationship between body and place. Locating this article within diaspora studies "signals relations between 'home' and dispersal, global and intimate scales of belonging, as well as tensions between cultural authenticity and hybridity."[12] Drawing together aspects of Authentic Movement and Amerta movement, I investigate ideas of home-place and the cultural mobility that occurs in migration through my creative project *Home Practice*. My hope is that this can lead to a deeper understanding of Irish women's diaspora experience but also offer a space for dialogue across cultures drawing from somatic principles and methods.

Cultural Embodiment and Somatic Practices

August 2015: Ecological Body workshop with Sandra Reeve in Sligo, Ireland

The workshop is situated in the gardens of a local Irish psychotherapist and movement practitioner Therese O'Driscoll who has invited Sandra Reeve over. To open the workshop, Therese invites us to acknowledge the festival of Lughnasa, of harvest time, and to create a ritual with a potato as we arrive. The instructions are to find a place for the potato within the gardens we are working in. I feel a lack of resonance with this task and connecting to part of an Irish heritage that I never felt related to – pagan rites, rituals and seasons. I look at the potato and see a mock symbol of Irishness, with reminders of the famine but also stereotypes of the Irish diet, and associations of being stuck in the mud, rustic or backward. Wandering in the gardens, I feel out of place, disconnected, lost. Trying to

participate in this Lughnasa ritual, I place my potato on a metal seat in the garden. With some frustration building, I rock the seat which holds the potato, creating a loud rattling noise that satisfies my exasperation. The potato rolls around and finds a gap in the metal where it rests. From here, I settle into stillness, looking at the potato wedged in the gap, and ask myself "How can I find my gap, my niche, my place, in between?"

In moving country, I became acutely aware of my own cultural heritage, which to me not only includes cultural works and traditions, but also a set of attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that are passed down across generations. This latter group of embodied inheritances came to my awareness through a range of psychophysical responses to relocating. In England, I felt at times 'out of place' and a need to adapt my ways of relating to others. This began with a familiar flow of habits, which were then interrupted by feelings of disorientation when my expectations for response were not met. For example, I missed the ease with which I got to know new people in Ireland by understanding local codes of forming social groups; I was also aware of differences in use of touch, voice and other interpersonal dynamics in public and private spaces. At other times, I felt distant from Irish cultural customs and traditions, and unsettled by changes in myself that I noticed through spending time in England. This account is based in my own personal experience of moving from and to a specific set of circumstances, and I don't want to fall into suggesting stereotypes of Irish or English behaviours. However, awareness of difference and shifts in attitudes or behaviour are likely to be a common thread for those moving country as they embody cultural histories in new communities.

The historical and political relationship between Ireland and England produces its own particular set of issues for Irish migrants. At times, I felt a need to assert my Irish identity, especially to honour the Irish colonial past, which often felt unrecognised. Bronwen Walter notes that "In place of either/or relationships conventionally associated with the resettlement process, migrants and their descendants are connected by both/and ties to their countries of origin and settlement," while "the specificity of the relationship between the Irish diaspora and British imperialism problematises this notion of both/and."[13] This reflects my own feeling of discomfort of developing a new identity informed by both living in Ireland

and England, with a need at times to assert my own (and Ireland's) independent identity. Moya Kneafsey and Rosie Cox address Walter's premise that Irish people in Britain become invisible, appearing as an insider but feeling like an outsider, exacerbated by the ways in which the Irish are "incorporated into the myth of 'internal homogeneity' against which black groups are constructed as a new and dangerous presence."[14] At the same time, as mentioned earlier, Brexit has more recently increased uncertainty and fears for Irish immigrants in relation to work rights, border conflicts and also in behavior towards immigrant groups. The complexity of the insider-outsider experience, including a negotiation between the Irish histories which I carry with me and the English context that I live in, have informed a new cultural embodiment in me, and probably countless other Irish immigrants.

In order to investigate somatic embodiment of culture, I draw primarily on the teaching of two somatic practitioners, Irish choreographer Joan Davis and English movement artist Sandra Reeve. Through Davis, I learned to practice Authentic Movement, an approach originally developed by a series of women including Mary Starks Whitehouse and Janet Adler in the US in the 1950s. It involves a free form movement session with eyes closed, and attention to sensation, emotion, thoughts and image, later reflected on through the process of 'witnessing.' This involves a structured format for a witness to speak of their experience of watching the mover. The mover learns to cultivate an 'internal witness' where they articulate their own movement process through writing, drawing and speaking. This witnessing process became a foundation for noting my experiences of transitional cultural embodiment as I changed location. The role of context and environment is also a central feature of the work of Sandra Reeve, with whom I studied in both Ireland and England. Reeve trained extensively in the Amerta movement practice developed by Indonesian artist Suprapto Suryodarmo (also known as Prapto). Again, Amerta is an improvised exploration guided lightly through spoken facilitation, however this time with eyes open and with attention in the relationship between the environment and the individual. Reeve has articulated some dynamics and lenses in the work including position, transition, proportion, niche, pattern and emergence. These features of her movement approach informed my somatic exploration when moving to England, particularly around loosening

identification with movement habits in order to "lead to a movement, an action that is as appropriate to the context as it is to my personal needs."[15]

What is clear from this brief introduction to my movement lineage from Ireland and England is that each of these practices lead back to more complex cultural roots in America and Asia, which in turn lead back to prior sources. This indicates the complexity of cultural traditions now embodied in my current practice and promotes a more flexible understanding of cultural affiliation. With my move to England, I experienced a sense of identity becoming mobile, with home not experienced in one place. Carl Lavery and Simon Whitehead examine notions of home as mobile, noting that "homecoming is not simply about dwelling in a definite territory; rather it concerns an interminable dialectic between homelessness and homecoming."[16] Inhabiting the constant motion of journey rather than a single point of landing was reflected in my practice of Reeve's dynamics of position/transition between places. My home was no longer in one place, I had split and sometimes conflicting allegiances, in transition between multiple positions. Gray's research on Irish women diaspora also accounts for subjectivities that are "variously complicit, split, ambivalent and actively resistant."[17] Tracking lived experiences through somatic movement practice can bring awareness to structures which have formed identity by revealing movement habits and preferences, in this case culturally inscribed. The value of bringing awareness to habits is to unfix values, belief systems and narratives, and question if these identity stories or behaviours serve the individual in the current environment that they inhabit. It can also offer the opportunity to understand identity as constantly in transition, between self and the environment. How I move includes both my embodied history but also the environment surrounding me. Sights, sounds, smells, textures, structures, pathways and atmospheres shape my movement and change my behaviour; and therefore embodied experience arises from the meeting of self and place.

Women's Roles and Home Practice

7 March 2016, Movement session at home

Seeing light and shadow streaming in,
Metal pots hanging in a row, dirty dishes stacked.

Feeling the softness of the cushion under me,
I am held between the arms of a chair.

I lift onto toes to feel sunlight on my face,
Light on eyelashes, on nose. Hearing birds.

I see light seep up the staircase
And create a path of light in the sitting room.

The texture, taste, smell of this room with table, couch, books.
Standing, I rest my hands on hanging laundry, drying.

Lace and laundry. Photo: © Emma Meehan (2016) CC-BY-NC

On moving to England, I started an Authentic Movement exchange with dance artist and scholar Amy Voris. During this time, she co-founded the Accumulations Project, a group of artists concerned with female ancestral lineage in their work. In 2016, the group received Arts Council England funding to generate a series of activities "to explore female genealogies,"

one of which was *a shrine to women's work* group exhibition curated by Voris. She notes that:

> *a shrine to women's work* brings together works from eleven artists who have reflected upon matrilineal influences in their own working / playing lives. Such influences include the work / play of mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers and also the "grandmothers" of each artist's art form(s) – or artistic lineages. Each contributor has made something that incorporates selected aspects of this embodied and relational history. The idea was that this contribution somehow took its inspiration from this lineage of women's work while also somehow being engaged with one's own current work or creative interests. Eventually the shrine was assembled from these objects at my studio space in Hope Mill, Ancoats, itself a site where women, men and children endured grueling labour in the textile industry in the 19th Century. The impetus for this project came from my desire to recognise hidden histories of women's work / play and from the site in Manchester in which I currently work. It has also arisen from my own feelings of being haunted by the generational differences and resonances between myself and my grandmothers and from my own detailed interest in early modern dance history (my artistic grandmothers).[18]

Voris' introduction to the project highlights a simultaneous connection to and disconnection from lineage, as she emphasises a relational enquiry. These are aspects which I also navigate in my submission to the *shrine*, as investigating cultural heritage can prompt a sense of alignment or separation. Migration especially tests the borders of identity, as the new culture can shift attitudes and behaviour. The *shrine* project allowed me to assess my relationship with matrilineal heritage just at the moment when I was experiencing a mobility of identities between two cultures.

In preparing for the *shrine* project, I continued my movement practice and kept journals of the process which include drawings and writing, tracing emerging experiences of cultural embodiment. I also conducted a series of conversations with my father and mother about the women in our families, especially grandmothers and great grandmothers. What emerged was a

view of women in Ireland at a moment in time where work opportunities were restricted and bearing children was valorised. This is reflected in the Irish constitution of 1937, which states that "the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved."[19] However, my great grandmothers and grandmothers all found ways to work that were somehow acceptable, such as working in family businesses or making and selling hand crafts. Most of this work was done in the home between minding children and domestic chores. Hosting people at home, cooking food and baking also were common threads, revealing what seem to be lives of undervalued skill and service to others. Initiatives in the late 1970s around married women working and having access to contraception reflected changing attitudes of the state towards the role of women in Irish society.[20] By the time my mother married, it was not unusual for women to work outside the home, but they were also expected to be the primary homemakers at the same time.

Through a comparative positioning as suggested by Voris, I was reminded of the "generational differences and resonances."[21] Unlike the women in my female lineage, I have made choices so far to study, work, not get married and not have children. However, I also share interests in baking, hosting, writing and practicing at home – where I do a large portion of my ongoing movement practice. Davis and Reeve, my female creative lineage of teachers mentioned earlier, also practice and present their work in their homes. Davis teaches, performs and holds events in her family property called Gorse Hill in Wicklow, Ireland. Her *Maya Lila* performances from 2005-2010 regularly took place in her homestead including the sharing of food, performance, artwork and a cultivated garden installation. Reeve also teaches, performs and hosts creative events in her home place called Westhay in Dorset, England, where the sharing of food, conversation, gardens and creativity become central to her open day events. In the past, creative practice in the home has remained unacknowledged as an area of skillful practice, whether through crafts, cooking, gardening, informal performance or hosting people in the home. In the work of Davis and Reeve, practice in the home becomes much more publicly visible and recognised. *Home Practice* therefore became the title of my contribution to the *shrine* and reflected both my familial and creative female lineage.

The theme of home practice appeared in my somatic movement, perhaps as a way of finding 'home' in my body and environment when I was experiencing a fluctuating identity. I practiced movement at 'home' in my apartment in Ireland when commuting during the first few months of working in England; and later at my new flat in England when I had fully moved country. Both provided quiet and familiar albeit temporary spaces of working. Somatic practices often promote grounding experiences in the body, ideas of spatial locatedness, nurturing, taking time and resting. In Davis and Reeve's work, their home places offer sites of familiarity for workshop and performance participants, for deepening and grounding in bodily and spatial experience while also experiencing the shifting of fixed borders of identity and behavioural patterning. Further, their work values daily home activities such as cooking and gardening, as well as sharing with local communities. This is somewhat contrary to the shift towards globalised networks and virtual connectivity in an era of increased ease of access to travel and communication. Marc Augé suggests that in a globalized society, there are a proliferation of spaces that are replicated around the world such as airports and shopping centres "which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity."[22] He notes how "the individual can thus live rather oddly in an intellectual, musical or visual environment that is wholly independent of his immediate physical surroundings."[23] I propose that somatic approaches rather revalue the time and space given to physical locatedness and locality. Similarly, In Irish diaspora studies, Breda Gray discusses "time-space compression" as "the sense that geographical distance is overcome by new communications and transport technologies."[24] She suggests this also can cause new experiences of migration and home through the subsequent paradoxical "time-space compression" which include "extended commutes to dispersed places of work, expanded spaces of everyday life, extended periods of planning to bring the family together."[25] For example, in Ireland it is not uncommon for one person in a family to work in the UK and fly back and forth every week to Ireland. These long weekly commutes can mean less time for rest, relationship with local place or community, and physical interaction with family through daily activities. My home-based practice of movement gave me time and place to integrate new and unsettling experiences and acknowledge my shifting sense of home. It presented me

with the tools of bodily and spatial locatedness, aiding me to embed into a new location while also maintaining a sense of embodied cultural history.

So far, I have described the idea of home practice in my female cultural and creative lineage, which has proved important to me in relocating. However, there are problems with reinforcing the links between woman and home, which for example the Irish state enshrined as the woman's ascribed place with her role as homemaker. This is an association that has historically restricted women's opportunities for work and therefore often the valuing of their activities financially and socially. Deirdre Heddon identifies the "confining and limiting" aspects of home, as well as questioning the idea that home is a safe space.[26] For many women (and indeed men), the home has been restrictive and sometimes violent, and therefore I don't wish to exalt the position of the home or women's place in it. At the same time, the lack of wider public visibility and valuing of women's work in the home is what I seek to address. The daily activities undertaken in the home by my female ancestors were often highly skilled although behind the scenes, and so to reflect on the validity of home practice seems pertinent. Unlike my female lineage, I have made an active choice to practice in the home, rather than being subjected to it through government or social regulation, and this offers another way to inhabit the home-place. Finola Cronin discusses methods that "reappropriate particular iconic images that associate woman with narratives of Ireland" as "subtle and disruptive strategies that communicate diverse and different accounts of woman in an Irish context."[27] With *Home Practice*, I wanted to acknowledge the skill of work in the home, find new ways of reappropriating what might be seen as restrictive roles and stage new ways of enacting them.

The exhibited work of *Home Practice* consists of a picnic hamper which holds a piece of my great grandmother Mary Ellen McGowan's lace, and my mother Anne O'Connell's poem about her. In line with Voris' request to have a relational response, the basket contains a notebook with my own writing from moving with the lace. It also includes an Irish tea brack recipe hand written by my mother, along with a version of the recipe baked by me for sharing with the exhibition attendees. Finally, there are also a series of family photographs, one of which depicts a picnic by the sea with

generations of women from my mother's family. The picnic basket became the choice of container for the exhibited objects, serving as reminder of the seaside where I grew up, and also inviting a sense of the sociality of a picnic with others. I hoped the exhibit could invite a dialogue between my own experiences and those visiting, and I envisioned the basket as a starting point for informal sharing with participants, much like a picnic.

Irish tea brack. Photo: © Emma Meehan (2016) CC-BY-NC

Woven Threads of Words and Movement – Writing Contained in the Basket

Excerpt from "Til Death Do Us Part" by Anne O'Connell

Her body was soft as the dough she kneaded with her knuckles.
Beneath her chin, the flesh wobbled as she worked,
Making soda bread which we devoured fresh from the range.
Mary Ellen was widowed young,
She knew the meaning of work.

…

On winter Sundays, our father dropped us off to visit.
Mother, daughter and us five granddaughters together in the sitting room.
The adults, heads close, shared news across the fireplace.
We children became a team of packers,
Stacking rows of slim boxes, a dozen at a time,
Containing 'out-workers' craft-handkerchiefs of Cliffoney lace.
We pinned a green ribbon in the corners,
Bound the boxes with strong brown paper,
Tied them with twine and dripped red sealing wax on the cord.
The product was now ready for export.

Movement at home, UK, June 2016

I collect the lace in my hands.
Hands press into cloth, damp clothes, pressure slow but firm.
Hands washing lace, washing now not by hand.
Hands working, typing, moving, touching, thinking,
Like hands sewing, with dexterity and precision, creating.
Weaving threads, threads alongside each other, working together,
Holding shape, structure,
Restricted holding, trapped,
But still some gaps, enough space to breathe,
The lace teasing in one or other direction.
Circles of threads, circling arms,
Crumpled lace, resting hands.

Workshop with Suprapto Suryodarmo, UK, June 2016

Bantham beach looks like the seaside of my childhood, with rough winds and waves crashing on rocks. I reach for my great grandmother's lace, which is in my pocket. As I lift it in my hand, it twirls in the wind, dancing. I place it on my neck. I sit in the passionate weather, as surprising feelings of loss arrive, rising from my chest to my mouth and my eyes. Slowly I fold away the lace and place it back in my pocket.

My emotions ebb away as I feel into the sand with my boots and my hands. I crawl forward like a cat, pushing my claws into the wet and gritty sand. I

am reminded of the hands of my ancestors, baking, sewing, washing, taking care. I take some driftwood and slowly walk down the beach to the water's edge. I let the stick float in the water, and wash my hands, letting go of the dance, as I arrive back in this place.[28]

Lace dance Bantham Beach, Devon. *Photo: © Eline Kieft (2016) CC-BY-NC*

Hosting Dialogue

TaPRA Gallery, University of Salford, August 2017

I sit on a cushion waiting for the audience to arrive.
People wander in, alone or in groups, joining me on the floor.
Sometimes I talk a lot, introducing the basket.
Other times I invite people to touch, taste, read, smell,
And later ask me questions.
I notice my fear, a desire to jump out and imagine the needs of others.
My breathing goes shallow as I start to 'inform' or 'tell.'
As times goes on, I try to breathe deeply and notice the wider space,

As I watch for internal and external cues and connections,
I hear the stories of the audience of
grannies and families,
not having children,
women's roles,
cultural sexuality,
migrant journeys.

Simon Whitehead proposes that home can reside in the encounters between body and place, stating that,

> the body is the 'first home,' and the place or the territory where we live is a 'second home' … The 'third home' is the home you discover when you start interacting with the assemblage of body and environment to produce something new.[29]

Through my bodily interactions with my changing cultural environment, I felt like I was producing something new through an evolving identity and the creation of *Home Practice*. I was also keen to allow for something new to emerge through the encounters between the *Home Practice* materials and the visitors at the exhibition. This was to incorporate the "multi-perspectived view" in Authentic Movement practice, so that the experience of the exhibit could be "inspired and permeated, nourished and contaminated by a multitude of influences."[30] Rather than focusing on me as primary meaning-maker of the project, I wished to shift attention towards the relationship between the participants and the sensorial materials in the basket, so guests were invited to play through a written invitation to look, touch, taste, smell, read aloud and so on. Kramer notes the importance of receptivity and exposure to materials in Amerta movement, which she describes as "intermaterial confederations."[31] Bringing together the multi-perspectived view and intermaterial confederations, I envisaged *Home Practice* as an unfinished encounter between visitors and materials. Aligned with postmodern ideas and practices, I wanted to share the ongoing process and invite others in to reflect on what this might mean for them.

Although the exhibition format allowed me to point towards the role of materials and audience encounter, I missed my place as embodied enquirer within the exchange. In previous research, I questioned how I might include the openness to relational interaction which is fundamental to the exchange between mover and witness in Authentic Movement, imagining that:

> Practice-based research 'offerings' of physical, verbal and written materials could be formulated as an unfinished encounter where potential for interaction is made available in the dialogue between presenter and audience, inviting provocations, uncertainties, moments to respond, questioning, collaborative investigation and curiosity.[32]

Although I could not be at the exhibition all the time, I was in residence at Hope Mill for one day of the two-week run where I met and talked with various attendees. The informal conversations brought to my attention what mattered to those attending, how they viewed their own heritage differently from me but also the value in having space to discuss this with others. In August 2017, one year later, I exhibited *Home Practice* at the TaPRA conference gallery at University of Salford in Manchester, curated by Alison Matthews. There, I chose to be in the space more often with my exhibition materials, and explore my role in 'hosting' emergent conversations about cultural heritage.

My teacher Joan Davis had previously investigated the role of the host as a means to explore different ways of integrating the witnessing aspect of Authentic Movement into performances. The host, a role which I had previously played in her work, acted as a guide to the audience through the event and was usually undertaken by someone who had experience of witnessing. In Davis' practice of hosting, she applied British psychoanalyst Wilfred Ruprecht Bion's concept of the 'container.' Bion described the container as the primary relationship of care and receptiveness offered by the mother, and later re-created in therapeutic or other relationships.[33] Further, Davis also incorporated D.W. Winnicott's related idea of 'holding,' which originates in the mother's careful physical attention to the baby.[34] A kind of holding and containment is mediated by the presence of the host in

Davis' performances, providing attention, care, support, guidance and feedback, that reflect the witnessing process.

Hosting the *Home Practice* basket also became an important way to mediate complex experiences with others, and to invite clear boundaries around experience. Voris notes that "It is widely regarded that the witness in Authentic Movement practice intends toward a non-judgmental and reflexive attitude of 'holding' which offers the mover space to potentially tolerate a range of emotions and experiences."[35] As the exhibition host, I hoped to hold the space for the audience to engage with the work, to express unformed thoughts and feelings, share them with others, and be open to mingling perspectives. In this context of being hosted, attendees at the exhibition in Salford chose to discuss topics as diverse as choosing not to have children, sexuality in different cultural contexts, and the journeys of migrant grandparents. Here the work extended beyond my own diasporic experiences, opening up shared perspectives on social and cultural identity as well as migration.

Hosting and holding suggests being the stable and secure container for meeting others' needs. Similarly, the role of Irish women being bound to the home was often also connected with being in service to others. Walter notes that:

> After the Famine, the Virgin Mary was promoted as a role model for women. Her assigned qualities, which were promoted as ideals for all Irish women, included duty to family, self-sacrifice, submerged sexuality and the elevation of a caring function above all others. Thus restrictive and limited roles for women became Catholic religious ideals and the Church portrayed married motherhood as the only acceptable status.[36]

The image of the self-sacrificing and caring woman in the home was a cultural model for women, which could be associated with hosting others. In my *shrine* contribution, I do not claim to be free from the cultural embodiments of my ancestry. In first attempts at hosting the exhibition, I noticed a tendency to drop my own interests and needs, in order to figure out what attendees wanted, which I associated with an embodied cultural role of women in service to others. Through exploring somatic principles, I feel I have found a way in which this nurturing and holding role can be

reappropriated for other purposes. In playing the host, I try to be aware of my own experiences while in the presence of others, much like the role of the witness of Authentic Movement practice. I offer containment for conversations by attending to the gestures, comments and queries of attendees, reflecting back their feelings and thoughts, and providing a supportive structure. But I also receive back from the exchange in mutual reciprocity, through a process of posing questions from my own interest, as well as following my own sensations, needs and thoughts. Paradoxically, I wish on the one hand to investigate the skill and craft of hosting which was underestimated in previous generations; and on the other, to move away from women's roles 'in service' towards a negotiation between self and other on a more equal basis. Somatic practices have shifted my cultural embodiment of hosting, as they have brought awareness to patterns of behaviour and opened up new ways of responding.

Conclusions and Future Directions

In this article, I have described my own psychophysical disorientation when moving from Ireland to England, in order to examine questions about cultural embodiment in somatic practices. During the process, I have encountered issues such as the historical restrictions of Irish women's role in the home, and further, the invisibility of Irish women in diaspora studies. Through my contribution to the *a shrine to women's work*, I grew an appreciation of my cultural heritage and the skills of home practice. I investigated the role of host within the exhibition, undertaking the caring and nurturing role of my creative and cultural lineage, and recognising the potential for reciprocity. Addressing my research question about what somatic practices can offer to understanding cultural heritage, I suggest that they can unpack subtle processes of cultural transmission, revealing genealogies, continuities, crossings, entanglements and dislocations. The project raised questions about definitions of the term home, with both somatic practices and diaspora studies supporting the idea that home is constantly evolving between embodied heritage and places of inhabitation. In my case, a somatic approach offered a way of coming to terms with an emerging fluid identity between two cultures, neither one nor the other; while at the same time valuing connections to past cultural history which can feel invisible. Further, somatic practices offered the opportunity to

assume and adapt inherited behaviours in new ways, altering and expanding cultural embodiment.

Emerging from *Home Practice*, I am working on a new project with artists Carol Breen and Carmen Wong examining Irish women diaspora in Coventry through cook-along interviews. Kneafsey and Cox examine ways of 'making home' by Irish women in Coventry through cooking, preparing and sharing food as a means of establishing cultural identity. In the *shrine* project, I chose an Irish tea brack recipe as a means of materialising my Irish cultural heritage and difference, as well as finding a way to incorporate it into the bodies of others. Sharing food and conversation calls on the dialogue inherent to somatic principles which I explored in *Home Practice*. These ideas are further being explored by gathering Irish food ethnographies through cook-along interviews with first generation Irish women in Coventry, including established Irish immigrants in England who arrived in the 1950s and 1980s with a new group of Irish immigrants who have arrived since the recession in 2008. The project is currently raising questions about what and who is invisible in Irish stories of migration, so that we are now considered a broader range of gender, ethnicity, religion, age ranges as well as attitudes, behaviours and cross-cultural practices that can be understood as both migrant and Irish. Gray recognizes that Irish diaspora identity is not unified and requires "self-identifications and recognition of membership of particular categories."[37] For example, with very little written about the new wave of Irish immigrants, they appear even less visible than their predecessors, perhaps because they don't identify with communities of Irishness currently in existence. Can we find formats and sites to explore alternate identities of Irishness? Can the dialogic hosting practice developed through somatic principles enrich this process?

While I have focused here on Irish diaspora identity, and noted a critical lack of research about Irish women migrants in Britain, I also suggest there is a value in somatic methods for working with different populations. Somatic practices provide ways for becoming aware of cultural embodiment and a means for exploring the displacement caused by arriving into a new culture. They support the acknowledgement of cultural heritage while allowing adaptations to take place, whether to beliefs, attitudes, feelings or behavior. Sharing my own cultural heritage through

the hosting practice also started a dialogue with people from different backgrounds, revealing their cultural experiences, stories, similarities and differences. I have written elsewhere how witnessing involves reflecting on the first person position, in order to "acknowledge subjective perspectives, reflect on personal judgement and develop a form of non-violent communication."[38] With the witnessing process incorporated into the hosting role, there is potential for subjective offerings of cultural heritage to open up wider ethical discourses about experiences across cultures. Louise Ryan also calls for comparative analysis of immigrant experiences across cultures, in order to gain "a wider understanding of migration processes, experiences and inter-migrant relations, and, secondly, to a fuller appreciation of varied dimensions of migratory experiences in Britain."[39] Hosting offers one practice-based model for this kind of comparative study, inviting participants from different places to track cultural experience and share it in dialogue with others.

Notes

[1] Voris, *a shrine to women's work*.

[2] In this article, I refer to the exhibited project as *Home Practice.* I refer to the concept and activity of creative practice in the home more generally without italics as home practice. The idea of home art/practice was first discussed several years ago with Sandra Reeve in a conversation about artists choosing to work in the home in the UK and Ireland. Reeve's reflections were also informed by Javanese movement artist Prapto's "respect for and cultivation of Home Art in Javanese villages so that local practices do not get lost" (personal communication 19 March 2018).

[3] Fortin and Grau, "Editorial," 3.

[4] Claid, "I am because you are," 115.
www.pure.roehampton.ac.uk/portal/files/401940/JDSP_Claid.pdf.

[5] Batson and Wilson*, Body and Mind in Motion*, 74-75.

[6] Eddy, *Mindful Movement*, 16.

[7] Barbour, "Dancing in foreign places," 317.

[8] See for example "Brexit must not endanger the Good Friday agreement" by Simon Coveney, Irish Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister), in The Guardian.

[9] Barbour, 318.

[10] MacPherson and Hickman, "Introduction: Irish diaspora studies and women," 1.

[11] Gray, *Women and the Irish Diaspora*, 1.

[12] Gray, "Thinking Through Transnational Studies," 45.

[13] Walter, *Outsiders Inside: Whiteness, Place and Irish Women*, 3.

[14] Kneafsey and Cox, "Food, gender and Irishness," 7. This identification of Irishness with 'whiteness' has been challenged for example by the inclusion of non-white Irish in the 2011 British census, as another group which need to be recognised (see Hutton 2012, 4). The Association of Mixed Race Irish (AMRI) was also "set up to positively promote and support Irish people of mixed race backgrounds and their families/relatives," www.mixedraceirish.blogspot.co.uk (accessed 9 Feb. 2018).

[15] Reeve, "The Sacrum and the Sacred," 69.

[16] Lavery and Whitehead, "Bringing It All Back Home," 113.

[17] Gray, "Thinking Through Transnational Studies," 46.

[18] Voris, www.accumulationsproject.com/a-shrine-to-womens-work.

[19] Article 4.1, 2.1 and 2.2, Irish Constitution/ Bunreacht na hEireann, 1937 with amendments up to 2004.

[20] Though the relationship between the Irish state and women's bodies are arguably still intertwined. For example, legally women in Ireland cannot elect to have an abortion though there will be an abortion referendum held in 2018.

[21] Voris, www.accumulationsproject.com/a-shrine-to-womens-work.

[22] Augé, *Non-Places*, 63.

[23] Ibid., viii.

[24] Gray, "'Generation Emigration,'" 24.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Heddon, *Autobiography and Performance*, 116.

[27] Cronin, "On Peregrine Collaborations," 51.

28 All journal writing and poems are by me, except for the poem "Til Death Do Us Part" by my mother, Anne O'Connell.

29 Whitehead, "Bringing It All Back Home," 114.

30 Goldhahn, "Towards a new ontology," 281.

31 Kramer, "Dancing materiality," i.

32 Meehan, "Speak," 325-326. www.pureportal.coventry.ac.uk/en/publications/speak-authentic-movement-embodied-text-and-performance-as-researc-2.

33 Chessick, *A Dictionary for Psychotherapists*, 330-331.

34 Winnicott, *The Maturational Processes and the Facilitating Environment*, 44.

35 Voris, "Forming, Returning and Deepening," 36.

36 Walter, *Outsiders Inside*, 18.

37 Gray, *Women and the Irish Diaspora*, 5-6.

38 Meehan, "Immersive performance and somatic practices," 233.

39 Ryan, "Compare and contrast," 6.

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Biography

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'THE CRAFTED BODY': THOUGHTS ON DANCING, VIEWING AND REMEMBERING

MARIE-LOUISE CRAWLEY

Keywords

archaeology
museum
history
temporality
memory

Abstract

In this chapter, I draw on my choreographic practice-as-research project in the Ashmolean Museum (UK) to propose the ways in which live dance in the archaeology museum interrogates received notions of how we view and remember history. The choreographic practice develops from feminist classical scholarship focusing on the gaze, and on the gaze's relationship to mobility and stillness. It posits 'stillness-that-is-not-quite stillness' as a strategy that allows dance to step out of the linear temporality of representation and into a different economy of time and presence.

> Where does history rest, if at all? And how is history reawakened and put into motion?[1]

These bones will not rest. Sometimes I imagine the museum's galleries after dark, after the colossal front doors have been shut and the crowds and the curators have all gone home. I imagine the silent and still spaces of the halls as perhaps not so silent, and not so still. I imagine the whisper of voices, the murmur of stirring inside glass display cases. I imagine sculptures shaking off their plaster and marble, and beginning to move. I imagine the bodies of unknown Roman women pushing against the glass of the vitrines enclosing them; their entombed remains re-fleshed in the darkness. I imagine them smashing through the glass, shattering the vitrines. Sometimes I imagine that I see these ghosts emerge even during the daytime, when the visitors are not looking. These are ghosts who dance through time and who move through history.

The aim of this chapter is to document my practice creating and performing solo dance works for the museum of ancient art and archaeology, and in particular for the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford (the world's first university museum and, founded in 1683, the UK's oldest), as part of a six-month residency that I undertook in 2017 supported by the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD) at the University of Oxford. The chapter's main focus will be on *'Galatea,'* one of the solo dance works that formed the durational triptych *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* and which was first performed in the Ashmolean Museum in June 2017 as part of the residency programme. Working alongside archivists and Classics scholars specialising in the reception of ancient performance, my choreographic practice during the APGRD residency sought to explore the potential of certain foundational conventions of the ancient Roman pantomime form, *tragoedia saltata* or 'danced tragedy,'[2] namely that it was a solo, masked and narrative dance form. Yet rather than focussing on the impossible task of reconstructing an ancient dance form, my practice aimed to 're-imagine' ancient sources in order to find new possibilities for twenty-first century performance. The ancient sources used include the Roman poet Ovid's hexameter poem *Metamorphoses*, itself written contemporaneously to the development of *tragoedia saltata*, which became a source text for the 'narratives' of all

three solos in the triptych. My hope was that the new choreographic act would both dislocate and relocate the ancient dance form and the Latin written text from their classical past and into the performer's present in the museum. Moreover, when 'exhibited' in the archaeological museum, the practice would itself be at the centre of these shifting temporalities, dancing somewhere between the ancient past, the performer's present and extending into an unknown future.

My wider question through the practice was how it might consider dance (or the dancer) in the archaeological museum as a site of "counter-memory,"[3] to use performance theorist Rebecca Schneider's reworking of philosopher Michel Foucault's term. What might happen to our understanding of time – and of history – if we were to juxtapose this notion of a bodily, im/material "counter-memory," an alternative fleshy history, with the museum's material objects? As I have argued recently, "if and when dance in the archaeological museum becomes this site of counter-memory, might it then allow a new, alternative visibility for those bodies, most specifically those female bodies, previously misrepresented or rendered partially invisible by history?"[4] I have to pause here for a moment to think about the mummified bodies of 'unknown' Romano-Egyptian women on display in the Ashmolean Museum. My first encounter with these bodies on an early site visit to the museum was marked by an overwhelming sense of shock. On the one hand, these female bodies were undeniably materially present in the museum; on the other, the women themselves were unnamed and 'unknown.' A sense of who they actually were has been lost to history. Their bodies are present in the museum; but their stories, their histories, are absent from it.

In dancing in the museum, I am putting my own body – and my own story – on display alongside these ancient female bodies. I too become an exhibit. In so doing, I ask how the dance practice in the museum might be able to subvert the idea of 'the gaze,' of being looked at: how might it enable me as dancer to look back? Here I am thinking of looking back in the two senses of the word: not only in terms of returning the gaze, but also in terms of looking back on the past, of looking back through history, as inevitably we do whenever we enter the archaeological museum. My practice-as-research has a strong feminist framework, aiming to build on

and interrogate a significant and dense body of scholarship on the gaze in the fields of Classics[5] and of dance and performance studies. In particular, classical scholar Patricia Salzmann-Mitchell's 2005 study on the gaze at work in Ovid, *A Web of Fantasies: Gaze, Image, and Gender in Ovid's Metamorphoses*, is relevant to my project. Situating itself in the line of David Fredrick's 2002 study entirely dedicated to the Roman gaze, Salzman-Mitchell's work explores the relationships between gaze and visual imagery in Ovid's hexameter poem. It uses feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey's seminal "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"[6] in a classical context to approach the poem as an inter-play of intrusive and fixing gazes. Salzman-Mitchell develops Mulvey's argument with her emphasis on women telling stories for each other, and argues for a reading of Ovid that she terms as both resisting and releasing, one that somehow lets the female characters speak for themselves despite the male authorial voice of Ovid.

I propose here to apply Salzman-Mitchell's resisting and releasing readings of Ovid to my choreographic practice-as-research in the archaeological museum. While my research interrogates and speaks back to gaze theory, most importantly, it is the dance *practice* in the museum that does the interrogating. So while the theoretical framework is clear, I am keen in this chapter to offer a space for the practice itself to speak and to dance through these pages.[7] I want to offer a space for the other questions that arise out of the practice and emerge out of the process, and I want to document how it is the practice itself that is constantly questioning. Here I will inevitably encounter headlong one of the methodological challenges of practice-as-research, and that is how to navigate the relationship between practice as an artefact or an experience in itself and the documentation of that experience. I am struck by theatre and performance scholar Baz Kershaw's discussions of the unfair unwariness of documentation that the field seems to have, following Peggy Phelan's famous comments on performance's ontology being its disappearance,[8] and the connection that he makes between documentation and memory, or rather documentation as "a form of memorialisation."[9] Kershaw's thoughts here on this connection echo Simon Ellis's suggestion that perhaps documentation is the wrong term here and that we should substitute "remembering" for documenting.[10] I like this idea of remembering, especially in the context of

a performance practice that is situated in a museum, a place for collective memory and site of public remembering *par excellence*. In a recent presentation "Loops, notes, folds and fragments – experimenting / documenting / dancing,"[11] dance studies scholar Alys Longley also speaks of an "experimental documentation" as a means of translating a performance practice. Longley evokes what she terms a "fragmentary thinking" in documenting choreographic work, a "translated memory" of a practice. Fragmentary thinking, translated memories; these resonate with a practice taking place in a museum which houses fragments – literal fragments of sculptural bodies, metaphorical fragments of thoughts, and translations of memories and stories shifting from Ovid's text and into the dance. And so my dance practice, as it is remembered, is forever shifting; it is still dancing. I ask you, reader, to approach this chapter with that framework in mind as I remember this particular museum dance.[12]

> *Eyes closed, eyelids slowly fluttering open and closing again, gently awakening to an invisible touch, a birth; a rebirth; a fluttering of life in the chest, the sternum, the heart.*

> *Warmth radiating from the centre point, flowing first into limbs and then into extremities;*

> *The neck, the head, slowly moving, awakening, revealing alabaster flesh;*

> *Arms extend upwards, fingers search, eyes open. The chest opens, the heart opens, the hips move, then the bones of the sacrum, knees, ankles, the tiny bones in the feet, slowly turning, revolving on oneself, moving towards the glass, yielding to it, warming, loosening, softening, melting.*

> *– Rehearsal notes, June 2017*

'Galatea' is one of the three solo dances that make up the durational triptych of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* that was created and performed in the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in June 2017. The triptych was performed on a loop throughout the museum's regular opening hours. *'Galatea'* was sited in the vitrine-like balcony high above the museum's main entrance. The solo itself draws on a passage from Roman author Ovid's poem *Metamorphoses* Book 10.243-297, a well-known story from classical mythology, that of the sculptor Pygmalion who

carves a statue so beautiful that he falls in love with it. Pygmalion then prays to the goddess of love, Venus, for a bride who should be the living likeness of his sculpture. The goddess grants him an answer to his prayer as the statue comes to life. Although unnamed in Ovid's text, Galatea is the name commonly given to the ivory maiden (hence the inverted commas of my own title); in naming the dance work *'Galatea,'* I was keen to offer both a body and a name to the unnamed 'ivory maiden,' whose story is appropriated even by Ovid. In keeping with the museum context and the galleries of statues below the performance space, the solo *'Galatea'* plays with opposing notions of the statuary and the mobile, of stillness and movement, of dancing body and sculptural mask.[13] Through the practice of creating and performing *'Galatea,'* two parallel yet interlinked ideas began to arise: the first relating to the gaze and the second to stillness.

As classical scholar Patricia Salzman-Mitchell has pointed out, there are extensive interplays between gaze, desire, mobility and immobility in the Pygmalion episode in Ovid's text.[14] The story of Pygmalion is well known and has received much scholarly attention in relation to the gaze,[15] although these vary considerably as to their views on the statue's agency, or lack of it. Within these various stances, I have been drawn in particular to Salzman-Mitchell's close textual reading of Ovid and the "performativity" of Pygmalion as creator.[16] I wish to dwell for a moment on Salzman-Mitchell's reading of a particular passage in Ovid's text, as it underpins the choreographic practice of *'Galatea.'* Salzman-Mitchell's reading of *Metamorphoses* 10.247-49 and Ovid's use of what she terms the "diachronicity"[17] of the repeated preterit tense (which shows a succession of completed actions) firmly places the male Pygmalion as the central, active and mobile character. It is his agency that leads to the creation of the statue; he is the artist embodying masculine action. To illustrate this, here is the Latin text in question, with the preterit verbs in bold:

> *interea niveum mira feliciter arte*
> **sculpsit** *ebur formamque* **dedit***, qua femina nasci*
> *nulla potest, operisque sui* **concepit** *amorem.*

> [In the meantime, he successfully sculpted a statue of dazzling ivory with amazing art and gave it a beauty that no woman can be born with. He fell in love with his own work.][18]

Salzman-Mitchell then goes on to suggest how, after these three lines of the act of creation itself, the reader's gaze is directed to the finished work (*Met*. 10.250-53) and a narrative pause or 'stoppage' is produced in the text, a still moment, where the reader, like Pygmalion, can stop to gaze upon the statue:

> *virginis est verae facies, quam vivere credas,*
> *et, si non obstet reverentia, velle moveri:*
> *ars adeo latet arte sua. miratur et haurit*
> *pectore Pygmalion simulate corporis ignes.*

> [Her face is that of a real maiden, which you would think was alive, and, if shame did not prevent it, you would think she would want to be moved: to such an extent does his art conceal his art. Pygmalion admires her and burns in his heart with the fires inspired by the crafted body.][19]

Salzman-Mitchell points out that the verbs in these lines are now mostly in the present tense, which gives an idea of both detention and synchronic action: "the image of the woman detains the action and with its visual charge produces a stoppage in the narrative."[20] Furthermore, while Pygmalion remains the more active, mobile character when kissing and touching the passive statue, once the statue is activated (or animated) by her creator, he himself begins to lose his agency while the formerly passive "crafted body" (to use Ovid's words) becomes the agential one. In Salzman-Mitchell's reading, it is Pygmalion who seems to be affected by the immobility of the statue by becoming himself less active. Once the statue decides to move, she becomes the agential character, looking back on her creator, returning his gaze *and acting upon it*. It was Salzman-Mitchell's evocation of the play between the diachronic and synchronic in Ovid that became an important aspect of the performance of *'Galatea'* in the museum. The durational performance in the museum allowed for, and indeed called for, moments of stoppage, of stillness and movement, of what I came to term a 'stillness-that-was-not quite-stillness.'[21] Dance performance in the museum allows for an alternative to a linear, chronological, diachronic narrative; the present-ness of the performing moment enables a synchronic, fragmentary view. As such, the practice of performing *'Galatea'* seemed to offer an alternative possibility for viewing

history in the museum, allowing for a synchronic and fragmented view, rather than a linear, 'received' version of events.

In the Pygmalion / Galatea episode, in both Ovid's text and in my performance of *'Galatea,'* the desiring gaze of Pygmalion clearly stands in for the gaze of the reader and viewer in the museum respectively. On display in her glass vitrine, the viewing public, namely those visitors standing below me in the museum's atrium, gaze upon my Galatea. However, it is worth recalling here that Pygmalion is also, importantly, a creator; he is an artist, standing in for Ovid. What of the authorial gaze then, the gaze of the creative artist? What of the gaze of the choreographer? Does Galatea really wish to be a "crafted body" once again, only this time through choreography? Does she wish to be re-animated once more through the dance? How was I to ensure that my creative act in reawakening Galatea did not become yet another act of re-appropriation? In beginning to formulate an answer to this question, I was struck by certain further examples that Salzman-Mitchell gives of resisting and releasing readings of Ovid's heroines, such as her readings of Philomela or Myrrha, characters whose stories form the basis to the two other parts of the museum triptych *Likely Terpischore? (Fragments)*. Salzman-Mitchell reads these two stories as ones in which female characters are somehow able to actively bear witness to the gazes which fix and define them. Such readings, particularly in the case of Philomela (who is raped, mutilated and silenced by having her tongue cut out by the perpetrator of the rape so that she cannot speak of her ordeal, but who is able to recount her story by weaving a tapestry depicting events) began to tie in with the *visual* aspect of the dancer exhibited and viewed in the archaeological museum; and, by extension, with how 'history' might be *re-viewed* on the dancer's body as it moves throughout the museum.

Witnessing History

I still had to reconcile this with how my own re-awakening and re-fleshing of these heroines' stories, and their bodies, did not become yet another in a long line of appropriations. In resolving this issue, it is Salzman-Mitchell's concept of witnessing that began to speak to me most clearly. Her notion of Ovid's women, as witnesses who offer 'glimpses' of female narratives to be

completed by the imaginations of female readers who are asked to 'fill in the gaps,' appeals to my broader project of offering a glimpse of alternative female narratives of these heroines' stories when performed in the museum. Salzman-Mitchell's idea of a female glimpse that is to be completed by the viewer also speaks to the 'archaeological' idea of a series of visual fragments that the viewer is called upon to reassemble. The durational practice in the museum sought to do exactly that: *'Galatea'* could be viewed from multiple angles, seen once or several times. As such, each viewer only ever caught partial 'glimpses' of *'Galatea,'* fragments of a story that could be re-assembled multiple times in different ways.

I was struck by how I might apply Salzman-Mitchell's notion of witnessing to the practice itself. How might witnessing speak back to the gaze, to how we look and how we are looked at? And how might Salzman-Mitchell's concept of witnessing as applied to the choreographic practice also speak back to witnessing as understood in dance and performance studies? I am thinking here of Tim Etchells and Peggy Phelan's rich discussions of witnessing versus viewing performance.[22] In brief, witnessing suggests complicity between viewer and performer, for:

> To witness an event is to be present at it in some fundamentally ethical way, to feel the weight of things and one's place in them, even if that place is simply, for the moment, as an onlooker.[23]

This concept of being fundamentally ethically present and feeling 'the weight of things' may in turn be related to that which dance scholar Elizabeth Dempster describes in somatic dance practice as the "witness dyad," a movement practice that explores watching and being watched, a tool that "has been explored by dancers as a way of countering the feeling of objectification […] the feeling of becoming an object of another's gaze."[24] Here the action of witnessing is no longer about objectification, but mutual exchange between viewer and performer. It is important to point out that for Dempster, witnessing is a shared experience where there is an understood 'contract' in that process; this is very different context from that of me, dancer, in relation to the museum visitor. However, it does lead me to think about how in my practice as choreographer and dancer, I become witness: witness to Ovid's heroines, witness to those women of the past. If I am their witness, then I am complicit in their story; I must bear witness for their

past in the dock of the present. I am no longer gazing at Galatea with the eyes of another Pygmalion; I am witness to her agency. This act of witnessing takes place in the fleshiness of my body; and so the ivory statue is reincarnate once again through my flesh, muscle and bone. I am no longer the watcher of history; I am the beholder, the one who holds. I hold those women close in my body as I dance in the museum. In so doing, I bear witness to previously lost, appropriated histories. In so doing, I bear witness to history.

The next question then becomes one that asks how the viewer in the museum is transformed into a witness too, a beholder of history, in the action of viewing the performance of *'Galatea.'* I think of Susan Melrose's reminder that in considering performance "we must never speak about the body but only ever of the bodies – watched bodies and watching bodies."[25] If we consider the dance performance of *'Galatea'* in the museum in this light, then we see how the performance itself becomes an action of "complex ghosting,"[26] where the dead live on in our present, witnessed and witnessing. Perhaps this is what is meant when we talk somewhat glibly of performance enlivening the museum's displays.[27] Yet this performance is more than a re-animation of ancient artefacts; it is the resurrection of history's remains.

My palm slides across the glass, my fingers tracing its cold surface. My shoulder pushes up against the glass, then cheek, then forehead, my eyes look directly ahead meeting theirs. Turning slowly, I choose to turn away, my scapulae and spine pinned against the glass, the whole surface area of my back making contact with it. Turning again, I look back at them, then to my left and to my right at the fragmented friezes surrounding me. My body, moulded against the glass, is pulled into a deliberate movement, a movement reminiscent of the painted lines on the vases below, an arm reaching upwards, extending to arms extending from the sculpted friezes. I pause an instant, a split second of stillness that is not quite stillness, but moving, moving in the quiet motion of breath. Slowly, deliberately, I continue to move, never entirely stopping. It is as though I am resisting petrification. This is not so much about reanimation as resisting the sculptural stillness surrounding me.

– Rehearsal notes, June 2017

Witnessing Stillness

I would now like to relate the notion of witnessing or beholding history to the second question that has emerged from the practice of *'Galatea'*: the question of stillness. This is not unrelated from what we might term the witnessing gaze, for it points back to the *temporal stoppage* explored both in Salzman-Mitchell's rich textual analysis of the episode in Ovid and in the choreographing of the play between stillness and mobility, the 'stillness-that-is not-quite-stillness', that is at work in '*Galatea.'* I am reminded here of performance theorist André Lepecki's exploration of the term "the still act," a concept proposed by anthropologist Nadia Serematakis to "describe moments when a subject interrupts historical flow and *practices* historical interrogation."[28] As Serematakis herself suggests:

> Against the flow of the present […] Stillness is the moment when the buried, the discarded and the forgotten escape to the social surface of awareness like life-supporting oxygen. It is the moment of exit from historical dust.[29]

This "moment of exit from historical dust" echoes my thinking on the sculptures in the archaeological museum shaking off their plaster and marble as they are reawakened and re-fleshed through my dancing. In his reading of Serematakis, Lepecki proposes that:

> to exit from historical dust is to refuse the sedimentation of history into neat layers. The still-act shows how the dust of history, in modernity, may be agitated in order to blur artificial divisions between […] the mobile and the immobile.[30]

How does my practice in *'Galatea,'* as it blurs the divide between what constitutes mobility and what constitutes stillness, speak back to both Lepecki and Serematakis? I propose the term 'stillness-that-is-not-quite-stillness' as an important choreographic strategy allowing my dance in the museum to step out of the linear temporality of representation (akin to Salzman-Mitchell's diachronicity in Ovid) and into a different economy of time and presence. Here, the dance quite literally steps into a synchronic, fragmented temporality. No longer the past preterit of history, we are in the present of performance. Echoing the "still-act," the still dance allows for the production of a different temporality, one that is no longer chronological,

but unstable, jumbled up, contractile, fragmentary. My choreographic stillness-that-is-not-quite-stillness speaks to Lepecki's still act as a strategy for looking back. Again, this is a looking back in both senses of the word; not only a returning of the gaze, but in its relation to temporality and its durational quality of valuing slowness and stillness, a looking back through time at history. Lepecki's conclusion is that the still act might enable dance to escape the prison of its irretrievable present-ness:

> To track the coexistence of multiple temporalities within the temporality of dance, to identify multiple presents in the dancing performance, to expand the notion of the present from its melancholic fate, from its entrapment in the microscopy of the now, to the extension of the present along lines of whatever still acts, to reveal the intimacy of duration, are all theoretical and political moves producing and proposing alternative affects through which dance studies could extract itself from the melancholic entrapment at the vanishing point.[31]

The durational aspect of my practice in the museum means that the 'stillness-that-is-not-quite-stillness' is about an extension (duration) through time, that of a present act reaching backwards and forwards.[32] Together with Lepecki, I am stretching the duration of present-ness both forwards and backwards in time.

In such a way, I would hope that the dance practice of *'Galatea'* in the archaeological museum might be one possible response to Lepecki, and one way in which dance's extraction from the "perpetual vanishing point"[33] might occur. For the past, like the dance, does not entirely disappear; through memory, through recollection, it lives on in our present, evermore alive and evermore fleshy, moving forwards through space and time into the future. In the museum, those dormant women who have been waiting silently and in stillness for centuries suddenly rise up out of their glass cases, they shake off their dust and they begin to dance.

Notes

[1] Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance*, 106.

[2] In 2013-14, I was a participating choreographer on a University of Oxford TORCH research project entitled "Ancient Dance in Modern Dancers," led by Dr. Helen Slaney, Dr. Caroline Potter and Dr. Sophie Bocksberger, and which explored contemporary re-interpretations of the ancient Roman dance form *tragoedia saltata* and I am indebted to this initial research for introducing me to the potential of this ancient dance form.

[3] Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 105.

[4] Crawley, "Likely Terpsichore?," 67.

[5] For example, Kaplan, Richlin, Segal, Kampen, Fredrick, Sharrock, Salzman-Mitchell and Lovatt.

[6] Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." 6-18.

[7] I am aware here of the paradox that such thinking opens up: the practice does the 'interrogating' not only through the performance itself, but also through my written documentation of it here. Does this then mean that, at least in terms of this interrogation, the practice alone does not suffice? Or is the documentation itself to be considered as another facet of the practice, a writing practice that moves alongside and connects with the dancing practice?

[8] Phelan, *Unmarked*, 146.

[9] Kershaw and Nicholson, *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*, 164.

[10] Ellis, "Indelible." simonkellis.wordpress.com/2013/08/18/indelible.

[11] I am here citing Alys Longley's presentation of her research at the Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE), Coventry University, 21 Oct. 2015.

[12] Moreover, within my own practice in the studio, writing has become a significant part of that practice, one that dances alongside the choreographing. As such, this chapter aims to blend a critical discussion with a 'looser' (though no less rigorous) voice of practice, articulating in another register more fragmentary thoughts from choreographic notes and reflections.

[13] I wear a white neutral mask when performing *'Galatea.'* While another of the other solos in the triptych, *Philomel*, plays with the actions of masking and unmasking my face, in *'Galatea'* I keep the mask on throughout.

[14] Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies*, 68-75.

[15] See for example Elsner (1991), Sharrock (1991) and Liveley (1999): research-information.bristol.ac.uk/files/34490613/299360.pdf.

[16] Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies*, 70.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.247-49, Salzman-Mitchell's translation, *A Web of Fantasies*, 70. The Latin 'forma' (cf. 'mutatas formas' in Ovid *Metamorphoses.* 1.1 for the changing forms of the bodies within the work of *Metamorphoses* and changing form of the body of the poem itself) and 'opus' are meta-critical pointers in terms of Pygmalion standing in for Ovid as creative artist and the statue's body as the 'corpus' of an artistic work. See: www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0029%3Abook=10%3Acard=243 for original Latin text.

[19] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.250-53, Salzman-Mitchells' translation, *A Web of Fantasies*, 73.

[20] Salzman-Mitchell, *A Web of Fantasies*, 73-4.

[21] I cannot help but think here of Steve Paxton's "small dance" (Paxton cited in Zimmer, "The Small Dance," 11) and of André Lepecki's reading of Paxton in his argument for stillness as "the vibratile microscopy of dance" (Lepecki, "Still," 334).

[22] Etchells and Phelan, *Certain Fragments*.

[23] Ibid., 17.

[24] Dempster, "Identities in Motion," 109.

[25] Melrose cited in Etchells and Phelan, *Certain Fragments*, 74.

[26] Ibid.

[27] This is a thought that is currently trending in discussions about dance performance in the historical museum. Dance is often seen as a way of animating the museum collection: in particular, I am thinking here of how Arts Council England describes British dance company Made by Katie Green's *The Imagination Museum* (2014-2017) which "brings stories behind historical collections to life through contemporary dance." Arts

Council England website, www.artscouncil.org.uk/case-studies/bringing-museum-collections-life-audiences-east-midlands. Accessed 17 Jan. 2018.

[28] Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance*, 15.

[29] Serematakis, *The Senses Still*, 12, my emphasis.

[30] Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance*, 15.

[31] Ibid.,131.

[32] It is worth noticing that this chimes with the Bergsonian concept of duration (*la durée*) and memory (Bergson, *La Pensée et le Mouvant*). Open access version in French available at classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/bergson_henri/pensee_mouvant/bergson_pensee_mouvant.pdf.

[33] Siegel, *At the Vanishing Point*.

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Biography

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Choreographer and dancer Dinis Machado and choreographer Vicky Malin. Photo: © Ruth Campbell (2017) CC-BY-NC

I'M JUST SIFTING FOR GOLD, FROM THE DAILY PRACTICE OF DOING AND DOING, I'M LEFT WITH SOMETHING[1]

KATE MARSH

Keywords

observation
choreography
collaboration
curation

Abstract

What gets left behind in the process of observing a practice? What room is there to shift words through practice and practice through words? This article considers the mutual impact of researcher and maker/performer on each other's experience. Presented as a curatorial 'note' alongside the final performed work, this text was originally intended as one observer's interpretation of a brief moment in a choreographic process.

In this contribution, I offer my thoughts, comments and reflections on being on the edge of choreographer and dancer Dinis Machado's process in the creation of the BARCO collection.[2] The collection is a project where guest choreographers were invited to make a short solo on Dinis. These solos formed a curated series to be performed together, sometimes 4 or 5 in one evening and sometimes in their entirety. Dinis invited me to respond to moments in his process of making the BARCO collection; he called these moments and the resulting writing "curatorial gazes."

From the start my curiosity has been seduced by the knowledge that the invited makers might never meet. It seems to me like a sort of infidelity; he belongs to them all, he is the glue that somehow bonds them all as a strange/estranged family. In both periods of observation, I wondered the extent to which each of the two choreographers thought about the choreographer before them, or the one before that. Are notions of ownership amplified when a maker knows that their work will be part of a collection? Maybe there is an increased attempt by the choreographers to mark their work as 'their own' in this curatorial process with multiple 'authors.'

Although the notes from the studio observations were inevitably edited to meet the brief of the choreographer to produce a form of artefact, in my watching, listening and absorbing I allowed myself to note my immediate thoughts. I allowed myself to drift, I allowed the mishearing of words, I allowed the hearing of grabbed snippets of conversations. I like what this brings to my viewing; that what I observe is fed by the artists, but also by me, on that day, in that moment.

Through a curatorial and editorial process of re-visiting my initial writing for the purpose of this article, I see a story emerge, the artists become like characters, each score a script. The writing moves between my own words and words spoken by the artists during the observations. I offer them here as my reflection on the relationship between artist and researcher and the experience of being both in and on the edge of a creative process. I want to explore where my own creativity sits in this process and consider how my viewing informs, and is in turn informed by, the practice I am observing.

In my editing, the words become merged into one voice and one text. The purpose of this writing is not to offer a timescale or even show progression

in Dinis' process. I want to re-create the hazy, fluid, questioning of these early days of making work together. In the choices I make about what to leave in and what to take out of the text, I acknowledge that this is my interpretation of what I experienced and that, to me, is the most interesting part of the process with Dinis. What of me gets left in the work, and what of the work remains with me?

The writing presented here is based on two sets of observations: the first with Dinis and dance artist Vicky Malin, the second with Dinis and dance artist-choreographer Lucy Suggate. The observations took place in April and June 2017 at Metal, an arts organisation based in Peterborough.[3]

This writing was presented as written notes handed out to audiences alongside live performances of the BARCO collection. It has been further refined for this collection. It is reproduced with the kind permission of Dinis Machado, Vicky Malin and Lucy Suggate.

What is leftover in the body? Between each dance, is each solo somehow an echo of the others?
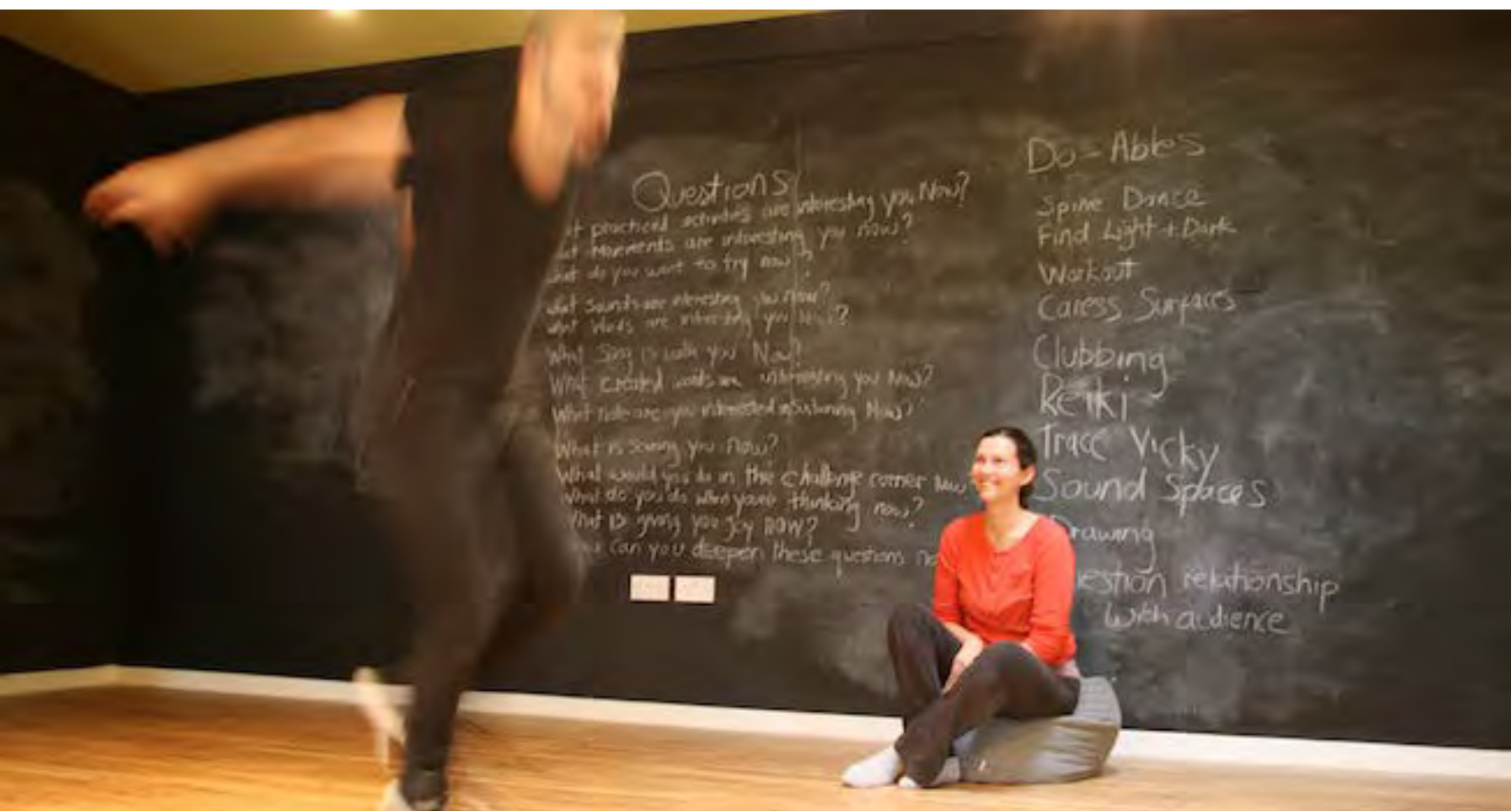
Choreographer and dancer Dinis Machado and choreographer Vicky Malin. Photo: © Ruth Campbell (2017) CC-BY-NC

He is crouched, prayer like, humming. Her hum begins, deeper, she moves on the floor shifting from lying to kneeling, her head is lowered, dog-like in preparation. For what? She starts to punctuate the duet of humming with small snippets of information, allowing the hum to fill the mouth, fill the head, fill the body, play with the different depths and lengths of the sound and feeling. Conducting the mouth space.

She sits watching, he rolls and hums.

I close my eyes and listen. The sound of chalk and (trapped) whale song seem church-like. Church of who?

Her curiosity is clear, she sits looking, her head inclined intently watching. She doesn't know yet what might emerge.

There is sense of negotiating this new relationship (or same relationship on different terms maybe). The switch from maker to 'makee' is tangible, subtle, but still there. A polite verbal dance around each other, each one allowing space and creating space for the other.

Without the music, everything is …

Everything. Everything and nothing.

He is sweating, she laughs and says 'I found that funny'

They talk about his dancing and gesture, she tells him I wanted you to get louder and louder and makes less sense.

Being excited by an idea that there is no judgement – you don't have to do all the do-ables on the list as you move through the dance, is that alright?

He wants to move the tables, she likes them …

In my mind I'm like fucking Beyonce or you know someone else. And then on film it's never the same …

How do you dance when you're dead?

I enter, the music is, sombre, dark yet hopefully heavenly, an organ.

"Give us our daily dance" written on the wall surrounded by notes that blend the common dancerly with the obscure.

Space [ ] Dancer – Space [ ] Dancer – Space [ ] Dancer – Space Dancer?

We'll Listen. So that we have a code?

Silly after lunch, needing to focus

He tells her "you are dwelling, your space is getting bigger"

She replies "My choreography is expanding – taking up space"

I hear feet sweep, swipe, squeak I hear breath, soft, louder through mouth and nose Dancers preparing in a silent conversation, bodies moving, reaching, rolling

"Dancing the fall" – The wall is an elaborate diagram of mathematical drawings I look closer some of it speaks of what I know – of bodies and a language that is so familiar find myself more drawn to the lines and blurred circles that might be anything.

"fall off the cliff"

I don't look up from typing I feel the closeness of a shifting body – I play a game and force myself not to look, only to feel and hear. Footsteps, breath again. Clothes moving.

She watches, an invisible laser between her and him, is she willing him? What is she looking for, what is she looking at?

Glasses on, glasses off

I think I can see a score, folding, unfolding, signalling, reaching, placing, marking out searching?

We sit, women, surrounding him. Watching, I write, she watches … He breathes, heavy, heavier, louder – I think he wants to stop.

Where is my head? Being drawn away by thoughts of dinner and deadlines. Brought back guiltily by breathing and squeaky shoes on the floor and a chinking plate in a next door kitchen. Do they drift as well?

Find a conclusion – interrupts my wandering, find a conclusion …(I'm) here. I am here.

What was going on for you?

That got your body into positioning we don't always see …

Linear peeling – taking a garment off

Where does your thought connect to your body? Translates to the whole, the whole body so that's …?

Where does it start, where will it end?

Piles of bones, peeling, revealing skeleton, taking the skeleton into a pile of bones

Time to see … How do piles behave?

Does that make sense?

She walks through her idea, re-showing somehow, the roles are shifted, he sits she is now dancing for him, showing reflecting his dancing back. Arms, different this time, folding, reaching. Body piling on the floor,

thump, shift,
thump reach,
thump, settle.
Landing Sound

Does that make sense?

If I see it, I'll throw it in …

I type quickly to catch the words, they are disappearing.

Moving from the floor my body creaks, a reminder that I am more than fingers on a laptop, I watch, listen absorb with everything, I cannot blend in, for this short time, I am not separate. Our trio, shifts from two watching, one moving, two watching, one writing two watching one drawing.

Peels, Piles, Bones

A shaft of light catches me eye, drifting again, I listen to chalk on the wall, cars on the road, I indulge in a sleepy half gaze half, listen. I am here, I am here.

You ARE your bones

Smiling at the score, she stands back, pleased?

Does that make sense – to you?

The one dance inevitably inhabits the space

They look, they stand back.

"Brilliant, now I just have to do it!"

No, it makes sense

Start in the peel, 1,2,3

The score is a map, a topography of the work, use the score to navigate through.

Starting with piles you already peeled.

He Laughs.

You gave up my peeling?

I didn't give up on your peeling, do you want to do it as it is then?

Yes, I do want to.

He dances.

Isn't it going to become too metaphorical?

It's all metaphorical.

I'm feeling the pressure of time.

Quietly, he stands movement from the belly, judders and shudders, a twitch. She says 'the paper stays there you peel away, the body is imprinting on space, the body peels away from what exists.' He shifts, when I glance at him he almost stops.

I am aware of the soundtrack I am making of fingers on keys, tapping, noting, making the thing solid somehow, I am here. The light shaft hits glasses and chain and earring, natures limelight.

This is where I am getting confused I don't know what you mean …

I sit, I shift, uncomfortable, you dance at my feet I look down, you are folded, peeling, reaching, making me come back in.

What does the viewer or the viewing make us do? We cannot be separate in this I AM here, you ARE here.

A random passer-by, lost, looking for some place, some shop. The doors squeal, voices, not in an audience whisper, but loudly speaking. Nosey, I listen, I am here, you are here, they are here. You carry on, peeling, piling, bringing us back.

The conventions are up for grabs you're not beholden to gravity up or down mean nothing, the ideas and material are giving you ways to start a fresh or pick up from where you were, the interruptions prevent you from falling, falling into over familiar patterns.

Confused if we are passing through things or … I feel like I'm getting locked.

The rules of the bone dance are expansive, chaotic and transforming, we should never see the same thing twice. Focus out and in at the same.

I wander how they are managing this conversation verbal/non-verbal. Talking/listening. Watching/Dancing. They support, they are polite, they are friends. How can we really share an idea, what happens in the telling and the interpretation, how can we say what we are not seeing. There is something I note about ownership, so delicate in this earliest of stages, it is hers and it is his, they are telling and dancing the same but different story. "I felt I was looking for something, but we are on different pages."

Articulating your body around an idea, the space is either moving around you, or you are moving around the space.

It's not easy …

You go into your thought space and I can't read you, if you stay in the room, I can see you more clearly.

In the attempt of the impossible it becomes something else.

Is it a diving board that you launch off or is it that you're in a boat wearing a lifejacket and we throw you off?

Reflection

I have not yet been present at a performance of the work where my text was given to the audience. This has led me to further consider my relationship to both my words and the performed work. How would the viewer/reader interpret my text? I became aware of the differing contexts of studio observation and public performance. Maybe my text would seem simplistic and disconnected outside of the containment of the small studio and without me there 'owning' them and speaking for them.

Agency seems prominent in this process. I responded to a brief set by a choreographer that included an expectation that I would invest personally in the observation, that I would not simply record what I see and hear, Dinis invited me to include something of myself in the writing, which was inevitably informed by my experiences inside and outside of the process of observing the solos. In the text, I am expressing how I feel, and this process of embodied observation gives me a greater sense of ownership of the work. The words are personal to me, they seem fragile without me speaking for them or about them.

What I did not expect from this process is that the sense of ownership I felt extended to Dinis' performed work. My memory of the observations, how I felt, the heat of the room, the proximity of the artists to me, has meant that I genuinely feel that something of my presence lingers in the live work.

This offers an interesting perspective on how the relationship between maker and observer is understood. Something in the attempt at shared autonomy in the process of observing Dinis' practice resists traditional ideas of 'professional' or ethical distance. In this process Dinis and I give permission to interrupt each other, he asks what I'm writing at a given moment and I tell him, I ask him how something feels in another moment and he tells me.

Of course, in the end, the work is his, all of it, the solos and my writing. After all, we are all contracted by him. It is Dinis that decides the order he performs the solos in and the way the text is presented. However, there is something that has emerged through this process, that the perceived line between researcher and artist is a blurred one. For me this is a positive blurring, where I might move between writer and artist without a conscious stepping out of one role into the other.

Notes

[1] Quote from choreographer Lucy Suggate during choreographic process with Dinis Machado (Mar. 2017).

[2] BARCO Dance collection is a project curated and performed by Dinis Machado. It is a collection of dance works created by invited choreographers and performed by Machado. See: www.idea1.org.uk/event/barco-workshop-vicky-malin.

[3] Metal is a UK based interdisciplinary arts organisation offering artist support across three sites in Liverpool, Peterborough and Southend. See: www.metalculture.com/about-us.

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BARCO Workshop: Vicky Malin. 2018. Accessed 28 Feb. 2018. www.idea1.org.uk/event/barco-workshop-vicky-malin/vicky-malin.

www.metalculture.com, 2018. Accessed 12 Mar. 2018. www.metalculture.com/about-us.

Biography

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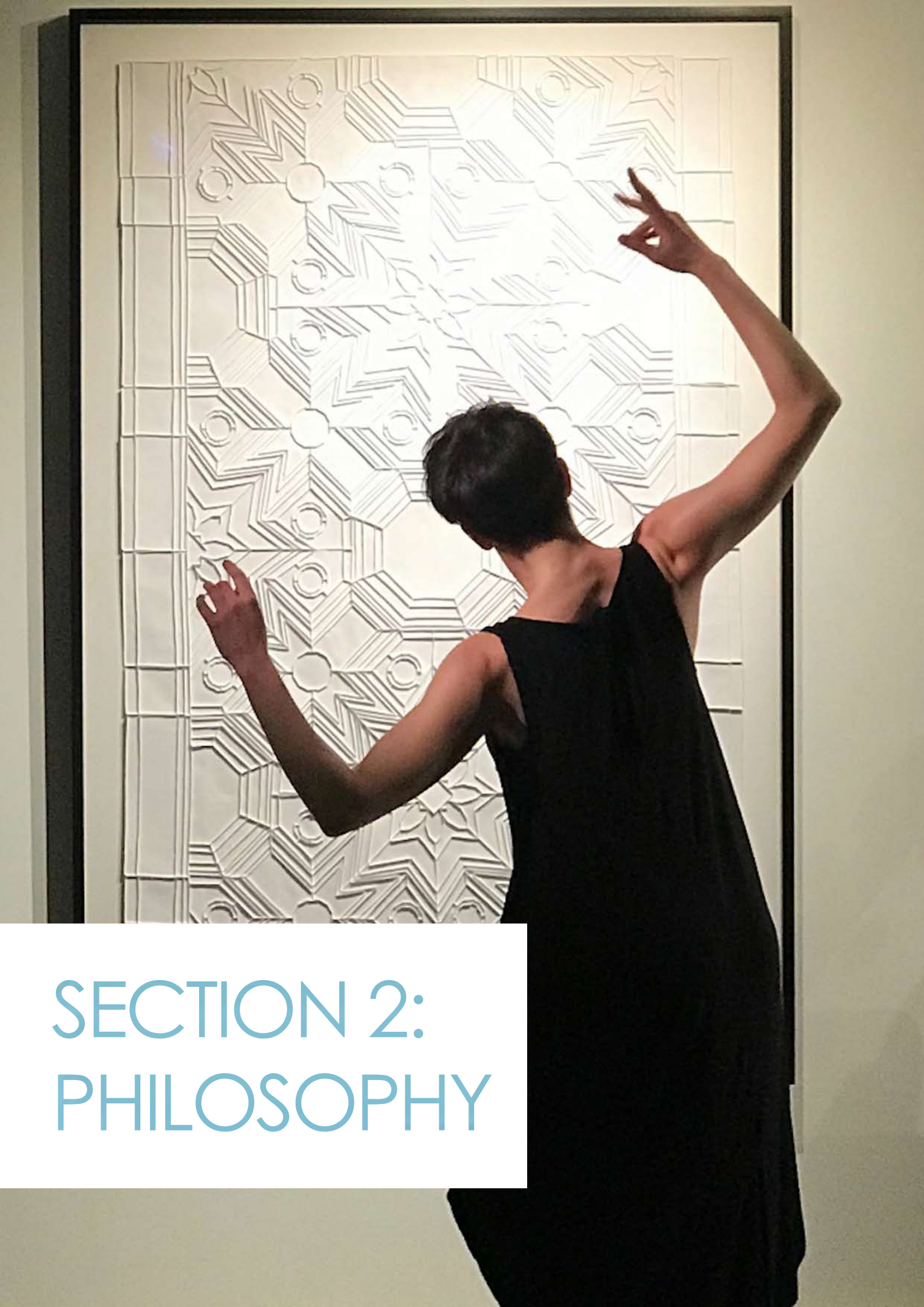
SECTION 2: PHILOSOPHY

On The Habit of Being Oneself by Joe Moran. Dancers: Rosalie Wahlfrid, Erik Nevin, Alexander Standard. Photo: © Zbigniew Kotkiewicz (2017) CC-BY-NC

DANCE'S POLITICAL IMAGINARIES

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Abstract

This chapter examines claims made by choreographers and scholars about a particular type of political value. In relation to ideas arising in philosophical aesthetics about the distinction between inherent and instrumental value, and different forms of cognitivist value, I examine how claims made through the textual framing of performance about dance's ability to challenge neoliberal capitalism create a paradox in which dance's non-instrumental character is instrumentalised as politically useful. In response to this paradox, I go on to suggest that claims about dance's political nature function as a form of 'myth' which gives rise to an 'imaginary' in which dance can oppose the structural forces within which it is produced, shared and consumed.

Dance is valued in a wide variety of ways. A dancer might value a work for the period of employment it provides, the skills they learn in the making or the people they meet. A viewer might find a piece provocative and thought-provoking, valuing the comment it makes on society or appreciate it solely for the way it looks or makes them feel. A particular work might have comedic, political, formal, moral, economic, sentimental or tragic value. It might be of value in different ways for a choreographer, dancer, audience member, venue programmer, theatre director, critic or scholar. In this chapter I focus on some of the ways artists and scholars articulate the political value of contemporary dance.

To probe this area, I discuss an essay written by British choreographer Joe Moran and included in the programme for his work *On the Habit of Being Oneself*, and performance theorist André Lepecki's reading of Mette Ingvartsen's framing of a performance of her work *7 Pleasures*. I suggest these examples are indicative of a recent move in some areas of contemporary dance practice and scholarship in which choreographers and scholars draw attention to a particular type of political value related to dance's characteristics rather than the content or concept of a work.

Whilst the relationship between dance and politics is by no means new,[1] I suggest that there are particular features of these examples that make them worthy of discussion. First, in both cases the political value of the work is articulated in its *framing;* by this I mean that features of the work other than the movement, such as the text within the programme, are what propose its political nature. Focussing on framing draws attention to questions at the heart of the philosophy of art and dance about the way that we experience and appreciate a work in performance and how we think about its value. For example, debates dating back to Plato's *The Laws*[2] have explored questions about whether art's function is purely aesthetic or whether it might have primarily cognitive or moral functions, broadly categorised as the difference between 'inherent' and 'instrumental' value. I suggest that framing a work in political terms appears to point to a cognitive paradigm by implying that the work provokes thought about a particular issue. However, I argue that a particular form of cognitivism is invoked by instances in which the work's political value arises through an interplay between the text and movement.

Second, this chapter examines the way in which the claims made about dance's political value are done so in relation to the form's relationship to the conditions and characteristics of 'neoliberalism.' The meaning of this term differs depending upon the context within which it is used. As an economic-political paradigm, neoliberalism refers to a form of governance which favours free-markets and therefore places very little restriction on trade. One of the results of recent neoliberal economics was the global financial crisis in 2008. In the UK, this was followed by a period of austerity, resulting in a reduction in arts funding, limiting opportunities for contemporary dance artists and companies. One response to these cuts was to promote the commercial potential of the arts, which became subsumed into the rubric of the 'creative industries.' The message that artists should "commericalise to survive"[3] was met with resistance from many working in contemporary dance.[4] The idea that dance should be 'commercialised' or an 'industry' seems to rub up against many areas of practice. For example, in his ethnographic study of the Brussels dance community, sociologist Rudi Laermans describes a "general disavowal of monetary matters informing the functioning of artistic fields"[5] and suggests that "a general semantic scheme opposing 'the economic' to 'the artistic,' according to the value-logic of 'unworthy' and 'worthy,' guides the self-observations within contemporary dance."[6]

Echoing the distinction between the artistic and the economic, other recent writing has pointed to dance and performance's 'uselessness.'[7] Martin Hargreaves suggests that performance is

> both very useful and also useless. Performance is useful because it often brackets itself off from real behaviour and then questions this bracketing. It is useless (in a positive sense) because it is difficult to instrumentalise in order to produce a singular known affect or impact.[89]

Where these two areas merge is that articulations about the non-economic value of dance seem to point to a paradigm that sees dance's value as primarily inherent (in the nature of the form) rather than instrumental (serving a purpose outside of itself). However, pointing to dance as a form of opposition to political structures through its uselessness, re-instrumentalises the form, by implying it is politically useful. This

suggestion, that dance's non-instrumental character is instrumentalised by its framing as political creates a paradox. To ease this knot, I draw on the notion of the imaginary – discussed in the social sciences[10] – to suggest that framing dance's inherent, aesthetic, ontological features as political is a form of myth, which gives rise to a social or collective imaginary in which these works can oppose the structural forces within which they are produced, shared and consumed. In using the term 'myth' I am not necessarily disagreeing with those who make these claims, I think dance does have the potential to lead to tangible, 'real' social change. I am also not suggesting that people who frame dance in these terms are under dealing in fantasy or untruths. Rather I use 'myth,' following sociologist Gérard Bouchard,[11] as a mechanism through which to understand how ideas function as structuring forces within particular communities or social groups.

Value

Some views in analytic philosophy, dating back to Immanuel Kant[12] consider the value of art as concerned purely with the aesthetic experience it affords, arguing that we should therefore judge or appreciate a work solely on its appearance. However, this perspective has been disputed by many aestheticians who argue that the value of art works can lie in artistic, rather than aesthetic features. Artistic features might include such a work's historical significance, commentary on the world, or place within an artist's oeuvre.[13]

A further distinction is made between instrumental and inherent value. Instrumental value implies an art work serves a particular function. Intrinsic value, on the other hand is that which is valuable about the appearance and experience of the work, rather than any external function. In other words, "to appreciate the imaginative experience it properly affords, which may be beautiful, moving, uplifting, pleasurable, insightful or profound."[14]

Thinking about the value of dance in instrumental terms, such as serving an economic function, has been critiqued by artists and theorists.[15] On the other hand, suggesting that dance's value is inherent implies that whilst it might teach us about the world, raise ethical issues, or critique the status quo, its usefulness for doing so is secondary to its aesthetic. This latter

perspective perhaps rubs up against some of the concerns of some contemporary dance artists which are tied up with politics, ethics, strategies of critique and narratives of resistance. If we are to think of dance's value as primarily aesthetic, its potential to provoke thought or affect change takes a backseat, becoming merely a potential by-product of the aesthetic forms is produces.

The either/or nature of these debates might seem jarring and many have pointed out the difficulties with these binaries.[16] Philosopher Robert Stecker, for instance, challenges these positions by suggesting that to value something because of the experience it affords is to value it as a means to an end and therefore instrumentally, meaning that art cannot have purely inherent value.[17] In response, aesthetician Matthew Kieran distinguishes between two forms of instrumental value. The first values something *purely* instrumentally and therefore sees it solely as a means to an end. In such cases, the nature of the thing plays no role in its value to meet these ends. A dancer who values a work purely for the period of employment it provides, would be one such case. However, Kieran points out there are things or experiences that we value instrumentally in part because of their nature, including experiencing art as viewers. Thus, he suggests that, "The inherent value of art is a distinctive form of instrumental value"[18] implying that the value of art is that it meets a particular end through its inherent nature.

This leads us to ask, what is the end met by art? Or, in other terms, what is its instrumental value? One line of thinking is that art's value lies in its ability to reflect the world and therefore teach us things about it and ourselves. The term 'cognitivism' is frequently adopted in philosophical aesthetics to describe this position. Cognitivism is construed in different ways by different aestheticians. One strand of thought, proposed by Kendall Walton in relation to representational artworks is to consider their value as concerned with promoting particular versions of states of affairs.[19] In relation to dance, this view might explain how works with overt narratives and mimetic forms of representation, such as Kurt Jooss's *The Green Table*, tell us things about the world through the way they represent particular scenarios and characters.

Another way of thinking about cognitivism is to suggest that the value of art lies in its ability to confront or challenge pre-existing ways of thinking about the world, implying that viewing an art work might lead us to rethink our beliefs. However, as Kieran points out:

> Art works often do not so much deepen our understanding, but serve to revivify impressions or understandings we already have, by foregrounding in particularly vivid and striking ways aspects of ourselves, others or the world.[20]

Kieran's position is that revisions to our ways of thinking about the world are unlikely to be achieved through experiencing art. Rather, he suggests that art works might rejuvenate existing ways of seeing the world.[21] Whilst we might not develop entirely new understandings from art works, however, deepening understandings we have already still points to a form of cognitivism.

A counterargument to cognitivism is that if the value of art is to teach us about the world, the same means could be met through any other medium. Thus, implying that the only thing that distinguishes philosophy, for example, from art is the form through which each form undertakes the endeavour of teaching.[22] Therefore, cognitivism does not help us to understand what is distinctively valuable about art because it points to values that can be achieved through other means. As a potential way of resolving this issue, Kieran cites Martha Nussbaum's view that there might be a distinctive kind of knowledge that can only be conveyed imaginatively[23] therefore suggesting that art might have a unique form of cognitive value that distinguishes it from other forms of communication.

Another counterargument is to do with the notions of 'truth.' Theorists and practitioners who are concerned with "how and what we know *in* and *through* movement"[24] are likely to object to conventional cognitivist theories which tend to conflate cognition with propositional knowledge and the quest for singular 'truth.'[25] Kieran offers a response to this issue, by referring to Bernard Harrisons's view that truth is not relevant to a cognitivist framework. Kieran suggests that, "What matters is whether the understanding prescribed by the work is interesting, complex and expands our imaginative horizons,"[26] offering a description that resonates more comfortably with current conversations in dance.

Cognitive framing arises in multiple areas of current dance practice, in particular those practices underscored by critical engagement with the modes and methods of making. For example, Belgium-based artist Eleanor Bauer's organisation Good Move is described as having "an interest in projects based in the critical concerns of artists challenging their relationship to artistic process in the mediums of dance and performance"[27] highlighting the critical potential of choreography. Choreographic enquiry is often underpinned by philosophical concepts, as seen in American artist Jeanine Durning's description of her work as "grounded in choreography as ontological enquiry – exploring questions of who we are, the nature of perception and relation, and the slippery terrain of invented narratives of self and other."[28]

Furthermore, there are numerous cases that explicitly frame dance spectatorship and making as cognitively valuable. William Forsythe's projects such as *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced*[29] for example, are framed as an examination of "choreographic thinking"[30] and a research collaboration between Wayne McGregor, Scott deLahunta and Phil Barnard was focused on 'choreographic thinking tools.'[31] These projects frame choreography as a form of thinking and draw a link between dance-making and cognitive activities, but often result in objects that aim to draw users into generative engagement with choreographic principles, rather than dictate a single 'correct' method.

The cognitive framing of dance can be said to arise from multiple characteristics of the current socio-cultural climate in the UK. Many dance artists are educated within degree-awarding institutions and often to post-graduate level, implying engagement with theoretical texts and concepts, informing the way the work is written about. Furthermore, the increase of practice-as-research PhDs and dance degrees within universities, means that artists often straddle academic and artistic contexts.

Furthermore, recent scholarly initiatives such as the Performance Philosophy network[32] have sought to draw attention to the ways in which dance and performance can be philosophy in and of itself. The aligning of performance with a traditionally text-based and cognitive discipline frames the value of performance as driven by concepts and ideas, thus pointing to a cognitive paradigm. This alignment of performance with ideas is also

prevalent in some areas of choreographic practice. The development of so-called 'conceptual dance,'[33] exemplified in the work of artists such as Xavier Le Roy and Jérôme Bel has shifted attention from thinking of dance as the compositional arrangements of bodies to a way of posing questions and examining concepts. Artists working in this register often engage with critical reflection on the form's modes of production[34] questioning, for example, spectator-performer relations and the role of the moving body, thus positioning ideas and concepts at the heart of the work.

Articulating political value

Moran's essay refers to moments in which the work of American dance artists Yvonne Rainer and Deborah Hay became entwined with current affairs, specifically, the Vietnam War and invasion of Iraq, respectively. He describes how both artists, in different ways, pointed to the dancing body as a form of resistance or antidote to their disbelief and horror with military intervention.[35] Moran includes Hay's proposition that, "Dance is my form of political activism. It is not how I dance or why I dance. It is that I dance."[36]

Following Rainer and Hay, Moran's argument is that the act of dancing is political through its potential to eschew fixity. He describes how he works with the dancers,

> I relish this complicating and problematising effect of dancing where the dancer occupies a state of an expanded perceptual, sensory and embodied awareness. A liminal and comprehensive state where one can witness a power of being in tension with and immersed in, as well as other than, our material constraints; witnessing both where one is and where one is not – an interplay of experiencing what one can and what one cannot. The dancer in my view transmutes time and space; radically reconfiguring who, what and how we may be and making readily imminent.[37]

Moran goes onto acknowledge that the state described above, achieved through dancing is not permanent and that the dancer will inevitably 'reconstitute.' However, it is in this tension that Moran situates the political potential of dance:

> Yet perhaps it is precisely in this tension that dance can speak to many political concerns – the tension between my lived

experience that I am always already choreographed by history, culture and politics, and that in dancing the fixity of representation may also be dislodged and made mobile.[38]

Moran's thesis here is that dancing can 'dislodge' the fixity of representation and therefore disrupt political features of identity and our lived experience. He suggests the act of dancing is a political act due to the tension it can create between different states of being; but how does this political potency translate to the non-dancing audience?

On Thursday 28 and Friday 29 September 2017, Moran presented *On the Habit of Being Oneself* as part of an evening of work in the Lilian Baylis Studio at Sadler's Wells in London. It is a group piece performed by Katye Coe, Samuel Kennedy, Erik Nevin, Christopher Owen, Alexander Standard, Pepa Ubera, and Rosalie Wahlfrid-Shaw. These dancers appear to be in some form of relation to one another, but there are no direct interactions or contact. Each is absorbed in their own task. The structural rules are hard to identify. They appear to be responding to a score or stimuli which invigorates their movement, but the rules are not visible. There is no didactic narrative or message in the work and the movements are abstract. There is no explicit meaning or narrative.

Viewed alone it would be possible to value this purely aesthetically. However, Moran's decision to include his essay in the programme, invites the reader to consider the experiences of the dancers, and engage in the interplay between the ideas presented in the text and the aesthetic spectatorial experience of the movement. The relationship between Moran's words and the abstract movement on stage is indirect, but not contradictory. His description of 'multiple states' and 'different temporalities' chimes with the multiplicity of the dancers' movement. There is a complicated interplay between the notions expressed in the text and the aesthetic forms appearing on stage.

In a related example, Lepecki[39] recounts his experience of attending Danish choreographer Mette Ingvartsen's work *7 Pleasures* in Paris in November 2015, five days after the city had experienced a series of terror attacks. The performance was accompanied by a text in which Ingvartsen and the rest of the team articulate their reasoning for deciding to continue

with the performance. The text, printed in full in Lepecki's book, includes the following statement:

> As a group of dancers we have been discussing whether or not to perform in these extreme circumstances of crisis, after the events that happened on Friday in this city and that are still ongoing. The main reason for continuing to play, besides insisting on not being paralyzed by what has happened, is to allow the theatre to take up its social function of being a place to gather. Dance and performance are live art disciplines. And as dancers and performers we find a difficulty in separating our performance inside the theatre from what is going on in the outside world. We would like to acknowledge that particular situation.[40]

Although coming from a different position to Moran, this text echoes some of the thinking present in his essay, in particular that characteristics of dance and performance have a connection with politics. *7 Pleasures* is not a work *about* politics in terms of its content,[41] but its framing through this text situates it firmly within a particular political moment and implies that continuing the performance has value within the context it finds itself in. In his analysis of this text, Lepecki acknowledges the history of dance addressing and critiquing socio-cultural conditions, referring to Martha Graham's *Lamentation* and Yvonne Rainer's work in the 1960s and 70s. However, he suggests that with Ingvartsen's text:

> What is emphasised is not content, but how dancers and audiences all produce and are produced by, a shared bio-and necropolitical "nervous system" (Taussig 1993: 1-8) that assaults the putative autonomy of choreographic representation at the moment of its performance and informs the very physical and affective conditions of contemporary spectatorship and performing.[42]

This acknowledgment of dance's positioning within a 'nervous system' points perhaps to the motivations of Moran and Ingvartsen to articulate the relationship, as they see it, between their choreographic work and the world it inhabits. The two texts move in slightly different directions, with Moran articulating how the moving body might be seen as political, and Ingvartsen focussing on performance providing a space in which people

can come together. Nevertheless, they share an emphasis on the characteristics of dance as possessing political value.

Dance scholars Rebekah Kowal, Gerald Siegmund and Randy Martin articulate two ways of thinking about the relationship between dance and politics, distinguishing between 'political dance' and 'the politics of dance.'[43] 'Political dance' deals with political content and strives "for an alignment for a political cause and its mobilization for change. [Political] dance speaks about and articulates political grievances raising the public's conscience for its cause."[44] On the other hand, 'the politics of dance' operates self-reflectively to question its "own modes of production, its relation to the institutions in which it takes place, and the power relations among the different players (dancers, choreographers, audiences) in the game."[45]

Although closer to the second articulation than the first, the texts from Moran and Ingvartsen propose a different form of political value in that they don't directly question the structures and institutions of performance. Rather, they share the suggestion that the act of dancing is itself political and that therefore political value might arise from dancing that does not deal with political content, or question its modes of production. The implication is that dance can be political in and of itself. Significantly, the characteristics that Moran and Ingvartsen articulate as political; namely, the state produced through movement and the act of gathering, are not explicitly political. Audiences might read the features of these works differently to Moran and Ingvartsen but the framing of the work through written text encourages a particular experience.

Framing and cognitivism

Making claims about dance's political potency implies that encountering dance in these works, or any other will lead us to understand the world differently, points to a cognitivist paradigm. How differently the audience will see the world as a result of the experience of the work is an open and arguably immeasurable question. The prevalence of discourses about dance and politics mean that the ideas being presented are unlikely to be entirely new to the audience. This takes us back to Kieran's suggestion

that artworks do not invoke major revisions in our ways of thinking about the world, meaning that a particular form of cognitivism is at play.

Conventional cognitive theories of art's value suggest that we gain *propositional* knowledge from art works.[46] The term 'propositional knowledge' is used to describe a view often encountered in analytic philosophy, which sees knowledge as 'justified true belief,' bound up with notions of a singular, discoverable truth. Moran and Ingvartsen's works invite a different form of cognitivism. Their texts are not rooted in discourses of truth and reality, and they do not suggest that dancing will show us particular political scenarios. Rather they invite the viewer to see the abstract movement as entwined with politics.

John Gibson outlines alternative approaches to articulating the cognitive value of art. His 'critical cognitive' and 'neo cognitive' approaches are worth consideration here. A critical cognitivist approach draws attention to the materials surrounding a work, suggesting that we might not find particular knowledge propositions within artworks themselves but in the writing around them. Gibson suggests that, "What we see in critical discourse is a rationally, often argumentatively, structured manner of scrutinizing artworks."[47] While Moran and Ingvartsen's writing is perhaps more poetic than the kind of arguments Gibson is envisioning, there is certainly a sense in which their words scrutinize the nature of dance, and draw attention to particular political values.

A counter-argument to critical cognitivism might claim that the view doesn't really address the value of the work itself because it shifts attention to the materials surrounding it. Indeed, it might seem that I am placing too much emphasis on programme notes in the construction of value, but it remains important to recognise that the paratexts, (or materials that surround a work) are part of the audience's experience. Here, I align myself with Gerard Genette and Marie Maclean when they propose in relation to paratexts, that

> One does not always know if one should consider that they belong to the text or not, but in any case they surround it and prolong it, precisely in order to present it, in the usual sense of the verb, but also in its strongest meaning: to make it present, to assure its presence in the world, its 'reception' and its consumption.[48]

Whilst I don't suggest that dance needs text in order to be present, I consider any immediate paratextual framing of performance as part of the work.[49] There are of course works without programme notes, and in cases where there are notes, not everyone will read them. However, Genette makes the point that those who ignore them have fundamentally different experiences to those who don't[50] and we might argue that they have not fully encountered the work.

Another issue with a critical cognitivist approach is that it still equates cognitive value with the acquisition of propositional knowledge, which implies a more didactic relationship between the paratext and the movement than we encounter in these examples. Gibson articulates a 'neo-cognitive' approach, acknowledging that there are many forms of knowledge and "many ways of coming to grasp the world that do not rely on my having come into possession of a new worldly truth."[51] There are multiple ways that a neo-cognitive approach might be fleshed out. One option, echoed in Kieran's articulations above, is to suggest that art is of value because it transforms knowledge we already have, rather than offering new knowledge.[52] Another approach is to argue that art offers 'understanding,' and therefore "would not offer the consumer of art discrete bits of knowledge but a valuable expansion of her cognitive capacities."[53] This second option feels a little closer to the kind of experience these examples offer. When Moran and Ingvartsen frame the performances in this way, viewers are explicitly invited to think about the nature of movement and performance, and their political potential, rather than taught a particular idea.

Instrumentalism and impasse

As I've already stated, recent discourses in dance have drawn attention to the value of dance as a critical and knowledge producing activity, thus implying the form is capable of producing entities that circulate within the 'knowledge economy.'[54] Others have argued against the instrumentalisation of dance and to consider its value as primarily non-economic.[55] This second argument is the result of socio-political developments over the past 30 years. For example, Geoffrey Crossick and Patrycja Kaszynska[56] describe how UK politics in the 1980s led to art being

valued for outcomes other than the work itself. They suggest, "A new approach to public sector management from the 1980s meant that arts outputs came to be appreciated for their non-art outcomes, and this drove the discourses of cultural value."[57] As a response, some dance artists started to consider the potential of the form to resist these instrumental paradigms, which saw the value of art as related to outcomes in areas such as wellbeing, industry, and commerce. For instance, choreographer Hamish MacPherson's discusses the rubric of the 'creative industries.' He suggests that this, and related terms, have become dominant ways to talk about the arts, "Or maybe more accurately the arts have just been rolled into a bigger story about economic returns."[58] He suggests that Arts Council England, who are largely responsible for funding contemporary dance are having to 'play the game' by stressing the economic value of art, which MacPherson suggests undermines "all the non-economical things that art can offer us as humans."[59]

Referring to a speech by educationalist Ken Robinson about the value of dance, MacPherson suggests that,

> Robinson's point isn't that we shouldn't be put off by how hard it is to get a job in the arts, but that you don't need a job in the arts for the arts to be valuable. In fact the 'ineffectiveness' of an arts education (in terms of its ability to get you a well paid job) is kind of its power – it is not playing by the rules of mainstream education that have been in play since the 19th Century, namely to serve industry.[60]

MacPherson's position is that dance's value not only resides in non-economic forms, but is entwined with its ability to not play by the 'rules.' This way of thinking about the value of dance is echoed in a collection of recent books in dance studies, including Lepecki's *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance,* Kunst's *Artist at Work,* Laermans' *Moving Together* and Burt's *Ungoverning Dance*, each of which offer perspectives on the ways in which dance might oppose neoliberal capitalist markets, implying the form's value is entwined with its ability to challenge the 'rules' of capitalism.

For example, Burt discusses experimental dance practices and argues that works have the potential to 'ungovern' themselves from the institutions that

manage dance by disrupting the conventions of the form. He suggests that these practices "offer performative critiques of the economic and political system of neoliberal capitalism whose rules the market for dance must obey."[61] He further suggests that contemporary dance practices and resources are freely shared between artists, creating a 'commons,' as opposed to a market. He argues that sharing rather than selling resources challenges the neoliberal emphasis on markets and that therefore, the contemporary dance commons poses a challenge to neoliberal structures.

Lepecki describes neoliberalism as "a new kind of rationality, a new mode of reasoning, not necessarily the most amenable to those who happen to believe in thinking (thinking as art, thinking as thought, thinking as living), to those who trust the necessary opaqueness and complexity of life, those who believe in the vital importance of not having profit and self-profit as the only goal for life and its arts."[62] His argument is that dance can oppose this rationality due to the way it produces 'singularities'[63] which disrupt normative modes of perception and experience and can in turn draw attention to and challenge the conditions of neoliberalism. Lepecki suggests that through its singularity, dance and performance can,

> generate charged and vital problematic fields on which pressing and urgent political, corporeal, affective, and social problems are made visible and gather – not to find a solution, but to further the movement of problematization.[64]

For Lepecki, dance's political value lies not necessarily in its content, but in the spaces and experiences it cultivates. As is evident in Moran's essay and Lepecki's text, claims for dance's political power are often made in direct reference to the form's inherent, aesthetic value, which is tied up with the opaque forms of meaning and the 'uselessness' articulated by Hargreaves.

There is an interesting paradox lurking in these dialogues. The articulations draw attention to features of dance and performance —which it is argued are unique to these forms — and claim that these characteristics opposes dominant political ideologies. The discourses presented from MacPherson, Burt and Lepecki appear to argue for dance's inherent value and resist the instrumentalisation of the form through market-driven paradigms. They also propose a form of instrumentalisation by suggesting dance can serve a

political function. The implication of the argument that dance opposes neoliberalism suggests it has a useful political function. It seems, therefore that MacPherson, Burt, Lepecki and others might be opposed to the instrumentalisation of dance for economic means and the use of the form to further political agendas that oppose their own value systems, rather than challenging the usefulness of dance per se.

Myths and Imaginaries

I propose that the tension created through the claim that dance's inherent value might instrumentally oppose political structures can be eased if we are to think of these propositions as a form of myth, rather than claims for instrumental value. When I use the term 'myth' I am not suggesting that the people articulating these narratives are dealing in illusions or untruths, rather, a particular type of claim is being made. In his book, *Social Myths and Collective Imaginaries* Bouchard clarifies how the term is used in sociology, not to indicate fable or legend. Rather, he explains:

> From a sociological perspective myth is a type of collective representation […] a vehicle of what I would call a message – that is of values, beliefs, aspirations, goals, ideals, predispositions, or attitudes.[65]

This articulation seems to resonate with the assertions in Moran and Ingvartsen's programme notes and the texts above. These assertions articulate a set of beliefs and aspirations for the way dance should be thought about and valued. For example, Moran and Ingvartsen are not claiming that viewing their work will necessarily alter how you feel about the world around you or lead to direct social change, rather they offer a proposition; an assertion of value and a way to think about what the work might offer.

Bouchard makes the point that the common association with deception and illusion oversimplifies the concept of the myth which goes 'far beyond' these notions. He suggests that myths are a powerful and under-examined mechanism in postmodern societies.[66] He focuses in particular on 'social myths,' which he distinguishes from religious, philosophical, allegorical and scientific myths.[67] Whilst he suggests all forms of myth have social dimensions, strictly social myths develop in the social arena, "echoing its

challenges, conflicts and contradictions" and are the product of social actors.[68]

A particular space is created by the exchange of statements or myths regarding beliefs and aspirations in dance practice and scholarship. This space overlaps with Bouchard's concept of the 'collective imaginary.' He introduces this concept as follows:

> In any society or collectivity, many ideas and propositions are constantly being put forward regarding how it should be defined and governed, the values and ideals it should pursue, the role or vocation it should set for itself, the representations of the past with which it should sustain itself, the heroes it should celebrate, and so on and so forth.[69]

Collective imaginaries therefore describe how myths generate structures and processes which become accepted as social norms. Bouchard suggests that the concept of 'collective imaginary' "refers to all of the symbols that a society produces and through which its members give meaning to their lives."[70] More specifically, he explains that the collective imaginary includes that which belongs "more to the psyche than reason per se."[71] However, his conception of the term does not restrict it to the 'non-rational.'[72]

This is where Bouchard's concept departs from the widely-used notion of the social imaginary. He suggests that social imaginary discourses do not take into account psyche or cognitive substrates.[73] Furthermore, he suggests that Castorious and Taylor, theorists of the social imaginary, use the concept in relation to widely held reforms or resolutions. Bouchard argues that "the social imaginary excludes ideas, theories, doctrines, and versions of the world derived from high culture, unless they are disseminated to the entire population"[74] but that imaginaries can in fact function of various levels, "from the village to the nation."[75]

Bouchard's concept therefore describes the circulation of values on a small scale, as well as entire populations. Furthermore, the collective imaginary does not place emphasis on revolution or reform, but can describe how values are constructed and circulate within particular communities. As discourses circulate in contemporary dance practice and scholarship,

particular ideas are reproduced, adopted and adapted. The idea that dance can oppose politics in the very act of dancing has been developed through the assemblage of multiple overlapping assertions and experiences.

Departing from Bouchard's work, I suggest there are two intersecting forms of imaginary at play in the experiences and texts analysed above. First, the 'collective political imaginary,' refers to the way that ideas about dance's political value arise and are reproduced within particular communities and groups, giving the claim a sense of legitimacy. As with any assertion of value, the reproduction and reworking of the idea in different contexts over time secures its meaning, and it becomes accepted as a norm.[76] It is not that I disagree with the idea that dancing is political, rather I am interested in how it functions when it is used to frame spectatorial experiences. I suggest that framing which proposes ideas not visible in the movement alone gives rise to a second form of imaginary, a 'framed performance imaginary,' in which the text that surrounds a performance of abstract movement invokes a particular form of cognitive experience. In this case, this experience invokes a temporary suspension of space between the stage and the world outside the theatre and invites the viewer to imagine the experiences of the dancers and their political implications.

The 'framed performance imaginary' overlaps more closely with the role of the imagination in art spectatorship, than the 'collective political imaginary' does. The place of imagination in the viewing of art has been widely discussed in philosophy. For example, Ann Sheppard draws on Ancient Greek concepts of artistic imagination, which were related to 'vividness' of depiction.[77] However, she also suggests,

> Sometimes in aesthetic experience we are stimulated to go beyond what is seen or heard, to reach out towards an understanding that cannot be readily expressed in words. This too has been regarded as the use of the imagination.[78]

One way in which imagination functions in art, according to Sheppard, is by imagining the experiences of the subjects we are observing. This idea resonates with the framing of Moran's work, which refers to the somatic state of the dancers and Ingvartsen's articulation of the performers' decision to continue with the show. Both these texts invite the audience to imagine the experiences of the performers. This imagining is one part of

the 'framed performance imaginary,' which also involves critical and neo-cognitive processes, through which the audience make sense of the relationship between the text and the movement. The interaction between imagination, critical and neo-cognitive dimensions give rise to an experience in which audiences might experience the political potential of dance, in line with the invitation from the artists.

Acknowledgments

Notes

[1] See Franko, *Dancing Modernism/Performing Politics*; Kolb. Ed. *Dance and Politics;* Kowal et al. *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Politics*; Martin, *Critical Moves* and *Performance as Political* Act; Mills, *Dance and Politics*, amongst others.

[2] Kolb, *Dance and Politics*, 4.

[3] Waelde, Whatley and Pavis "Let's Dance? But Who Owns It?" 1.

[4] MacPherson, "I am Not A Creative Industrialist."

[5] Laermans, *Moving Together*, 314.

[6] Ibid., 314.

[7] Kappenberg, "The Use of Uselessness"; Hargreaves, "Q and A with Martin Hargreaves." Jonathan Burrows' contribution to this volume also discusses dance's politics and refers to the form's potential 'pointlessness.'

[8] Hargreaves, "Q and A with Martin Hargreaves."

[9] Thank you to Florence Peake for pointing me towards Hargreaves' views on uselessness.

[10] Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. www.base.mayfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/cornelius-castoriadis-the-imaginary-institution.pdf; Taylor, "Modern Social Imaginaries" www.urbanlab.org/articles/Taylor_2002_ModernSocialImaginaries.pdf.

[11] Bouchard, Social Myths and Collective Imaginaries.

[12] Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*.

[13] Kieran "The Value of Art," 296 and Lopes "The Myth of (Non Aesthetic) Artistic Value," 518.

[14] Kieran "The Value of Art," 293.

[15] Burt, *Ungoverning Dance;* Hargreaves "Q and A with Martin Hargreaves"; Laermans *Moving Together* and MacPherson "I am Not A Creative Industrialist."

[16] Crossick and Kaszynska "Under Construction: Towards a framework for cultural value" and Kieran, "The Value of Art."

[17] Kieran, "The Value of Art," 294.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Kieran, "The Value of Art," 300.

[20] Ibid.

[21] This might seem like a fair assessment given the homogeneity of dance artists and audiences. For example, Arts Council England's Report, Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case 2015-16 highlighted the lack of diversity within arts audiences in the UK, suggesting: "Those most actively involved in arts and culture tend to be from the most privileged parts of society; engagement is heavily influenced by levels of education, socio-economic background and where people live. DCMS Taking Part surveys show that Black, minority ethnic and disabled audiences continue to be under represented" (2016: 22). The implication of the lack of diversity in the arts is that audiences and artists are likely to share ways of seeing the world.

[22] Kieran, "The Value of Art," 300.

[23] Ibid., 301.

[24] Popat and Salazar Sutil, *Digital Movement,* 3.

[25] Gibson, "Cognitivism and the Arts."

[26] Kieran, "The Value of Art," 303.

[27] Bauer, *Eleanor Bauer | Good Move.* www.goodmove.be/A-B-O-U-T.

[28] Durning, *Jeanine Durning.* www.jeaninedurning.com/?page_id=50.

[29] See www.synchronousobjects.osu.edu.

[30] Forsythe, "Choreographic Objects." www.williamforsythe.com/essay.html.

[31] This initiative resulted in many outputs, including the educational choreographic toolkit "Mind and Movement," see www.waynemcgregor.com/learning/resources.

[32] See www.performancephilosophy.ning.com/about.

[33] This term has been contested by scholars and practitioners, including in the discussion "Not Conceptual" (2007) between Jerome Bel, Jonathan Burrows, Bojana Cvejić and Xavier Le Roy. www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkdI-87T2z0.

[34] See Cvejić, "The Dance Market and the Dance Worker". www.player.fm/series/audio-stage/bojana-cveji-the-dance-market-the-dance-worker.

[35] In Moran "On the Act of Dancing," 4.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., 5.

[38] Ibid., 6.

[39] Singularities.

[40] Ingvartsen et al. in Lepecki, *Singularities,* 1.

[41] I have not seen this work live but I have heard Ingvartsen discussing the work and seen a section on film at the PostDance conference in 2015.

[42] Lepecki, *Singularities,* 2.

[43] The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Politics, 3.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Gibson, "Cognitivism and the Arts," 8.

[47] Ibid., 9.

[48] Genette and Maclean "Introduction to the Paratext," 261.

[49] This is an area also discussed by Thomas McEvilley in "13 Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" (1993). ais.ku.edu.tr/course/24872/Thirteen_Ways.pdf.
Thank you to Simon Ellis for introducing me to this text and these ideas during a lecture at Roehampton University in 2009.

[50] Ibid., 266.

[51] Gibson, "Cognitivism and the Arts," 13.

[52] Ibid.

53 Ibid., 14.

54 See Leach, "Choreographic Objects."

55 See Burt, *Ungoverning Dance* and Laermans, *Moving Together*.

56 Crossick and Kaszynska "Under Construction."

57 Ibid.,121.

58 MacPherson, "I am Not a Creative Industrialist."

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 *Ungoverning Dance*, 5.

62 *Singularities*, 2.

63 The term is used not to mean, unique, particular, individual or singular. "Rather, singularity is irreducible, and therefore a bearer of strangeness" (Lepecki's translation of Georges Did-Huberman 2016:6).

64 *Singularities*, 8.

65 Bouchard, *Social Myths and Collective Imaginaries*, 23.

66 Ibid., 5.

67 Ibid., 28-9.

68 Ibid., 32.

69 Ibid., 7.

70 Ibid., 13.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid., 21.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid., 18.

76 Bouchard, *Social Myths and Collective Imaginaries*.

77 Sheppard, "The Role of Imagination in Aesthetic Experience, 36.

78 Ibid.

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Hetty Blades's research focuses on philosophical questions posed by dance works and practices. She completed her PhD at C-DaRE in 2015, and has since worked on a range of funded projects addressing areas, such as cultural heritage, ownership, disability and human rights.

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Dancers Iris Platt and Angela Falk with rehearsal director Valeria Solomonoff; Jacob's Pillow Research Residency, artistic director Ilya Vidrin. Photo: © Sue Murad (2018) CC-BY-NC

PARTNERING AS RHETORIC

ILYA VIDRIN

Keywords

rhetoric
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Lloyd Bitzer

Abstract

Bodily rhetoric is a burgeoning field, with scholars investing attention to the ways in which non-verbal communication mediates change between individuals and groups in complex scenarios, including political settings. Scenarios in which individuals move together – whether in completely extemporaneous situations or in existing forms such as Contact Improvisation, Argentinian Tango, or Classical Pas de Deux – pose a similarly complex communicative problem. Drawing on the work of Lloyd Bitzer, I demonstrate how rhetorical theory provides methodological insight by which we can better understand the dynamic practice that is always already happening in situations where individuals move together.

Introduction

When considering the act of dance partnering, whether a dyad, trio, or large group dynamic, it is reasonable to wonder about the character of non-verbal interactions between moving bodies. That is, the movement idiosyncrasies of each individual, as well as the quality with which they engage each other in and through movement. For example, people can move together in a way that is dialogic – a (non-verbal) coordinated effort between two or more individuals – as well as a sort of "polyphonic" monologue, wherein multiple bodies interact as one while retaining their own distinct movement quality. Polyphony here is an extension of the musical concept; though bodies are not strictly speaking voices, it may be a useful term to describe how nuanced cues, with or without physical contact, provide the space to retain individuality while moving together. In both scenarios, individuals rely on a process of listening and responding to impulses and cues, be they physical or perhaps even energetic. Whether through coordination, harmonization, synchronization, or other communicative efforts, this essay investigates the potential for cues and impulses to function as persuasive elements that impact communication between partners. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to parse the nature of dance partnering itself, I move to present partnering as a rhetorical act that relies on a certain type of non-verbal persuasion between two or more individuals moving together physically and/or energetically.

By invoking the work of prominent scholars of rhetoric, namely Lloyd Bitzer and George Kennedy, I will attempt to construct a theoretical understanding of bodily (physical and energetic) discourse. To set up this argument, however, requires understanding how a rhetorical framework offers a relevant methodology to parse the ways in which partnering explicitly necessitates critical (bodily) discourse. The framework is one in which rhetoric is understood in basic Aristotelian terms as the "available means of persuasion."[1] Subsumed within this definition is an attention to quality – not only how a particular articulation (be it verbal, physical, or energetic) functions persuasively, but also the potential to discern properties such as tone, character, attitude, and so on. Positioning scholars such as George Kennedy and Lloyd Bitzer in conversation with

dance provides insight into non-verbal modes of communication, which I take to be a prominent feature of dance partnering. This structure is hermeneutic, as its content models how partners can potentially interpret each other and how each partner will (or will not) reciprocate. That dance can be communicative in a performative way, to an audience, is an argument articulated by leading scholars including Maxine Sheets-Johnstone,[2] Susan Leigh Foster,[3] and Graham McFee,[4] as well as countless movement and dance practitioners. The arguments presented in this paper, however, explore how dance partnering facilitates (or inhibits) the transfer of information between the very bodies that move together, extending the traditional concept of audience to a more intimate setting of those within the practice. I ask how partners act as performer and audience for each other, in real-time, and how discrete movements, continuous as they are in practice, lend themselves to the rigorous study of non-verbal (physical) dialogue. To probe the conditions by which partners interpret cues and impulses from each other, I ground specifically into the work of rhetoric scholar Lloyd Bitzer, who demonstrated the significance of situations from which rhetorical discourse emerges.

It is important to note here that examining dance through a rhetorical framework is not a new approach. Cases are visible as far back as Plato in the ethical concerns of Greek *choraia* (a term designated for both music and dance),[5] and more recently endeavored by the work of rhetoric scholar and choreographer, Cynthia Roses-Thema. Following her claim that dance performances function as rhetorical situations,[6] this essay utilizes a similar rhetorical framework to understand the conditions by which partners interpret and understand each other. Conversely, examining rhetoric through the lens of movement is also not a new approach. Speaking of movement and mobility more generally, rhetorical theorist Helmut Pflugfelder claims:

> Rhetoric is very well suited to addressing mobility concerns in part because movement in the world – as enacted by the coordination of people and technologies – is argument. That is, when people move, they take part in and comprise rhetoric. Rhetoric is not limited to the language arts, but is epistemic. Rhetoric occurs whenever we create meaning, link meanings together to form

systems, or engage in a productive art. This rhetoric is never just the intervention of people into situations, nor the application of meaning to cold, dispassionate objects, but a process that occurs whenever people move in the world.[7]

What does it mean in this context for rhetoric to be epistemic? Robert L. Scott, a theorist who famously championed the rhetoric-as-epistemic doctrine, noted that, "man must consider truth not as something fixed and final but as something to be created moment by moment in the circumstances in which he finds himself and with which he must cope."[8] The epistemic in this case refers not to static, *a priori* knowledge, but perhaps closer to understanding that is gleaned in the moment. Scott posits, "if one can be certain, then one needs no commands or urgings (either from oneself or from others)."[9] Acting in the face of uncertainty is a particularly cogent point for interacting non-verbally. For one, we can never truly know if a partner will be ready to respond, so we must attend to physical and energetic cues and impulses that communicate our partner's state of presence. Acting with certainty may also mean acting from expectation, which can further inhibit attending to relevant stimuli, particularly if something unexpected happens. Fixed knowledge, or assuming that because something worked a particular way before it must always work this way, detracts from the process of attending to relevant stimuli. Thus, this is a study on the ways partners discern cues and impulses from each other; basically understood as listening and responding, or alternatively still, action/reaction. Cultural anthropologist Ray Birdwhistell developed a vocabulary for such cues that allow individuals to communicate and respond to one another, which he called "paralinguistics."[10] These bodily cues include touch (*haptics*), eye contact (*oculesics*), personal space (*proxemics*), culturally meaningful[11] gestures (*kinesics*; such as a wave or a thumbs up), culturally appropriate response timing (*chronemics*), and so on. This is particularly relevant for partnering, as these are the cues that one senses (visually and/or kinesthetically) and subsequently interprets when moving with other(s). Thus I ask, how are partners convinced by subtle movements, such as a lingering or avoidant gaze, and how does a rhetorical framework provide a model by which to make these tropes salient to practitioners, as well as observers?

Taking a step beyond paralinguistics, bodily movement itself need not have a narrative or one-to-one linguistic mapping to be considered rhetorical. As rhetoric scholar Jennifer LeMesurier suggests, the body can be understood as a "functional, inventional actor and bearer of ideological weight, capable of producing rhetorical influence […] our range of rhetorical actions is guided by our embodied memories just as much as our training in argument or analysis."[12] It is here that we can begin to explore the nature of bodily discourse.

Rhetoric and Energy

Expanding on the Aristotelian definition of rhetoric, George Kennedy, known for his expert translations of Aristotle's work, offers the following view:

> Rhetoric in the most general sense may perhaps be identified with the energy inherent in communication: the emotional energy that impels the speaker to speak, the physical energy expended in the utterance, the energy level coded in the message, and the energy experienced by the recipient in decoding the message. In theory, one might even seek to identify some quantitative unit of rhetorical energy – call it the "rheme" – analogous to an erg or volt, by which rhetorical energy could be measured.[13]

Though Kennedy is being somewhat provocative, perhaps even facetious, with his suggestion of a qualitative unit, we are still left with an open question of interpretation. How can the emotional and physical energies be interpreted and experienced, particularly non-verbally, when moving together? Harvard philosopher Catherine Elgin positions her epistemology in conversation with this kind of emotional understanding, noting "self-knowledge enables us to access the information our emotions embed."[14] How does one become aware of one's own emotional energy in movements such as a particular gesture, look, or other non-verbal cue? How does such awareness impact the quality of a response from a partner? That is, the character of physical dialogue between two or more people, as well as subsequent ethical dimensions such as trust, care, vulnerability, responsibility, and so on? Elgin suggests, "if we can identify our emotions, assess our level of expertise, and recognize how sensitive

we are, we can profit cognitively from their deliverances. Reflective self-awareness pays epistemic dividends."[15] Though Elgin is situated within the field of epistemology, identification is a crucial concept to rhetorical studies. Indeed, according to eminent rhetoric scholar Kenneth Burke, identification provides the space for rhetorical discourse, as one is persuaded by content in which one can identify *with* another.[16] Many concepts have been used by different cultures throughout history to describe such emotional, energetic identifications in relation to body and time. *Wuwei* in ancient Chinese philosophy [17] and *duende* [18] in flamenco are two prominent exemplary concepts, wherein an individual somehow transcends oneself (perhaps by channeling a divine presence) such that action flows seamlessly. Within the tradition of rhetoric, this seamless flow of time is referred to as *kairos,* which often translates as "felt" or "experienced" time. Rhetorical theorist Debra Hawhee holds, "*kairos* is thus rhetoric's time, for the quality, duration, and movement of discursive encounters depend more on the forces at work on and in a particular moment than their quantifiable length."[19] Viewing partnering as a discursive encounter through the rhetoric-as-energy lens provides the framework by which we can explore the emergence of rhetoric that is non-verbally mediated.

To ground the argument, I turn to Lloyd Bitzer, who in his well-known (1968) paper introduces the reader to the notion that rhetoric is situational. Bitzer notes the pragmatic nature of interactions that seek a goal beyond themselves (such as inspiring action or inciting change), and names three constituents that together comprise a rhetorical situation: a) an exigency (or urgency to solve a particular problem), b) an audience that must be able to act as a mediator of change, and c) constraints that limit decisions and actions.[20] What follows is an outline of the exigencies, audience, and constraints pertinent to partnering.

Exigency in Partnering

Bitzer maintains that the first constituent of a rhetorical situation is the demand of an exigency. He notes, "any exigence is an imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be."[21] So what, then, is the exigence in partnering? In dance, the exigence is often a product of the

problems a given form makes for itself, such as particular shapes, postures, or relationship to rhythm and music. Bitzer is careful to note that "an exigence is not rhetorical when its modification requires merely one's own action or the application of a tool, but neither requires nor invites the assistance of discourse."[22] The obstacle a partnering situation presents, at the very base, is to successfully interpret the quality of shifting and sharing weight of others. One cannot simply rely on one's own action to move *with* other(s) because one must act toward and react to other(s). The reasons are myriad, from satisfying an aesthetic ideal to achieving a state of transcendent connection. Thus, given the relational nature of bodies moving together, the act of partnering itself seems to invite the assistance of bodily discourse.

Before we can entertain the meaning of a particular movement, we must first be aware that each movement, no matter how small, can be significant in the process of communicating with others. These minute bodily movements form the discourse that is the primary communicative medium of partnering. The appropriateness of each action, be it an assertion, response, proposition, and so on, is an especially relevant concept to Bitzer, who notes, "the situation dictates the sort of observations to be made; it dictates the significant physical and verbal responses; and, we must admit, it constrains the words which are uttered in the same sense that it constrains the physical acts."[23] Any movement form, such as Argentinian Tango, classical ballet, Kathak, or Contact Improvisation, will have its own set of conventions, which dictate how bodies can respond to each other. Bitzer states, "although rhetorical situation invites response, it obviously does not invite just any response."[24] In other words, "to respond appropriately to a situation" means that one "meets the requirements established by the situation."[25] Each situation is fairly unique, so it is difficult, if at all possible, to be able to prescribe appropriate responses divorced of context. The ability to notice how dancers are compelled to respond based on particular qualities, both kinesthetically and visually, is precisely what makes partnering a matter of rhetorical concern. With respect to physical contact, for example, rhetoric scholar Shannon Walters suggests,

> Rhetorical touch takes place when bodies come in contact; the meanings produced by this contact are rhetorical in that they convey messages, craft character, and create emotion in a way that fosters a potential for identification and connection among toucher and touched. In short, touch is rhetorical because it is epistemic, creating knowledge, communication, and understanding about the widest ranges of embodiment and ways of being in the world. Understanding touch as rhetorical makes rhetoric accessible to a wider range of bodies and minds, increasing the means of persuasion and possibilities of rhetoric.[26]

Again we are directed to the notion of rhetoric as epistemic, this time in an explicitly bodily sense. Walters highlights how touch reveals insight about the relationship between knowledge, communication and understanding. Positioning this within the epistemology of Elgin, the epistemic is a "cognitive achievement"[27] concerned primarily with understanding, rather than the limits of traditional epistemology (namely non-fortuitous justified, true belief). Elgin's work does not, however, hierarchize the cognitive over the bodily, and so her work sets a solid framework for understanding *from and within* embodied practice. Her investigation of epistemic yield within the arts more broadly is especially valuable given her claim that "dance enriches our lives at least in part because it enables us to understand things differently than we did before."[28] I believe understanding the nature of dance partnering in particular may reveal insight about the ethics of interactions, physical and otherwise, that extend beyond dance practices.

Within the demands of partnering, the physical dialogue that takes place necessitates agreeing on the appropriate conventions for negotiating movement. That is, if we are moving together within the context of a *milonga*, we will ostensibly be negotiating weight in a way that is significantly different than if we are moving together in the context of a Contact Improvisation jam. The same can be said if individuals are negotiating weight in a ritual form versus combat. Indeed this can be further differentiated if individuals are moving together in the context of capoeira versus aikido.

The claim that moving together entails agreement of appropriate conventions by which partners negotiate movement raises a concern of

whether partnering is a form of physical argumentation, albeit an informal approach. Earlier, I appealed to Ehren Helmut Pflugfelder, who stated "movement in the world is argument."[29] Argumentation here is not in reference to the verbal exchanges that occur between partners, although those too are valuable. Rather argumentation here is in reference to the means by which partners convince each other that a given physical action necessitates a particular physical response. As rhetorical theorist J. Anthony Blair states,

> arguments aim to move us by appealing to considerations that we grant and then by showing that the point of view at issue follows from those concessions […] the process is impossible if the appeal is vague or ambiguous. Thus vagueness or ambiguity makes argument impossible.[30]

It is important to note that Blair suggests that this is true of standard verbal and written arguments, as well as visual ones. If partnering involves finding agreement of how weight is shifted and shared, what are the tools with which dancers make their arguments? Of particular significance is the point of agreement the negotiation presupposes, which we can consider to be the space where an exigency emerges. Though partnering may not seem to be an argument in the formal sense, decisions are being made in real-time by each party based on interpreting the physical actions they direct at one another. In moving, weight is always already being negotiated, individually and in concert with others, regardless of whether the movement is extemporaneously generated or choreographed. For ease of communication, there must be agreement between each agent about which cues are meaningful and what constitutes an appropriate response. This agreement may be unspoken, simply by following the conventions of a particular movement form. Rhetoric scholars Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, who present a case for non-formal argumentation, state, "if we presuppose the coherence of reality and of our truths taken as a whole, there cannot be any conflict between facts and truths on which we would be called to make a decision."[31] That is, in partnering, to be able to communicate physically and achieve a state of connection, dancers cannot simply be moving randomly, even if it is improvised. While there may be no inherent truth-value in our physical arguments, we ostensibly interact with

our partners in a way that they understand us to be trustworthy. Thus, it seems there are certain consequences at stake if we are not aware of the ways we influence each other physically. That is of course assuming we want to level with our partner(s). Duping them explicitly, while beyond the scope of this paper, is still a provocative thought when considering how our smallest actions influence and are interpreted by our physical interlocutors. To make sense of the non-formal argumentation elicited in a partnering situation, of the point of agreement in the process of negotiating weight, let us focus on how an action executed by one partner is sensed and perceived by the other.

Audience in Partnering Situations

Bitzer claims "the second constituent [of a rhetorical situation] is the *audience*"[32] (emphasis in the original). He states, "since rhetorical discourse produces change by influencing the decision and action of persons who function as mediators of change, it follows that rhetoric always requires an audience – even in those situations when a person engages himself or ideal mind as audience."[33] Bitzer, like many before him, points to the performativity of rhetoric, yet is clear that one may engage oneself as both audience and performer. It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider audience-performer relationship in a more traditional understanding, yet if we consider a partnering scenario with two individuals, it is evident that each influences the other. It may still be unclear how each individual mediates change. In cases where partnering is sequenced choreography or improvised lead/follow, one partner relies on the other to complete actions based on certain predetermined cues (such as a change of direction or timing). In this way, though movements may be quite fast, one is acting as audience for the performer. It is interesting to note that it is perfectly possible that both individuals are moving at the same time. In such cases, as well as ones where there is no choreography, the spectating partner(s) must be very sensitive to potential cues, choosing when and how to respond. Bitzer clearly states that an audience must be able to act as a mediator of change.[34] Thus, as one partner listens and is influenced by the performer, so the spectating partner(s) elicit(s) change by reacting. In this way, partners are always switching fluidly between spectator and performer for each other, mediating change through subtle

cues that can be physical, visual, or perhaps even energetic. It is important to note that the absence of movement, the choice of stillness, can be a valid response, perhaps sometimes even more than choosing to respond by moving.

Bitzer notes, "in any rhetorical situation there will be at least one controlling exigence which functions as the organizing principle; it specifies the audience to be addressed and the change to be effected."[35] For a simple example, consider an individual who suddenly moves into close proximity of another. There is no limit to possible responses for the second individual, but for the purpose of this example, let us say the sudden proximity is unwanted. What cues may function rhetorically to communicate discomfort? There may be a tightening of the partner's body, a slowing down or hesitation, or perhaps the individual simply continues moving past and avoids the interaction completely. These cues may easily be overlooked, creating a new problem (exigency) that needs to be addressed.

A more complex example may involve the quality of response time between each partner; or, following Birdwhistell, the *chronemics* of an interaction. At first glance, this may seem only relevant to forms where timing plays a principal role, such as ballet and ballroom. Timing in a practice such as Contact Improvisation is no less important however, given that concepts such as "pelvic tracking" are also time-dependent, despite the form having quite a capacious understanding of what signifies an "appropriate" response. A response may, for example, be too quick; rather than focus on responding by attending to relevant stimuli, and thus connecting to the impulse, one responds by executing an action based on a preconceived notion. If there is a particular aesthetic in mind (i.e. a particular line, pattern, movement figure, or even quality of effort), both the performing partnering and the spectating partner will be bound to movement that satisfies the aesthetic ideal.

This is perhaps the most difficult view to articulate, because there are multiple levels of complexity. For one, there is the case in which a particular aesthetic quality is perceived by an outside party. The outside perception may be a misinterpretation of what is being communicated between the performers because one may be not be privy to what is

happening between moving partners. For example, gestural choreography may seem to indicate particular cultural tropes that are not significant to the performers themselves, such as when one dancer extends a hand to another seemingly in invitation but is really only extending the arm as part of the architecture of the choreography. This is as much true for gestures in western forms like classical ballet as it is for non-western forms (i.e. Balinese dance), wherein those inexperienced may misread or misunderstand the significance and/or semantic density of culturally meaningful gestures. On the other hand, a partner is always sensing and perceiving the cue kinesthetically, and so is also technically acting first as a spectator, before continuing on to perform a response as an actor. It is interesting to note that a partner may misperceive and/or give ambiguous cues based on poor conceptual understanding of the conventions of a particular form. A prime example is the cues in social dancing forms. To signal an underarm turn, a leader is taught to raise the arm of the partner, under which s/he can then perform the turn. Even with extensive training in other forms of dance, the signal to turn from the lifting of an arm may be a convention particular to the social form. Thus, without explicit previous experience in the social form, arriving at conceptual understanding of an underarm turn is unlikely (though of course, not impossible). The case is interesting to consider both for an individual who newly arrives to the social form as a leader or as a follower. The novice leader may raise the arm of an experienced follower for aesthetic effect, and so unknowingly leads the follower into a turn. Similarly, an experienced leader raises the arm of an inexperienced follower to no avail, given that the lack of experience prevents the novice from discerning the lifted arm as a relevant cue.

In relation to the misperception of cues, performance theorist Erving Goffman introduces an asymmetry within communication, noting how one is usually aware "only of one stream of [one's] communication" while an observer is aware of that stream "and one other."[36] Goffman points here to the way in which an interlocutor (observer/audience) experiences the "expressive behavior" of a performer in a given interaction. As dancers, we are apt to control our movement far more than is conventional in everyday life, yet Goffman's claim is still relevant. The claim he makes is both epistemic and aesthetic in that the "other" in the conversation – whether an interlocutor or merely an onlooker – witnesses, interprets, and

subsequently derives meaning from particular visual cues, including posture and facial features such as a smile, frown, raised eyebrow, averted glance, and so on. In being preoccupied with form (aesthetic expectation), one may no longer be attending to relevant stimuli of the partner, as well as the possibility of accidentally expressing ambiguous, albeit subtle, cues (such as the case in the social form). Before arriving to the semantic construal of cues and impulses, it is clear that the aesthetic expectations of partnering practices may interfere with ethical dimensions such as care, responsibility, and trust. The main rhetorical concern that emerges from the tension between aesthetic and epistemic concerns in partnering is how partners are convincing each other that a particular cue is relevant and as such necessitates a particular response that is fitting (appropriate) to the situation. To get at this problem, we move to the constraints of partnering.

Constraints in Partnering

Bitzer claims "every rhetorical situation contains a set of constraints made up of persons, events, objects, and relations which are part of the situation because they have the power to constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence."[37] He delineates between two classes of constraints, ones that are "originated or managed by the rhetor" and "those other constraints, in the situation, which may be operative."[38] That is, the constraints that are created by the rhetoric of the individuals and those that are intrinsic to the situation itself. With respect to the operative constraints, a simple and obvious example is physics; there are only so many movements that are physically possible given forces such as gravity, as well as consequences of momentum, pressure, inertia, and so on. If one pushes a partner, the individual can respond by effortfully absorbing or effortlessly surrendering to the force of impact. The space itself is also intrinsically constraining – perhaps a ceiling is too low to execute a particular lift, or a room is too small to complete a full sequence with a supported *saut-de-chat*.

The constraints that are created make for interesting study with respect to dance partnering. Partners working together can begin to coordinate, conserving energy to seemingly defy gravity by finding ways to use momentum and inertia. There are the obvious considerations of measured

time (*chronos)*, such as music or predetermined choreographic sequences, as well as less obvious elements such as internal bodily rhythms (*kairos)*. In lead/follow scenarios, a follower is constrained by the timing of the leader. In extemporaneous leading, a follower is further constrained by not knowing when a partner will change direction, orientation, rhythm, or speed. A leader is subsequently constrained by the time it takes for a follower to respond. The *kairotic* element functions as a clear constraint in that the actor must be attentive to potentiality – when is a particular cue or impulse going to be most effectively received by a partner? This is perhaps especially true in ritual movement, as well as extemporaneous forms such as Contact Improvisation; though it is perhaps more acceptable to disrupt sequences in CI than in other forms (by actions such as jumping out of a lift), attending to the potential of one's partner(s) provides opportunities to be intentional about response to previous action. Given that many of these practices are saturated with cultural meaning, distinct forms have their own communicative content and conventions, which serve as constraints. For example, both Argentinian and ballroom Tango typically do not involve both partners engaging in floorwork, though there may be choreographic choices that can involve floorwork (such as dips, death drops, and other "tricks"). Contact Tango, on the other hand, blends the conventions of Argentinian Tango and Contact Improvisation to provide dancers with more opportunities to interact through conventional foot patterns, as well as non-conventional floorwork and lifts. Irrespective of form, responding to movement is tricky given the myriad possibilities of articulation. As Elgin suggests, "we are prey to massive information overload. Inputs flood our sense organs. Infinitely many obvious consequences follow from every belief. To know, understand, perceive, or discern anything requires overlooking a lot. The question is: what should be overlooked?"[39] Taking a step back, it is evident that knowing which cues are relevant is something that is manifest in context, which necessitates a certain kind of sensitivity to movement. This claim, while reductive, serves as a strong argument for the embodied understanding derived from engaging in physical practice (in studio or social settings). Indeed, the first canon of Aristotelian rhetoric is discovery [*heuresis*], which seems to necessitate understanding the constraints to appropriately respond to an imminent exigency. Creating a universal formula that could prescriptively dictate which movement(s)

function persuasively is quite likely impossible, yet questioning the rhetorical nature of cues and impulses within practice may serve as a useful tool for increasing the efficiency of communication between partners. This I leave as a question to be asked physically within a partnering practice.

Conclusion

Understanding partnering as a rhetorical situation provides a framework by which to detect and analyze the subtle and intricate movements and cues that contribute to shared, embodied understanding between each moving body, whether the situation involves a dyad, trio, or a large group dynamic. The greater aim of this research is to contribute to the practice and training of dance partnering as a rigorous mode of communication, stemming from the firm belief that such an approach facilitates potentiality, freedom of expression, as well as an ability to exemplify connection in and outside of studio practice and performance events. This framework may be useful for interpreting partnering in a didactic setting, especially to promote specific articulation to satisfy one's own aesthetic fancy, be it technically virtuosic or otherwise. It may also, however, promote self-monitoring that can be inhibitory to expression. Cognitive psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky suggest a two-system model of decision-making, wherein System One is quick-thinking and impulsive, and System Two is slow, rational, and self-reflective.[40] Training in partnering may begin as a System Two process, with slow, serial processing of cues and impulses, and become a System One process once principles become embodied. For some, the transition may be fast, and for others may take many years that it might not seem worth it to continue. Kahneman and Tversky suggest common heuristics that act as cognitive biases, the discovery [heuresis] of which harkens back to Aristotelian rhetoric and the necessity of attending to the situation in the moment. Plato himself suggests that philosophy (i.e. the love of wisdom), begins first with wonder [thauma] and continues with discovery.[41] The ability to be curious within partnering lends itself well to philosophical investigation of how best to communicate with the partner in front of you.

Perhaps, however, the Two-System approach is too reductive for a complex process like partnering. Nevertheless, a significant lesson from cognitive neuroscience is the notion that "practice makes permanent"[42] – meaning that if our practice is always self-monitoring, then we become really good at self-monitoring, making it difficult to be "in the moment." Yet, by practicing this type of metacognition, we can gain articulation that can be quite freeing. This is not a paradox – to achieve the freedom of expression that can be technically virtuosic is largely a question about the way in which we practice attending to relevant stimuli. As Elgin notes, "by attending to and reflecting on our emotional responses, the situations that trigger them, and the orientations they give rise to, and by assessing the opinions they generate, we have resources for developing more nuanced and more accurate responses."[43] If we hope to achieve a connection that emerges from attending to relevant stimuli and responding in a way that is appropriate to context, a rigorous physical practice is simply a necessity.

Notes

[1] Aristotle (Trans. Kennedy), "On Rhetoric."

[2] Sheets-Johnstone, *The Phenomenology of Dance*.

[3] Foster, *Choreographing empathy*.

[4] McFee, *The Philosophical Aesthetics of Dance*.

[5] Kowalzig, "Broken Rhythms In Plato's Laws."

[6] Roses-Thema, *Rhetorical Moves*.

[7] Pflugfelder, *In measure of the world*.

[8] Scott "On viewing rhetoric as epistemic."

[9] Ibid.

[10] Birdwhistell, *Kinesics and Context*.

[11] Meaningful in this context refers to gestures that literally carry meaning, such as a thumbs up to connote success or a wave to connote hello or goodbye. A gesture counts as meaningful if there is a group agreement on what it means.

[12] LeMesurier, "Somatic Metaphors."

[13] Kennedy, "A hoot in the dark."

[14] Elgin, "Emotion and understanding." elgin.harvard.edu/undg/emotion.pdf.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives*.

[17] Slingerland, *Effortless action*.

[18] Lorca and Di Giovanni, *In search of duende*.

[19] Hawhee, "Kairotic encounters."

[20] Bitzer, "The rhetorical situation." www.arts.uwaterloo.ca/~raha/309CWeb/Bitzer(1968).pdf.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid

[26] Walters, *Rhetorical touch*.

[27] Elgin, *True enough*.

[28] Elgin, "Exemplification and the Dance." elgin.harvard.edu/exemplification/danceex.pdf.

[29] Pflugfelder, *In measure of the world*.

[30] Blair, "The rhetoric of visual arguments."

[31] Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*.

[32] Bitzer, "The rhetorical situation."

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*.

[37] Bitzer "The rhetorical situation."

[38] Ibid.

[39] Elgin, "Emotion and understanding."

[40] Kahneman, *Thinking, fast and slow*.

[41] Chrysakopoulou, "Wonder and the Beginning of Philosophy in Plato."

[42] Willis, "The current impact of neuroscience on teaching and learning."

[43] Elgin, "Emotion and understanding."

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Biography

With backgrounds in cognitive neuroscience, rhetorical theory, and classical, contemporary, and improvisational movement and sound, Ilya has spent much of his time synthesizing his interests to investigate interdisciplinary collaboration. A graduate of Harvard University, Ilya's current research focuses on the ethics of non-verbal interaction, in and beyond dance.

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PHENOMENA OF THE UNFINISHED: ON THE CHALLENGES OF PERCEIVING AND DESCRIBING FLUCTUATING MODES OF THE BODY IN CONTEMPORARY DANCE

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Keywords

contemporary dance
corporeality
phenomenology
unfinishedness

Abstract

The chapter deals with the challenges of how to speak and write about moving bodies in contemporary dance, about choreographers and performers whose declared aim is to question and deny fixed modes of representation and signification or corporeal patterns. Unfolding the problematic of the always already signifying 'moves' of language as a tool of scholarly analysis, the chapter scrutinizes possibilities of moving beyond or in between significations and its deconstruction by delving into the disposition of bodies as material and cultural construct, and the phenomenological proposals of 'grasping' the body beyond its intelligible realm, thus taking its unfinishedness into account.

A black, shapeless figure is moving on a completely white stage. The focus is on an oversized black shirt; two pant legs are dangling from the bottom edge. Off and on, a head juts out of the ensemble. What precisely is happening under the masses of fabric is hardly identifiable: the clothes stretch out, to then immediately return to their previous shape. At times one believes to be seeing the movement of two arms that then, a moment later, are twisting at almost impossible angles and appear at unusual locations under the shroud of fabric. On occasion it even seems as though two beings are hiding behind the covers.

The piece by the Berlin choreographer Isabelle Schad (the soloist of the performance) and the Parisian visual artist Laurent Goldring is called *Unturtled*.[1] They initiate a game of confusion based on considerations where movement has its starting point, and they subjugate body forms and images to permanent deconstruction. The body disappears almost completely in the 'moved accessories' but still literally presents its stirrings as materiality. It almost seems as though the clothes change entirely on their own in an autarchic way: in the stretching and shrinking, blowing up and restricting that the shirt's billowing begets, and that seem to have removed the body's own movement impulses. One speculates on the body parts that could be 'responsible' for the respective sequences, but they are led in the wrong direction. The body presents itself as imaginary; except the legs and head, it is invisible under the shroud and only allows for conjecture as to the way it appears.

Isabelle Schad, Laurent Goldring, Unturtled. *Photo: © Dieter Hartwig (2009) All Rights Reserved.*

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the materiality of the body in contemporary dance performances – especially in the European arena – has increasingly received attention. While for example Pina Bausch's dance theatre was asking about the "why" of dancing on stage and often placed the biographical constitution of the dancers in the focus, such contemporary choreographers as Jérôme Bel, Xavier Le Roy or Meg Stuart are dealing with the state of the body itself, as a (questionable) physical carrier of signs (Bel), as a metamorphous appearance (Le Roy) or as an insecure, fragmented phenomena that tends to be deconstructed (Stuart).[2] Partly in alignment with the Judson Church experiments,[3] the representation of movement on stage is critically questioned or rejected, less so through the introduction of gestures from daily life onto the stage – but far more through reflecting on theatrical means and the production of meaning itself. In the case of dance, the body stands at the centre of this, accompanied by a then academic desire to de-categorize obsolescent, inflexible patterns of arts interpretation that for example a strict semiotic approach towards performance analysis seemed to induce.[4]

In considering dance scholarship, the problem arises how this sometimes seemingly almost completely ungraspable experimental field of the body in contemporary dance could be described without once again placing it in fixed categories. How can writing follow the deconstructing movements of contemporary choreographers and at the same time make such corporeal phenomena plausible? And what is the body actually made up of, the body one would be writing about?

In the context of these reflections, phenomenology seems to be an adequate boulevard of thought, assuming a corporeal reference of knowledge on the one hand, and the attempts to "go back to the things themselves," as Edmund Husserl formulated it, on the other.[5] Nonetheless, the body, especially in the case of stage dance, has never been a blank page. Bodies are always already culturally codified, located within certain patterns of order and filled with habits and corporeal techniques. So, is it even possible to speak of the body "as such" and follow its materiality and fluid appearances without addressing certain cultural patterns? Or are we dealing with an unreachable utopia? The following chapter attempts to outline the paradox of fluctuating models of the body and their

ascertainment, which I call phenomena of the unfinished.[6] My main point of interest is the question of how we could conceive of corporeal materials being other than ourselves but also very familiar to us at the same time. Arguing from a theoretical, phenomenologically induced perspective, my focus lies on the possibilities and difficulties of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concepts of the body. As an introduction, an outline of concepts of corporeality in recent philosophical discourse and in (German) dance scholarship is given. The chapter later closes by briefly sketching a perspective of the incomplete in contemporary dance that would also embrace scholarly analysis.

Speaking About Bodies

In her book *Bodies That Matter*, Judith Butler slightly revises her concept of "performance" as a subject-building strategy.[7] Her goal is not a construction of bodies solely from linguistic prerequisites.[8] Instead, subjectification is an issue of materialization processes that "stabilize over time."[9] Though Butler does not promote an irreversible creation of identity, it has been shown that these materializations[10] can be repeated constantly and that one literally has to give them weight in order for them to retain their stability within normative frameworks: "the principle of that materialization is precisely what 'matters' about that body."[11] But how are resistance and change possible then? Butler emphasizes that the process of materialization is connected to signification from the very beginning;[12] the so-called non-intelligible can thus only be found in an area of a "constitutive outside,", as she formulates it.[13] This sphere of a normative "outside" is a prerequisite of materialization, but, in the end, it cannot be represented. In other words: something like a material that is wildly sprawling, de-formed and not yet covered with meaning does exist. However, one cannot speak of it without immediately loading it with meaning again and moving it into a certain visual, and intelligible field.

In contemporary dance, André Lepecki makes reference to this relationship of tension in the example of Jérôme Bel's *The Last Performance* (1998). It is not the "end of representation," that is being heralded here; instead, the piece demonstrates that the ideal of the new and indescribable must remain "a project and an impossibility." Following Jacques Derrida, Lepecki

argues that representation has "always already begun" and never ends.[14] The marginal – the wildly materializing exterior – also seems to evade verbalization, or rather: it cannot be thought of without the imperative of the "always already."

The German philosopher Dieter Mersch also emphasizes this theory of non-representability, though he does not do so in reference to Butler.[15] He speaks of the paradox of the materiality (in signification processes) on the one hand as well as the performative on the other, embedding it into a determination, a connection between saying and showing.[16] However, the saying itself cannot be addressed according to Mersch: One can 'say' that there are possible moments of presence ('before' representation), and that signification as such always already consists of material signifiers, however one fails to address them, to signify their materiality 'as such.'[17] The saying as such remains exterior and is evasive, it cannot be 'pinned down' to its very materiality, and at the same time it constitutes the basis and the process of the production of meaning. These determinations can also not be reconstructed: they create signs and are attached to them, but do not allow themselves to be determined (*"fest-stellen"*); at best, as Mersch puts it, they can be "remarked."[18] Quoting Derrida with reference to writing, he postulates that here a present moment appears, an eventfulness that comes before signification, but that cannot be noticed without an immediate signification: "The writing says nothing about its own presence."[19] In this context Mersch emphasizes elsewhere the resistant character of avant-garde art, for example, in Kurt Schwitters' sound poetry, whose units of meaning were cut and deconstructed so often that only the "physicality of the sound" in the sense of an eventful presence remained.[20] Thus the voice as a material carrier of signs appears on stage.

Meanwhile, one can ask to what extent art is then idealized as a residuum of resistant experience, and what happens to this art and its *leiblich-sein (being corporeal)* as soon as one speaks of it. For dance, Mersch formulates the necessity of a "precise reading" of body techniques and composition processes, which he provisionally terms "dance literacy": it has to articulate itself in reference to the respective specific subject and it follows the traces of negation, evasion and fragmentation.[21] Using the example of Pina Bausch's pieces, Mersch emphasizes the unavailability of

conclusive interpretations by highlighting the appearance of physical presence demonstrated by sweating and breathing.[22] However, he then surprisingly presents a rather exact system with the categories of "space – body – movement – rhythm" with which he, as an example, describes Bausch's choreography *Das Frühlingsopfer* (The Rite of Spring, 1975).[23] Thus (stage-)dance must always be sought in alternation between "moving *and* being moved, doing *and* being befallen by, bodies *in actu* as well as occupied or possessed and dispossessed bodies."[24]

The dance scholar Gerald Siegmund also directs his attention to the contradiction of what is unspeakable and what is to be spoken of. While deconstructing its different theories, he turns the paradigm of presence around.[25] With his theory of absence in dance as a critical alternative project to the positions of presence and sensuality – as signs of the performative – he opts for bodies on stage always already being "an imaginary model of the body."[26] While making reference to the philosopher Daniel Sibony, he suggests a concept of the "desiring body" that unfolds in the situation of a dance performance into a "dancing body," an "observing body" and a third instance of the "other" that serves in this approach as a (cultural, symbolic) prerequisite in front of which all dance performances occur.[27] Contemporary dance attains a critical/artistic potential, since it acts from the position of the absent, which Siegmund calls "the moving," related to Georges Didi-Huberman's talk of "le visuell" – a "prerequisite of possibility for *Gestaltung.*"[28] According to Didi-Huberman, the visual is the *movens* in the process of viewing: it indicates the moment of perceiving (an image) as such while at the same time being 'unreadable,' for the visible cannot not be reduced to a simple (semiotic) sign.[29] Even more so, the relationship between the observer and thing that is seen is constituted by the "evasion in perception," as Siegmund paraphrases it.[30] *The moving* is a blind spot for this unreachable interpretation, yet "[it] opens up spaces for potential bodies that are not yet and are again no longer."[31] As a result, speaking about the body can only occur *ex negativo*, in its imaginative projections.[32]

It is precisely here that a contradiction arises. When one speaks of the seen in the sense of something imaginary, then the production of (body-)images seems unavoidable.[33] Siegmund does not negate that even

Xavier Le Roy's or Jérôme Bel's pieces are touched by a symbolic order, but he emphasizes that the "absent" shines "between the symbolic"[34] – except that a "dance language" is missing which could place what was seen into a symbolically ordered principle of signification, and thus meaning.[35]

So, is the attempt to speak about 'sheer' carnal material, that which is sprawling, which lies in the suspension, between the signs … doomed to fail? Can bodies on stage not escape their assigned meanings and images, applied by audiences, critics and academics?

Which Bodies?

Around the turn of the millennium the question of the body in (German-speaking) dance studies develops into a defensive movement against ideologies that are proposing to see the dancing body as a guarantee for authenticity, naturalness and a kind of testing ground of possibilities for how to devoid it of signification. So, for example, Isa Wortelkamp criticizes theatre scholar Hans-Thies Lehmann's idealization of dance as a senseless "physical rapture of gesticulation" that is projected as a (post-dramatic) opposing model to semiotic theatre studies that are searching for meaning. Wortelkamp argues that sensuality and presence cannot be thought without meaning [*Sinn*].[36]

Historically, Janine Schulze emphasizes that the search for a natural, authentic body for instance in *Ausdruckstanz* around the turn of the 20th century corresponds to a culturally over-formed ideal within which, for example, Isadora Duncan's ostensible "natural body" in dance (inspired by images on Greek classic vases) is "the product of a high culture."[37] She is oriented towards Gabriele Brandstetter's remarks, whereby the equation of natural bodies with the ideal proportions of Greek antiquity corresponds to a mediated concept of nature that had its beginnings in early art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann's observations of ancient Greek art. Thus "[Greek sculpture] reawakens the viewer's ability to perceive nature."[38]

In addition, dancing bodies are already remodeled through body *techniques* – in this sense, Kerstin Evert opts with Marcel Mauss for a technical model of the body: "The expression of movement sequences occurs on the basis of dance techniques that are stored in physical

memory and their respective specific methods of creating movement."[39] In this context, Sabine Huschka speaks of a "double artificiality of the body" in dance that is made up of an "individual, physically structured as well as socially coded physicality of dancers and their *Gestalt*, which is induced by dance technique and choreography."[40] Thus a double constitution of dancers' bodies results; they are always simultaneously the "object and subject" of their representation.[41]

Incidentally, Ann Cooper Albright, in reference to Butler, follows a similar argumentation by formulating the body in dance as a double of (cultural) representation and (personal) experience.[42] However, her approach is itself interlaced with the wish for a pre-predicative, natural body, before signification comes into play, and that is expressed by her concerns about the "fate of material bodies at the end of the twentieth century."[43] Although Albright considers the body as necessarily interlocked with cultural discourses, she places a gap between the so-called "somatic identity" and the "cultural one."[44]

French dance scholar Laurence Louppe emphasizes that contemporary dance rejects object-subject dichotomies, as a Cartesian separation between body and mind, among others, or incorporates that which appears as oppositional into a networked fabric: "the body thinks and produces meanings."[45] It thus follows that dance cannot be grasped semiotically, but should rather be analyzed in its "lyrical function."[46]

A focus on the body cannot be considered without posing the question of its representations and possibilities of description. Dance studies is also, especially when observing contemporary productions, confronted with the difficulties of verbalization as well as the dangers of generalizing knowledge in the face of a seemingly sweeping and ephemeral subject. The problem of overcoming rationally steered epistemological methods (that seem to fail when confronted with stage events in motion) takes up a large amount of space in the discourses on analyzing dance, and especially the investigation of contingent, incomplete body models. Therefore Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophical project will be explored in the following: It attempts to make the body tangible and communicable beyond rational thought.

Beyond Dualism? Between Materialities and Meanings

In the past two decades, the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty has received much attention in dance and theatre studies. His phenomenological concept of perception that makes the body the centre of feeling and consequently knowledge has proven to be productive for body and movement analysis in dance studies and for research perspectives of 'the view on what is seen,' especially in terms of how we do perceive dance on stage.[47] His late work *The Visible and the Invisible* is focused on when the ambivalence of the difference and interweaving of "seeing and the visible" is being addressed.[48] I would thus like to give Merleau-Ponty's positions towards the body a larger space and explore the question of the determination of the body as a "thing" in contrast to other phenomena and its surrounding world.

Merleau-Ponty's philosophical project, as he formulates it in his work *Phenomenology of Perception*, is a perspective on knowledge that is connected to Edmund Husserl and that should succeed in getting to the "things themselves,"[49] following the idea of a preferably non-judgemental approach towards the things that surround us. What seems to be a utopian project here is dismantled by him just a little bit later: a "constitution of the object," which intends to depart from a classical scholarly concept of fixating and objectifying, must admit to itself that its pre-conceptual project must always remain an unfinished one.[50] Here, Merleau-Ponty is taking over Husserl's talk of the "pretension of the being-in-itself of the object in reference to gnosis": one thus knows that the thing exists, but one's own scope of experience only allows one to perceive a certain side, a certain "appearance" of the thing.[51] The decisive change, already introduced by Husserl, in phenomenological thinking places the body at the centre of the world, which Merleau-Ponty also emphasizes.[52] The body is not seen as a passive thing, but rather as an acting body in the sense of an intentional concept: it is in contact with its exterior world and communicates with it constantly.

In the course of his book, Merleau-Ponty wanders between the poles of corporeal experience versus signification with the idea in mind to propose a third path in contrast to Cartesian logocentrism as well as empiricism – beyond the "traditional dichotomy of body and consciousness."[53] While in

his first writings he essentially works on these oppositions, twenty years later the philosopher expands his perspective regarding a transcendental project that details the chiasmatic connection of perception and the perceived.[54] The concept of the flesh (Fr.: *chair*) in his book *The Visible and the Invisible* serves as a sensually loaded metaphor to grasp the close, communicative connection between body and world.[55]

However, there is a gap between the theory of the body in the *Phenomenology of Perception* on one hand, often still caught in dualisms – in a divide in which Merleau-Ponty tries to establish the differences between body and world with the term "nature" and "culture,"[56] – and its transcendental solution in *The Visible and the Invisible* on the other hand. This breaking point concerns the thing that one wants to arrive at; a project that one can also apparently only fail at. In a rejection of Cartesian dualism as well as Immanuel Kant's empirical theory,[57] in his first writings Merleau-Ponty speaks clearly against the assumption of an "existence in itself," of a "thing being precisely what does not know, what slumbers in absolute ignorance of itself and the world."[58] Accordingly, the movement of the body is never one of an unconscious machine.[59] In this context, the German philosopher Bernhard Waldenfels emphasizes that a *Gestalt* "is always a *Gestalt for* someone"; it shapes itself with an intent.[60] Merleau-Ponty is also no proponent of the subject as an autonomously acting, psychological entity. The French *sujet* is far more something that "experiences a *Gestaltung*," i.e., is not complete, as the German translation emphasizes.[61]

To arrive at a literal point of departure, Merleau-Ponty must reach for ontological crutches that make it possible to draw lines between things and appearances,[62] between "natural world" and "cultural world."[63] It is precisely here, however, where his concept is under close scrutiny, since Merleau-Ponty is in no way interested in an essentialist concept of nature.[64] Instead, he emphasizes that nature always means a concept and a perspective *on* nature.[65] Yet to make a distinction between the body and the world graspable, he makes a primordial assumption that requires a being in the world that creates meaning: "that I am able, being connatural with the world, to discover a sense in certain aspects of being without having myself endowed them with it through any constituting operation."[66] The motivation for this being in the world is the body: it (and therefore I)

"belongs to […] space and time": "My body has its world, or understands its world, without having to make use of my 'symbolic' or 'objectifying' function.'"[67]

But Merleau-Ponty still poses the question how distinction – for example of colours *as* (a certain) colour or of different tones – is possible as something that is different from me and my body.[68] Here the detour to Descartes seems almost unavoidable.[69] A certain quality of the senses or a thing must be fixated and must be determined in a certain moment to recognize it as such. Merleau-Ponty does not offer a solution to this dilemma; instead, he is focused on directing a critical gaze onto judgments that emerge from the *logos*, and he demands a mobile view of the phenomena to be investigated as well as onto the investigator as such: "We must not only adopt a reflective attitude in an impregnable *Cogito*, but furthermore reflect on this reflection."[70]

Perceiving Bodies

> My body is that meaningful core which behaves like a general function, and which nevertheless exists, and is susceptible to disease. In it we learn to know that union of essence and existence which we shall find again in perception generally, and which we shall then have to describe more fully.[71]

In order to not immediately understand this body as a cosmological instance, phenomenology since Husserl initially separates it heuristically into firstly, the "*Körperding*" (body thing), the object (and as such can also be something non-organic), and secondly, the "functioning/acting body."[72] Only the latter is, according to Merleau-Ponty, capable of performing syntheses of knowledge;[73] it is "in the world as the heart in the organism."[74] In this sense the body is, however, already an ambivalent thing that cannot be strictly separated into an interior and an exterior;[75] it always finds itself in the middle of what is being perceived.[76] To make it possible to differentiate between the own body and other bodies and sensual impressions, phenomenology brings self-reference into scope – the feeling of pain serves as an example here: "Self-reference lies *before* the differentiation into a something that is perceived and a someone who perceives."[77] Merleau-Ponty speaks of the "permanence of my own body,"

but this could never be established in its fullest sense. Precisely because the body is constantly with me, I am not able to distance myself from myself or place in front of my eyes what I actually have "in front of me."[78] My body always only "remains marginal to all my perceptions,"[79] just like my *perception* adheres *to the edge of the body*; it is never completely able to break away from the "Körper*ding*" as a part of the "functioning [acting] body."[80]

Such a self, accounted for in this way, is no stable, fixed entity – in this sense, Merleau-Ponty formulates a *provisional ontology* that is characterized precisely by its *temporality*, through the relationship of the body to space and time. The perceived takes place and appears as a *passage* through the body – the body loses its *Ding-Sein* (being thing) and becomes a *transitional body* that knows no solid boundaries. In this context, Waldenfels emphasizes the "spatiality of a situation" articulated by Merleau-Ponty in the framework of his body schema,[81] a principle of movement that sees the body as a "location," from which something is done.[82] According to Merleau-Ponty, what one sees is always already a movement of the own body *towards* the perceived – and the things are contaminated by the body proper.[83] Thus a body's self-reference becomes revealed that is always only possible by being perceived from the outside – the famous example for this is Merleau-Ponty's attempt at grasping and feeling of one's own hands. It is never possible to completely correlate the own and outside perception; they constantly oscillate between the hand that feels and the one that is felt – the act of recognition is a literal grasping of the 'now I have it' that is always characterized by "failure."[84]

One could make a preliminary conclusion at this point that – though the body in phenomenological thought is my way of being-in-the-world – *vice versa*, 'because of this,' it is also *in* the way. The thing-in-itself – as, for example, the raw material of Isabelle Schad's metamorphous, evading body – recedes into the distance and instead makes reference to a dualism that already begins in my own body: ontology is no longer based on being sure of one's self, it is determined through the body's "being-in-the-world" precisely from the entry of the other, the foreign – Waldenfels highlights this constitution as "in-between-corporeity" (*Zwischenleiblichkeit*).[85] In a chiasmatic interconnection, the body is a point of reversal and mediating

instance, an "ontological relief"[86] that alternates between the body's "two leaves."[87]

Body and (Theatre) Experience

Perceiving, as Waldenfels states, is an "act of differentiation."[88] Merleau-Ponty formulates this experience of difference through the relationship between a figure and a background, on the basis of different textures of materiality in the example of a white spot on a wall:

> The colour of the shape is more intense, and as [if] it were more resistant than that of the background; the edges of the white patch 'belong' to it, and are not part of the background although they adjoin it: the patch appears to be placed on the background and does not break it up.[89]

However: these (perceptual) differences are not so clear. They must each be contextualized, whereby Merleau-Ponty discards the "idea of an external world in itself": what I see is always already "involved in relations."[90]

In the context of dance and theatre, Gabriele Brandstetter establishes the figure as a literal movens of movement. So, in the case of the "back and forth of figure and background," it is not so much an issue of the respective recognition of the one or the other level of representation.[91] Instead, the "event of 'toppling' […] is already a potential of the figure itself."[92] In this sense a figure is not a clearly encircled appearance, but becomes essential for a formulation of theatricality in its agility as a "toppling figure" (*Kippfigur*).[93] Differentiating again – and thus the toppling itself (to return to Merleau-Ponty) – cannot occur without verbalization. In corporeal viewing, words such as "under" or "beside" are already stored; how could a difference otherwise be determined?[94] Amazingly, the phenomenologist already delivers the groundwork for what Michel Foucault would later term discourse and what Judith Butler refers to in her speech on materiality, of which nothing can be said without storing it immediately in another net of stabilizations. Merleau-Ponty explains this contradiction on the basis of spatial orientation within the body schema:

as soon as I try to posit bodily space or bring out its meaning I find nothing in it but intelligible space. But at the same time this intelligible space is not extracted from orientated space, it is merely its explicit expression, and, when separated from that root, has no meaning whatsoever.[95]

Here the philosopher operates very closely on the borders of a logocentrism that he thinks should be discarded on the one hand, and knowledge that is based "solely" on sensual perception on the other hand. The one cannot be considered without the other. However, the impression is given that the balance is tipping, at least in the *Phenomenology of Perception,* slightly more to the side of speech and experience. Merleau-Ponty initially emphasizes that perception of a thing is at first an act of positing, *before* any background of experience.[96] At the same time, the thing as such is not possible without a net of remembered experiences – Merleau-Ponty must perform this shift, since his aim is not only to take leave of rationalism, but also from empiricism. He arrives at a concept of perception that is no conglomerate of remembered images; instead, they stand as frames in a row in front of a horizon of experience and memory, and are respectively *renewed* in the act of perceiving as *corporeally* performed recognition.[97] Therefore, other than in an empiricist perspective, the past can only be understood as such in the moment of its respective appearance as a difference to what is currently being perceived. In the course of his first book, Merleau-Ponty gives more room to remembered images, since the perceived thing is not just connected to the respective now of corporeity, but rather it is closely connected to "my individual history."[98] History integrates itself into the sentience; it does not appear each time as a completely new 'sensation.'

Merleau-Ponty attempts to overcome the gap between the being of things in the respective moment of their perception and a previous existence of experience that cannot be ignored. In the process, he creates a new separation by splitting the body into the "layers [...] of the customary body and that of the body in this moment."[99] However, his concept of a body *in actio* up to a "manipulatable" body[100] then shifts – he deduces these thoughts from the quite concrete experience of a missing, amputated limb: one can no longer handle things with it, since it is absent. At the same

time, the knowledge of a (corporeal) experience that can be (habitually) experienced with this body part remains.[101]

Now that Merleau-Ponty has turned against the Cartesian "in itself" and the graspability of things, it seems he has no other choice than to draw an objectifying aid line, also in order to be able to include a "familiarity with the world born of habit, that implicit or sedimentary body of knowledge"[102] into his concept of the body that, willy-nilly, accumulates over time. Waldenfels makes clear that the body cannot be grasped independently of the respective "accumulated history": "the body must be considered from this history, as saturated in history."[103]

In the process, a proliferation of things, woven in the diverse contexts, takes place – discourses, so to speak, that respectively penetrate perception and overlay it panoptically, since

> every object is the mirror of all others. […] Any seeing of an object by me is instantaneously repeated between all those objects in the world which are apprehended as co-existent, because each of them is all that the others 'see' of it.[104]

From this perspective, seeing becomes an act of temporality that is simultaneously "prospective," moving towards the thing, and "retrospective" when one bears its primordial way of being in mind.[105] Numerous temporalities are thus stretched out in the body. The thing repeatedly disappears and "cease[s] to exist as a thing at the very moment when we thought to possess it."[106] Knowledge is thus always situational,[107] a short recompense, "still only a momentary halt."[108]

But it can apparently happen that the 'stopover' takes too long, the sediments that can be handled deposit themselves, overlay one another, begin to sprawl and limit the possibilities of actualization, for example regarding habits of perception when seeing dance on stage or within certain incorporated dance techniques. Thus coming back to the field of dance, it couldn't be explained otherwise why dancers' movement experience is accumulated in the so-called body memory. Accordingly, choreographers like William Forsythe develop methods of movement that break through materialized patterns in order to make the unusual and surprising possible again[109] and to hold the fine balance between physical

technique, ability, movement habits, improvisational skills and the generation of new movement – in this sense then: to de/figure what seems to have aggregated in the dancer's body.

Bodies: De/figured

By shifting the body to the centre of experience, Merleau-Ponty opts for a material concept. The notion of the flesh must be understood as "the coiling over of the visible upon the seeing body, of the tangible upon the touching body"[110] – the visible, however, can sometimes get the upper hand. Merleau-Ponty himself makes reference to the Cartesianism that is constantly 'creeping into' recognition in daily life, since it is paradoxically easier to 'think' of perception via the mediating body than to experience it while feeling in practice.[111] The body thus proves to be an unwieldy material that tempts one to let knowledge "emigrate" to the mind, or more precisely here: the language.[112] Merleau-Ponty's aim is to make this process conscious, to reflect such a secondary position of knowledge and not to confuse it with primary perception:[113] "Is my body a thing, is it an idea? It is neither, being the measurant of the things."[114] The body finds itself in a field of visibilities that it is literally "*surrounded*" by;[115] the body itself is seeing and being seen. These visibilities create a thin membrane between the body and the world that it perceives in which the seen things take shape from a certain perspective. The transitory nature of this shaping (*Gestaltwerden*) is accentuated by Brandstetter and Sibylle Peters in their concept of a figure that realizes itself between "things and surrounding spaces" and thus also in acts of perception, knowledge or its categorization in science.[116]

Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that in his concept of flesh, it is not about material or substance as the basic foundation of experience,[117] nor about the Cartesian mind and body polarity. Instead, Merleau-Ponty attempts a sleight of hand with flesh – towards a temporal concept of material. Materiality is, as far as it is a part of being, always present in a form of possibility; it is thought of as a process – as a potentiality, as an "ontological relief."[118] But still: in such a relief, accumulations and hence materializations can take place.

Merleau-Ponty occasionally uses vocabulary that gives a foundation to this assumption. So he speaks of flesh as "gangue of my perception"[119] (in the German translation: *Gang-Gestein,* literally passageway/walking-stone, geol.: dyke rock), he sketches out a "flesh of the *Gestalt*" that may not emphasize solid contours, but that highlights its materiality – for example, the "grain of the color"[120] – and thus reveals the sensuality of perception before any *logos*.[121] The things follow no intellectual discernment; instead, they remain lodged like "thorns in my flesh."[122] They penetrate the observer, can also remain caught and perforate the body with impressions that cannot be so easily erased. They literally build heavy meanings, gain weight, they matter (as Butler would say) and sometimes develop knots. But these sediments are always moving, the rock is no Massif Central that doesn't budge from the spot. The solidification as well as the dynamic is shown in this "gangue," the matrix, even if a difficult *In-Gang-Kommen* (to get under way) is highlighted in this metaphorical turn: they are stones that propel a grinder, slowly getting under way, to then roll ceaselessly once they have been given the initial push.

In this reading of Merleau-Ponty, the point is not to reduce him to fixated categories, but rather to make clear the difficulties and ambivalence of an observation of (scholarly) things/subjects *between* dualisms and the always already engulfed/intertwined nature of the body and the world – as well as the experience of fluid, figuratively non-fixed, in this respect non-representative bodies on stage that created the initial impulse of this chapter. Choreographers like Xavier Le Roy or Isabelle Schad strive to avoid the repetition of already well-known, traditional patterns of dance on stage and withdraw from easy significations and interpretations of movements on display – even though the production of certain body images and even "inventories" of the unfinished seem to be unavoidable over time.[123] However, Merleau-Ponty's talk of the flesh even goes further, being also a transcendental ideal, whereby the body and the surrounding world have always already been in exchange … in fact, the body as pure material being is overcome in the later *The Visible and the Invisible* – towards a transcendence of sensuality.[124]

But to what extent do I separate myself from what I see? Waldenfels underlines the ontological "self-reference" of the body in phenomenological

theory, even before a distinction is made – that is, nevertheless, not realizable without the other.[125] Thus *self-reference* results simultaneously in *self-evasion*.[126] When Siegmund then takes the body on stage as always already projected by the audience and uses it as the foundation for his analysis of dance, is there then a material body *before* the imagination? How could it be described? Or, to put it differently, where and when does the material mix with the *imago*? As could be seen in Merleau-Ponty's case, his reflections (afterwards especially in postmodern times) circle around overcoming form-material binaries or interior-exterior dualisms. However, it seems we cannot manage without them. Though the chiasmus, from Merleau-Ponty's view, is currently the topos that seems to ensure that the thinking about bodies and the surrounding world as an interwoven structure is possible; from a phenomenological perspective, both levels repeatedly drift away from one another without letting themselves be separated. It seems that we are standing in front of an insurmountable paradox.

For a Perspective on the Incomplete in Contemporary Dance

In order to investigate pieces of contemporary dance in reference to their incomplete materiality, an operation is necessary – in an almost literal sense. Waldenfels states that describable knowledge can only be gained on the basis of "caesuras" – whereby the caesura does not determine, but rather allows for a game in the contingencies: "dissolvable units can only be grasped as a construct or a limit value."[127] In this sense, it can become necessary to disassemble performances of contemporary dance – especially those that show dissolving bodies like the one of Isabelle Schad mentioned in the beginning – into their individual parts and fragments, to cut out certain scenes or body images, reduce them to their openings, points of transition and sometimes their corporeal nature as a thing and then examine them for characteristics of the contingent.

One possibility to trace down the incomplete, and thereby following Waldenfels, is to allow the entry of the foreign into the reception of transitory, metamorphous phenomena on contemporary dance stages – it is the attempt to distinguish moments of differentiation in a

phenomenological perspective of the everything-as-one identity of the body and world, trying to figure out how to discern the "own" and the "foreign," the "elsewhere."[128] Such a perspective could help to enable scholarly descriptions of the subjects in question.

For example, a dynamic composition consisting of both 'foreignness' and one's own experiences when watching a piece resides in the work of Isabelle Schad: of splinters of recognition stemming from the repertoire of the own personal cultural experience mixing with surprising, at first ungraspable moments of motion and bodily alignment. In *Unturtled,* one seems to only incidentally grasp the shape of the body beneath the fabric, the way the limbs are arranged in order to move – but only to once again lose these 'secure' perceptions in the next moment, being left with an unsettling feeling as one is simply unable to identify the movement's sources. As Waldenfels would say, it is "noticeable in the form of the un-usual that appears in different ways at the edges and in the gaps of diverse orders."[129] In his account, the foreign appears as a triad: as "normally foreign," the way pedestrians can be perceived as foreign in one's own neighbourhood; as "structurally foreign," the way a foreign language or unknown rituals and habits are; and in a "radical form." These are appearances on the borderline that exceed interpretation's range; Waldenfels mentions, for example, ecstasy and death.[130]

Schad's work oscillates between these different realms of the foreign, at times knowing that we are seeing an example of contemporary dance being still unknown, hence new to us and thus "normally foreign" as it can be classified in the categories of this dance form, dealing with diluting corporealities on stage. But then again, the comfort zone of our observations is uncannily undermined when we are losing grip on how bodies "usually" move on stage. These are moments when the foreign shifts into the spheres of "structural" or even – depending on one's own receptive habits – "radical" forms of encounter with stage phenomena unfamiliar to us.

In order to let phenomena of the incomplete and operations on the edge of bodies in contemporary dance become visible and describable, a few characteristics may be sketched as a brief résumé. They could stimulate academic practices to make bodies *writable* in the movement between

materializations and the processual. They could also serve as ways for the analysis not only of examples of contemporary dance, but also of the visual arts and performance art that stretch beyond representation both in the making as well as in subsequent analyses. Corporeal experiments in dance often emerge in a break with representations. In the process, they perform movements of stretching, expanding and sprawling. Many artists operate with strategies of de-composition, fragmenting, mutating, dis- and remembering … whereby they shift between the 'own' and the 'foreign', between interior and exterior – in the space in-between rejecting and reinforcing, contingency and sediment, dissolution and order.

Developing corresponding analytical reference lines that try to follow these infinite, at times non-categorial motions could not only enable us to adequately describe anti-hermetic body concepts in dance. They could also assist in scholarly understandings of the openings that they offer without remaining caught in the diffuse and indefinite. Academic writings that seek the vicinity of those phenomena of the unfinished, and their occasional accumulations and patterns, wander along caesuras, between formations and their deconstruction. They follow anti-representational shapes in dance, on the borderline between corporeal and/as scholarly experience and phenomenal appearances of body movement on stage: a scholarly discourse that does not close itself off to the incomplete.

Translation: Christopher Langer.

Notes

[1] Premiere in 2009, Sophiensæle, Berlin.

[2] As in the pieces *Jérôme Bel* (Bel, 1995), *Self unfinished* (Le Roy, 1998) and *Disfigure Study* (Stuart, 1991).

[3] Protagonists of the Judson Church such as Steve Paxton and Yvonne Rainer opted for non-spectacular approaches towards stage dance, for example introducing movements of everyday life into their works that (seemingly) do not require a specific dance training. See Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, Burt, *Judson Dance Theater*.

[4] Wortelkamp e.g. criticises Fischer-Lichte's semiotic approach developed in the 1980s (Fischer-Lichte, *Semiotik des Theaters*) as it would not take

the perceiving subject itself into account and tries to fix performance as text, e.g. in notations (Wortelkamp, *Sehen mit dem Stift in der Hand*). Hence, she opts for a phenomenological, embodied and thus a rather poetic perspective (ibid., 227, 257). However, one could claim that a semiotic analysis is still very helpful when for example trying to distinguish between various gestures made on stage, if one takes into account that such a model cannot be regarded as a 'mere objective' category. And even Fischer-Lichte herself turns to a rather mixed understanding of bodies present on stage that always oscillate between being "phenomenal and semiotic" when she explores the aesthetics of the performative especially in performance art (Fischer-Lichte, *The transformative power of performance*, 89-93).

[5] Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, 7. academiaanalitica.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/edmund-husserl-logische-untersuchungen-bd-i-i-1.pdf.

[6] The following text is based on the chapters on materialities and corporealities in a phenomenological perspective from my book *Am Rand der Körper. Inventuren des Unabgeschlossenen im zeitgenössischen Tanz* (On The Bodies' Edge. Inventories of the Unfinished in Contemporary Dance), 35-60.

[7] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 140. selforganizedseminar.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/butler-gender_trouble.pdf.

[8] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 11. eng5010.pbworks.com/f/ButlerBodiesThatMatterEx.pdf.

[9] Ibid., 9.

[10] Butler focuses especially on the 'doing' of gender as a performative, and thus iterative cultural operation, and not a given biological entity (Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 2). The idea of materialization is thus set between the normative scope of "sex," being a bodily concept but always already a normative one (ibid., 2), and the very "intelligibility" of the body, for "materialization is precisely what 'matters'" and thus creates meaning (ibid., 32).

[11] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 32.

[12] Ibid., 30-31.

[13] Ibid., 38.

[14] Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance*, 49

[15] Mersch, "Paradoxien der Verkörperung," 32. www.uni-kassel.de/upress/online/frei/978-3-89958-142-3.volltext.frei.pdf.

[16] Ibid., 31.

[17] Mersch, *Was sich zeigt*, 379.

[18] Mersch, "Paradoxien der Verkörperung," 32.

[19] Mersch, *Was sich zeigt*, 379.

[20] Mersch, "Präsenz und Ethizität der Stimme," 214. www.dieter-mersch.de/Texte/PDF-s.

[21] Mersch, "Medien des Tanzes," 272.

[22] Ibid., 271.

[23] Ibid., 280.

[24] Ibid., 283, original emphasis.

[25] Siegmund extensively criticizes Peggy Phelan and others' concepts of presence and compares their theses to his proposition of absence (Siegmund, *Abwesenheit*, 63-81). The polarization of representation and presence appeared in the actions by the protagonists of the New York Judson Memorial Church in the 1960s. They rejected representative body images and movement, for instance Yvonne Rainer with her "Aesthetics of Denial" (see Banes, *Terpsichore in Sneakers*, 41-54 www.scribd.com/document/364410485/Banes-Sally-Terpsichore-in-Sneakers-Post-modern-dance-pdf).

[26] Siegmund, *Abwesenheit*, 44.

[27] Ibid., 42-43.

[28] Ibid., 101-102.

[29] Didi-Huberman, *Devant l'image*, 26-28. www.lignes-de-fuite.net/IMG/_article_PDF/article_24.pdf.

[30] Siegmund, 101.

[31] Ibid., 103.

[32] Ibid., 105.

[33] Siegmund also points this out. Looking at dancing bodies is always tied to "the tendency to turn them into or establish them as images." (Siegmund, 307)

[34] Ibid., 105.

[35] Ibid., 383-384.

[36] Wortelkamp, 177.

[37] Schulze, *Dancing Bodies Dancing Gender*, 53.

[38] Brandstetter, *Poetics of Dance*, 29. Brandstetter makes her point in correspondence to Duncan's declaration of war against the "degeneration" of the body in ballet as a paradigm shift towards "'natural' and 'free' movement." (Ibid., 40) The emphasis thus lies on a *model* of the body that has always already been superimposed by cultural techniques, even if ballet's corsets have been cut.

[39] Evert, *DanceLab*, 10.

[40] Huschka, *Moderner Tanz*, 24.

[41] Ibid., 26.

[42] Albright, *Choreographing Difference*, 27.

[43] Ibid., 155.

[44] Ibid., 5.

[45] Louppe, *Poetics of Contemporary Dance*, 49.

[46] Ibid., 50.

[47] On problems of reception of the body in this context see Siegmund, 198-203; Berger, *Körper denken in Bewegung*, 109-110; Wortelkamp, 197-208. Sabine Sörgel, citing Thomas J. Csordas, underlines the renunciation of a Cartesian, objectivating worldview towards an observation of bodies in dance that should be as ideology-free as possible; this could be supported by phenomenological approaches (Sörgel, *Dancing Postcolonialism*, 15). Laurence Louppe, on her part, emphasizes the phenomenological perspective as a specific way of *Zur-Welt-Sein* of the dancer's body and its connections that result through breathing, for example (Louppe, 61, 84). Gabriele Klein argues in a similar way; "in the relationship between body, time and space" (Klein, "Tanzkunst und ästhetische Erkenntnis," 27). She disseminates a phenomenological perspective as a dimension of dance in cultural anthropology. Jens Roselt goes so far as to postulate a phenomenology of theatre: the central element is the "experience of striking moments" in the performance. It is an aesthetic experience from which one can analyze the events on stage (Roselt, *Phänomenologie des Theaters*, 20-21): The phenomenology could begin where "hermeneutic theories and methods of analysis reach the end of their possibilities in the face of subjective and individual experience." (Ibid., 146)

[48] Wortelkamp, 199, 202.

[49] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, viii. alfa-omnia.com/resources/Phenomenology+of+Perception.pdf.

[50] Ibid., 54.

[51] Husserl, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* 1910/11, 49.

[52] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 82.

[53] Ibid., 122, footnote 1.

[54] With the figure of the chiasm Merleau-Ponty seeks to overcome the Cartesian separation of body and mind by intertwining them: "There is a body of the mind, and a mind of the body and a chiasm between them" (Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 259). monoskop.org/images/8/80/Merleau_Ponty_Maurice_The_Visible_and_the_Invisible_1968.pdf.

[55] Ibid., 135.

[56] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 186.

[57] Ibid., 31, 33.

[58] Ibid., 121.

[59] Ibid., 123.

[60] Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 74, emphasis S.F.

[61] Merleau-Ponty, *Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung*, 7, footnote d.

[62] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 8.

[63] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 24.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Here again Merleau-Ponty agrees with Husserl's rejection of objects that are apparently given in nature and recognized by reason (Descartes) or the senses (Kant) (Husserl, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie 1910/11*, 52). To escape these categories of knowledge, Husserl makes the methodological suggestion of a "phenomenological reduction" that should be limited to "*pure* experience as the object of phenomenological perception" (ibid., 53-54, original emphasis). Merleau-Ponty expounds the problem of such ways of perception, since such a mode of experience is always already characterized by former experience and reflection (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 43-44).

[66] Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology of Perception, 217.

[67] Ibid., 140-141.

[68] Ibid., 227.

[69] See Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 112.

[70] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 62, original emphasis.

[71] Ibid., 147.

[72] Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 15.

[73] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 232-233.

[74] Ibid., 203.

[75] Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 42.

[76] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 206.

[77] Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 43.

[78] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 90.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 42, emphasis S.F.

[81] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 100.

[82] Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 115.

[83] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 11.

[84] Ibid., 9.

[85] Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 285.

[86] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 88.

[87] Ibid., 137.

[88] Waldenfels, *Grundmotive einer Phänomenologie des Fremden*, 68.

[89] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 4.

[90] Ibid., 10.

[91] Brandstetter, "Figur und Inversion," 247.

[92] Ibid. Brandstetter develops this topos in a visual sense, promoting the oscillation between figure and ground as a capability of the figure itself, being able to irritate the processes of perception as a "space-time occurrence" (Idem., 247). This rather abstract exploration becomes more clear when we think for example about the play between figure and ground in paintings or in vexatious games, where either figure or background come into focus.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 101.

[95] Ibid., 102.

[96] Ibid., 69-70.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid., 215.

[99] Ibid., 83. The reference to habitual bodies brings Pierre Bourdieu to mind, who, forty years later, developed his concept of the habitus as a double combination of living situation and behavioural practice. This also has an effect on the body (Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 170, 190. monoskop.org/images/e/e0/Pierre_Bourdieu_Distinction_A_Social_Critique_of_the_Judgement_of_Taste_1984.pdf).

[100] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 83.

[101] Ibid., 80-83.

[102] Ibid., 238.

[103] Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 188.

[104] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 68.

[105] Ibid., 203.

[106] Ibid., 233.

[107] Ibid., 241.

[108] Ibid., 233.

[109] See Berger, *Körper denken in Bewegung*, 86, 54.

[110] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 146.

[111] Ibid., 13-14.

[112] Ibid., 153.

[113] Ibid., 87-88.

[114] Ibid., 152.

[115] Ibid., 271; original emphasis.

[116] Brandstetter and Peters, "Einleitung," 10.

[117] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 139.

[118] Ibid., 88.

[119] Ibid., 9.

[120] Ibid., 205.

[121] Ibid., 204-205.

[122] Ibid., 181.

[123] Foellmer, *Am Rand der Körper*.

[124] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 259-260.

[125] Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 43.

[126] Waldenfels, *Topographie des Fremden*, 27.

[127] Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*, 131.

[128] Waldenfels, *Topographie des Fremden*, 24-33.

[129] Ibid., 10-11.

[130] Ibid., 35-37.

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Biography

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SECTION 3: COMMUNITIES

Cell Block Tango *for Chicago inspired image. Dancers: Kimberley Harvey, Louise Dickson, Beth Gardiner, Laura Dajao and Sian Green. Photo: Sean Goldthorpe; © People Dancing (2014) All Rights Reserved.*

11 MILLION REASONS: TRANSMITTING INCLUSION IN DANCE

SARAH WHATLEY

Keywords

disability
photography
nostalgia
exhibition
Yvonne Rainer

Abstract

This chapter discusses the *11 Million Reasons* photographic exhibition commissioned by People Dancing in the UK, which features dancers with disabilities reconstructing still images from 20 well-known films that highlight dance. Comments by the dancers are woven through the chapter to inform the discussion, which also looks to examples of iconic dance photography to ask a number of questions about what the images transmit, and the extent to which the exhibition elicits nostalgia in the viewer.

Opening

In a recent conversation with dance artist Welly O'Brien, when asked about how she saw her role in some of the photographic images in the *11 Million Reasons*[1] exhibition, she replied it is 'just a picture.' Whilst an apparently casual and throw away remark, it led me to think how this comment actually reveals a great deal about the relationship between the dancer and her image, and more particularly perhaps in relation to this exhibition. *11 Million Reasons* is a photographic exhibition led by People Dancing in the UK and funded by Unlimited Impact, created to positively profile Deaf and disabled people who dance. Disabled photographer Sean Goldthorpe was commissioned by People Dancing to create images inspired by iconic dance moments from film. Taking three months to complete, the project involved 160 people and took place in over 12 indoor and outdoor locations in the UK. The aim of the project was to "demonstrate how photography can reach audiences that wouldn't normally access disability arts."[2]

Returning to O'Brien's comment it invites a number of considerations. Does she view the subject, theme or aim of the 'picture' as unrelated to her 'real work' as a dancer or is her image in this particular collection far removed from her own dancing identity? Does she see her role as simply 'servicing' the aims and needs of the exhibition so she has less personal investment in the project overall? Or does she regard the 'picture' as having little general value as a representation of the dance and/or the work she wants to do and does do? In this chapter I will probe these questions to ask how this project shapes discourses around identity, agency, and embodiment in dance, specifically through the lens of disability. Beginning with an overview of this particular exhibition in the broader context of the dance 'still' versus moving image, I will discuss the exhibition from my own perspective as a viewer with some insider knowledge of the project as a whole[3] and will draw on comments shared with me about the exhibition from some of those dancers who feature in the exhibition in response to questions relating to their role in the project, their motivation for taking part, and their response to the image once included in the exhibition.[4]

In developing some broader thinking around this particular exhibition, the notion of the 'picture' in dance and the questions that have arisen out of O'Brien's remark, I will seek to argue that the exhibition exposes two core themes that I will briefly explore in turn. The first is the perception, reception and representation of disability in dance, and the problem of agency when the individual artist is portrayed through a 'still' that seeks to replace the non-disabled with the disabled performer. I ask whether the still image transmits a truthful or fictive idea of the dancer in motion and does the image erase or falsely convey agency and movement potentiality? Or in the stilling of the (disabled) dancing body is the body rendered immobile, silent and unable? Or do the images, now widely circulated, transmit an important statement about disabled bodies in dance? Or are they now 'utilised' images wherein the individual dancer is reduced to a 'message'? The second theme is that of nostalgia, which operates both within the image and its associations, and which relates to disability as bodily condition and as memory.

Exhibition

11 Million Reasons was developed in 2014 by People Dancing with the expressed aim to create "stylish and challenging images [in which] Deaf and disabled people are centre stage as they re-imagine memorable dance scenes from a broad range of well-known films."[5] The exhibition comprises 20 images, inspired by and from the original images, and features a number of dancers with physical, cognitive or unseen disabilities who were invited to take part in the project. It has toured to 11 UK venues and 2 international venues (Zagreb and Macau). The images have been the inspiration for a much wider *11 Million Reasons to Dance* programme of work that has been designed to take dance by disabled people to what are regarded as 'cold spots' in the UK, where disabled people have less opportunity to participate in and/or view dance. The photographic exhibition has been shown as part of this larger tour, presented in galleries, in theatre foyers and a variety of other settings.

The images are intended to be quickly recognisable because they reconstruct photographs taken from famous popular films that feature dance in some way. Many of the original photographs have been in wide public circulation, often for promotional purposes, reflecting the high visibility, reproducibility and ubiquity of the photograph as a medium of representation. Films featured include *Black Swan* (2010), *Billy Elliot* (2000), *Chicago* (2002), *The Sound of Music* (1965)*, The Blues Brothers* (1980), *Saturday Night Fever* (1975), *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Step Up 2* (2008), *Step Up 4* (2012), *The Full Monty* (1997)*, Grease* (1978), *High School Musical* (2006), *Hairspray* (2007), *The Wizard of Oz* (1939)*, Singin' in the Rain* (1952)*, Smooth Criminal* (1988)*, Strictly Ballroom* (1992)*, Flash Dance* (1983)*, The Red Shoes* (1948) and *Dirty Dancing* (1987). The point of the exhibition is to encourage the viewer to 'look again' and to notice that a familiar image is made 'strange' because the movie star is replaced by someone new, and in many cases by a person with a different physicality. The aim is thus to encourage the viewer to see disability as something positive, as in all ways equal to the non-disabled performer who created the 'original' image; to "positively profile Deaf, sight impaired and disabled people who dance, and to desegregate them from anyone else who dances [...] to change people's views around disabled artists and disabled people."[6] The images are intended to be seen as a collection; it is in the totality of the images that the force of the 'message' is intended to be received and be most affecting.[7]

Goldthorpe cleverly manages to capture the atmosphere of the movie in which the dancers have been inserted, created through lighting and staging, shot in both indoor and outdoor settings. In *Black Swan*, for example, dancer Sian Green is closely resembling the Natalie Portman back-view tutu-wearing silhouetted figure, shot from upstage, as she is facing the imagined audience centre stage in full light. In the original, Portman's legs are blurred and out of clear shot, but are likely imagined as they are seen elsewhere in the film; carving out a classical line and pointe-shoe clad.[8] But in Green's recreation the bright spotlight in which she is standing highlights her lower body unveiling a shadowy prosthetic lower leg. The semiotics of ethereality and bodily reality are craftily juxtaposed, perturbing the classical image of an 'ideal female ballet body.'[9]

In another image, there is something of an irony in the description provided for O'Brien's reconstruction of *The Red Shoes*, in which according to the image caption she is Vicky Page 'longing to be a ballerina,' reaching forward to a red ballet shoe hanging by its ribbons on a tree in front of her. Whether the reference to 'longing' is to draw attention to the discriminatory ableist aesthetic inscribed in ballet which effectively rejects any body that diverges from the classical ideal, or is to suggest O'Brien is longing to be able to wear *both* her red shoes is not clear. Moreover, because O'Brien always chooses to dance without her prosthetic leg, which is reflected in the image, and O'Brien has described how the floor is her 'natural home,' seeing her in a ballet pose (supported by a non-disabled dancer who is *en pointe*), and which emphasises the vertical and an apparent resistance to the floor and pull of gravity, is a curious proposition. In her other image in the collection she is held high above the head of Mickael Marso Riviere in an adaptation of the famous lift from *Dirty Dancing* as another apparent flight away from her home ground.

Elsewhere, Jacob Brown's seated recreation of John Travolta's dance floor scene in *Saturday Night Fever* resembles more of a composite of Travolta's many face-to-camera disco moves rather than his iconic asymmetrical 'arm pump' move. Another wheelchair dancer, Laura Jones from Stopgap Dance Company, takes up Julie Andrews' opening scene from *The Sound of Music* with what looks like a playful dare situated atop a steep hillside. Several images feature two or more dancers, including *Chicago* with five women, described in the image's caption as recreating the 'sassy Cell Block Tango.' As five women in provocative poses, this image could be read as foregrounding an exploration of the disabled female body and spectatorship. Disabled people experience always being 'on display' in public spaces.[10] When the dancers here are invited to re-embody the non-disabled female bodies, which were (and are) purposefully on display, their disability is made hyper-visible, but as the dancers have discussed, their roleplay was not always self-determined. As one dancer commented:

Being the type of dancer/performer I am, I would never be in a show like *Chicago,* so this was a rather unique opportunity for me as a performer to be captured in that way […] I am acutely aware that I do not have the physicality of your typical Fosse dancer, so it definitely resonated with me when Louise Wildish said that she wanted *11 Million Reasons* to capture those iconic dance moments from classic films by recasting the lead roles with Deaf and disabled dancers.[11]

What we can't tell from this recreation is if the original actors were similarly uncomfortable in their 'sassiness.'

Image

The dancers I spoke to all described how the photo shoot was set up in advance of their arrival by People Dancing Producer Louise Wildish in collaboration with Goldthorpe. They were given their role, the costume, and the shoot began. As one dancer explained:

We did not have any say in what images we were in and also the set designs were already decided as I believe Louise [Wildish] and the photographer had a clear vision. Everyone on set was very happy and comfortable with what they had to do and they briefed us before the day.[12]

For another dancer, the clear set-up was welcomed – "They knew what they wanted, what would work and so my job, as the performer, was to go in and take on that role. I enjoyed that challenge!"[13] – even though the role she was given felt very unlike her personal character or how she would choose to be seen. When asked if they identify with the image that they have recreated, one dancer exclaimed:

It's not me at all, which is hilarious! Sexy or sultry doesn't come naturally to me! People who know me are generally surprised when they see the image - I don't think they expect me to be in an image like that as it's completely at odds with my character as a person. I like the fact that it surprises them! It surprised me too![14]

Although clearly unfamiliar, for this dancer it didn't appear to produce any discomfort. For another, this role playing seemed more problematic,

commenting that "[t]he image of me is pretty opposite to my sense of how I naturally move or choose to move in choreographic/performative contexts."[15]

When asked what motivated them to take part in the project, some dancers admitted that they agreed to participate because it was paid work, and one because of the loyalty she felt to the people involved. To the extent that the dancers retained some sense of ownership over their contribution is less clear because their involvement was pre-designed and because their contributions were limited to being directed to take up the same pose created by the star of the original movie. There are many stakeholders in the project who could claim authorial control and responsibility (People Dancing, Goldthorpe, the various rights holders as well as the reconstructing dancer) and the multiple processes involved in producing the exhibition complicates the claim of authorship in the work.

It is likely that a shoot of this nature would have raised questions for many dancers who are unfamiliar with a process of stepping in to an already established 'set up' and asked to take on a particular character role. But for dancers with disabilities the intention for them to replace a body with a very different corporeality, to re-embody a normative body, precisely to demonstrate that they "are capable of the same passions as an able bodied person"[16] may well have unintentionally reinforced an unhelpful hierarchy and thereby a distinction between the 'disabled' and 'non-disabled' body. Several dancers found this comparison unhelpful and for one dancer it was a particularly uncomfortable experience, saying:

> Personally […] I don't think there is great value in suggesting that a certain strategy or 'events' elevates disabled people to be equal with non-disabled people. This seems to perpetuate a hierarchy that in my view is already dominant in the way the work of disabled artists is viewed.[17]

Another agreed: "I don't think it's particularly helpful as a statement. It baffles me that in 2017 disabled people can still be perceived as somehow fundamentally different to other (non-disabled) human beings."[18] But this dancer continued by expressing how important the exhibition is precisely for its equalizing impact, commenting, "[t]herefore, all the more reason for there to be an exhibition like this. Some people really need it 'spelt out' to

them that we are all human, regardless of physicality, disability."[19] One dancer was more positive about the statement by remarking "I do think the review is right by saying that statement as I really do think people's outlook is changing on what people with disabilities can do. The Paralympics speaks for its self that we are training to have no limitations."[20]

Whilst the exhibition has a particular aim and is thus perhaps not easily aligned with other photographic exhibitions where dance features so directly, it does elicit responses and might raise questions that have some connection with other dance photography exhibitions. These questions revolve around the play between 'truth' and 'fiction' that any photographic image has the potential to explore. For example, Art Historian Carrie Lambert examines the photographic records of American postmodern choreographer, Yvonne Rainer's iconic work, *Trio A*.[21] Lambert states that they seem to be "particularly misleading"[22] because "the camera stills the dancers of *Trio A* in moments of physical drama"[23] which Lambert argues contradicts the 'truth' of the work and Rainer's "radically antispectacular dance programme."[24] Lambert goes on to consider whether there can actually be any such thing as dance photography (acknowledging the categorical differences between dance as "an art of time and motion" and photography as the art of "the temporal and spatial freeze")[25] and continues by suggesting that Rainer's *Trio A* has a prime directive – constant motion.[26] Her essay offers a richly insightful and extensive analysis of *Trio A*, frequently examining the role of the photograph and Rainer's apparent resistance to the camera, but concluding that the "camera does not so much freeze *Trio A* as distill it."[27] Lambert raises interesting questions about the 'truthfulness' of the photographic image, which can fix dancing bodies into spectacular pictures that may be at odds with the moving body itself.

Rainer's *Trio A* is a single and now historic and iconic performance work in its own right so is very different from *11 Million Reasons*, which is first and foremost a photographic exhibition of multiple images, linked thematically by featuring famous moments from dance movies over time. However, it could be argued that the exhibition relies on the viewer being able to 'call up' the movie in their memory or imagination. The viewer is even encouraged to imagine how the disabled dancer would embody the rest of

the movie that the single image arrests in time. Imagining the whole performance of *Trio A* that *did* generate the photograph is quite different from imagining how the dancer might embody the rest of the movie that the single image appears to arrest in time, but which never happened.

In *11 Million Reasons* there are several truths and fictions operating simultaneously. The images that are being reconstructed are drawn from films that are fictional stories, created with dance as the central theme as a form of fantasy, escapism, as tragic narrative, or to promote the transformative potential of dance. The images further fictionalise the original image by attempting a reconstruction that produces a faux version of the 'original' pose. And yet the image is attempting to portray the truth of the individual dancer in terms of her or his physicality or cognitive impairment. The dancers are asked to recreate the position of the performers in the original image and yet a further truth/fiction is that the image is apparently 'stilling' movement for the purpose of the photograph but what movement took place to capture the pose in *11 Million Reasons* was not that which produced the still image in the original – something I discuss further below. Further, whilst some dancers have sensory impairments or 'unseen' disabilities so they appear to have no 'visible' disability, the aim was to draw attention to the variety of disabilities and the specific reality of each performer's disability and how they perform the 'truth' of their disability through the image. For at least one dancer the image did not portray her truth as a dancer or convey a sense of how she moves but she did not see that as a problem saying: "It's completely different from the dancer I usually am and I love that! I feel quite proud actually, as it isn't something I would usually think I could do."[28]

In the UK, photographer Chris Nash, is probably the most well-known documenter of contemporary British dance, photographing many works by major choreographers since the 1980s. His approach on the face of it seems to share some of the same principles as Goldthorpe's method. Rather than photographing dance performed 'live,' Nash sets up the shoot in the studio, and according to performance theorist Matthew Reason, constructs the set up "to produce still images that are evocative of movement and the experience of dance."[29] However, as Reason argues, "Nash produces photographic images that are very explicitly *made*, not

taken";[30] he works collaboratively with the choreographer to generate material for the camera, working through movement material, getting the dancer to repeat a section for the camera.[31] This process of studying the dance in process, of transformation of the image for the camera, followed by further digital manipulation, is one place where Nash and Goldthorpe diverge in their work. The image in *11 Million Reasons* relies on the transformation of the image after it is taken, without dwelling on studying the dance in process, which may be why they do not so much imply or anticipate motion or prompt a reading of movement into the still image.

Reason claims that "in the context of our engagement with images of dance it is clear that we are most often less interested in movement knowledge – the empirical observation that movement happened – than in the subjective response to movement."[32] What then is our subject response to the 'movement' in *11 Million Reasons*? What is our perception of movement when there is no motion? Can the image re-present the experience of the dance and evoke a kinesthetic empathy through the medium of the image when there is no implication of a body moving? Or is it in the potentiality of movement that the power of the image lies? One of the dancers refers to her own embodied sense of movement potential by describing how she related to the image she was in because it was her life before her accident (that resulted in a physical disability), and even though she was "just posing for the image and not actually dancing" she said, "it gave me that feeling like I was just about to take the stage again."[33]

In Reason's analysis of Nash's photography, in which his focus is kinesthetic imagery, and through which he weaves Nash's own words, he argues for how Nash's images provide "an ambiguous starting point from which movement seems possible but where – crucially – the exact nature and indeed meaning of that movement is determined by the viewer's imaginative and emotional engagement."[34] In *11 Million Reasons*, the images might well convey the possibility of movement but the exact nature of that movement is determined more by the viewer's memory and knowledge of the film from which the image emerges rather than what is evoked through the image itself and imagining what the dancer might or might not be able to reconstruct. Because the image is simultaneously extracted from and situated within another 'object,' that of the film that the

image is reimagining, it might well thwart an emotional engagement for the viewer. Our response may be guided by knowing that the dancer/s are recreating a frozen moment from a longer sequence that may already be 'known' (or remembered) but which could not be performed in the same way, so might impede our subject response.

All photography plays with imagining the dance that the image stills but these images betray the possibility of a before and after; there is little evocation of movement beyond the pose.

Details in most images are surprisingly static, denying any indication of motion. There is no blurring, nothing obscured or fuzzy to suggest something in motion. Only the images for *Billy Elliot* and *Step Up 4* convey a sense of the dancer 'caught' in action. In the former, Jake Maguire is captured mid-move recreating the moment Billy Elliot tells his father he wants to dance. In *Step Up 4,* bboy Denny Haywood is photographed mid-battle. If we agree with Reason's point that "[t]he still image must always enact a distinct interpretation, a selective construction, which in its choices, omissions and creativity tells us more about attitudes to and understandings of performance than merely pointing us towards what it purports to show,"[35] then the inadvertent effect of the stilling of the (disabled) body in most images is that it appears to render the disabled dancing body immobile, silent, even unable, even whilst ably reconstructing the static pose.

Paradoxically, whilst the image stills the body, for some dancers a disciplined, composed stillness is actually physically impossible. As performance practitioner and theorist Margaret Ames observes; "we might observe that disability often makes impossible the feat of quieting the multitude of reflexes, and discharges of internal activity externally. Stillness is a controlled neurological act as much as dancing is. Disability often externalizes internal processes of spasm, fluctuation of tensions and decision at play with indecision."[36] Staging the shoot thus must have demanded an elaborate set-up to establish the pose. Dealing with the individual dancers' unique bodies, movement patterns, assistive technologies and sensory impairments, doubtless also played a role in determining the practicalities of the shoot. For dancers with disabilities it often takes more time to arrive, prepare, and be physically ready to work

than for non-disabled performers. Some may also need support workers to facilitate their involvement. If assistive technologies are needed, such as a wheelchair, then time needs to be built in if the dancers work both in and out of the chair. For O'Brien, whose mobility in daily life is facilitated by a prosthetic limb, but who dances without the prosthetic, time is needed for her to put on and take off her leg when leaving and joining the shoot. 'Crip time,'[37] which describes the traces of temporal shifting in disabled people's lives that mark a difference with normal time[38] is likely to have been a factor in the shoot. Crip time is a reality that affects levels of stamina and cognitive effort, yet refuses to see disability as defining a pre-determined limit.

Nostalgia

The play between the distant or recent past that is invoked through the collected images suggests that *11 Million Reasons* functions as a platform to express nostalgia. Moreover, the exhibition can be read as aligning with recent thinking about a 'false nostalgia,' described by media cultural theorist Katharina Niemeyer as "a pleasure-seeking yearning for former times that we have not, in fact, lived."[39] The images of 'old movies' are thus replete with an inherent longing or yearning for a previous time, for stories of how dance drew lovers together, how dance transforms lives, how dance was a metaphor for redemption, social cohesion and community identity – and how dance became a vehicle for exploring issues as diverse as body image, unemployment, racial segregation, British working class culture, loss of homeland, and the transition from 'silent' to 'talkie' movies in the film industry itself. Whilst these themes might function in current dance practises, the aesthetics of the past image (the pose, the setting, the implied narrative, the costume, the lighting mood) seep into the present image, creating a nostalgized present.

Niemeyer discusses further the theme of nostalgia and observes that the beginning of the 21st century was marked by "an increase in expressions of nostalgia, and in nostalgic objects, media content and styles."[40] Niemeyer's project asks: "what is nostalgia *doing* and what role *do* media play in a context of progress and crisis?"[41] Whether or not *11 Million Reasons* is part of this nostalgia wave of retro styles and vintage moods, as Niemeyer

discusses, is what I consider here. In relation to nostalgia, Niemeyer describes how "media can be used as an *ersatz* stand-in for former rituals, feelings or past, without actually replicating them exactly."[42] On one level, the images in *11 Million Reasons* could be perceived as an ersatz stand-in for the original images. However, the emphasis on 'reimagining' rather than attempting a more faithful 'reproduction' of the image resists the idea that the images are a substitute for the original and are therefore in some way inferior. And yet there is also a sense of artificiality that may run counter to the intention for the exhibition to positively profile disabled people who dance and which seems to underpin some of the dancers' experiences of their role within the shoot. One dancer commented on this:

> I think the impact of so many images is in some way empowering, […] however I think it could have been far more powerful if the images were of 'authentic' dancing by the artists. This would suggest more agency in the work.[43]

The exhibition would likely be of interest to Cinema Studies scholar, Vera Dika, who examines the use of images from film history in contemporary culture to argue for evidence of a growing nostalgic style.[44] Dika's primary focus is film but she talks about images being 'returned' from the past; "the image returns not as representational of the natural real, but as simulacral, as a copy of copies whose original has been lost."[45] In *11 Million Reasons*, the original image is not 'lost' so functions differently, and as I note above, not as an inferior version of an 'original'; rather, the images are a form of recycling for a specific purpose of 'positively profiling' disability, and promoting equality and access. The images are constructed stagings of pictures, so become pictures of pictures thereby addressing "the very structuring of meaning and temporality in the film/photographic image."[46] In the context of Dika's examination, it is interesting that she refers to *Singin' in the Rain*, one of the films that features as an image in the exhibition, which itself complies with illusionistic conventions being a film within a film (by telling the story of putting on the show in a film musical within the film).[47]

There were hints of nostalgia in a few of the dancers' comments although it was not clear whether these reflective remarks emerged because of the photographic project or were a condition of their dancing now in relation to a dancing (or non-dancing) life prior to a disability, if a disability was acquired. One dancer stated:

> I don't identify with the image or film it relates to. However, my partner in the image is one of the first people I ever danced with over 20 years ago so that has meaning for me, actually it makes me a bit sad that it's not an image of us – just re-connecting.[48]

The dancer expresses a heartfelt connection with a past experience that the project promotes even though the image she creates does not recreate her memory of that connection. It is an expression of nostalgia as related to memory, since it recalls times and places that are no more, or are out of reach.[49]

The theme of nostalgia in relation to disability has emerged in another context, when disabled artists and commentators questioned what was termed the 'golden age' of disability arts, identified as being during the 1980s and 1990s, in the focus on archiving work in the recently opened National Disability Arts Collection and Archive (NDACA).[50] If there was a 'golden age' of the past, disabled artists asked, what about the present and the future? Does disability arts have to accept that the good times are over, that we have to look back and not forwards? The artwork that emerged during that time, named 'protest art,' was certainly powerful and the archive project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, is intended to preserve and make visible some of this work that captured the energy of the time and expressed the frustrations of artists.

11 Million Reasons is not intended to be a protest work but does provide an alternative, if static, alternative archive of disabled dance artists. In a different way to that of *11 Million Reasons*, the NDACA project might also be experienced as a project of nostalgia, whilst acknowledging that people with disabilities can distrust nostalgia if it creates a sentimental and fictionalised past, which was not a better time. *11 Million Reasons'* reimagining of past movies does not communicate that life in the past was better for people with disabilities. Indeed, whilst movies have frequently *portrayed* people with disabilities, few have ever directly *involved* disabled

people. In the dance films featured in the exhibition, I can find no trace of a disabled person in the cast list. But nostalgia need not always be about the past. It could be thought of as a projective prologue whereby motives are projected on the future, producing a different kind of fantasy and fiction. This is where *11 Million Reasons* can do its work, to offer an alternative to a future of fantasy and fiction, whereby dancers with disabilities are 'centre stage,' where their disabilities are not seen as deficit or lack, and their interpolation, integration or inclusion in the non-disabled professional performance context is not as 'outsiders' needing to comply with or conform to ableist and hegemonic performance traditions. Rather, as the exhibition aims to show, their own specific embodiment and particular way of moving is re-presenting the variety and 'normality' of differently-abled bodies, whilst alerting visitors to the exhibition to their own variety and difference.

Closing

11 Million Reasons raises several issues that focus on the relationship between the photographic moment and the moving image, between permanence and transience, between normative and non-normative bodies, and between 'truth' and 'fiction' in dance.

I began by citing Welly O'Brien. Her comment in tandem with her own presence in the exhibition has prompted the questions that have underpinned my analysis. For some who feature in the exhibition, their images are not how they perceive themselves as dance artists, so seem to be far removed from their own dancing identity. But most experiences were positive and even for those who felt that their own image did not convey their own artistry, the project appears to have made a positive impact on their own work. One commented:

> It's opened my eyes more to what I can do. To know that I can surprise myself is a great feeling as an artist! Continuing to reaffirm the excitement and importance of coming out of my comfort zone. Made me want to be more mischievous as a performer/artist.[51]

Another explained that her motivation for taking part was that:

> It sounded great fun! It wasn't something that I had seen done before and I could imagine it grabbing people's attention, surprising them…perhaps, making them think about why this is different from what they would usually expect. To me, this is a positive thing.[52]

I have attempted to give voice to the dancers who feature in the exhibition, who can easily be eclipsed by the 'weight' of the movie that the image recalls, and by the message of the exhibition as a totality, so could mean that the dancers feel they are 'in service' to a wider project of advocacy and political action. The individual artist can sometimes be lost in the heft of the 'whole.' However, all those I talked to expressed their hopes for the project overall and were optimistic about the broader impact and benefit of the project. For one, the hope is that the exhibition will open people's eyes to preconceptions that they have/society has/we all have in some way, remarking:

> I want people to see it and enjoy it! The photographer has done a great job with the exhibition. And I hope that on some level it contributes to society continuing to begin to see disabled people not as some 'other' being. We are all human beings and it's our differences (in every sense), regardless of whether or not you have a disability, that make us who we are as individuals.[53]

Two dancers referred to how it had also benefited them. One commenting:

> My hope for the project is for it to carry on with its success and hopefully show other people with disabilities that we all can dance. Doing this shoot helped me not only see what I was capable of but it helped me connect with other people with disabilities too. Also, it gave me the confidence to pursue other opportunities that came my way, as I then went on to be a part of the Paralympic advert for the BBC twice, both involving dance.[54]

And the other:

> In practical terms the project overall has continued to offer me employment in the engagement strand (teaching, mentoring) it has also given opportunity to perform my own work as part of the wider project brief.[55]

Finally, one dancer summed up the way the project has divided views by offering: "I would hope that this project could be a catalyst for another exhibition/collection that makes space for the 'real' dancing and experiences of disabled artists."[56] Authenticity and actuality is a theme that underpins much of the intentions and outcomes of the exhibition. Overall, *11 Million Reasons* is perhaps best described as a catalyst; for showing what different bodies can do when they inhabit the spaces of stage and screen, and for helping to change public perception of disabled people.

Notes

[1] The title *11 Million Reasons* reflects the fact there are more than 11 million disabled people in the UK.

[2] See: www.doingthingsdifferently.org.uk/events/11-million-reasons.

[3] I had several conversations about the project with Louise Wildish, project producer, at the start of the project and during the development of the *11 Million Reasons to Dance* project that led out of the exhibition.

[4] Questions I asked included: What motivated you to take part in the project? Did you have any role in deciding what film/what image you would participate in? Was there opportunity to contribute to the image set up? Having seen the outcome, do you feel you can identify with the image you appear in? If so, how? One review talks about the way the project sends the message that disabled people 'are capable of the same passions as an able bodied person.' Do you think this review is helpful or useful in how people might view and respond to the project? Do you think that the images and the project overall conveys or draws attention to agency of the dancers who feature? Do you think the images convey a sense of how you dance/move or do you think the still image constrains or prohibits imagination of your dancing? What is your own hope for the project? How would you describe the project's impact on your own work as an artist? The artists were contacted and responded

mostly via email and all comments by the dancers included in this chapter are taken from these communications.

5   The description of the project is provided on the People Dancing website: www.communitydance.org.uk/developing-participation/11-million-reasons-to-dance.

6   This description is provided on the People Dancing website: www.communitydance.org.uk/developing-participation/11-million-reasons-to-dance/photography-exhibition.

7   Unlimited Impact, who provided financial support for the project, refer to the message of the project, saying "The stunning, powerful, emotive, and humorous images are diverse with many bringing a subtle but relevant message": weareunlimited.org.uk/our-reason-to-see-11-million-reasons.

8   Another 'fiction' is created here as Portman is not a trained ballet dancer but put in many hours of training in preparation for the film so she could be convincing in her role.

9   There are plenty of sources that discuss the 'ideal ballet body' – see for example: dancemagazine.com.au/2011/07/the-ideal-ballet-body.

10 Sandahl and Auslander, *Bodies in Commotion.* muse.jhu.edu/book/6367.

11 Email communication with contributing artist.

12 Email communication with contributing artist.

13 Email communication with contributing artist.

14 Email communication with contributing artist.

15 Email communication with contributing artist.

16 Cleasby, "A photographer has recreated famous movie dance scenes with disabled dancers," no page number.

17 Email communication with contributing artist.

18 Email communication with contributing artist.

19 Email communication with contributing artist.

20 Email communication with contributing artist.

21 Rainer, *Trio A.*

22 Lambert, *Moving Still*, 87, no-w-here.org.uk/mediating.pdf.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 89.

25 Ibid., 91.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 110.

[28] Email communication with contributing artist.

[29] Reason, "Photography," 240.

[30] Ibid., 241.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., 247.

[33] Email communication with contributing artist.

[34] Ibid., 251.

[35] Reason, "Documentation," 114.

[36] Ames, "Dancing Place/Disability," 178. cadair.aber.ac.uk/dspace/handle/2160/29993.

[37] Alison Kafer, *Feminist;* Kuppers, "Crip time*."* yale.instructure.com/files/1435608/download.

[38] Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies*. www.scribd.com/document/116994411/Rosemarie-Garland-Thomson-Extraordinary-Bodies.

[39] Niemeyer, *Media and Nostalgia*, 9.

[40] Ibid., 1.

[41] Ibid., 2, original emphasis.

[42] Ibid., 12, original emphasis.

[43] Email communication with contributing artist.

[44] Dika, *Recycled culture*, 11.

[45] Ibid., 3.

[46] Ibid., 8.

[47] Ibid., 19.

[48] Email communication with contributing artist.

[49] Niemeyer, 5.

[50] A report on the project and reactions to it are here: www.bbc.co.uk/news/disability-35063050.

[51] Email communication with contributing artist.

[52] Email communication with contributing artist.

[53] Email communication with contributing artist.

54 Email communication with contributing artist.

55 Email communication with contributing artist.

56 Email communication with contributing artist.

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Biography

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PREFERRING THE BLUR: CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CHOREOGRAPHER, AUDIENCE AND TREE IN CALLING TREE[1]

ROSEMARY LEE

Keywords

audience
boundaries
encounters
site
tree

Abstract

This chapter attempts to reveal my personal hopes and fears about my process, whilst documenting and conjuring a sense of creating *Calling Tree* in Bruce Grove Park, Tottenham. I particularly explore my relationship with the audience, with the tree itself, and the ways in which I navigate the complexities of new and existing invisible boundaries in the park, between communities and individuals. I reflect on the profound effect my encounters with unsuspecting audience members that I meet as the work is made have on me, and as a result question what matters to me as an artist.

Since 2014 Simon Whitehead and I have been developing our collaboration on Calling Tree.[2] *Located in and around a mature tree in a public site, and working with a team of aerialists, singers and performers we created a durational performance made up of cycles of songs, movement and messages. Originally commissioned by Migrations, the first* Calling Tree *in 2014 was created for a mature oak tree in the heart of Betws y Coed, North Wales.[3] We then went on to develop the project further for two London locations; in Tottenham for LIFT 2016 in and under the huge boughs of the 500-year-old oak tree in Bruce Castle Park,[4] and in Bloomsbury, presented by The Place and Bloomsbury Festival in and around the elegant London Plane trees of St George's Gardens.[5]*

Each is a response to the trees themselves, their unique site and to the communities – human and otherwise – which share the trees' environments. Reaching out to the surrounding neighbourhoods, an associated programme of activities was also developed with the local people and woven into the daily performances. Using the tree as a gathering point, these ranged from performances by a community choir, spoken word and dance events, local history and nature walks, and talks with artists, ecologists and bird specialists.

This writing focuses on Calling Tree *in Tottenham July 2016, where the performers were Gisele Edwards, Milton Lopes, Alesandra Seutin and Ben Stammers with a visiting singing ensemble of six young women gathered especially for the event.*

Calling Tree *is a collaborative project, hence the occasional use of collective pronouns, however what you read is my personal experience of the work.*

When writing about people who made a particular impression on me during the work in Tottenham, I am aware of the risk of 'othering'. However, I have chosen to describe people in this way to illustrate, honour and celebrate the rich diversity of my neighbouring borough Tottenham in Haringey, described by its MP David Lammy as "one of the most ethnically diverse constituency in the country".[6] The descriptions also reflect memorable features of our interactions.

As performance makers some of us must, to some degree, imagine ourselves as our audience. How else are we to gauge and imagine what their experience is except through our own perception? Theatre maker and composer Graeme Miller[8] once said he sometimes imagined his audience as himself in various guises; ill-fitting clothing, wigs and sunglasses. He said it partly in jest, but it is an image that has stayed with me. It doesn't feel quite as tangible as that in my experience; instead the audience feels like an invisible force, a presence, a silent void. Their absence feels tangible while I am making the work. Like ghosts of the future, they stream around the creative process, poking, shaping, directing, stalling it.

I want to connect with my audience empathically – does that require me to know something about them? All I can know when it comes down to it is what I think I know about humanity – what I think I have some remote chance of touching or moving. In turn I would like the audience to empathise with the work itself and the dancers in front of them, to feel with them and for them.

I make work for an audience of strangers. I desire a relationship with them which I also want to shape. I want it to have intimacy even though I only meet them vicariously through the work. This leads to a tangle of empathetic connections, all imagined and hoped for, all quite delicate and vulnerable.

When an audience enters the 'black box' space of a theatre, many things are already choreographed, without the piece even having begun: the

"Only connect!"[7]

Tottenham Encounters

Elaine and her son, visiting every day

timing of their entrance, the light settings they enter into, what they can see, how they will sit, when they might exit and how. I can sit in the empty theatre, and imagine the empty stage being transformed by the work, my body in roughly the same position as the audience member who will sit there in the future, my sitting bones pressing into the seat as theirs will be.

When I am creating site-specific work, the presence of the future audience is more elusive, less captive, less controlled. I pace out the space the audience will stand in, one good stride per person, then I put my feet into their shoes one by one. I think of the elderly, the wheelchair user, the tiny and the tall, the tired and the energetic.

If planning a promenade performance, I dream of them understanding when and where to go, being respectfully hushed and engaged, knowing the right distance to keep between them and the performance – the perfect audience in other words. Is that the same as Graeme Miller's audience of himself? Perhaps imagining that "perfect" audience helps me figure out how to help them be that, at least give them as many clues as I can, to help them conform to my notion of the performance they are going to make for me. In reality, they become an extension of the cast and their score needs crafting in a similar way to the arc of logic through the work itself. They are themselves an intrinsic part of that logic, their movement, pace and attention affects the flow of the entire work.

Working in public spaces I notice many invisible lines; not just the personal kinespheres in and around ourselves and our project, but also the

Tall man, purple turban, little fluffy dog, on daily run

unspoken, embedded dividing lines in cities between locations and communities, as well as those we create and project around others. This first struck and shook me when I visited Derry/Londonderry to consider making a new work there. There were surveillance cameras, wire fences, concrete foundations where the watch towers used to be, and stone city walls proudly presented with their canons still pointing outward. These harsh, visible boundaries betrayed the invisible lines (be they past or current) between houses, shops, graves, and people, convincing me to cross them physically and metaphorically in the new work. Tiptoeing, running, skateboarding, cycling across them gently, willfully, easily, in and out of the Bogside[9] and the Fountain,[10] carefree and oblivious of the historic hatred that for a few still envelops each territory. *Without*,[11] the seven-screen video installation that resulted from my first walk on the city wall, portrays a city where people can move, appear and disappear anywhere. The figures are as much ghosts of the past as visions of future inhabitants.

Coming then to a village in Wales, a park in Tottenham and public gardens in Bloomsbury for the most recent outdoor project *Calling Tree*, I am acutely aware of the boundaries we set up ourselves. Perhaps reawakened by the experience of working in Derry where for every step a performer took – whether that step was into uncharted territory of the 'other' or on their home turf – I made it my practice to imagine how that might feel. Not only for the performer, but for the passers-by who would witness them live

Woman in coat pacing

Woman praying on her knees at bench

*Man in hoody, his mate and his dog (see p.**)*

Kind Dave

Gentle gardeners

Librarian who climbed tree as a child

as they were being filmed, and for their relatives, friends and the general public who might come to watch the subsequent video installation.

I feel that we – human beings that is – live in times where we are trying to expose these invisible dividing lines and sometimes redraw them afresh. Some aim to mark them with more force indelibly onto the landscape and others aim to erase them, hoping for a free flow of thoughts, ideas and people. I can sense myself doing that personally, drawing and rubbing out chalk or charcoal lines around myself or/and my work. I can sense myself preferring the blur.

To blur a line that one has noticed in a park – between the families and the drinkers and smokers of varied substances, the sane and the insane, the bathed and the unbathed, the poor and the rich – takes direct action: literally walking and forging a new *desire path*[12] across the grass; changing the silent, accepted, unspoken choreography of the public space. Just as in Derry when I walked from the Bogside to the Fountain, smiling slightly awkwardly at anyone I met, in Tottenham I contemplated striding across to the drinkers (one of whom, every time I turned to look at them was weeing against a tree). I mostly thought the better of it, and instead approached them sideways, via longer diversions along paths to walk past them and acknowledge them with smiles and small talk. To cross that open expanse directly to them, head on, would have felt too strong a statement, potentially too threatening to them. It was as if there was an accepted invisible fourth wall in that no man's land between us, across that vast

Drunk man, bitter tears of regret for voting leave

Smokers

Noah

Drinkers

Boy on his bike

expanse of open grass. They watched us from under their tree and we watched them from under ours. It was completely amicable, respectful, and accepted, both of us entertaining each other; but that open space between us remained for the most part uncrossed directly until our performer Ben Stammers (who periodically sprinted through the park complete with loud megaphones playing bird calls) arrived and the rules of the work meant he ran directly across that divide. Simple choreographic choices subvert the human geography of the park for brief moments like a cat among the pigeons.

When we began working on *Calling Tree*, we decided we would make ourselves available to talk to locals and passers-by during the on-site making process. This simple decision became a personal challenge for me. During the first half of our residency, before I got too caught up in the mechanics of the performance we were creating, I would make myself acknowledge and speak to literally anyone who looked up, or glanced at us, however shyly.

Initially we adopted this open, extroverted approach in order to engage with the users of the space in which we were resident, to allay any fears and to feed the work itself by our growing knowledge of the tree's human community. We were, after all, climbing their tree, filling it with ropes. This could raise alarm for local people. The danger of artists metaphorically parachuting in and out without thought of the disruption of the familiar and often treasured space is one I want to avoid at all costs. Interventions into

Boy on his bike, stays ten hours

Fitness coaches pounding the air

Older women walking together for fitness

Laughing Polish granny, embarrassed grandson translating

Woman who sat beneath the tree to get over huge arguments with her husband

public spaces may be accepted when the viewer knows it is a one-off, but our taking up residence in and beneath a tree for a longer period of time could be seen as anything: odd, threatening, fool hardy, hippy, leftie, self-righteous, insensitive, alien, arrogant, entitled. Who were we – protestors or tree surgeons? For others it was a welcome change: affirming, adventurous, stimulating, poetic, hopeful, joyful. I had imagined myself into the minds of everyone, tasting those contrasting reactions to us being in their public space, from the most wary and aggressive, to the most welcoming and gracious. These are my imagined audiences of strangers.

Paradoxically, putting myself into their shoes and minds (as *I* imagined them; as if I knew?) has the danger of paralyzing me as an artist, but I do it in the wishful hope it might help me create work that can touch a range of people whose lives I cannot in truth begin to imagine; indeed, strangers.

These usual imaginings of the future audience were redundant here; now here they were in broad daylight, everyday. There was no need to imagine them and I couldn't and I shouldn't ignore them (as we often do, going incognito into a theatre audience and hiding at the back). The self-imposed challenge (which, I confess, slightly obsessed me) of talking to anyone who glanced our way became part of my daily practice.

I became aware of how many people I would normally not think to acknowledge; unconscious engrained choices. I suspect in most public contexts I am less likely to make spontaneous eye contact with men unless elderly or very young. I probably now avoid eye contact with teenagers for

90-year-old man whose father remembered the tree before it was struck by lightning and lost one huge limb

Chinese, Afghan, Cypriot, Turkish, Polish, Somali, Portuguese, African, Afro Caribbean, Jamaican, Nigerian, Vietnamese, French, English, Scottish, Irish, Brazilian, Eastern European, Middle Eastern, Kurdish, Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist, Catholic, Protestant, Non-conformist, Quaker, Evangelical, Agnostic, Atheist.

fear of embarrassing them. I avoid eye contact with people from some other cultures for fear it might be misinterpreted. I certainly avoid eye contact with people I suspect to have mental health issues. All that had to be cast aside. I assumed a different character on some level. Perhaps having a directorial role in a public place gave me some kind of strange and welcome confidence, or perceived opening to perform, to be other than my norm with strangers. It gave me a sense of security.

The tangible, solid presence of the tree in Tottenham provided a safe space where I could return to my colleagues. Perhaps being with a tree gave me permission and a point of contact much as having a dog or baby does. The living tree holds no judgment and makes no assumptions; it is neutral in its tree-ness, and therefore safe. It has nothing to prove, it is non-threatening. Talking about the tree and our relationship to it allowed conversations to start between strangers more easily. Maybe this tree, with its extraordinary sculpted form and its incredible age particularly drew strangers together for moments of contact and often shared wonder.

I am wary of suggesting the tree is anything other than itself in its tree-ness and is both no one's and everyone's. Nevertheless, this tree has a real and profound affect on me personally. After spending almost four continuous weeks under its boughs, on the day after our project ended I found myself finding an excuse to go back to be with the tree again. The tree offered me a tangled canopy against the summer sky, a living, sculpted presence, revealing its extraordinary ecosystem and reminding me of my place in it. It

Lyrics of Terry Mann's song commissioned for *Calling Tree*

Listen,
listen, listen,

I hear a tree rustling in the evening wind.
Branches twist out of me, leaves whisper in my ribs.

became my home for a brief while, helping me reflect on what it is to be part of the human species, sharing the elements with the tree and all its inhabitants. It helped me sense more tangibly my connectedness as one particular species of many. It is said an oak tree sustains up to 284 species of insect, up to 324 taxa of lichen,[13] let alone the birds and mammals; we are one of those mammals along with the squirrels. When living abroad for five years what I missed most were mature, deciduous trees, particularly oaks. Noting that the absence of familiar trees and other flora around me made me feel less rooted and more alien, I often assume that must be the case for others. Perhaps in pointing out the great oak's presence and features to local people, some of whom were first generation immigrants, I might in some sense affect their sense of belonging.

Unsettling me though was that whilst a symbol of stability, strength and endurance for many countries, the oak is also associated with royalty and establishment for some English people. I was heartened to learn that the oak tree was originally the symbol of the working people as it provided such an abundance of acorns for their pigs[14] and only relatively recently acquired a different connotation. The desire to subvert this hijack of the oak's symbolism shaped how I approached *Calling Tree* in Tottenham. This great oak grew in an ancient royal hunting ground and now stands in a public space to be enjoyed and protected by working people. In its stillness, in its colossal presence and in its naturalness, it provides a focal common point for us all across our other divides of culture, experience, income, colour or gender.

Be still a moment.
Be still a moment, be still.

Flesh of flesh,
bone of my bone you are,
we can never be torn apart;
bliss or woe,
bliss or woe.

Breathe in,
breathe out
human being stand by me:
no judgment,
no judgment,
no judgment.

No human has created it except to aid its life by erecting crutches for its lower branches and tending to its wounds and scars, protecting the ground around its roots. It is a visual reminder of our tending of nature, of this elder, our human kindness to another species and our respect for it. Equally its scars, its contorted shape and weight remind us of its age, its incremental growth towards the light and space, it is a visual, three dimensional image of one life through five centuries, doing its thing, being itself. It is wild but un-scary. In Chinese the term wild can be translated as self-ablazement.[15] We see the tree being itself as we do a child or a dog, unselfconsciously. The old saying "never work with children and animals" is precisely because of their self-ablazement. They will always upstage you; the same might apply to trees.

We learn about and understand each other through our presence. Just as I use my own presence in teaching, by modeling a state I would like to transfer by proximal osmosis into the students' bodies, I try to also use it to calm audience members in outdoor work. Sometimes people's frustration and fear of the unknown affects them physically – they seem literally 'knotted' by their discomfort. I will stand with them, still, calm and quiet, slowing and lowering my voice in the hope it will encourage them to take a moment to just watch and wait, let them settle inward a little and rely less on their cerebral first response in an encounter with the unfamiliar. It does not always work if at all but I keep trying, against the odds. It strikes me that a tree might have this affect. Does its living silence and apparent

Breathe,
breathe with me.

Listen to this tree,
listen, wake up;
we are all part of this.
Don't go back to sleep.

Listen,
waken,
breathe.

stillness calm us? Facilitate people talking together? Give us a different sense of time?

Graeme Miller observes that relationships thrive better with a 'third space'[16] present. I remember the best conversations I had with my mother as a teenager were often side-by-side in a car, our talk mediated by the third space of the road ahead and the windscreen wipers. For *Calling Tree* the tree became the third space, a neutral presence/being, a conduit for connection.

The tree in all its tree-ness perhaps enabled these little conversations to flourish. Any apparent differences between us seem lessened in the presence of this living being. At the start of the project when walking through all the green spaces in Tottenham we could see on the A to Z,[17] we turned the corner round the museum in Bruce Castle Park and there it was; it quite literally took my breath away. A huge low ancient oak like something from an 18th century pastoral landscape painting, its huge branches twisting out in all directions. I imagined it standing in the very centre of the borough reaching out metaphorically to all corners of Tottenham, one of the most richly diverse areas in Europe. Unlike the tall oak in the valley in Wales where, from the top most branches, the performers called out excerpts of Rilke's poetry, the words ricocheting off the mountains, this Tottenham Oak[18] was a *gathering* tree.

Flesh of flesh,
bone of my bone you are,
flesh of flesh,
bone of my bone you are,
flesh of flesh,
bone of my bone you are.

Listen,
stand,
don't go back to sleep.[19]

Bringing work – not just the art work itself but the process, the presence of the team and myself – into these public realms means I don't only experience the relationship with our audience vicariously through the finished work itself. Instead we meet them face to face from day one. At first I felt I might be preparing them to be the audience I secretly desire for the finished work. But I realized that wasn't going to be the case in Tottenham. Our audience here might desire a chat but not to see the work at all. They had no interest. I surprised myself by feeling completely alright about this. Somehow these encounters were more fulfilling to me than meeting the 'proper' audience at the final performance.

Memorable successes of *Calling Tree* in Tottenham for me *are* the meetings with the boy on his bike who stayed all day, the families, the woman in full hijab who finally sat with me gripping my arm, the man with the five Alsatians who shared a sentence with me in passing that reaffirmed the power of making art work. Were it not for *Calling Tree* these tender moments of transformation could not have occurred. The making of this work becomes the conduit for these meetings.

These meetings in their small way affirm our aims for *Calling Tree*: to gently remind the users of the park of their arboreal silent companions. I hope the work engages them in their role of both stewards of the tree and humble onlookers too - as connected. Maybe they can feel the tree is as much theirs as anyone's and no one's; perhaps it allows them to have a moment of reflection on life, nature and its wondrous interconnectedness.

This is probably wishful thinking. Though I don't know all their names, I miss them.

I wonder why these encounters remain so very poignant for me still so long after. Perhaps they helped me feel more part of the wide world of humans out there; I can belong with them without hiding away my loves and ways of seeing the world.

What sustained me as a younger artist was, I admit, my hope that my work might move people, based on what I thought and hoped I knew about humanity. Coupled with this desire was a belief that if I got the overall structure and concept right and trusted my art form enough, it would work on its own, despite me and my frailties and doubts.

When I bring my work to the everyday, the ordinary, into people's domestic lives, crossing their daily path to the newsagent or interrupting their fitness regime, I am challenging my unspoken, imagined and hard to articulate desires and beliefs. Pulling this precious personal construct into the cold light of day where there is no support of the theatrical conventions and architecture seems brutal, but an ultimate challenge for me as an artist to confront. It puts the entire process and work itself under renewed personal and public scrutiny. I wonder sometimes if I am trying to impose the work and myself to greater challenges to test them. Am I a saboteur of my own unwritten artist's mission statement or manifesto?

Similarly, the dawning that what remains for me after the fleeting performance is gone is the memories of those people I spoke to during the

process. Does that blot out the artwork itself? Does the fact that I desire the audience to notice the tree, and their surrounding in relation to themselves obliterate the performance? Perhaps this is all part of the drawing and rubbing out of the chalk or charcoal lines. Am I erasing the very work I try to make? Rubbing it into the clouds, the soil, into the atmosphere of the park, into the memories of the people and myself. I imagine it is part of preferring the blur. I dare to wonder – is the blur interconnectedness?

O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?[20]

Five memorable encounters with people I met during the making of Calling Tree

Children who became stewards

During the first performance in Tottenham we noticed a little, lively gaggle of ten or eleven year old children laughing and chatting, particularly during the choir's song. When the choir came back to repeat their song an hour later we noticed them again, rushing for a front seat, jostling to sit on the log, this time intent and engaged in the song. Next we saw them chatting to our rigger and trying out sitting on his shoulders, or was it standing? Then we spot them chatting to our steward and assistant who has given them big yellow LIFT t-shirts; they seem to be negotiating with our producer Nicky Childs from Artsadmin. Another hour later and they run to watch the choir again this time transfixed. They stay the whole time, no adults in sight and wave goodbye at the end of the evening. Next day Simon and I are blearily at the tree at 9 am to teach an open movement session beneath the tree, there are the three children waiting for us. We ask why they are here so early, they answer they are here to work for us. We are touched and say there really is nothing to do. They retreat to the playground dejected. Once the session begins they quietly join in, eyes closed improvising with

us, hand on a sacrum following a partner, offering thoughts on what they notice about the dance and the tree when asked, stifling off giggles at times. I am stunned and humbled by their curiosity and courage to join in with this extraordinary group – several keen and game older women, a young mother who was passing with her baby whom she carried throughout, and an older person waiting for their car to be serviced who was walking past us and had never danced before. It was affirming to witness this motely group of strangers dancing together with tenderness and acceptance of each other. All day the three youngsters work as stewards – inviting and cajoling the audience to write tiny message poems to attach to the great oak's little young tree near it, grown from its acorn, learning bird calls and recording them into megaphones, running with performer Ben Stammers across the park as part of the performance and listening… always listening to the choir singing. One boy is proud of his earned voucher to get a free drink – "I am a man now," "why?" "I have drunk a cup of tea". They leave as dusk is coming, running into the evening. We miss them. Nicky remembers the school they told her they go to and contacts the head teacher to tell the school about their remarkable students and to thank them and let their parents know how much we enjoyed their children.

A few months ago I looked up from my seat on the underground to see a gaggle of teenagers and one of their mums returning from a night out in central London. I immediately recognize them as the children. They are suspicious of me at first as I try to start up a conversation with them, until I pull out the laptop and show them photographs of themselves and the project and they become so animated, the new coolness of teenager slipping away so easily into excitement. It is such a delight to bump into them again. I am moved.

Afghan mother with two lively sons

Two very small doe-eyed little boys come to the tree and try to climb the ladders immediately. I distract them by playing with them on a seesaw I make over a log holding their hands to walk the plank and jump off. I glance around to see where the adult with them might be. In the distance is a woman in full black hijab. She

beckons to them every so often but doesn't come near. The older boy speaks English and the toddler just grins. After quite some time of helping them balance I ask the boy what language he speaks to his brother. He seems worried to tell me. Pashtun. I encourage him to bring his mother over and translate for me so I can talk to her. She won't come, instead I try to send the children back to her, I wave and smile and hope that maybe they will return. They do and we play again and their mother stands a little closer but still does not react to my attempts to welcome her over. So instead I play for almost an hour keeping them from the ladders up the tree that they so desperately want to scale. Perhaps during the third visit I am sitting on a log with the children beside me watching performer Gisele Edwards working on a rope hanging from the tree. I try to explain to the boys what we are doing, since they don't know what a performance or an audience is (its actually quite tricky to explain). Suddenly I feel a hand on my arm and there beside me is their mother animatedly gripping my arm and gesturing up to Gisele. She is terrified she will fall and that I must help her. I try to tell her that Gisele is safe, that she has practiced a lot, she knows what she is doing. The woman looks into my eyes and I into hers to try to reassure her. She continues to talk to me in Pashtun laughing and smiling expressively and I continue in English and futile gesticulations though neither of us knows what the other is saying. I feel relief and joyful.

I don't see her again until in the middle of one of the performances. I spot her sitting with her whole family; there are older girls and the boys. I talk to a reticent older girl and ask her to thank her mother for coming back. They stay for a little while in the presence of the event. Next time I look, they have gone.

M

A tall, handsome, gold toothed black man with waist length dreadlocks, in shorts – a man we will call M – excitedly greets a group of adults with learning difficulties who we have introduced to the tree and who are entering the nearby playground. He goes to kiss one of their hands but he is physically and verbally pushed

away by their very fierce white male carer – "get back, back off, I have a duty of care, BACK OFF NOW". Simon and I are shaken by this man's aggressive stance. M retreats tearfully to us under the tree, explaining how all his life this has happened to him – could he kiss my hand please? I let him press his lips to my hand repeatedly. He only wanted to respect them and greet them he says as he feels for them; he knows how it is. He tells us of his run-ins with the police, rolling down his white knee socks to show his scars from the police car he says ran him over deliberately. He knows what it is to be hounded and persecuted. He tells us his name. He gets quickly agitated and cross that I cannot repeat it correctly at first but is calmed by Simon. He tells us how he loves the tree and has climbed it, how children should be allowed to climb it because it will make their limbs supple and fit and make not just their bodies supple but their minds. Children should be allowed to climb, to be adventurous, to explore the world through their hands, their bodies. His words make us well up. M's suffering in the world to be accepted, was so acute, but his sensitivity and wisdom so poignant too. I am wary to open the door of our open space more than it is already, having had much experience with mental illness. We wonder if our befriending means he will be with us daily as he suggests. He is restless though and leaves saying he will return. Next time we see him bounding across the dewy grass towards us with such intent. I am here he says, ready to climb the tree with you. We gently dissuade him and chat for a while about his life and then as suddenly as he arrived he says he must try to find a present for his girlfriend. He wants to give her a pet. We ask what sort of pet will he try to get, he says – a tadpole. I am going to find a tadpole. He strides off with such purpose.

We never see him again; M, did you find your tadpole for your lady?

Distant man with his pack of dogs

A white man with a shaved head, trackies, trainers and jacket and four or was it five elegant Alsatians at his heels does a circuit round the park that does not include going past the tree but I see him from afar regularly

as he leaves the park. The dogs are large, calm and magnificent and he seems a natural master of his pack, it is almost mythic. One day I am closer to him as I return to the tree with hot drinks. I wave to him and comment on his beautiful dogs and say how I see him from afar most days. You must think we are a bit weird I say. He says quietly "what you are doing is meaningful and profound". I am utterly stunned, this was so unexpected, I begin to weep.

Man in hoody, his mate and his dog

I spy across the divide (the huge expanse of lawn) a white man with his hood up and a sturdy dog with a huge jaw that frightens me. He is staring at us. I take a deep breath and walk towards him. I am concerned that directly walking towards him across the space he thought was big enough for him to stay protected from me/us is threatening. He hardens and seems unsure whether to answer me and looks at me with what I read as distain though its probably shyness and fear. I in turn can see myself over-smiling and busy in my movement, such an uncool middle-aged woman trying to jolly the encounter. But I tell myself I must trust the work, just as I always have told myself when I feel as if I am losing faith. "Trust the form, trust the form" was my mantra and here it is again. We start to talk and his mate sidles up too. I talk about the tree's age and he is beginning to be interested. I say "you see Henry VIII might have ridden under it" and his mate reminds me, "No it would only have been tiny then, not big enough". I am so amazed at his accuracy and my stupidity we become more equal together in that moment. We start to discuss why Gisele and Milton have so many ropes. The bigger man says "it's ridiculous, I climbed that tree all the time, I got higher than them. I have fallen from it many times, had a few injuries from it. Why do they need all that kit?" I am admiring of his climbing and discuss health and safety and our sadness that we cannot put a show on without all the kit for lots of reasons. But all the time the respect and love of the tree is evident in these men. I suspect that people who I look like I might be, do not usually start conversations with them. We nod goodbye and I say come and see us again

and why not climb it again one day? He says "nah" implying he is too old now. A few days later a man with clean white jeans and a grey top comes bounding towards me, quite radiant. I don't know who it is but I pretend I recognize him. He is smiling and saying "I have been up I have been up again!" He is a different man, full of life and vibrancy rather than the leaden heaviness and suspicion of our meeting before. He tries to go up to show me and I say "wow but be careful of your white jeans". He bounced down, the spring and life in his body is fantastically beautiful. The tree has reinvigorated him and I suspect our conversation gave him some status he did not know he could have.

Man in white jeans, keep climbing the tree, keep climbing the tree.

Notes

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[2] *Calling Tree* www.artsadmin.co.uk/projects/calling-tree. The two versions of *Calling Tree* in London were co-produced by Artsadmin & presented by London International Festival of Theatre (Tottenham) and Bloomsbury Festival with The Place 2016. Funded by the Culture Programme of the European Union *Imagine 2020 (2.0) & Create to Connect* project, the National Lottery through the Arts Council England and the Adobe Foundation Fund with support from the London Boroughs of Haringey & Camden. *Calling Tree* was developed through a commission in 2014 from Migrations and supported by the Jerwood Choreographic Research Project.

[3] 23-25 August 2014 at Cae Lan Betwys y Coed, Wales. Produced and presented by Migrations

[4] 30 June - 2 July 2016 at Bruce Castle Park, Tottenham, London. Co-produced by LIFT and Artsadmin, presented in association with The Place.

[5] 21-23 October 2016 St George's Gardens, Bloomsbury, London. Co-produced by The Place and Artsadmin, presented in association with Bloomsbury Festival.

[6] David Lammy, Black History Month.

[7] Forster, E. M. *Howards End* (title page, epigram). This quote has remained present with me since studying *Howards End* in the late 70s for my A levels. It is widely used and interpreted in a number of ways, which I suggest is testament to Forster's genius. For years I thought of it as meaning only connect to others, across class, gender and race, but recently I have realised it could be read as imploring for an action to be inextricably linked to all its consequences, and lastly to mean only connect your whole nature, from your transgressive sexual desires to your more conventional self.

[8] Spoken in conversation at ResCen private meeting Middlesex University (date unknown). Graeme Miller later wrote in an email to me "they are other and to be real in the future – but like every "other" guess work based on yourself. Robert Wilson is insistent he is making work FOR an audience however strange or challenging that might be – he is considering the details of this communication" (2017)

[9] The Bogside is a neighbourhood outside the city walls of Londonderry/Derry. It is largely Catholic/Irish republican. It borders the Fountain.

[10] The Fountain is a staunchly Protestant loyalist neighbourhood just outside the city wall. www.visitbishopstreetandthefountain.com/Map.pdf

[11] *Without* (2013) a seven-screen installation commissioned by and created with Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company for the Londonderry/Derry UK City of Culture programme. www.artsadmin.co.uk/projects/without; http://echoechodance.com/projects/without

[12] A desire path is a path trodden by people or animals, or even bicycles. It's often a short cut. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desire_path

[13] www.countrysideinfo.co.uk/woodland_manage/tree_value.htm

[14] Bob Gilbert – story-teller and urban ecologist and writer of the Green London Way – led walks and talks at *Calling Tree* Tottenham and Bloomsbury. He referred to the symbolism of the oak in his free talk by the oak tree in Bruce Castle Park in Tottenham July 2016. The association with royalty began in 1651 after the future King Charles II hid from the Roundheads in an oak tree. www.greenlondonway.com; www.greenbelt.org.uk/artists/bob-gilbert

[15] I came across this evocative and thought provoking term in Robert Macfarlane's *The Wild Places*. He writes: "There is a history that tells of wildness as an energy both exemplary and exquisite. […] Such a love for the wild can be found in the Chinese artistic tradition known as shan-sui or 'rivers-and-mountains' (2007: 31). Shan-shui originated in the early fifth century BC and endured for two thousand years. Its practitioners lived in the mountain lands of China, and wrote about the wild world around them. Their art sought to articulate the wondrous processes of the world, its continuous coming-into-being. To this quality of aliveness the shan-shui artists gave the name zi-ran, which might be translated as 'self-ablazeness', 'self-thusness' or 'wildness'." And: "the wild proceeds according to its own laws and principles … acts or moves freely without restraint, … is unconfined, unrestricted." Co-incidently the term 'suchness' (translation of Tathata) has parallels, meaning the as-is-ness of the moment, and used in Buddhist teaching, I used the term in the title the Suchness of Heni and Eddie (2002). www.rescen.net/Rosemary_Lee/suchness.html

[16] Graeme Miller spoke in a private conversation with me (2016) about the third space. He later wrote in an email to me – "the analogy is the bench conversation or the car-drive where the view becomes a kind of read/write surface – a hinterland that enables communication to come in at an angle rather than head-on. It's space because it allows a certain amount of wandering. You're right then about the tree being this space" (2017).

[17] An *A to Z* is a brand of maps, often taking the form of a paperback sized book of maps for the whole of a city.

[18] The Tottenham Oak, Bruce Castle Park, Tottenham. www.tottenhamtrees.org/tottenham-oak.html.

[19] *Calling Tree* a song composed by Terry Mann, commissioned by Rosemary Lee and Simon Whitehead. The words are compiled and arranged by Rosemary Lee and Simon Whitehead and draw on oral poetry and excerpts from Milton and Rumi. It was premiered at the Tottenham *Calling Tree* and sung by six young women who mainly sang gospel songs in their respective churches. The group sang it beneath the oak tree four times throughout the performance. In the Bloomsbury *Calling Tree* it was sung by Sianed Jones and Isaac Lee-Kronick as a duet four times throughout the duration. www.terrymann.net.

[20] Excerpt from Yeats, *Among School Children*, 217. www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43293/among-school-children.

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Biography

Rosemary works in a variety of contexts and media, creating site-specific works often with large cross-generational casts, video installations and films. Her research interests include-creating a moving portraiture of both the individuals and the performing communities, the relationship with audiences in outdoor contexts, highlighting our relationship with our environment.

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Hidden Spire devising session. Photo: © Josh Tomalin (2015) CC-BY-NC

CITIZENSHIP, PERFORMANCE AND 'VULNERABLE' GROUPS; A CASE STUDY

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Keywords

homeless community
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Abstract

The subject of this chapter is a case study about inclusion, access and citizenship that was carried out in 2015 as part of the pan-European *Civic Epistemologies* project, in collaboration with the Hidden Spire project in Oxford, UK. The case study brought together artists, homeless people and a local charity in order to examine how homeless people engage with digital cultural heritage and how it influenced their own practice. Negotiation between what is hidden and what is revealed through the writing of a theatre script created a context for the homeless community to explore cultural heritage and digital technologies.

Introduction

Cultural heritage is "the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations."[1] With the development of digital technologies and widespread access to digital platforms, the way we engage with cultural heritage has been transformed. The EU-funded *Civic Epistemologies* project[2] examined the participation of citizens in research on digital cultural heritage and humanities. In the project, the term 'citizens' was used to refer to those individuals who inhabit a city or town and who are entitled to its privileges. It is a loaded term that inevitably opens up debates within legal, political and social discourses.

This chapter focuses on a case study within the *Civic Epistemologies* project titled *Hidden cultural heritage – inclusion, access and citizenship* that was carried out in collaboration with the Hidden Spire arts project.[3] The case study explored key issues around the nature of 'hidden' cultural heritage and its relationship to digital technologies. By 'hidden' we are referring to culture that takes place in contexts that have limited public exposure; it resides in the individual histories and experience of the individual citizen. It is culture that is not the focus of cultural institutions because it is unknown or falls outside of conventional archiving strategies, and it emerges and resides within the memories, bodies and creative expressions of participants. Our main goals in the case study were to understand the types of digital cultural heritage content (e.g. digital books, online videos, online archives) the vulnerable group used or were interested in, and how they accessed this material. We focused our interviews on concrete examples and we learned that a variety of objects, institutions and cultural events were important. We also wanted to better understand if accessing this digital content somehow affected what the participants were doing within Hidden Spire. Another focus of the case study was to better comprehend the participants' understanding of citizenship and if Hidden Spire allowed them to be 'active citizens.'

This chapter will thus draw on this case study to investigate the relationship between digital cultural heritage and marginalized communities. Our investigation sheds light on the effects digital

technologies and participatory art-making have on vulnerable groups and professional artists. However, our primary focus is on the social aspects; we consider whether a vulnerable group feels more included in society through the act of participating in an arts project. This focus enables us to also refer to the pedagogical aspects of the case study.

Background and methodology

The impulse for this case study grew out of the researchers' relationship with Hidden Spire, that has been a core activity for Arts at the Old Fire Station (AOFS)[4] in Oxford, UK. AOFS is a charity and social enterprise that is co-located with Crisis, the national charity for homeless people. AOFS and Crisis are very different organisations under the same roof. AOFS brings together arts workers and homeless people for professional development. Crisis develops holistic services that tackle the root causes of homelessness. They offer activity classes and counseling to improve health and wellbeing. Through education, training and employment services they support people back into work, and offer housing advice and access to decent permanent homes. In December 2012, the two organisations came together to produce the first Hidden Spire event as a manifestation of their collaborative ethos. The aim of Hidden Spire is to demonstrate that 'inclusive art' and 'excellent art' can be the same thing. The event brings together professional artists and Crisis members to create a performance using music, dance, theatre and visuals. The two groups work together and aim to produce an event to be performed confidently to a paying public on a biennial basis, subject to funding. Everything from set design and script-writing to front-of-house is developed collaboratively between the artists and Crisis members. In 2015, we used Hidden Spire as a case study – specifically the script-writing production process – to investigate the relationship between the process of co-creation and the use of digital technologies within vulnerable groups. Our methodology consisted of observing and interviewing participants. Unless otherwise stated, all comments from the participants in the project are drawn from the interviews in 2015. A full impact report on the 2014-2015 Hidden Spire project was published by Liz Firth and Anne Pirie.[5]

Citizenship, arts and digital cultural heritage

The homeless community is arguably one of the most marginalized groups. The homeless person is often 'invisible' to those with no direct experience of homelessness, and who might be regarded as part of 'mainstream society' by conforming to conventional or common expectations of what it means to be a citizen. In this chapter, we reveal that digital cultural heritage can be used as a tool that strengthens the fragile relationship between mainstream society and the homeless community.

As Charles Antaki and Sue Widdicombe[6] suggest, the construction of the citizen is in part the construction of an identity. Our case study of Hidden Spire found that through engagement with digital cultural heritage, Crisis members had a chance to reconstruct their identity and moreover engage with mainstream society. Within Hidden Spire, margins and centres continuously shifted as people who were often labeled or self identified as removed from society found ways to bring their own knowledge and creative outputs to the workshops. Through Hidden Spire, behaviours and patterns that often took place in private settings revealed that some Crisis members were engaging in conversations with people in other cities and countries and that those exchanges influenced the workshops.

While working with Hidden Spire, our questions focused on inclusion and exclusion in society, and helped us to understand if marginalized communities found agency through the act of participating in an arts project. Highlighting the value of community participation, the European Special Peace Programme acknowledged the role of the arts and the creative industries, as economic drivers and agents of change.[7] Agency is not a straightforward notion; it is inherently multidimensional and it can be exercised in different domains and at various levels.[8] Agency in the context of a collaborative arts project that involves a range of participants with different roles, responsibilities and aspirations is particularly complex. Our work allowed us to revisit narratives around citizenship. For example, while in the workshops, the participants felt they belonged and were like anyone else in the room. Outside of the building they were relatively "invisible," and as one Crisis member highlighted, the workshops gave her a "safe place" where she could construct and rebuild her identity.

During the writing sessions digital technologies were not a major part of the devising processes, and later in this chapter we will expand on the types of exercises the facilitators used. Digital cultural heritage entered the conversation when the Crisis members were either inside the Crisis computer lab or outside of the AOFS building, and in other public places like a library, cultural venues or on the internet on their mobile devices. What was happening outside the studio and the way that the Crisis members found, rediscovered, engaged with and shared digital cultural heritage was an important activity that affected the writing sessions. The act of engaging with digital cultural heritage that was outside and 'hidden' to others in the room was very much a pillar of the writing taking place inside the AOFS building. Many of the Crisis members explained that they enjoyed exploring digital cultural heritage content when they were alone and found it "easier" to interact with people using online digital platforms like YouTube, email, online video channels, blogs, e-books, online archives and online chat forums. Many of the Crisis members found that they had a digital identity even though they are uncertain about their place, role or identity within wider society.

This digital presence in their private life (meaning their life outside the AOFS building and the Hidden Spire project) happened to take place within a public space. Through digital technologies and their engagement with digital cultural heritage, some Crisis members settled into conversations with other citizens. They suggested that through digital technologies they could contribute to an online community that did not label them or know of their past. They were joined through their interests and the technology. This fluid relationship with digital cultural heritage through digital platforms offered what can sometimes be seen as a transient community, a place where they could contribute. The Crisis members used digital technology to move from the periphery of society to a new centre.

Writing workshops facilitate an appreciation of diversity

Script writers, set designers, professional actors and the Crisis members got together in January 2015 to devise the script and the staging of a theatre piece. The process was completed in twelve consecutive weekly meetings. The outcome was a script titled "Before the Tempest" which was

a prequel to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. As a professional artist highlighted:

> The ideas that the Crisis members brought to the table – these often offered a new way of looking at things and inspired our thoughts, discussions and improvisations to take unexpected directions. Their ideas often led to thinking outside the box which is always exciting.

Another professional artist noted that "The writing that had been generated by the Crisis members […] was often insightful and sometimes moving." Our observations led us to conclude that the Crisis members were fully invested in the workshops and were willing to engage with professionals, share personal stories as well as explore new and unknown territory and ideas. However, some commented on what they perceived to be the differences in the group's experiences. One of the professionals referred to "familiarity" and "comfort" in the working process noting:

> Familiarity with a situation, a way of working, a way of being with each other, is something really key here – I am extremely familiar with the process of making theatre (or making art), it's something that feels very comfortable to me and I'm guessing to most of the rest of the creative team, but I'm guessing it isn't for many of the Crisis members involved. So that if there is a split in the room, perhaps it's about familiarity with a situation and a way of being rather than about people's lives/education/experiences.

Early on in the project, language that referenced this split was highly visible, and in interviews the participants referenced those that were "professionals" and those that were "non-professionals." Over the course of the project the 'division' between the trained/untrained and the housed/vulnerable became less rigid; the professional artists, facilitators and Crisis members expressed that anyone, once exposed to a situation, could bring something to the table and contribute to the process of art making.

Through the process of script-writing, the participants, in particular the Crisis members, had a safe space to reflect and express previous personal experiences. The supportive, nurturing and healing environment

encouraged autonomy. Two creative facilitators supported the writing sessions. Facilitator one was a professional script-writer and facilitator two was a professional director. Facilitator one led the sessions by committing to a principle of equality and celebrating everyone's voice and unique value systems. This approach produced powerful work and the participants claimed to be positively affected by the creative process. For example, in one of the writing sessions a member shared her writing with the group. She set up the work by describing that her character walked on the sand talking to her dead mother and then said "I wish I knew you mother. My brother died within you. You were intelligent, your captured wisdom, your beauty …"[9] The group responded with applause and positive feedback to the Crisis member's writing. The young woman appeared to be surprised by the constructive comments and in an interview later the same day, she shared that the writing was partially true and reflected her own life and story. She also revealed that her personal sadness about the situation was "healing" through her engagement with Hidden Spire. She was happy to share it with others through her writing and she was thinking of using the piece in an open-mic session later that week. The soft-spoken young woman admitted that she was lacking confidence and afraid to get up and share at the open-mic event. However, the following week when asked about the open-mic evening she confidently said that she presented three poems "from my collection." This is one example where the writing sessions had a wider benefit for the Crisis member.

The collective and supportive ethos in the writing workshops constructed an environment in which individuals were able to find ways of voicing buried stories and ideas, private matters and also allowed for conversation on digital technologies to surface. The workshops provided a 'safe space' in which participants were able to reflect on past experiences through creative expressions: sharing writings with the facilitators, reading in front of the group, performing during the devising workshops or discussing ideas during the brainstorming sessions. The participants also discussed the digital tools they were using to prepare for the writing sessions. Participants were encouraged to be both performers and active audiences. This practice prepared them for the often-challenging experience of meeting and engaging with the public. The connection between writing and

sharing helped members to express their own experiences while being open to receiving those of others.

In our interviews with Crisis members, many of them said that the writing sessions were preparing them to be "on stage" and face a public audience. The members during the writing workshops and also during post-workshop interviews referred to isolation and being, or feeling, alone. An example when the theme of isolation was being discussed and explored through various writing tasks, was when one Crisis member was relating to how some people feel "psychologically isolated" and how it reflects "real-life." He went on to say that "you can be in a room with one hundred people and still feel alone."[10] Then another member said "like when you have moved on and then go back and everyone has changed. It brings back memories but you can't get your past back."[11] Facilitator one integrated everyone's thoughts and the emerging themes to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Throughout the writing workshops and the devising material sessions, topics explored ranged from death, love, loss and abortion to losing homes and forgiveness. As one Crisis member said "some of these topics are close to home but this way of working is radical." We observed that the Crisis members appreciated the freedom to discuss their past and reflect on some painful memories within these creative spaces.

Pedagogic principles

Pedagogic research helps to frame the Hidden Spire project. Although Hidden Spire is not a conventional classroom, the facilitator-participant relationship mirrors the conventional teacher-student relationship. The complex interactions in the script-writing workshops encouraged tolerance and diversity. Social scientists have reported on the benefits of adult interaction in a learning context. For example, Tellado and Sava observe:

> The opportunity to interact with more adults, who have a range of life experiences, also provides the students with broader perspectives on their society and the world around them. When students have contact with these various adults, they develop a much broader understanding of activities, theories, and practices than if they only interacted with their teachers.[12]

The facilitators provided the participants with an environment that was conducive to learning, exploring and freely disagreeing with others. They encouraged members to focus on their strengths as individuals and not to worry about their backgrounds or previous skills. In doing this, they set up a structure that was tolerant and that celebrated people's diverse ways of writing, sharing and performing. This type of relationship encouraged learning. As one Crisis member noted:

> In the rehearsal room, mostly what struck me was the concentration on making a piece of theatre. There wasn't much obvious discussion or overt awareness over Crisis members' differing background, potential vulnerabilities, problems or issues. I felt (and knew from previous experience) the safety net that does surround a project like this but it wasn't really very visible. People in the room were included in making a good story, a good piece of theatre. The process of devising and improvising is by its nature perhaps more inclusive as it allows people to work at their own pace, but at the same time [Facilitator Two] and other team members were demanding a lot from everyone in the room.[13]

In one exercise, the participants were asked to act as birds and build a bird's nest. In the following exercise, Facilitator One set up an improvisational performance task asking each of the participants to imagine their bird character was in a classroom having a discussion with the teacher figure. Facilitator one asked for feedback after the exercise and one Crisis member's reply made the discourse of inclusion enter the writing workshop directly: "How did that make you feel? I wanted everyone to be included and not one person left out … I want people to know inclusion." This participant was mindful of what inclusion was and could identify when exclusion was taking place. Observing the improvisational task, it was clear that when the participant was in a position of authority, he was promoting inclusion in the group. He was mindful of everyone's voice and encouraging dialogues, even in this simple creative task. It seemed to us that he was modeling the behaviour that he had seen earlier in the sessions from the facilitators.

Developing new skills

The facilitators were experts at navigating what can often be daunting territory. Approximately 45 minutes into the bird exercise mentioned above, the birds encountered a 'storm' that was tearing apart their freshly built nests: Facilitator two started deconstructing the nests, removing objects and forcing the 'homes' to collapse. One pair of participants grasped the objects that made up their dwelling and refused to let them go. The impression to those of us watching was that the bird's nests were no longer bird's nests; suddenly this felt like more than a theatrical exercise. In a discussion with us after the workshop, Facilitator two said, "I have learned to not walk away from issues that may be very real to them … it may be close to the bone but it is not something to be afraid of." This prompted a conversation about facing real life issues that may be challenging to the Crisis members and how these topics may find their way into the workshops. The project exposed unexpected vulnerabilities and having the Crisis members direct and steer ideas in the workshop facilitated agency.

Learning in the project mixed social, cognitive and emotional elements and affected each of these in separate as well as in interconnected ways. A professional artist said "I have found the project, so far, to be hugely creative. Working with the Crisis members has been like nothing I have done before and I feel honoured to have had the opportunity to work with them." People sharing stories and experiences in a raw way led to deeper conversations and nurtured learning. The structure of the workshops allowed for autonomy as well as group work to cultivate change. As the Crisis members shared their writings with others, they learned to debate, support and listen to one another's views. In particular, the sharing process encouraged the individuals to be more tolerant of others and thus led to a more inclusive way of living and co-existing both inside and outside the AOFS building.

In addition to the Crisis members being challenged, the professional actors were also developing creatively and professionally. The actors cultivated their leadership skills and applied their training. A visual artist in the project said:

There were three members at this session, two of whom participated, and lots of professional actors/dancers (including some volunteers). With only two members in the group and a really sophisticated improvisation developing, it was interesting to see how professional actors led the way for members. There was a real sense of members being carried and enabled through the sessions. I thought the quality of performance from the members was really high, and there was an openness which allowed all of the performers to put their own ideas into the work.[14]

This collaborative way of creating and the willingness to try new ideas, accept new challenges, and have the ability to adapt to the constantly changing situations positively affected the professional actors. An actress said:

The willingness of the Crisis members to throw themselves into the exercises [Facilitator 2] set up, was powerful. Regardless of how far from their comfort zone they may have felt, many of them just 'went for it.' This, in turn, inspired us (the trained actors) to have greater bravery and to take more risks.[15]

These quotes highlight an implicit division between the members going into the unknown, and the professionals building on their professional practice. With many of the interviews with the actors there was a familiar lexicon that emerged where the actors saw Crisis members as "brave" and "powerful" and referred to them as "inspirational." The Crisis members in a general sense saw the actors as "professionals." However, all agreed that they were being challenged and pushed out of their comfort zones and learning new skills that affected their "professional practice and/or their real life."

How people participate: the depth and breadth of their engagement

Creative thinking can facilitate change through being open to thinking of new ways to problem solve and consider other people's perspectives. A respectful mind welcomes differences between individuals and can attempt to understand the differences of others in the space. Hidden Spire's way of working horizontally ensured that all felt included in the creation of the final product. The project's goal was to produce a quality show that is open to

the public and engages its audience, while simultaneously offering an inclusive experience for members from a vulnerable group who were integrated into the process. The methodology established a democratic working process in which differences were voiced, acknowledged and accepted. By including people from various social and economic backgrounds, Crisis members were provided with an opportunity to experience diversity at a micro level. During the writing sessions there was an appreciation of the capabilities that each person brought. The project maintained its aim to allow participants to cultivate their thinking skills through the arts while undergoing a creative experience. As one professional artist involved in the project noted:

> The professional actors seemed to work alongside the Crisis members as if in any other theatre-making situation – there wasn't any particular dominance from them or any reticence, just an alignment of pace to whoever was in the room. I felt this relaxed attitude and in fact the feeling in the room that this was about making good theatre – not about giving the Crisis members a good experience or a learning experience or supporting them in their journey (though it will do all these things) made it especially interesting and exciting – observing the making of a theatre piece is always exciting – and perhaps we had a greater range of people, ages, experiences, backgrounds in the room, which did give it a bit more unpredictability. I was aware of the difference between the professional actors and the non-professional actors, and I think everyone was, so perhaps the interesting thing was that it didn't really matter.

This professional artist felt that the participant pool of the sessions was diverse and that the facilitators and professional artists were aware of these differences, however, the differences were perceived not to be important to the creative tasks. The same professional artist went on to say that the societal separation between the Crisis members and the others in the space ceased to exist during the workshops and resurfaced only after the workshops were complete. It was in the post-meetings, where participants and facilitators were obliged to speak with Crisis staff about the day, that labels were used and categorisations were made. The

language used by the artists when speaking with the Crisis staff shifted as the artists shared an account of the sessions:

> I did notice that the conversations between non-Crisis members of the team after the Crisis members had left on each day then actually reintroduced a separation between the two groups – we began exchanging thoughts about how individuals had worked and discussing individuals to an extent (as well as discussing the piece itself). So there is an interesting balance between recognising the situation in which some people have a lot less experience, confidence, knowledge etc. than others – not denying this – and also not giving it prominence above the creative impetus of the project. I think generally that balance seemed to be struck very well but it needs continual monitoring on an individual level from the non-Crisis members.[16]

While the language shifted at the end of the day, and some labels surfaced within the creative workshops, there was a deliberate act not to categorise anyone. The ethos of the project is to focus on making good artwork and not necessarily on celebrating differences; although Hidden Spire naturally does this through allowing Crisis members and artists to come together to work.

How Crisis members accessed Cultural Heritage and relationship to the script

Cultural heritage is not something that is within the experience of many of the Crisis members who regard themselves as neither citizens nor as creators or consumers of cultural heritage. However, the Crisis members accessed and/or participated in cultural heritage activities in a variety of ways. They used public libraries, museums, the internet and local theatre productions and other cultural events in the area as sources of inspiration for their work with Hidden Spire. They engaged deeply with these digital sources and mixed them with traditional writing to create a script that would be part of a professional production.

The interview data revealed that the writing workshops pin-pointed common themes and sources that the community used to engage with cultural heritage. The Crisis members accessed cultural heritage information both within AOFS as well other venues and sources. Within the AOFS, the computer lab was a direct link that many of the participants identified. They agreed that having access to a computer and the internet connected them with the wider outside world. Since the community can, in a general sense, live an insular life, computers, and more specifically the internet, allowed them to connect or reconnect with the larger world that they sometimes lost touch with due to their homelessness. The computer lab represented a window to a world that was often "daunting and intimidating." The lab enabled them to explore topics of interest, gain information, contribute to the cultural heritage sector and participate in other activities. Indeed, Crisis members independently drew connections between the act of writing, which encouraged them to look for cultural heritage content, and using digital platforms, which allowed them the freedom to discover and explore.

Due to the work taking place with Hidden Spire, some of the Crisis members felt confident enough to go to their local libraries to read further or to attend local productions that combined digital technologies and art. Another Crisis member started his own YouTube channel discussing magic and books and even curated his own magic show in the area. Through the internet, the Crisis members identified other cultural heritage activities that were taking place locally and abroad and would either attend the performances as audience members or audition for local productions. One Crisis member was cast in a street performance show where digital technology and theatre were at the core of the production. Some expressed that they often learned about other events or watched content online, which fed their own creative work and satisfied their artistic interests.

The use of digital technologies in Hidden Spire also affected the project and its participants. Although digital technologies were not explicitly part of the creative process, they enriched the script writing process. The tools used inside and outside the sessions reveal how the members worked with digital technology and cultural heritage. One Crisis member, who was

present in all of the writing sessions, used a laptop and the internet throughout the workshop. The computer allowed the member to contribute directly by saving and sharing work. Many of the other members wrote in their notebooks or on loose sheets of papers provided by the facilitators. This at times hindered the sharing of the work with the script-writers. Oftentimes, many of the members would be apprehensive about tearing something out of their notebooks or giving the writing directly to the facilitator. This would later affect how, when and if the writing was given to the script-writer. During observations, many of the Crisis members were apologetic about their penmanship and one woman was embarrassed by the level of her proficiency in writing. When asked about it later, she said that she didn't want to share her writing with others because of her handwriting. When offered the option to type her notes and vignettes, she said "I would prefer that … yeah, that would be much better." In later writing workshops, the facilitator made time for the members to use the Crisis computer lab to type out notes. This ensured that the notes and writings were shared with the script-writer and also made it easier for the script-writer to integrate their ideas into the script. Digital technologies helped connect the group, as ethnologist Dagny Stuedahl observes:

> Digital technologies do build an infrastructure for co-creation of cultural heritage content between institutions and audiences which opens up for online and onsite participation by visitors with competencies and knowledge which are not part of the official expertise of the institution. In this participation, the construction of identity, memory and narratives do build important issues for understanding how digital cultural heritage content becomes part of socio-cultural processes of transformation.[17]

Summary

The *Civic Epistemologies* project provided the overall focus and direction for the case study, which forms the basis for this chapter. The case study involved extensive conversations and observations with many of the participants. This field research revealed that the project can be regarded as a model of good practice in how a diverse community can work together to create a production that was widely regarded as 'good art.' Whilst the

community is perhaps novel, the methods adopted were not unlike other tried and tested co-creation methods that soften the distinctions between participants, in this case the professional artists and the Crisis members. By making explicit the underpinning ethics of the practice, all of the participants were expected to respect cultural norms, values, and practices different from their own, and appreciating diversity was a fundamental part of the project. What became clear was that Hidden Spire celebrated the collaboration of many voices, opinions and experiences, providing the participants with access to a cultural experience, which stimulated greater awareness of cultural heritage, and in some cases exposed how digital technologies were useful tools to access cultural content, whether inside or outside the project. Our observations, combined with an analysis of the data collected during interviews, pointed to participants gaining a greater sense of involvement and a recognition of the potential for active citizenship, even if that may not easily align with traditional conditions of having a residence, paid work, and an explicit commitment to civic responsibility.[18]

We did not anticipate that digital technologies would play much role in the project. Digital tools and technologies were largely absent in terms of the production process but still present in how participants communicated on a daily basis. The case study identified which digital technologies and platforms were used by the homeless/ex-homeless community. These digital spaces played a role in how people felt more connected and gained a greater sense of belonging, reflecting the narrative of 'belonging' that infused the project and contributed to an emergent understanding of citizenship.

Hidden Spire is a project that models inclusivity while creating contemporary theatre by engaging with vulnerable groups and professional artists. It is a biennial event, with a new theme and with a slightly different structure. It is designed to be visible, actively taking 'hidden cultural practice' to a public audience. In the context of the *Civic Epistemologies* project, as a container for the case study, we recognized that much more was revealed than was expected or required. There is a rare quality and way of working that makes the Hidden Spire project special. Having described its process in detail, it may be easier to try and classify the

project for what it is *not*. It is not a conventional show that works solely with amateur and professional artists. It is not a 'community' production that prioritises participation for its own sake. Rather it is the combination of its devising structure and the individuals it brings together that provides a particular performative aesthetic. Those who participate in and view the work describe it as transformative. For those homeless or vulnerably housed it provides a sense of home or belonging. For these participants as well as the professional artists, there was recognition that they were contributing themselves to cultural heritage through their work being shared and preserved, thereby joining a new kind of community of cultural producers, consumers and actors in the generation of cultural content.

Notes

[1] UNESCO - Intangible Cultural Hertiage. www.unesco.org/new/en/cairo/culture/tangible-cultural-heritage.

[2] EU *Civic Epistemologies* project www.civic-epistemologies.eu.

[3] Hidden Spire Project www.hiddenspire.co.uk.

[4] Arts at the Old Fire Station. oldfirestation.org.uk.

[5] 2014-2015 Hidden Spire Impact Report. oldfirestation.org.uk/about/reviews-reports.

[6] See Antaki and Widdicombe, *Identities in talk*.

[7] Hamayon-Alfaro, "Sustaining Social Inclusion through the Arts,*"* 127.

[8] Samman and Santos, *Agency and Empowerment.* www.ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/OPHI-RP10a.pdf.

[9] Crisis member involved in Hidden Spire.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Sava and Tellado, "The Role of Non-expert Adult Guidance in the Dialogic Construction of Knowledge,*"* 172. www.academia.edu/20627104/The_Role_on_Non-expert_Adult_Guidance_in_the_Dialogic_Construction_of_Knowledge.

[13] Crisis member involved in Hidden Spire.

[14] Visual artist from Hidden Spire.

[15] Professional actress from Hidden Spire.

[16] Professional artist from Hidden Spire.

[17] Stuedahl, "Digital Cultural Heritage Engagement," 74. www.researchgate.net/publication/260563465_Digital_cultural_heritage_engagement_A_new_research_field_for_ethnology.

[18] Smith and McQuarrie, *Remaking Urban Citizenship*, 3.

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Biographies

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AUDIENCE AS COMMUNITY: CORPOREAL KNOWLEDGE AND EMPATHETIC VIEWING

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Keywords

screendance
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Abstract

The essay focuses on the concept of community in screendance audiences. How audiences are formed as a collective and what is experienced as part of this identity are concepts that will be explored here. Using audiences' experiences of viewing a selection of contemporary dance films and kinesthetic empathy as a framework for the analysis, individual responses will be detailed in relation to the visceral, corporeal and sensorial experience of watching. What informs screendance audiences as a community, enriched with corporeal knowledge, and how this may influence the making of films, is the crux of this discussion.

This writing was originally published in the International Journal of Screendance in 2015 while I was employed at both Coventry University and the University of Wolverhampton. The original is online at screendancejournal.org/article/view/4518/3914#.WoMJ6GacZR0.

This essay focuses on community in the form of audiences, and in particular, screendance audiences. A specific focus is given to a collection of screendance experiences from viewing a selection of contemporary dance films. The term *screendance* is used in this research as suggested by Douglas Rosenberg as "stories told by the body" and "not told by the body."[1] What follows, for this essay, are theories borrowed from the discipline of audience and reception research detailing what we may perceive audiences to be and how the idea of 'audience' as a community may influence the way filmmakers approach the very audiences they hope to reach. Kinesthetic empathy will be used as a framework to understand the pleasures and displeasures that are experienced by the viewer from an embodied perspective. While considering kinesthetic empathy with audience and reception research, the main focus for this essay is nuancing the idea of audiences as a community that is enriched with corporeal knowledge. This knowledge reveals itself as empathetic and sympathetic viewing of the media.

Kinesthetic empathy can be loosely defined as the sensation of moving while watching movement, where the viewer can sense, as Ivar Hagendoorn points out, the "speed, effort, and changing body configuration" of the dancer, as if performing the movement themselves.[2] The word 'kinesthesis' is derived from the Greek word *kine* – movement – and *aesthesis* – sensation. Combining kinesthesis with 'empathy,' this concept emerges as an empathetic interaction between performer and viewer that embodies aspects of the performer's movement. This interaction is a sensory experience, perhaps facilitated by emotion, memory, and imagination.

This investigation into kinesthetic empathy and screendance audiences, described below, reveals that the viewers are part of a collective, or indeed in the case of the experimental dance film audiences, are part of an immediate small collective, and is a key factor in engagement with the

viewed media. In focus groups created for this research, dance film viewers revealed that they experience enhanced attention to technical details. Therefore, I assert that the selection of films, with their different characteristics, create empathetic viewing experiences.

Approach

Rather than 'audience' research, this essay engages in what is better termed 'reception' research as it focuses on processes involved in the reception of an artform and the resultant experience as reflection and memory. Audience research focuses on demographics such as gender, geographical location and mass consumption. Both William Sauter[3] and Matthew Reason[4] employ the term 'reception research' for their explorations into theatre audiences and their methodological enquiry. Although each has slightly different methodological approaches, their concerns encompass the collective and individual experience of audiences and the gathering of information on audiences' experiences through talk and other such methods, for example, drawing.

This type of reception research is qualitative and is used to examine individuals' interpretations of a particular phenomenon and, in this case, of particular media. According to John Creswell, qualitative research "begins with a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens,"[5] and studies a phenomenon through a specific approach to inquiry, collecting data, and analyzing this inductively for emerging themes.[6]

Through analysis of audiences' experiences of viewing dance on screen, I will show how empathetic viewing is created from the artistic aesthetic of dance made for camera. Qualitative reception research methods, focus groups, and diary writing were used to gather material on viewers' experiences of watching selected contemporary dance films.[7]

The films selected for the participants to view were shown in the following clusters: first, *Loose in Flight* by Rachel Davies, *Delia and George* by Shelly Love, and *Linedance* by Alex Reuben; second, *Flesh and Blood* by Lea Anderson, *The Wild Party* by Rosie Kay, *Three's A Crowd* by Andy Wood. These films were selected from the artists' portfolios of work because of the filmic techniques employed in their creative process. They cover a variety of techniques including narrative structures, defamiliarised

camera angles, and animation. This variation will be one of the factors I take into account in my consideration of the conditions associated with the experience of kinesthetic empathy in audiences.

For this project, fourteen participants took part in four focus groups. Focus groups gather data from a group of people and encourage discussion and interaction amongst the participants that can be valuable when exploring experience. Four focus groups were arranged over two days, two each day. Seven participants watched three of the films and the other seven participants watched three different films. The room contained a projector, large screen and speakers, which allowed the films to be shown on a larger scale than a TV screen would have permitted. The three films in each set were shown, one after another, to each group at the beginning of the session. Each participant was given a notebook to jot down any immediate thoughts he or she had on the films whilst viewing. After seeing the films, three exercises were conducted in relation to each film. The session ended with an open discussion about all three films.

Some problems arise when dealing with individual experiences. As a researcher, I rely on the viewers to externalize their experience and articulate this through talk or writing. I am asking them to discuss their experience of a feeling, sensation, emotion, or instinct that perhaps is indescribable using words. Group discussions can be one way of dealing with difficulties in expressing the inexpressible in addition to the opportunity to use other media, such as drawing as an alternative to talk-based methods.[8]

There are also moments where it is necessary to consider my own experiences of either participating as a performer or observing the screen media. By acknowledging my self-reflective thoughts, I hope to enrich the material and show an awareness of how my position as researcher has shaped the methodology. Indeed, my life experiences as performer, teacher, and researcher have impacted my stance in writing and affected my interpretation of the material. As Creswell notes, "how we write is a reflection of our own interpretation based on cultural, social, gender, class, and personal politics that we bring to research."[9] It is important to highlight this factor, especially since with writing on embodiment and experience, one can relate to an interpretation through one's own corporeal existence.

What is an audience(s)?

From the advent of cultural studies in the 1960s and 1970s, audiences have become a popular area of research in the humanities and social sciences and there is now a vast amount of literature published on the topic, in particular on the television audience. There has been widespread debate concerning the effects of mass media on their audiences and how the media position themselves on key issues, such as politics.

An audience is commonly referred to as 'the audience' or 'it,' signifying a unified and singular consciousness.[10] The idea that an audience is constructed from many consciousnesses is not reflected in the general singular use of the word 'audience.' In this essay, I employ the plural form, 'audiences,' to represent the many interpretive communities that constitute a larger whole. While I acknowledge the power of a collective presence, intersubjectivity, and the desire to belong to a homogenous entity, I also value the individuality of the viewers and their interpretive strategies.

Reason discusses how the audience is thought of as a "communal body"[11] and how this communality is an essential element for many performers and spectators of live performance. It adds value to their experience, knowing that they are part of a unified presence. In addition to the desire for communality, however, Reason places importance on the identity of the individual and the subjective experience of the spectator. This has been emphasized by the broadcast media developments that allow audiences to fragment into sub-groups mainly due to the ownership of television sets and recording devices in every household. Furthermore, Reason discusses how, when trying to understand what engages audiences, focusing on aspects such as each particular medium and its content reduces the audiences to passive viewers[12] rather than focusing on individual experiences that empower engagement. He states:

> Each individual experience, in contrast, is to empower not only that individual as an active, engaged and consciously interpreting audience member, but also paradoxically empowers any voluntary engagement within a collective audience as a positive democratic act of communality.[13]

Helen Freshwater, theatre and performance theorist, supports Reason's claims and adds that it is important to recognize that the spectator brings "their own cultural reference points, political beliefs, sexual preferences, personal histories, and immediate pre-occupations to their interpretation of a production."[14] In addition, Martin Barker, who researches film audiences, asserts that spectators "bring their social and personal histories with them."[15] A parallel can be drawn here with Creswell's previous comments about how we bring our social, political and cultural interpretations to our research and, therefore, other activities (such as being an audience member) that require interpretation. Thus, audiences are formed from individual identification in cultural and social communities and identify with the communal act of 'audiencing.'

'Audiencing' is a concept initially borrowed from media studies and now widely used in audience research.[16] In the act of spectating, we are consciously active in various cognitive, sensory, and participatory modes of interpretation. Therefore, our subject positions and interpretative strategies (discussed further below) are an important point of departure, as one becomes an active audience member through choice. Audiencing is not context-specific, but is something that happens in spectating situations.

Screendance audiences differ depending on the context of the viewing medium and are a new challenge for today's viewing because of the fragmented way we can view media, for example, on the internet, on mobile devices and multiple platforms available in the home. Abercrombie and Longhurst, who are audience researchers, claim, "media consumption in the 1990s [was] essentially a fragmented experience."[17] In the 21st century, the "fragmented experience" is even more complex due to the multiple platforms available. Therefore, when discussing the dance films, I have to consider the viewers as having an individual experience but as also belonging to a larger, mass community of media-created imagined viewers[18] and how this affects their experiences. In addition, the viewers are part of a smaller audience, having their own individual experience and being part of a collective community for a selection of single viewings. This is similar to how one would view films at a dedicated dance film festival. However, for this research, the opportunity to discuss their experiences in the focus groups immediately with other viewers might change their

experience and the meaning of that experience for them. Being part of a community and having an individual experience are not mutually exclusive, however, and one may even enhance the other.

According to Barker, there is a tendency among researchers to singularize the audience rather than engage with a variety of audiences who belong to different interpretive communities. As Stanley Fish, a reader response theoretician in literature studies, has argued, interpretive authority does not reside with the author; it could, rather, reside with the reader, or a community of readers. Interpretive communities experience collective understanding and shared meanings in the interpretation of a text. Interpretive communities exist in different forms and, as spectators, we can find ourselves taking different, and sometimes conflicting, subject positions *vis à vis* the same performance. A subject position is where we locate ourselves on a subject from a perspective that makes the most sense to us. Alice Rayner points out that when occupying different subject positions, "sometimes I hear you from my position as a woman, sometimes as a professor, sometimes as a mother, sometimes as bourgeois."[19] This can be the same for a dance audience member; one can be a dance enthusiast, feminist, mother, worker – all at the same time. People belong to such communities and show commitment and motivation to such activity, with a desire to experience a sense of belonging to a larger collective community. For Barker, viewing from a particular position additionally introduces an internal mental schema or "viewing strategy" to assess works of art, for example, which facilitates "making sense" of the artwork.[20] Spectators employ a viewing strategy that is drawn from their beliefs, motivations, competencies, expectations and values. Viewing performances through this strategy imparts meaning to one's life. Reason concurs with this view: "Spectators (both individually and collectively) actively interpret and place value upon what they see and experience. In doing so, they actively construct what the performance (and what being part of an audience) means to them culturally and socially."[21]

The consideration of viewing strategies and subject positions can be useful when exploring screendance audiences. These concepts can be employed to analyze individual and collective responses to the media and explore how audiences construct their interpretations. This may provide some

fundamental information on how the use of different filmic techniques and narratives are experienced by screendance audiences. The next section will reveal viewers' responses to the media and consider the viewing strategies and interpretative communities that are uncovered.

Viewers' responses to screendance

I will start this section with viewers' responses to the selected contemporary dance films screened in the focus groups. The following example illustrates the response of one viewer, Chantelle,[22] to *Three's a Crowd*,[23] and establishes her reader position. *Three's a Crowd* was independently produced and directed and is a low-budget film. The film contains one male and one female dancer doing an improvised duet in a derelict outdoor space. Their movement is accompanied by diegetic and non-diegetic sound; the non-diegetic sound is two pieces of tango music. Chantelle comments on where the duo's improvised struggle with each other reaches the floor: "[I] thought *ow*… they seemed to be on a concrete floor and all that movement on the floor, I just kept thinking they are just going to graze themselves and it looked kind of very, very rough."[24]

Her reader position – as a mother, teacher and recreational dancer – and viewing strategy suggests caring and mindfulness of the surface that the dancers are performing on. Chantelle recognizes the contact with the floor and the possibility of injury to the performers. She sympathizes with the performers moving on the gravelly, uneven floor surface, and empathizes with the sensuous imagery that evoked a memory of the urban environment. This interesting slippage from sympathy to empathy shows a movement of heightened imaginative engagement. Reason and Reynolds suggest that kinesthetic empathy is an "embodied and imaginative connection between the self and the other," and kinesthetic sympathy is explained as an appreciation and admiration of the dancers' effort and skill.[25] In Chantelle's response, her corporeal knowledge is revealed through kinesthetic empathy and sympathy with the dancers in the image, which may show her investment in viewing the film. In addition, the way the camera moves with kinesthetic sensitivity with the performers may encourage this investment from the viewer, as Chantelle shares: "the way the camera moves in and out with the dancers, you kind of feel close."

Chantelle displays a sense of anticipation at the potential for the performers to become injured, which may be experienced through the tactility of the haptic visuality of the image.[26]

In a further example, another viewer, Julia comments on a moment when she empathizes with Akram Khan's body's contact with the surfaces on which the performer was dancing. This film, *Loose in Flight*,[27] shows Khan dancing inside a derelict building and then quickly changes to a shot of him dancing outside in an industrial area. Julia says: "the sequence on the mat outside with the barrel jump into the… the fluidity and the lightness… and you're making that look effortless and yet you are dancing that on concrete." Julia's kinesthetic sympathy reaches out beyond the physical realms of Khan's musculature to the skin's superficial contact with the concrete surface on which he is performing. Julia identifies with the inner mechanisms of the perceived movement and the tactile exterior of the body, using the proximal sense of touch. This experience is another example of what Laura Marks refers to as "haptic visuality."[28]

These types of experiences with their varying requirements of attention and focus, provide an insight into the micro-aspects of the reception of screendance, or the screendance viewer's emotional and sensorial experience of watching.[29] Jacqueline Martin and William Sauter describe the micro-aspects of the reception of theatre as emotional reactions and thoughts that occur when watching a theatrical performance.[30] Micro-aspects identified in this study may be challenging for the spectators to put into words: subtle and intricate, felt, tactile, and kinesthetic experiences can be difficult for viewers to express verbally.

Viewing dance is usually conducted with friends or family members and the fact that some of the viewers were friends seemed appropriate when trying to encourage a relaxed, natural setting.[31] Nevertheless, there is a certain pleasure in exploring topics in group contexts, as communities, and the viewers appeared to enjoy discussing the films amongst themselves and engaging in dialogue about their thoughts and feelings.

The film discussed here is Shelly Love's *Delia and George*, which depicts a couple at a table eating breakfast and reading the newspaper. The film progresses in reverse:

J: Because there wasn't… it was… are we going backwards? What? So it set up an implication of a narrative and didn't quite deliver for me. I ended up feeling like: 'oh that's a clever idea, and that's a clever idea and I think this looks really nice' but… for me whatever the narrative was or was not, it didn't seem to me to be clear enough

L: I had the same feeling, I wrote its very abrupt ending, irritating to feel like there's no conclusion… and you know, whenever expectations are disappointed there's a frustration, it's not always a negative thing because in fact I liked the way it made me question, you know, what I think dance is and I liked that question that came out of it but the experience of watching it was frustrating because of that…

P: Do you think we were projecting the need for a narrative on to it?

L: Yes. I think I was.

P: I think I was too. But looking back now I'm starting to wonder if that was just me going 'oh look, there should be a narrative here'

(J and P agree)

This example illustrates the viewers' experience of narrative as a story with characters and allowed me to consider how this can be a condition of engagement. In addition, narratives have logic and the viewers had expectations of finding a narrative within the film. However, in the hybrid form of screendance, the idea of dance as narrative can be structured with movement. Movement narrative involves choreography that constructs its own story. Aaron Anderson discusses movement narrative as when the "movement itself aims to convey a story or narrative."[32] Anderson analyzed the movement narrative of martial arts films and compared the movement within these films to dance. Fight choreography, its execution, and the director's desired response from the spectator require kinesthetic engagement, as does dance choreography. The spectator has a kinesthetic relationship to the martial arts expert executing the fight choreography; the movement projects power of the body. Although the spectator may not be able to perform the movement him or herself, he or

she can kinesthetically appreciate the power and skill required to perform the choreography because we watch with an awareness of our own body. Similarly, choreography in dance films requires the spectator to have a kinesthetic relationship with the performer. Comparable to martial arts films, dance film employs narrative strategies to encode narrative from the movement.

A further example from Lauren refers to making a narrative out of what we view and this is an act that audiences regularly participate in:

> I realize I try to make a narrative out of it or put one on it. And similar to you [referring to Julia], when I go to watch dance I think I can just appreciate the movement and I feel happy doing that but I'm sure subconsciously I'm doing something else.

In some abstract contemporary work, we may find a non-linear or *vertical direction*[33] narrative that we are then required to 'fill in the gaps.' Claudia Kappenberg states: "the absence of narrative and original context creates a void that can only be filled by the viewer."[34] Peter, in response to Lauren, captures the essence of meaning-making through narratives and stories in his comment:

> I love that. I love that about everything that you can tell stories; a story in itself. And actually that's one of the things I love about dance, it's often so abstract, it's a challenge to find your way through it.

Life, the way Peter describes it, takes the form of stories or we construct stories in order to make sense of life experiences. As spectators, we have certain expectations that narrative will provide character interaction and action-based movement. As viewers, we create the narrative to make it meaningful and engaging whilst in the act of audiencing. This may further contribute to our engagement and pleasure in watching screendance.

It is difficult to ascertain whether the material discussed is about a bodily experience and is felt, rather than articulated in words. Language is our primary mode of communicating and reflecting on experiences and words are the most flexible system for articulation. Reflecting through language creates an indelible impression on our memories. Yet, words can sometimes prove to be inadequate when describing the richness of an

experience. Plantinga acknowledges the insurmountable task of language in determining the emotional qualities of film and music.[35] Reason also acknowledges the difficulty in the use of language as a reflective device when discussing experiences of watching live theatre and dance but also defends reflection as methodologically sound. He discusses the traces of experience, which, when discussed in a group context after a performance, affirm one's individual memory and suggests that for most people, conversation post-performance acts as part of the experience.[36] An Australian study conducted by Renee Glass on audience members of a live dance performance suggests that people,

> when given the opportunity to reflect on their own experience with the work, enjoy being asked their opinion, and the freedom to interpret the work in any way they want. Perhaps what is important is not being given pre-performance information, but the opportunity to reflect on one's own interpretation, understanding and connection with the piece.[37]

The viewers in the current research engaged in reflection after viewing the films. The conversations that took place between the viewers seemed to affirm their thinking and interpretation of a film. One viewer, Lauren, comments: "I'm getting more out of these films because I'm reflecting and talking about it."

As Glass[38] and Reason[39] assert, and as Lauren comments, reflection post-experience can provide a platform for engaging in aspects not yet realized through direct affect and can implant traces of the experience in one's memory. Equally, post-experience conversation acts as part of the experience and assists the audience members in articulating thought and sensation.

To summarize, viewers' post-experience reflective conversations may contribute to the screendance viewing experience by allowing articulation through language, which may enhance connection with the films. Using focus groups to set up this environment has shown that this gives viewers the opportunity to discuss with other audience members their interpretation and understanding of the films and how this may stimulate kinesthetic engagement. Kinesthetic response and language are crucial to screendance audiences, as the medium demands this attention.

Screendance is attentive to narrative and choreographic structures and therefore requires interpretive communities to engage with and provide meaning to the artwork.

The focus groups conducted for this research have exemplified the importance of interpretive communities when experiencing screendance. The diverse subject positions found in such communities are rich with cultural and social aspects that are fundamentally motivating for screendance researchers. Researchers would do well to consider the fruitfulness of gathering screendance audiences to obtain material in order to better inform filmmaking practices. Embedded in these audiences are fertile interpretative communities that can contribute to expanding our body of knowledge and further research for the artform.

The research inspires further thought on how we want to construct our social worlds and what we want to be identified with. Furthermore, there is a sense of belonging to a community of people who, at that same moment of viewing a film, are potentially united in the experience. A community becomes much more engaged and invested in the media. Therefore, in addition to seeking kinesthetic pleasure from watching dance, we know that we will be part of a community of people interested in and identifying with aspects of dance, which constructs meaning around the role of watching dance on screen.

Notes

[1] Rosenberg, "State of the Arts," 13.

[2] Hagendoorn, "Some speculative hypothesis," 79. psycnet.apa.org/record/2004-14889-005.

[3] Sauter, "Thirty Years of Reception Studies."

[4] Reason, "Asking The Audience."

[5] Creswell, *Qualitative Enquiry*, 37.

[6] For the PhD thesis, a phenomenologically-informed approach was adopted to uncover individuals' lived experiences of the concept of kinesthetic empathy. The methodology was also informed by ideas of embodiment taken from embodied and social phenomenologies, aesthetics and cognitive research. This approach enabled me to

describe the viewers' experiences of viewing screendance and to look for commonalities between experiences that allowed themes to emerge from the research material. Allowing themes to emerge is an essential feature of phenomenological inquiry.

[7] I gathered information from viewers as part of my PhD research at the University of Manchester, titled *Kinesthetic Empathy and Screendance Audiences* (2012).

[8] Reason, "Asking The Audience."

[9] Creswell, *Qualitative Enquiry*, 179

[10] Freshwater, *Theatre and Audience*.

[11] Reason, "School Theatre Trips," 8.

[12] Classic cultural theory takes the view that mass media imitates a "hypodermic needle" through which it "injects opinions and attitudes directly into the audience" creating passive viewers. Gripsrud, 28.

[13] Reason, "School Theatre Trips," 10.

[14] Freshwater, *Theatre and Audience*, 6.

[15] Barker, "I Have Seen The Future," 124.

[16] See *About Performance* 10, entitled "Audiencing: The work of the spectator in live performance."

[17] Abercrombie and Longhurst, *Audiences: A Sociological Theory*, 33.

[18] See Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

[19] Rayner, "The Audience: Subjectivity," 4.

[20] Barker, "I Have Seen The Future," 134.

[21] Reason, "School Theatre Trips," 9.

[22] When a viewer is named in this paper, the name is a pseudonym and is therefore anonymous.

[23] Wood, *Three's a Crowd* (2007).

[24] All viewer quotations are taken from focus groups that took place in February 2010.

[25] Reason and Reynolds, "Kinesthetia, Empathy and Related Pleasures," 23.

[26] Haptic visuality values the proximal senses of touch, feel and smell over the distant senses of seeing and hearing and evokes the sensory network. For more on haptic visuality, see Marks, *The Skin of the Film*.

[27] Davies, *Loose in Flight*.

[28] Marks, *The Skin of the Film*.

[29] Macro-aspects relate more to demographical information and generality of the behavior of audiences.

[30] Martin and Sauter, *Understanding Theatre*.

[31] However, having friends discuss the films in this setting may also have an adverse effect and could impede the research by gently persuading their friends to think from their view.

[32] Anderson, "Fight Choreography," 3. ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC42folder/anderson2/action2.html.

[33] The opposite notion to horizontal movement or linear narrative is what Maya Deren terms *vertical direction* and is characterized by more "ephemeral elements of mood, tone and rhythm" (Haslem 2002). Erin Brannigan (2002), refers to Deren's association of the vertical movement with 'poetic structure.' This is concerned with quality and depth. sensesofcinema.com/2002/filmmaker-profiles/deren.

[34] Kappenberg, "The Logic of the Copy," 29.

[35] Plantinga, *Moving Viewers*.

[36] Reason, "Asking The Audience."

[37] Glass, *Observer Response*, 107-8.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Reason, "Asking The Audience."

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Biography

Karen is currently a dance practitioner/ researcher/ educator. She works at C-DaRE at Coventry University as a Research Associate. Her research has a practical perspective – the training principles of dancers, teaching dance techniques, somatic work – and a theoretical perspective considering embodiment and audiences' experiences of dance.

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SECTION 4: POLITICS

POLITICS

JONATHAN BURROWS

Keywords

dance
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Abstract

This talk was an attempt to answer and the question, "why do dancers often speak of their work as political?" It was written for the *Inventur#2–Contemporary dance and performance* conference at Tanzhaus NRW Düsseldorf in June 2017, organised by Gabriele Brandstetter, Sigrid Gareis, Marina Hochmuth and Bettina Masuch. It formed part of a panel on 'Social practices and the inherent politics of dance,' chaired by Jonathan Burrows and Dan Daw, with guest speakers Bojana Kunst and Joe Moran.

Sigrid Gareis told me last year
how she felt sad that contemporary dance was not more political,
and I responded by saying I thought there was an innate politics in much of
our practice.

And I've wondered since then if this can be true.

I feel unprepared to talk about politics,
but this talk is a way to think things through
at a moment when we need to think about these things.

And while I can't speak for anyone else
I use the word 'we,'
to mean all the independent artists
who are alert and struggling and questioning this art form,
and the producers, curators, directors, funders and fellow artists
who travel with us.

Because although coerced togetherness is not the answer,
right now we need to sit together and think together,
which was said by Juan Dominguez.[1]

It's difficult to unpick every aspect of the political in relation to dance
and in relation to how we produce and sustain our practices,
so I approach this with caution,
alert to the voices of others.

Some of what I want to say raises obvious problems for which I have few
solutions,
while some of it is hopeful because sometimes I need to feel that way
and dance gives me reason enough at times.

I am interested in real politics
and I'm interested in the social aspects of dance,
but what interests me most is a more existential question
of how to go on believing in the ethics of dance,
and how to interrogate the feeling commonly described by dancers
that to dance is in itself a political act.

Not least that sense of freedom people talk about so readily,
when they describe the experience of dancing,
where me tips into us tips into no-one.

Or reflections like these from a discussion in Coventry:
that dance troubles and in some contexts actively refuses capitalist market systems,
which was said by Hetty Blades,
or that dance matters because we believe that research into the human condition
is vital in a market-led world,
both of which are irresistible, but difficult to verify.[2]

I keep arguing that this inherent political
sits at the heart of dance practice and goes unnoticed.

And I don't know if there's any truth in this
or if it's just wishing for something
for an art form which at times seems more pointless than useful.

Despite how I hear myself argue often enough
that pointlessness is the point,
because of the way it feels in some way deep down
as though dancing is superfluous and therefore essential.

As though the permission to be in excess is political somehow.

Or embodies a resistance
or effective opposition, maybe naivety
towards certain things thought helpful in these days
like being easy to quantify or to assess or to monetise,
which it seems from experience most art dance is not,
not least because we're perceived as hard to understand
and even harder to describe.

And this sense of resistant practice is encountered
despite the referents and power structures that permeate what we do,
which is a problem.

Meaning some performers can represent a more abstract body
and some can't do that so easily.

Or as Paul Hughes said:
'Some artists have the privilege of making work that looks apolitical;
but there are others whose work, because of their race, gender, sexuality and so forth,
will always be read as political,
because the institutions are such that their presence causes discomfort.'[3]

Or as Jamila Johnson-Small said:
'In terms of the idea of 'hidden' politics I feel very black right now in this room,
because I'm aware that I watch performances where I see clearly a politics that, for instance, the person next to me is not aware of.'[4]

Performers themselves are not always aware of the politics,
because on the inside we are by choice lost in a world
of muscle and bone and organs and blood flow
and nerves and self-consciousness and shame and desire,
and joy.

On the inside it's uncomfortably subjective,
and we work to balance the overview with our inner experience
and the tension is challenging but sometimes fruitful.

Our body and mind try to integrate,
moving in and out of focus while we fly on emptily,
which is what we call dancing and is not so easily accountable,
even by us,
but we own it.

We own it and call it freedom for want of a better word
and a lot of dancers describe the sensation that way,
but the image remains questionable.

The illusion of freedom makes us idealistic,
which is worrying,
but at the same time we're aware that our hopefulness offers a counterbalance
to the critical inertia that sometimes traps us.

And the freedom is strongest when we dance with other people,
which may have to do with a moment of surrendering self

into a field of human,
which is itself political.

Or, as the hip hop artist Botis Seva said, 'When I'm dancing I can't be stopped or judged.'[5]

I can't be stopped or judged but my judgemental mind looks down
and picks fights according to criteria I can't always agree with,
which is another problem,
because dance fosters dysmorphic views of the body
and the art form remains obsessed with youth.

Not that you'd want to stop anyone from dancing
but it takes a certain confidence to get up in front of everyone,
and some people feel more confident for obvious reasons
and then everyone says they're good at performing
and so on …

This image of the fit angelic otherness of the dancer's body
is endemic within society,
and it's incumbent upon us to take it gracefully down,
and to remind each other that the courage we have in our bodies
is not shared by most people,
not even most of us.

But we try to stay balanced and our body feels free,
and we're working on cutting down the usual aesthetic judgements,
and we're hanging on to the outside critique,
and we're being as authentic as we can be though rationally we're having none of it,
and we catch ourselves doing our daily dancing in the privacy of our own living room
and something happens,
or as Deborah Hay says 'It's not why I dance it's that I dance and that is political.'[6]

And never more than in the privacy of our own living room
in our own authentically deviant way,
and it feels good but we don't always know what to do with it.

We're getting our freak on and we want to help everyone
but we wonder exactly how.

We know New Age feelings won't do it
so we hang on in there for a context that will make us fierce.

We hang on in there for a context that will make us bite
which is what we call the performative,
and the trouble we discover is that any old person doing any old dance
is weird enough to disturb the comfortable.

Which means either we've got a head start on the other arts
or else we're getting nowhere, not least while celebrity dance shows get
confused with what we do.

Or while the visual arts play a fast game of corporate complicity
with a mantra of compulsory political rhetoric
whether the politics is visible or not,
and as Joe Moran says, right now they also want what we've got.[7]

They also want what we've got and there's a clue there somewhere,
but we'd have to disentangle
all the shifting meanings and uses of the concepts of material and
immaterial
before we could even get close to figuring out why they want us,
and what relation it might have to the political or not.

Not that anybody doubts why politics might matter,
with the rise of the right and rising inequality,
and male privilege,
and white privilege,
and the erosion of social care,
and mass migration of refugees,
and the refusal to tackle carbon emissions,
and ideological war,
and renewed nuclear threat,
and the post-truth performance of the president of the United States.

Which makes us value the truth we question in our bodies.

But we know artists are part of the problem,
with our celebration of self and our obsession with the new,
and the way our rhetoric of creativity and collaboration sounds like a management course.

And our performative confrontations are quickly appropriated
by a capitalist economy which values their artful excess.

Or as Ramsay Burt asked:
'Is avoiding capture itself political?'[8]

But we want change and we continue to sound it out,
we're aware how the ways we work together are different and potential,
and although we avoid the overused exhaustion of the word collective
we're doing it anyway.

Because the thing we have hasn't much financial value which makes us generous,
so we give it away freely which is foolish and useful.

And we help the others and we leave no trace and the doer decides, which
feels like a more helpful model than worn out consensus politics.[9]

And we're learning to take the temperature of the room, which is a Quaker
principle meaning making the time
to arrive at a decision that leaves no one behind and we're good at time.[10]

Or each one teach one which is the philosophy of hip hop.

And we resist the word craft but we share a craft,
and as Charlie Ashwell says,
'Craft not only thrives in community,
it requires it for its dissemination of knowledge …
having the potential to articulate a resistance
to capitalism's acceleration towards individualism,
speed, profit, growth and spectacle.'[11]

Because if there was ever an art form that advances collectively
it's one that starts from the body.

So we start from the body and we must take our time
to resist the cult of the new,
and the product oriented overload,

and the throw away society,
and the speed,
and endless self-performance on social media,
and the fake notion of success for everyone,
and the hero worship of a few big players,
and hot young bodies and patriarchal behaviours.

And we have no gallerist so we take the platform together.

Or as Emma Meehan said:
'You understand boundaries better when you know how a cell works,'
which is an image of the somatic as coactive and ecological.[12]

Which is an image of the somatic as political.[13]

There are more ways to measure success than a dance student might
think,
but we need to start celebrating those ways
away from the TV notion of who is the best.

Or as Juan Dominguez said, 'We have to sit together and think together,
and I don't think we have to identify with each other because this is going
to be impossible,
but in certain moments I think we could be more supportive and go for
things.'[14]

And the notion of practice which is overused and hard to grasp
just means a way to find a sustainable ecology of daily doing,
and to make sense of the ethical tenor of whatever we do
in relation to whatever else we do and whoever is around
and how we might do it.

Which for many of us means what we thought we did for money
turned out to be the thing itself,
and did reach out but also fed us and was political,
but not in ways you'd need to shout about.

Meaning it turned out the hyper-technical body was less interesting
than whoever from wherever with whatever so-called disadvantage
of gender or age or race or class or sexuality or so-called disability.

And we're getting better at resisting the gateways that patronise our impulses,
taking the things we're doing anyway and giving them back as a series of rules
or a way to build a career or give to society or justify arts budgets.

We understand that theatres and festivals and producers
must make a hard case in an increasingly arts-averse economy,
but there's value in what we've got that can't be measured or corporatised.

And it's not going to get easier to challenge the imbalance
between the paid staff of arts institutions and the precarity of the unsalaried artist,
but redressing the imbalance starts with how artists support each other,
how we speak to producers,
how we don't speak to producers,
how we ignore institutions,
and how we redefine success for ourselves and for the people around us,
and for the public.

And redefining success requires that we stop believing in art,
or artists,
which means the exact opposite of a refusal to make art.

We indulge the fantasy that the dance market is one big family,
but we need to start recognising that the conditions of work change radically
according to which country or city an artist works in,
and how the policies and institutions and infrastructure of that country work,
which means some people have space and some don't,
or some have support and some don't,
or some can subsidise their touring but most of us can't.

Because when we perpetuate the myth that we're all in the same situation,
we get ourselves exploited pretty fast.

And the salaried people in arts offices
need to have at the forefront of their minds,
the awareness that most artists are living without regular income.

Meaning they have to stop weighing our lack of money
against how lucky they perceive us to be,
because of the old cliche that we're following our dreams.

So even though the money's not going to increase,
they should at least pay us on time,
and stop justifying non-payment
on the grounds that they're giving us good publicity
by inviting our work for free.

And the best curator should start from our instability
because the wobbling we do
and the fact you can't easily tell someone what the performance was like
is part of our resistance to becoming a product,
and you don't have to be a Marxist to understand the worth in that.

Which makes us hard to turn into a creative industry.

And the ways in which we resist corporatisation are born out of a recognition,
that the gatekeepers who would monetise and classify us
risk eroding exactly that fluidity and generosity of practice and identity
which makes what we do vital.

Which makes what we do useful.

Being what Chrysa Parkinson calls 'The Dancer As Agent' or 'The Swerve,'
that connects to a recent and radical shift in the ecology of dance,
beyond the challenging of dancer choreographer relations
or the hierarchical duality of the argument for more women choreographers
and into a place which reverences the dancer herself.

Or as Chrysa said:
'I feel a druidic wisdom emerging from this group
that inspires me to keep searching them out.
When a vibrant indeterminate space emerges between what's organic and cultural,
when a glimpse of a world lies next to a word, I know there's room for a swerve.'
And the swerving artist avoids capture.[15]

Or as Katye Coe said:
'the dancer (particularly on mass)
might be historically and currently feared as a danger to the system …
potentially she who, given a voice might be able
to see/sense through and around the back of old structures,
not a futile resister of that patriarchy but an undoer or healer of it.'[16]

Or as Charlie Ashwell said:
'… the activity of the dance artist, or the 'witch,'
literally as a kind of dance amongst and with these many centres;
whether those centres are theatres, institutions, festivals;
or concepts, actions, thoughts.'[17]

Or as Bojana Kunst puts it,
we have to work less and create more,
outside the old structures of cultural value
that have been eaten alive by capitalism.[18]

Which requires that we help keep each other visible,
despite the way global culture disappears us
in a waterfall of Facebook feeds.

Which requires that the universities who've given us sanctuary in austerity times,
fight for ways to redefine our role
away from assessment procedures based on business practice,
which have no language to describe the worth of what we do.

And I don't know how we negotiate the similarity
between the precarity of the swerving artist
and the precarity of the modern worker,
but it seems to me in positive moments
that at the heart of the swerve is a wresting back of agency
suggesting new models of self-organisation and survival.

And dance won't solve what's going on,
but the ethics of our activities and self-organisation
are part of the micro-culture needed to create change.

And the swerving artist must by necessity do rather than declare,
so that the dancer and choreographer Erdem Gündüz, who was Istanbul's

Standing Man,

was quoted after his protest as saying:

'I'm not the type to talk about politics, I'm an artist, I prefer to talk about dance,'

by which he meant exactly the opposite of a refusal to engage.[19]

Thank you.

With thanks for conversations, advice and shared writings to Charlie Ashwell, Hetty Blades, Ramsay Burt, Katye Coe, Simon Ellis, Susanne Foellmer, Paul Hughes, Jamila Johnson-Small, Joe Moran, Chrysa Parkinson, Jan Ritsema, Mil Vukovic Smart and Ivey Wawn.

Notes

These notes contain information on how to track down source materials mentioned in the text, and are intended not so much as academic endnotes but more as a part of the political tone of the writing, in the sense of recognising and acknowledging shared endeavour in the field.

[1] The quote from Juan Dominguez is part of an online interview, which looks particularly at the micro-cultures within which we sustain our artistic lives, and the strategies we might use for survival – from the series called *Measuring the Temperature of Dance*, initiated by Diego Agulló in 2016 – https://interplayberlin.wordpress.com/

[2] The discussion I mention which took place in Coventry, was part of a meeting of the faculty of the Centre for Dance Research at Coventry University in 2017, which happened after I'd been working on this talk for some months, and resonated particularly with me because of the clear sense in the room that dance does embody a politics, reflected again and again in statements from quite diverse people, some of whom I have quoted above.

[3] The contribution from Paul Hughes formed part of a discussion on Politics, curated and hosted by Matthias Sperling as part of the *Nottdance Debates* in 2017.

[4] The contribution from Jamila Johnson-Small was part of the same discussion on Politics curated by Matthias Sperling.

[5] This quote by Botis Seva came from an interview initiated by Jonathan Burrows as part of the 2016 online project '52 Portraits,' a Sadler's Wells production made in collaboration with Matteo Fargion and Hugo Glendinning - 52portraits.co.uk

[6] Deborah Hay's quote also came from an interview made as part of the '52 Portraits' project.

[7] 'They also want what we've got' is a reference to a series of talks led by Joe Moran at TripSpace London in 2016, which opened up a conversation about the recent interest that galleries have shown in dance, and asked how we might engage in a positive conversation, while remaining critical and recognising the principles and strengths of our own core practices.

[8] Ramsay Burt's quote comes from an exchange of emails between us during the writing of this text.

[9] 'And we help the others and we leave no trace and the doer decides' are the three rules of the Performing Arts Forum in Northern France, which has become an essential meeting point for a new generation excluded from the usual career structures within the dance market: and PAF itself is an ongoing, self-organised social experiment in shared living, researching and making, the experience of which continues to influence a widening demographic of people across the international dance scenes.

[10] The Quaker principle of 'Taking the temperature of the room' was introduced to me by Frank Bock, from a pamphlet called 'Beyond Consensus: Salvaging Sense of the Meeting,' written in 1964 by Barry Morley, and published by Pendle Hill Publications. This booklet seems particularly relevant right now, because of the way it articulates so clearly the limitations of first past the post voting systems, which can marginalise whole sections of the community and have recently shown themselves to be so vulnerable to manipulation by corporate and social media. An earlier version of these same arguments can be found in the writing of the 18th century proto-anarchist thinker William Godwin, husband of Mary Wollstonecraft, in his book *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Modern Morals and Happiness*, first published in 1793.

[11] The quotes from Charlie Ashwell are drawn from her 2014 essay 'Becoming Witch,' where she examines the erasure caused by the question 'where are the women?,' and argues that the women are everywhere but that they are not necessarily dancing where or how the market might wish them to.

[12] The quote from Emma Meehan came from the same meeting of the faculty of the Centre for Dance Research at Coventry University mentioned in note 2.

[13] 'Which is an image of the somatic as political' is written particularly in recognition of the activism of the generation of dance artists of the 1970s and 1980s, who challenged the enlightenment mind/body split, pioneered cooperative forms of choreographic decision making, broke down choreographer/dancer hierarchies, supported feminism and began a movement towards more social inclusion in dance – such that Eleanor Sikorski commented on a Facebook posting of Steve Paxton and Daniel Lepkoff performing contact improvisation in a gallery in Rome in 1973, 'I'm not sure how this sort of thing didn't change the world more than it did' – see Soft Pallet at vimeo.com/98280862

[14] interplayberlin.wordpress.com. Also see note 1.

[15] The quotes from Chrysa Parkinson are taken from her 2014 essay 'Tribal Currencies,' which formed part of the influential *The Dancer As Agent* conference, which took place at DOCH Stockholm in 2013. This conference marked a long awaited final paradigm shift in the perception of the dancer, away from the role of 'interpreter of the choreographer's work' or 'collaborator in a complex relation towards given hierarchies of production,' and towards the understanding that the dancer is an artist in her own right through the practice she makes, regardless of her role in relation to other people's choreographies and ideas. The *Dancer As Agent Collection*, edited by Chrysa Parkinson and Jeroen Peeters, can now be read and downloaded from the Sarma website – sarma.be/pages/The_Dancer_as_Agent_Collection.

[16] The quote from Katye Coe came in response to me asking her how I, a middle-aged male choreographer, might negotiate the question of the continued dominance of middle-aged male choreographers, especially

within more commercial areas of dance theatre; and like Charlie Ashwell, she chose the image of the witch, to articulate the thought that the struggle is no longer one of trying to compete with those traditional dance theatre structures, but rather to rewrite the parameters of what may or may not constitute success or visibility within the dance field.

[17] Charlie Ashwell, 'Becoming Witch' (2014). charlieashwell.wordpress.com/2014/04/28/becoming-witch-a-proposal.

[18] The paraphrasing of Bojana Kunst is from her *Artist At Work, Proximity Of Art And Capitalism* book (2015), which braves to tackle the paradoxical place of the artist in contemporary society, and which has been a motivating factor in me attempting to think further about the issues raised in this talk.

[19] I had known before, and been oddly moved by the thought, that Turkish protester Erdem Gündüz is a dance artist and choreographer, but I am indebted to Susanne Foellmer's 2016 essay on 'Choreography as a Medium of Protest,' for her clear articulation of his political act, and particularly its relation to the resistance inherent within choreographic slowness and stillness. www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/3227143705DA03CFA2684995A850BC0E/S0149767716000395a.pdf/div-class-title-choreography-as-a-medium-of-protest-div.pdf.

Biography

Jonathan Burrows is a choreographer whose main focus is an ongoing body of pieces with the composer Matteo Fargion, with whom he continues to perform around the world. His 'A Choreographer's Handbook' has sold over 13,000 copies since its publication in 2010.

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THE SHOCK OF THE RISKY(QUÉ) FEMALE: FEMININITY AND THE TRAUMA OF THE GREAT WAR ERA IN THE DANCING OF MAUD ALLAN AND ANNA PAVLOVA[1]

VICTORIA THOMS

Keywords

dance
femininity
cultural trauma
Great War era

Abstract

What role did the figure of the dancing female play in negotiating cultural anxieties in the Great War era? I explore this question by looking at the female performer Maud Allan who was famous for her danced interpretations of Salomé in pre-War London and cause of a sensational libel suit in 1918 bring together deviant female sexuality and wartime espionage. I juxtapose Allan with ballerina Anna Pavlova, a contemporary, and role model *par excellence* for proper femininity. These two examples offer a rich comparison from which to discuss how dancing and femininity was the grounds for inciting and palliating the profound cultural trauma of the Great War era.

What role did the figure of the dancing female play in negotiating the cultural anxieties of the First World War era? How might these anxieties be related to the era's troubling of traditional and hegemonic ideas about femininity and masculinity? Finally, how might we understand the trauma endemic to the early twentieth century as symptomatic of this gender trouble? In this essay, I open a discussion of cultural trauma as stemming from anxieties around femininity and identity played out against the backdrop of the Great War and deeply influenced by the social upheaval and devastating loss of life due to the conflict. I explore these anxieties by looking at the female performer Maud Allan who was famous for her erotically charged danced interpretation of Oscar Wilde's infamous character Salome in pre-War London and who was the cause of a sensational libel suit in 1918 that brought together deviant female sexuality and wartime espionage. To theorise the effects of Allan's supposed aberrance, I juxtapose her with ballerina Anna Pavlova, whose faultless image and prolific international touring made her both respected and a role model for proper femininity. Her untimely death in 1931 from pneumonia provoked an unprecedented international expression of mourning. These two examples offer a rich comparison from which to discuss how gender and female identity, in particular, can be read as the root of a significant cultural crisis. A cultural crisis linked to the traumas embedded within the socio-cultural cataclysms of the early twentieth century including not only the Great War itself but also things like the Russian Revolution and the Suffragette movement. Through these examples, I argue that gender is a formidable form of what I call a 'constellation of trauma' that left an indelible mark on those that survived the Great War conflagration.

Allan and Pavlova are not often directly compared or even considered peers. Allan's legacy is a footnote in Edwardian history.[2] Pavlova, on the other hand, has experienced a sustained cult status as one of the greatest ballerinas of all time.[3] Allan and Pavlova had similar beginnings to their London dance careers. They both had their London premieres at the Palace Theatre, a variety theatre, within two years of each other. Allan premiered there in 1908, Pavlova in 1910. Pavlova, in fact, chose the Palace because of its association with Allan[4] and was greatly influenced by the style epitomised by Allan in putting together her early programmes.[5] It is quite likely that Allan would also have paid attention to Pavlova's

performances. This link sets up a singular and important convergence for two careers that later radically diverged, and perhaps this connection has not been given enough emphasis. Indeed, it is the bifurcating historical trajectories of Allan and Pavlova from this point of origin and how the trajectories mediated differing socio-cultural responses to the events of early twentieth century London that make this initial proximity both surprising and uncanny. This point of origin offers a temporally extended discussion about the cultural trauma associated with anxieties about nation and empire through changing notions of proper femininity in popular British concert dance.

To set the stage, I introduce Allan and Pavlova and suggest that both mediated particular socio-cultural responses to the events of this era. This was not only in how their female identity was understood and the kinds of effects this positioning manifested but how their dancing played a central role in this process. I also therefore give particular attention to their signature works that became synonymous with their public identities: for Allan, this was her notorious work *The Vision of Salome* (1906); and for Pavlova, the elegiac *The Dying Swan* (1905). In looking at these works, I focus particular attention on the context surrounding their premieres in London in 1908 and 1910 respectively. I then explore what I consider to be summative events in the public history of these women – Allan's 1918 libel case and Pavlova's death 23 years later in 1931 – and how these events illustrate the influence that gender brings to bear on cultural trauma. These events, spread across more than two decades of enormous change, are brought together in my thinking in how they incited a sometimes global, social and collective response about the character of woman. The dancing and public persona of these two iconic female dancers generated vast public interest and led to the congregating of people – from the sold-out months-long runs of the Palace Theatre to the mass impromptu gatherings of people in public spaces. Their dance outstripped the boundaries of their subculture and infused larger populations, serving as powerful mediators of social desires and anxieties.[6] This effect is evident in how Allan's dancing came to be understood in the last months of First World War London as a deviant, socially destructive and even evil[7] form of female identity and how, in turn, Pavlova's dancing gradually assuaged the wounds to hegemonic

masculinity wrought by the era through its return to deferential and containable proper femininity.

The Female Leads

The pre-First World War London that Allan and Pavlova encountered, approximately within a year of each other, was one of the wealthiest cosmopolitan capitals in the world. The British Empire was at the height of its imperial power and London, as its capital, was a meeting point for multiple transnational identities. With 7.25 million people by 1914, Greater London had the largest population density of any urban centre in the western world at that time.[8] This size and influence, coupled with the effects of nineteenth century industrialisation saw the emergence of a greater heterogeneous strata of classes, especially the unprecedented rise of civil and administrative middle to upper middle classes. This was a potent variegated situation that loosened social and geographically-bound restrictions around acceptable identities and challenged, especially for women, the contained and silent modesty of Victorian ideas of female corporality.[9] The change was aided by a burgeoning print culture that served to promote new ideas about class, nation, sexuality and gender.[10] Dance exhibitions given by solo females were made acceptable and popular by American imports such as Isadora Duncan and came to be seen as a form of national culture.[11] This pre-War environment was ripe for, and celebrated in, the ambivalent pleasure-seeking Salomania that Allan's dancing came to represent – a constellation of feeling that the first programmes given in London by Pavlova reinforced with the inclusion of primitivist short-works (or *divertissement*) such as *Bacchanale* and *Valse Caprice*.[12] The Salome-charged cultural climate of pre-War London offered a form of sanctioned femininity that was urbane, razor-edged, pleasure-seeking and permissive, something quite different to the anti-Salome frenzy during the closing months of the war.

Ullah Maud Durrant, otherwise known as Maud Allan, arrived into this progressive environment in the late weeks of February 1908. She was born in Toronto in 1873 but later moved to San Francisco with her family. Her main sustained mode of study and ability was in music. During her early years in the United States, she showed promise as a pianist, studying at a

local conservatoire in San Francisco which eventually progressed to a move to Berlin in 1895 to enhance her abilities and pursue the promise of a professional career.[13] Losing interest in music, she started to experiment with free movement/Greek revivalist dancing made popular by Isadora Duncan in 1899 and made her dancing debut in Vienna in 1903. After middling success, she was asked to perform at a private event held for Edward VII in the resort of Marienbad in early 1908 where she performed a selection of both her Greek natural dancing and her Orientalist work *The Vision of Salome*. Edward was greatly impressed by her work and this led to an introduction to Alfred Butt, one of London's leading impresarios and the manager of the Palace Theatre, where she was booked for an initial two week run. From there she became an overnight sensation and maintained that success for the next two years.[14] This fame extended past the stage into the environs of Upper London society and politics.

While the majority of Allan's dancing was in the style of Greek inspired natural movement and performed to recognised composers including Chopin and Mendelsohn,[15] without a doubt what made her fame and what she is remembered for was her danced interpretation of Salome.[16] This was based on the eponymous character made famous by Oscar Wilde's play in which Salome agrees to dance for King Herod, her uncle, if he gives her the head of John the Baptist. Calling her version *The Vision of Salome*, Allan performed with a life-like replica of John the Baptist's severed head, an experience that the *Financial Times*

described as, "magnificent in its sinuous beauty, its climax is yet so gruesome as to make the flesh creep and the blood run cold."[17] What is also noticeable in Allan's version is her Salome costume which featured a mobile see-through and ornate beaded top of white pearls and black beads made to look surprisingly like breasts. The costume was finished with a long diaphanous black skirt with diamond-like beads encrusting its hem (see Figure 1).

What Allan's movement in these works actually was is difficult to determine. While Pavlova leaves behind a film, there is no existing moving example of Allan's dancing.[18] Nevertheless, while partly caricature, the drawing by H. M. Brock below taken from *The Graphic* magazine offers some indication of what Allan's movements might have been both in her Greek revivalist dances as well as her interpretation of Salome (see Figure 2).

In considering Allan's movement in these insets, it is not possible get a specific sense of movement dynamics, the sequences of the movements, or Allan's position on the stage. Nevertheless, they do give us a sense of Allan's bodily tension and the flow of movement; how she used levels going down to the floor to lay or kneel; and the thematic intention of the pieces. One can get a feeling for Allan's movement from the way the fabric is drawn and how the body is positioned to indicate transfers of weight. The top inset illustrates her more Greek-inspired dancing that appears to comprise of energetic space-

covering movement combinations and the bottom indicates a more static place-based study. In all instances, what is evident is the mobility and range of Allan's torso whether it is bending back or curving forward and how this freedom in the torso allows for a greater repertoire of bodily expression in the dance. This can be seen in the arm gestures; and without the restriction of footwear, the tension and position of the feet offer a further dimension to the dancing's expressive qualities.

Between her début in 1908 and her final pre-War season at the Palace in 1911, Allan also maintained a significant portfolio of special commissions and private patronage which included by-invitation-only performances of her works in events like the private garden parties of the capital's cultural and political elite.[19] It is through these connections that Allan became close friends with both Margot Asquith and her husband the then Prime Minister, Herbert Henry Asquith. Always vigilant to counterpose the still ambivalent propriety associated with being a solo female performer, especially given the charged eroticism of her onstage Salome, Allan was rigorous in policing information about her personal and private life.[20] This was doubly important for Allan because of the secret she maintained involving her brother Theo who was arrested, found guilty and executed in San Francisco for the murder of two women in 1898.[21] The association to the Asquiths in particular made her an increasingly charged public figure[22] because of polarised opinions about Asquith's policies in the run up to the First World War and the often perceived unhealthy political influence of his wife Margot. This included rumors about the close intimacy she shared with both husband and wife.[23]

Arriving in London as she did in the height of Edwardian cosmopolitanism, Allan's dancing contributed to a cultural milieu that was emerging from and defying the rigidity of the Victorian era, shifting from the masculine gendering of social space to a one which women could increasingly occupy and actively participate in. The context of the Brock image of Allan above with its pointed inclusion of her all-male audience could well have been chosen by *The Graphic* for its salacious potential, but Palace audiences were increasingly heterogeneous in character both in terms of class and gender.[24] Dance increasingly found its place in this milieu as a contributor to shifts in the make-up and consumption of national culture. Allan's

popularity in particular, coming as it did at the zenith of Edwardian London, captured this era of permissiveness. Cultural historian Judith Walkowitz gets at what the visceral and fantastical force of Allan's embodied danced performance of the character of Salome might have been for the audiences of the time when she describes Allan as "a solitary, autonomous, unfettered, mobile, weighted and scantily clad female body whose movement delineated emotional interiority, shifting states of consciousness and autoeroticism."[25] Indeed, the work's alluring orientalist costuming, and passionate duet with a life-like replica of a severed head, presented through the enfleshed and expressive form of solo 'natural' movement performance exemplified the rapid renegotiation of traditional and acceptable forms of identity that characterised pre-War Edwardian society.

Looking now at Anna Pavlova, there are interesting similarities to Allan. Both were foreign dancing imports. Pavlova was born in 1881[26] in St Petersburg, about seven years after Allan. While Allan's training was in music, Pavlova trained specifically in dance, graduating from the Maryinsky Theatre School on Theatre Street in 1891.[27] She immediately entered the Imperial Ballet and although her slight build and expressive style positioned her as against type to other female stars such as Mathilde Kschessinska[28] she side-stepped the lower ranks of the *corps de ballets* and quickly progressed to performing as a featured solo artist. Pavlova began international touring in 1907 and in the spring of 1910 made her public London debut at the Palace Theatre, an event that was greatly anticipated and an unprecedented success.[29] She would dance with Diaghilev and her former Russian colleagues but like many of the earlier imported solo female dance performers that transformed the Edwardian stage, she focused on pursuing an independent career aided by a complementary company of dancers who served as the vehicle for her promotion. Like Allan, who made extended professional visits to international locations including tours to the United States, South Africa, Australia and India prior to and during the First World War, Pavlova undertook extensive worldwide touring returning only occasionally to Europe. Like Allan, she also visited Hollywood, where she was convinced to dance in the *Dumb Girl of Porcini* (1916). She purchased a large house with gardens in Hampstead, North London in the early 1920s which became her home after the Russian Revolution. Allan also remained in London until 1941.[30]

In considering her contribution to dance, Pavlova could be seen to be conservative and canny in the roles that she performed and created for herself. She featured an established repertoire of ballet works that largely came out of the Imperial Russian tradition. These became audience favorites and, not unlike Allan, Pavlova continued this populist approach instead of pursuing the more high art *avant-garde* attitude that her fellow Russian Diaghilev was simultaneously making famous. The career she built showed an understanding of how to manipulate and stage her performances, for instance arranging the Palace Theatre as the venue for her London debut in 1910, the same theatre that was associated with the huge success of Allan. And as noted earlier, Pavlova altered her Palace programmes so as to attract the same kind of popularity that Allan's dancing enjoyed. Attached to and bolstering her box office successes was a masterful crafting of her public persona which relied on titillating rumors supported by absolute silence about the aspects of her private life.[31] For instance, from early on in her career, Pavlova had an ambiguous relationship with Victor Dandre, a White Russian and former member of the Duma. His role has never really been determined but he was variously postulated to be her manager, a father figure or her husband.[32] This kept audiences and the public guessing and reinforced her public image. This scrupulous suppression of personal details, as in Allan's case, may have been about hiding potentially damaging information. For instance, Pavlova was rumored to have been both illegitimate and Jewish[33] and while this was certainly not as explosive as having a murderous brother, both categories could lead to social stigma. And as we shall see from Allan's example in the late-war period this could carry heavy punishments.

Like Allan, Pavlova had a signature work that she performed throughout her career and came to be firmly associated with her public persona and celebrity. Called *The Swan* or *Le Cygne*, or more popularly, *The Dying Swan*,[34] the work is short piece of only three minutes to the music of Camille Saint-Saëns. It was created sometime between 1905 and 1907 in St Petersburg by the then up-and-coming Russian choreographer Michel Fokine with Pavlova as his dancer[35] and, like Allan's well-known piece, has morbid overtones, depicting the final moment in the life of a swan. What is different from Allan's example is that footage of Pavlova dancing *The Dying Swan* still exists and the work has had many interpreters after Pavlova,

serving as a kind of ultimate measure of ballerina legitimacy. The prominent and innovative aspect of the short work is that it is performed almost entirely using the *bourrée* step, where the dancer propels herself across the stage space *en pointe* with a succession of tiny steps, the body held completely still, as if floating across a calm pool of water. It also features choreographed arm movements, or *ports de bras*, in which arms are made to imitate the seamless sequential movement of a bird's wings as it flies. In *The Dying Swan*, a singular figure in full tutu and *en pointe* enters and almost languidly *bourrées* across the back with sinuous winged arm movements. This is followed by moments of stillness where she poses as if tormented. She increasingly succumbs to gravity as if fainting, and seems to rally only to admit the inevitable, as she sinks finally and irrevocably to the floor. The whole effect is strikingly zoomorphic and anthropomorphic as the dancing figure seems to shift back and forth between a woman dancing and the swan she is performing.

Thus while there are some significant points of departure, there are also some striking similarities between these two women within the context of the

Figure 3: Anna Pavlova as the Dying Swan. © Mary Evans / Jazz Age Club Collection. All Rights Reserved.

pre-war London cultural milieu that both were introduced into. The next section moves more specifically to considering how their diverging careers after the First World War offer a means to understand the consequences of the rapidly shifting ideas about masculinity and femininity in the early twentieth century. I do this with specific reference to two events: Allan's libel case of 1918 and Pavlova's death in 1931. These events will illustrate

how Allan and Pavlova's bifurcating histories can be understood to modulate attitudes in the post First World War era, behaviours that included public expressions of anger and fear associated with moral panic and xenophobia as well as grief and sadness linked to mass mourning. Ultimately, I suggest this was about the way these women's dancing came to mean different things about the ways women should be understood for the functioning of a 'healthy' social order.

Iniquity, Sacrifice, Reintegration

During the late months of 1917, Allan returned to undertake a London season after an absence of several years. This was not the sparkling *belle époque* London of the pre-war. The homefront was depressed with shortages of household necessities and the heavy emotional burden of catastrophic loss of life. The appalling losses of the Battle of Passchendaele were followed in the new year by rumors of a colossal German offensive planned for the spring.[36] The fortunes of her close friends the Asquiths were also in decline. Surprisingly Allan's performances were well attended and she was still getting good reviews from her critics.[37] She was in discussions with the London Royal Court Theatre who was arranging to produce a version of Oscar Wilde's play *Salome*. Public performances of the play were still banned by the Lord Chamberlain's office so the event was to be a private event. In it, Allan was to perform her famous *The Vision of Salome* as well as take on some speaking parts in the hopes that this would lead to a cross-over career in acting. As was convention with private events, a listing was placed in the classified advertisements section of *The Times* soliciting interest. In response to the notice, a small, far right newspaper called *The Vigilante* run by Noel Pemberton Billing published this short provocative notice.

> The Cult of the Clitoris
>
> To be a member of Maud Allen's performances in Oscar Wilde's *Salome* one has to apply to Miss Valetta, of 9, Duke Street… If Scotland Yard were to seize the list of these members I have no doubt they would secure the names of several thousand of the first 47,000.[38]

The 47,000 refers to a list identified in an earlier piece in *The Vigilante*, written by Billing, as a group of men and women in British society who were susceptible to blackmail by German agents due to their hidden sexual perversions. Allan, seeing the article, was provoked to sue for libel, arguing that the "cult of the clitoris" was slandering her by calling her a lesbian. The terms of the lawsuit were published verbatim in *The Times* with the term 'lesbianism' appearing for the first time in print in England.[39] Like the Wilde trial almost a quarter of a century before, although Allan initially brought the suit against Billing, it was she who ended up on trial for sexual immorality, as well as, more frighteningly, as a potential enemy of the state. The trial began on May 29th 1918 and ran for six days. Every major British newspaper reported ongoing details of the trial with the *Daily Mirror* featuring two photographic exposés of the trial over this period.[40] Billing promoted the opinion that Germans were profligate and those that infiltrated Britain as spies spread both venereal disease and homosexuality to undermine the British war effort.[41] His witnesses included Oscar Wilde's former lover, Alfred Lord Douglas and Eileen Villiers-Stuart who claimed to have seen the list which she said also included the judge of the trial, Charles Darling. Billing furthermore claimed that a group of women in upper London society were practicing homosexuals who sold secrets to the Germans. Fueled by the deprivation of what seemed an endless war and the anxiety over a continued successful German offensive in France,[42] the trial produced a frenzy which was fed by salacious gossip about Allan's earlier relationship with Margot Asquith, whose nadir in the public's opinion also hurt Allan. Allan's connection to her brother was exposed by Billing to show that sexual perversion was directly related to genetics. The court ruled in favour of Billing, who received great appreciation both inside the packed courtroom and on the packed streets outside. It effectively ended Allan's career and the career of anyone associated with her.

In the public moral frenzy that characterised the Billing Trial, we can witness what Shoshana Felman defines in her co-authored groundbreaking exploration of trauma testimony, as "the state of being stricken, wounded by reality."[43] Applied to the late-war British populous, what stands in sharp relief is how the event articulated this wounding and illustrated a historical moment where a culture may have been understood to be unravelling. Reassuring norms and beliefs about identity are suddenly and aggressively

called into question and bring on particular indicators of trauma including fear, violence, withdrawal, and apprehension. Furthermore, as I have argued elsewhere,[44] the wound to reality that provokes trauma is a complex web of effects involving multiple actors who themselves are both singularly afflicted but also collectively joined. One cannot act without some sort of influence on the other, however unknown or unclaimed. To cite Cathy Caruth, history, like trauma, is "never one's own […] history is the way we are all implicated in each other's traumas."[45] The effects of trauma arise not simply in the experiencing of a materially catastrophic event, although the specificity and impact of this singular experience cannot be underestimated; it is the way in which the event sits within a historical context that is enmeshed within socio-cultural value and meaning that informs the psychic injury and its palliation. Indeed, the event itself might not be traumatic to begin with but becomes traumatic in the way that it is addressed by social actors and institutions.

Thus the Billing Trial provided an expedient vehicle for the coalescing and articulating of traumata associated with a host of cultural change both directly and indirectly influenced by the war. The trench warfare on the continent was entering its fourth year with increasing social confusion and unrest at home.[46] The question of Irish independence and with it concerns about the integrity of the Empire had just come to a head with the violent eruption of the Easter Rising in 1916. The growth of the Labour Party also challenged the traditional status quo, giving a political voice to working class populations, especially with the *Representation of the People Act* in February of 1918 which granted limited suffrage to women for the first time in British history and enfranchised all men above the age of 21. Indeed, this last example brings into sharp focus the increasingly challenging role gender played in understanding the bounds of social reality. These rapid changes as well as the hysteria of the London home front in the spring of 1918 helped to set the scene for what became a trial about the very character of female identity. Here the question of 'woman' came to articulate the grounds on which the trauma of disintegrating belief systems and knowable identities was negotiated and it is telling that the trial and execution by firing squad of Mata Hari on false charges of espionage took place only six months before the trial.[47]

Central then to Allan's example is an anxiety about her identity as knowable and containable; writ large is the anxiety regarding the inability to tell the difference between friend and enemy that was adeptly played out in Billing's contentions about the hidden connections between sexual perversion, genetics, and treason. Medd brilliantly argues[48] the libel trial offered a surrogate for the unknowability of war, demonstrated in the unknowability of lesbian identity. I take a slightly expanded view and suggest that it is not simply how a cultural moment is destabilized by the emergence of lesbian identity but how the emergence of lesbian identity provokes an ontological abyss *qua* identity full stop. The Billing Trial magnified the impossibility of fully gasping the traumatic magnitude of war by providing an event that threw into question the very relationship between gender and sex, culture and biology, and following Judith Butler,[49] dissolved the taken for granted understanding that identity equals reality. We should be able to tell the difference between men and women and when we cannot it calls into question the very fabric of our existence. We think we know what 'woman' is but all of a sudden women seem to behave a lot like men and simultaneously we think we know 'men' but because of the events of the Great War, the identity of men, as Joanne Bourke persuasively argues, is also significantly altered.[50]

In highlighting the potential social crisis instituted around the categories of masculinity and femininity, the Billing Trial highlights how gender is a formidable constellation of trauma. By constellation of trauma, I mean a group of interrelated traumas and their effects (fear, anger, withdrawal, psychosis) that operate in relation to gender identity. "Gender is traumatic and trauma is gendered" as Tiffany Joseph reminds us.[51] On trial was precisely the pre-war figure of the solo dancing woman that Allan's example encapsulated. This figure was a stand in for and coalesced the overwhelming wound to reality caused by the Great War era. Her unrestrained weighted dancing came to demarcate the traumatic boundaries of identity. The trial made publically manifest the very raw and deeply troubling emotions about the war through a questioning of what constituted the proper identity and role for women. In doing so Allan's punishment was assured as she and by association her dancing became untenable for the social order. She became the casualty of this still open wound.

If Allan and her dancing of Salome were the catalyst for articulating the ongoing deep anxiety about female identity and the role of femininity for the integrity of the nation, Pavlova's death thirteen years later might be understood to palliate the rip in the body politic by repatriating knowable gendered identities. Her passing on 23rd January 1931 in The Hague was widely reported in the British press[52] and like the Billing Trial ignited mass public interest. This time, though, united in expressions of grief. The circumstances surrounding her death were no small motivation for the perceived tragedy of her death which presented her last days as the image of a gracious, dedicated, brave and above all self-sacrificing woman. As noted earlier, Pavlova was prolific in her touring and through it she enjoyed a huge international following of ardent and critical admirers. By the end of the 1920s, her zeal for promoting dance meant that she had visited every continent, performing in places like Egypt, South Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Japan, Venezuela, Peru, New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the United States, with weeks long seasons in New York. Yet by the end of 1920s the world economy was also in deep crisis, precipitating even more far flung touring. By this time, Pavlova was in her late 40s suffering from a constant state of exhaustion and a persistent knee problem. Returning to Europe in the spring of 1930, she continued to tour through the autumn and was undertaking a tour of northern Europe in the New Year. Travelling in early January, Pavlova's train derailed in the night and a piece of luggage hit her in the chest while she was in her sleeping birth. Several sources also reported that she helped to detrain other injured survivors with little concern for her own wellbeing. This was followed by a delay of half a day waiting outdoors and in unheated train compartments. She was already showing signs of significant illness on the subsequent train journey to The Hague were the tour was to begin. This illness was diagnosed days later as pleurisy which continued to worsen. Pavlova purportedly refused to undergo an operation to relieve the pressure on her lungs because it threatened to end her dancing career. She died in the early evening of 22nd January 1931, and it was reported that her last words were for her Swan dress to be made ready.[53]

In thinking about the dynamics of traumatic effect, Pavlova's death offers several registers of insight. Certainly, as I will explore in a moment, it is a collective working through of cultural anxieties via public mourning that

valorise traditional femininity. First though as an important corollary, the issue of trauma and temporality bears considering. The complexity of traumatic effect is that it is not fully available, emerging in unsettling phenomena undergone by the sufferers as a delayed response to the experience. Traumatic time is not perceived as the coherent flow of events that characterises normal social reality but rather as a palimpsest of competing temporalities with confused states of consciousness. It is experienced as an overwhelming ubiquitous now. This lack of the sense of passing time also influences the temporal lag associated with the after-effects of trauma. Ann Douglass and Thomas Vogler[54] for instance use the twenty-year progression of eventual public recognition of and engagement with the Holocaust to illustrate this effect. Traumatic time then can also provide a different understanding of historical eras and their ongoing effects. While proceedings associated with Pavlova's death in 1931 might plainly be attached to the second half of the interwar period, the capacious temporality of traumatic effect connect it to the influences of an earlier socio-historic era. It may well bear reiterating that the First World War was an occurrence that, at the time, went beyond the borders of the human imagination and its manifold influences in later events cannot be underestimated. Its traumatic resonances reverberated through, if not beyond, the first half of the twentieth century.

In the context of this delayed response, reactions to Pavlova's death also chime with Susan Kent's thinking on societal symptoms of trauma. Kent explores the British post-war and inter-war psyche and its influence on the politics of the era. She suggests that 'shell shock' theorised as a consequence of the Great War was felt collectively and was articulated in numerous testimonials by both combatants and civilians who felt that they had been "torn to pieces, fragmented their existence, utterly disrupted the flow of what should have been their natural lives."[55] The desire to feel whole again and heal the national psyche led to the widespread appeal of conservative politics intent on closely defining and policing the boundaries of the 'English' self from what was perceived as pernicious and invasive others, this including various religious organisations, women, and racial and ethnic groups. If Allan's trial articulated fears about a profound confusion about boundaries of female identity, Pavlova's death more than a decade later might be understood to have helped to re-establish these

boundaries. Pavlova's careful progressive cultivation of image made her the epitome of purity, modesty and dedication wrapped in an aura of grace and handsomeness. The circumstances of her death reinforced this image most emphatically. Her sacrifice was not simply to give up everything for her art but to also die for it. Her identity is worthy of mourning, and the mourning is more profound because of worthiness of her identity. She was not only the interpreter *par excellence* of this submissive grace and surrender but its literal embodiment. Her death provided an event that returned to and asserted a category of femininity that was reassuring and quantifiable. It recoupled gender and sex and offered a remedy for psychosis. Where melancholia, theorised by Sigmund Freud in 1917, is characterised by an inability to identify the specific nature of loss as well as feelings of worthlessness, mourning is a process of acknowledging loss and of social reintegration. Set against a worsening global financial crisis and increased socio-political instability accompanying Hitler's rise to power in Germany – all haunting consequences of the failure of post First World War reconciliation – mourning for Pavlova offered the comfort of celebrating knowable, laudable and containable ideas about women founded on traditional understandings of femininity.

The Dying Swan can be seen to play a central role in the building valorisation of traditional femininity as a social sedative, a claim that becomes more durable if one charts *The Dying Swan's* journey of influence from its premiere in London before the war, through the 1920s and into the 1930s after Pavlova's death. What is noticeable is that Pavlova's professional persona changes so that by the mid-1920s London, she has fully adopted what Jennifer Fisher has termed "the Swan Brand."[56] Nevertheless, while she danced *The Dying Swan* at her first pre-War programmes at the Palace in 1910, it was the exuberant and sensual partnered dances with Mikhail Mordkin that her management encouraged and the press reported, featuring the joyous unrestrained character of Greek natural dancing. This can be witnessed in pieces like their *Bacchanale* which was featured in promotion material and press coverage with a titillating medium head shot of Pavlova holding a bunch of grapes close to her mouth and looking over her shoulder in saucy invitation.[57] After the autumn of 1914, Pavlova only returned to London post-war in 1920, this time seemingly eschewing the Palace where she and her company had

all of her pre-War London seasons and appearing instead at notable West End theatres such as Drury Lane and Covent Garden. For someone whose choice to perform specifically at the Palace for her London premiere in 1910 was informed by its association with Allan, this change seems telling. This 1920 return was also reported in several newspapers with specific reference to the world-renowned Swan dance which they reported as being more beautiful than ever after a four-year absence.[58] In 1925, illustrating the further widening of the social reach and impact of the Swan emblem, the hotelier Gordon Selfridge featured a window showing a replica of Pavlova on stage in a classic pose from *The Swan*. An image of this was featured in the society periodical *The Sketch*.[59] This link also illustrates how Pavlova's image synchronized the 1920s commerce which offered the new and exotic – more romantic than erotic – in safe and controlled spaces.[60]

Nevertheless, the most profound link between Pavlova and the Swan comes with her death. These include obituary notices which featured: reports of Pavlova making "swan" movements just before she died;[61] images of her embracing a swan;[62] "letters to the editor" refining on points made in her earlier published obituary to include "such miracles of interpretation as the Swan;"[63] and photo essays highlighting *The Swan* as her signature work.[64] These reports of her death all reinforce the ubiquitous iconic image of her as the dying Swan. Perversely, as a foil for the 'ravenous prurience' of the character of Salome, *The Dying Swan* came to advocate that death itself is a positive characteristic of hegemonic femininity. In fact, Pavlova's role as the Dying Swan increasingly made her personal story always already a story about death and the healing tragedy of this death.

Pavlova as Dying Swan thus seems to serve as a powerful cypher for obliterating the feminine transgressions celebrated in the Salomania of the Pre-War and transforms into the tragic figure of the Swan who palliates the incontrollable fears associated with modern femininity. The social power of the Swan trope is further revealed by considering how both women have been written into history. It is perhaps telling that Pavlova's memory and her influence has experienced sustained cult status. Much of the work concerning Pavlova is hagiographic and intended for visual as much as

textual impact.[65] There is little discussion about the critical impact Pavlova's dancing and celebrity had on different social formations of the last 100 years. To be sure, I am provoked to read this shortage as an effect of those public figures we cannot or will not critically assess for fear of undermining a fragile enabling fantasy about plenitude and wholeness. 'Pavlova' as idea offers a social analgesic, providing sustaining hegemonic fantasies about the ideal woman as beautiful, sacrificing, proper, and of course, heterosexual.

On the other hand, up until the late 1970s Allan had all but disappeared from cultural memory.[66] She was rescued from obscurity in the last decades by sustained interest in her in the areas of Gender Studies, Women's Studies and Cultural Studies, where her example has offered space for the needed cultural excavations.[67] I have argued throughout that Allan and Pavlova's example offers a way of understanding how gender was a constellation of trauma for the Great War era and maybe this contention is most forcefully illustrated in how Allan's memory disappeared in such a significant way. In her acclaimed book on the complexity of memory, Susan Rubin Suleiman[68] suggests that the past is remembered in how a culture understands itself and how it desires to be understood by others. In the pre-war years Allan and Pavlova were both promising dancers with a career ahead of them, linked not only through the theatre they both premiered at but also in perpetuating the (female) freedom associated with natural dancing. Is the traumatic effect of the Great War then also that we are left remembering and celebrating the depiction of the final moments of a beautiful but doomed swan instead of the depiction of female autonomy and self-assurance coalesced in figure of the Salome dancer?

Notes

2 McDearmon, "Maud Allan-The Public Record."

3 Fisher, "The Swan Brand."

4 Money, *Anna Pavlova*.

5 Pritchard, *Anna Pavlova*.

6 To gauge this border crossing, I have looked at the frequency and content of a variety of print publication specific to a British context, considering not only how the events were reported but also in what kinds of publication. This ranged from the dance-focused the *Dancing Times*, a monthly publication; to weekly Society publications including, *The Sketch*, *The Tatler* and *The Illustrated London News*; to finally, the national dailies, both broadsheets and tabloids, including, *The Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail*, *The Observer*, *The Manchester Guardian*, the *Daily Mirror* and *The Times*.

7 Anthony Patterson, *Maud Allan*.

8 Goebel and White, "London and the First World War." www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03058034.2016.1216758.

9 Walkowitz, "The Vision," 339.

10 Kelly, "Seeing Through Spectacles."

11 Walkowitz, "The Vision," 338, 342.

12 Pritchard, *Anna Pavlova*, 63.

13 Cherniavsky, *The Salome Dancer*.

14 Walkowitz, "The Vision."

[15] Reviews of her work from her debut in March 1908 through to final notices of her first run in London in late 1909 can be found across a swathe of popular press. See P.G.K., "Canadian Who Will Stir London," *Daily Mail*, 7 March 1908, UKpressonline; "The Poetry of Motion," *Financial Times*, 7 March 1908, Financial Times Historical Archive; "The Drama," *London Daily News,* 7 March 1908, The British Newspaper Archive; and "Miss Maud Allan, the new dancer at the Palace Theatre," *The Tatler Sporting and Country House Supplement*, 11 March 1908. These of course mention the *Vision of Salome* but also indicate that her programme featured much Greek-inspired natural movement which was often enthusiastically reviewed.

[16] It is difficult to find any commentary on Allan that does not in some way also mention *The Vision of Salome*. See for instance, Farfan, "Masculine Women"; Bland, *Modern Women*; Medd, *Lesbian Scandal*; and Koritz, *Gendering Bodies/Performing Art*. There are also several examples of *The Vision of Salome*'s influence on its Edwardian audience including the Salome parody "Sal Oh-My" that opened at the Alhambra soon after Allan's debut and the rather startling reproduction of the Allan's Salome character by a group of female children employed by another parody done by the Edwardian musical comedienne Phyllis Dare. See "Dressed in a Chic Ventilation: Miniature Salomes," *The Sketch Supplement*, 24 June 1908; and "'The Vison of Salome' Parodied: 'Sal-oh-my'," *The Sketch*, 29 April 1908.

[17] "The Poetry of Motion," *Financial Times*, 7 March 1908, Financial Times Historical Archive.

[18] Weigard, "The Rugmaker's Daughter," who suggests that the silent film Allan made in 1915 called *Rugmaker's Daughter* included examples of both her Greek dancing and elements of *The Vision of Salome*; this film is now lost.

[19] Cherniavsky, *The Salome Dancer*.

[20] McDearmon, "Maud Allan-The Public Record"; and Walkowitz, "The Vision."

[21] Cherniavsky, *The Salome Dancer*.

[22] "Popular with the Upper 10, Downing Street," *The Sketch Supplement*, 24 June 1908.

[23] Bland, *Modern Women*; Medd, *Lesbian Scandal*.

[24] Walkowitz, "The Vision."

25 Walkowitz, "The Vision," 340.

26 There is some ambiguity around her birthday. See Money, *Anna Pavlova*.

27 Kerensky, "Review: Searching."

28 Pritchard, *Anna Pavlova*, 10.

29 "The Palace: Mdlle. Pavlova," *Daily Telegraph*, 19 April 1910, The Telegraph Historical Archive; "World's Greatest Dancer: Pavlova in London," *Daily Mail*, 19 April 1910, UKpressonline; "Art, Music and the Drama," *Illustrated London News*, 23 April 1910; "Anna Pavlova," *The Sketch Supplement*, 20 April 1910; "The World's Greatest Dancer," *The Tatler*, 6 April 1910; and "To Dance in England Again Before Long," *The Sketch Supplement*, 6 April 1910.

30 Cherniavsky, *The Salome Dancer*.

31 Money, *Anna Pavlova*.

32 Pritchard, *Anna Pavlova*.

33 Kerensky, "Review: Searching."

34 I use "Dying Swan" to refer to the work throughout.

35 Kerensky, "Review: Searching."

36 Kettle, *Salome's Last Veil*.

37 "Maud Allan's Return," *The Tatler*, 14 November 1917.

38 Cited in Medd, *Lesbian Scandal*, 28.

39 Medd, *Lesbian Scandal*.

40 See "P.B. Libel Charge," *Daily Mirror*, 31 May 1918, UKpressonline; "Scenes at Billing Trial," *Sunday Times*, 2 June 1981, Sunday Times Digital Archive; "The Billing Trial," *Daily Mail*, 5 June 1918, UKpressonline; "Mr. Billing Acquitted," *The Manchester Guardian*, 5 June 1918, ProQuest Historical Newspapers; "Acquittal of Mr. Billing," *The Times*, 5 June 1918; "Pemberton Billing Trial," *Daily Telegraph*, 5 June 1918, The Telegraph Historical Archive; and "The Defendant cheered by the crowd," *Daily Mirror*, 5 June 1918, UKpressonline.

41 Medd, *Lesbian Scandal*.

42 Kettle, *Salome's Last Veil*.

43 Felman, *Testimony*, 28.

44 Thoms, *Martha Graham*.

45 Caruth, *Unclaimed*, 24.

46 Kent, *Aftershocks*; Overy, *The Morbid Age*.

47 Mata Hari was executed on 17 October 1917. See Wheelwright, *The Fatal Lover*, who perceptively writes that "Mata Hari brought together fears about the enemy alien, the wayward woman and sexual decadence," 4.

48 Medd, *Lesbian Scandal*.

49 Butler, *Gender Trouble*.

50 Bourke, *Dismembering*.

51 Joseph, "Non-Combatant's," 67.

52 The *Daily Express* featured the news of Pavlova's death on their front page. See "Pavlova Dead," *Daily Express*, 23 January 1931, UKpressonline. The *Manchester Guardian* reported that same day. See "Death of Mme Pavlova: Illness during Tour of Holland," *The Manchester Guardian*, 23 January 1931, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. The *Manchester Guardian* followed this the next day with "Our London Correspondence: Pavlova as a Friend," *The Manchester Guardian,* 24 January 1931, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. See also "Pavlova Dead," *Daily Express*, 23 January 1931, UKpressonline; G.B. "Pavlova Lies in State," *Daily Express*, 29 January 1931, UKpressonline; and "Personalities of the Week," *Illustrated London News*, 31 January, 180. Eulogies and memorials reported on by the press extended into the spring of 1931. See as an example, "Pavlova Memoria - Special Performance at the Hippodrome," *The Times,* 16 Feb 1931, Times Digital Archive; "Anna Pavlova: Some Memories," *Dancing Times*, March 1931, 683-692; "The Royal Academy, 1931: A Memory of a Great Dancer," *Illustrated London News*, 9 May 1931.

53 Money, *Anna Pavlova*.

54 Douglass and Vogler, "Introduction."

55 Kent, *Aftershocks*, 3.

56 Fisher, "The Swan Brand," 51.

57 Title page to *The Sketch Supplement*, 20 April 1910.

58 "Pavlova's return' Enthusiastic Welcome at Drury Lane," *The Times*, 13 April 1920, Times Digital Archive; "London Theatres. Drury Lane. Return of Pavlova," *The Stage*, 15 April 1920.

59 "Commerce pays a tribute to the great art of Mme. Pavlova," *The Sketch*, 4 November 1925.

[60] Dennis, *Cities of Modernity*.

[61] "Obiturary – Anna Pavlova," *The Stage*, 29 Jan 1931.

[62] "Personalities of the Week," *Illustrated London News*, 31 January 1931.

[63] "Points from Letters," *The Times*, 26 Jan 1931, Times Digital Archive.

[64] "Anna Pavlova: Famous Dancer's Covent Garden Triumphs," *The Times*, 24 January 1931, Times Digital Archive.

[65] Money, *Anna Pavlova*; Glasstone, "Book Reviews," www.euppublishing.com/doi/pdfplus/10.2307/1290781; Pritchard, *Anna Pavlova*; and Kerensky, "Review." Notable exceptions that have considered the cultural impact of Pavlova include Casey, *Pavlova*, and Fisher, "The Swan Brand."

[66] McDearmon, "Maud Allan."

[67] Farfan, *Masculine Women*; Bland, *Modern Women*; Medd, *Lesbian Scandal*; Walkowitz, "The Vision"; Koritz, *Gendering Bodies/Performing Art*; Hoare, *Wilde's Last Stand*; and Kettle, *Salome's last veil*.

[68] Suleiman, *Crises of Memory*.

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Biography

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A COLLECTING SOCIETY FOR DANCE: HAS THE TIME COME?

CHARLOTTE WAELDE

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Abstract

This chapter argues that the time has come to establish a collecting society for dance in the UK. Collecting societies manage copyright in different sectors of the creative industries, but none yet exist to manage copyright in dance. Dance has mostly been thought of as an ephemeral artform, but as technologies make it increasingly easy to 'capture' dance, so copyright exists in both the recording and the dance. Through the management of copyright, a collecting society could facilitate the development of innovative new relationships between copyright owners and potential users, as well as implement social programmes to support the dance community.

Introduction

'Patchwork' is one way to describe the current approach to dance and copyright in the UK.[1] Copyright is far from unknown to the dance community, and is used to good effect in, for example, large productions of traditional dance works. However, growing numbers of digitisation projects and multi-partner developments, are resulting in an increasing numbers of copyright questions being asked as participants seek to understand the parameters of the law and its implications for dance. These range from questions concerning authorship and (multiple) ownership, through to infringement, illustrating the growing complexity around copyright and dance. In addition, digitisation is opening new opportunities for copyright owners to reach out to new audiences, and for the potential for increasing numbers of dance works to be used by third parties.

These developments combine to suggest that this might be an opportune moment to think about whether a collecting society could make a positive contribution to the dance sector.

This chapter will explain what a collecting society is, the roles it can play in relation to the management of copyright in dance in the UK, and to the development of the dance sector more generally. It will examine ways in which copyright is currently used by a range of projects, and explain how one organisation sought to set itself up as a type of collecting society to manage copyright in response to this increased complexity. Finally, it will highlight why, within the broader cultural industries context, this is a particularly opportune time for the dance community to seriously consider the establishment of a collecting society.

Copyright: preliminary points

An important point to bear in mind in the ensuing discussion is that ignoring copyright cannot make it 'disappear' in law.[2] In other words, once the conditions for the subsistence of copyright have been satisfied, two of which are that the dance must be fixed (recorded) in some form,[3] and that the right sort of originality must be expended in the dance,[4] copyright will exist, and will continue for 70 years after the death of the author[5] of the copyright in the dance. Once it exists, copyright comprises a number of exclusive rights that belong to the copyright owner. These include the

exclusive rights of reproduction, distribution, communication to the public, adaptation, public performance, and rental or lending.[6] Broadly this means that every time a work is used without the consent of the owner, then copyright is infringed.[7] The owner of the copyright can license others to use all or part of the copyright in the work,[8] or they can give/sell (assign) the copyright to a third party.[9] Such is the flexibility of copyright that it is possible to allow a third party to carry out some, but not all of the exclusive rights. For example, a licence could be given by the owner of copyright in a dance to reproduce that in a film, but not on the stage, and that could be for the duration of the copyright, or for a fixed period.

While copyright lasts, it is possible for the owner to decide not to enforce it. In other words, if someone used a dance work without permission, the copyright owner need not take any action in relation to the unauthorised use – for instance through suing for damages,[10] or seeking an order to prevent the work being used without permission.[11] However, ignoring the copyright can have a chilling effect on what happens to that dance work. If someone wanted to use the dance work, but was unable to find the owner, this would result in a work which cannot be lawfully reproduced or re-used because permission cannot be obtained. Certainly, it would be open to the user to re-use the dance work (or part of it) without permission, and take the chance that either the copyright owner would not find out, or would not take action if she did. But experience from other sectors suggests that users tend to be hesitant to do that, whether out of respect for the creator; a sense that copyright might have a role to play and that using it without permission is just 'wrong'; or through a fear of 'getting caught'.[12]

A second point to bear in mind is the roles that copyright can play in the dance community, and for copyright owners. Currently, copyright is used to fill a range of strategies, from a 'closed' management tool to generate revenue, to a device to keep dance 'open'. Larger institutions in the dance community tend to use copyright to bolster revenue – an approach rooted in the Anglo-American economic theory of copyright. This posits that we legislate for copyright to give an incentive to create works.[13] Because copyright grants a series of exclusive rights over creative works, so these rights can be assigned or licensed to third parties in return for economic reward. In this way, the argument goes, the author is incentivised to create

more works. In so doing, a public interest is satisfied because new works are always being created to fill public (consumer) demand. This type of strategy is illustrated by that taken by The Scottish Ballet. In an interview in 2010 for the AHRC funded project, Music and Dance: Beyond Copyright Text?,[14] Cindy Sughrue, then Chief Executive, spoke about the developed nature of the copyright licensing framework underpinning many of the major productions by the Ballet company. This included issuing licences to third parties for their use of a range of different copyright-protected works within the production – not only the dance, but also the costumes, the music, the lighting, the music, to name but a few (together sometimes referred to as 'grand rights').[15] Equally, when licensing in material to use in productions, the Scottish Ballet will pay royalties for the use of works protected by copyright.[16] Using copyright in this way accords with the public policy view that, in times of austerity alternative revenue streams should be developed to fill public funding gaps; generating revenue from exploiting copyright is one way to do that.

At the other end of the spectrum, copyright is used as a strategy by some to keep dance 'open'. This follows from open strategies developed in other parts of the creative industries, such as open access in academic publishing which seeks to keep scholarly publications freely accessible and reusable,[17] and the open software movement which seeks to ensure users can run and develop software. Copyright theories positing that authorship is relational and the author is a participant in a process of cultural dialogue and exchange have influenced, and are influenced by, these movements.[18] Some works in the open access movement, for example, are licensed using creative commons licenses.[19] One is the CC-BY license which means that a user can reproduce the work however she wants, so long as she attributes the author. The significant advantage of attaching such a licence is that the user knows what she can do with the work – thus avoiding the chilling effect noted above.

A final point to bear in mind, is that the law of copyright has moral rights embedded within it. These stem from the Civil Law tradition, another key theory underpinning copyright – or more accurately author's rights – in terms of which copyright is viewed as emanating from the personality of the author;[20] moral rights are the manifestation of the personality. The two

main moral rights in UK law are the right to be identified as the author of a work (the right of attribution),[21] and the right of integrity (the right not to have a work subjected to derogatory treatment).[22] While in UK law they are regarded as rather weak,[23] they are nonetheless important for creators at all stages of their careers. The attribution right, for example, underpins many of the credits shown at the end of a film, and of naming the choreographer of a recorded dance. The right of integrity can cause users of works to think twice about how an existing work might be used, lest it is infringed.

How might a collecting society for dance add value to the dance community, and what might that value be?

Collecting Societies

History

Collecting societies have been a feature of the copyright landscape since the mid 19th century.[24] In 1791, the exclusive right of the author to approve public performance of music was established in France, but it was not until 1847 that the right was enforced by composers whose music was played in Paris without their permission. The French court granted the equivalent of royalties for the unauthorised performance. Subsequently, an 'Agence Centrale', the predecessor of the world's first copyright collecting society for musical works, Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs et Editeurs de Musique (SACEM) was established. In the field of dramatic works, collective management also dates back to the 18th Century when, in France the predecessor of the Société des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques (SACD) was founded. The purpose was to ensure recognition and respect for authors' economic and moral rights in theatres.[25] The first collecting society in the UK was the Performing Right Society (PRS) established in 1914.[26] Copyright collecting societies are now an integral part of the copyright landscape and exist for a range of different works and rights including music, publishing, visual artworks and audio-visual clips from broadcasts, among others.[27] There is, however, no collecting society established to manage copyright in dance.

The functions of a collecting society

'Collecting society' is the name used for a copyright organisation that manages copyright on behalf of owners, and which can carry out a range of other functions. More narrowly, and in legal parlance, a collective management organisation (CMO) is a licensing body that can grant the right to use works protected by copyright owned by multiple copyright owners in a single licence, in return for a payment. Exploiting works protected by copyright can cause practical problems for both the copyright owner and a third party who might want to use the work. A copyright owner can find it difficult to keep track of third parties who wish to exploit those works in one form or another. Similarly, a licensee may wish to incorporate a range of works protected by copyright into their repertoire, but have difficulty in tracing the copyright owners to obtain permission (the chilling effect). For example, educational establishments and businesses often make copies of published literary works which would be an infringement of copyright if permission was not given, and broadcasters frequently play musical works which are protected by copyright. To facilitate these transactions, owners of works protected by copyright assign or license their rights to the CMO (or the CMO acts as agent on their behalf) which then manages the rights on behalf of their members. Thus, the owners are saved from having to spend a lot of time on administration, and those who wish to exploit the works have one place from which they can seek permission.

The CMO issues licences to users, in return for royalty payments. The users can use the works in accordance with the terms of the licence. This removes all of the difficulties of users finding rights holders, rights holders finding users, and it enables and facilitates the exploitation of copyright works in accordance with the licences. These licences can be targeted at particular users, for instance those in the education sector, and for specific purposes, for instance public performance. Such an approach could make the works more freely re-usable for defined purposes – making it clear to the user who owns the copyright, and what permission they have been given to use the work, thus avoiding the chilling effect. It would also significantly reduce transaction costs for users who would know what (standardised) uses they could make of the works, and for copyright

owners who would not have to repeat the same, or similar licensing processes multiple times. In addition, through a CMO, creators, and in particular the single creator or small collective, have access to a collective bargaining mechanism which could be useful when faced with large exploiters of rights. If the interests of the small(er) creator are represented on a collective basis by a CMO, there is greater chance of the small creator getting a 'fair deal' for their copyright. This in turn could help to secure their creative survival, supporting, in turn, a more culturally diverse society.[28]

At first blush the fact that CMOs are useful for bringing multiple copyright owners in contact with multiple users of copyright may not seem relevant to dance. As noted elsewhere, there seems a general, and rather unquestioned, assumption that the choreographer is the author and first owner of the copyright in a dance.[29] That assumption however is not supported by the law. The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) (CDPA) protects dance under the category of dramatic work[30] but does not thereby limit authorship and ownership of copyright to the choreographer. In order to determine the author in law of the copyright it is necessary to ascertain who has expended the right type of originality in the work, an area that is influenced by European jurisprudence. Cases from the Court of Justice in Europe indicate that the standard of originality is one of intellectual creation. To reach this level the author should express her creative ability in an original manner by making free and creative choices, and stamp her 'personal touch' on the work.[31] Where a dancer reaches this level in her contribution to a dance work, then she is likely to meet the standard of originality necessary for authorship. That however will not always be the case. For instance, where the dancer follows the choreographers' instructions, and no room is left for original input – in the copyright sense - by the dancer, then she will not be a copyright author. This may be the case in a production by a large ballet company, or a contemporary dance, in each case where the dancers follow and realise the choreographers' instructions. But there are two points to bear in mind: the first is that ideas are not protected by copyright – so where a choreographer gives ideas to the dancers, and facilitates the dancer in realising those ideas – then the dancer, not the choreographer may well be considered to be the copyright author in law.[32] The second point is that the creation of dance is often an iterative and joint process as between

choreographer and dancers. If this is the case, and the right sort of originality has been expended by each party and the constituent parts cannot be separated, then the choreographer and dancers may well be considered as joint authors in law of the copyright.[33]

As the author is the first owner of copyright,[34] (unless an employee and there is no agreement to the contrary[35]) the legal result is that ownership of copyright in the dance is likely to be far more fragmented than might have been thought by many in the dance community, and potentially be split between the choreographer and dancer(s). This, in turn, could make management of the copyright challenging. If a third party wanted to obtain permission to the dance, then she would have to find the choreographer(s) and dancer(s) who had joint ownership of the copyright in the dance – a task that could prove difficult, if not impossible. And that is another reason why the role of a CMO in managing dance could be so important - to consolidate this fragmented ownership and make it easy to get permission to re-use the dance, and to return royalties to the copyright owners.

Beyond issuing licences and collecting royalties on behalf of users, CMOs and Collecting Societies more generally often also carry out a range of other activities. PRS for music for instance funds new talent and has since 2000, according to its website, invested more than £23.6 million in over 5,300 new music initiatives.[36] In addition, PRS works with a range of national, European and international policy makers to seek to influence policy, much of which implicates copyright. For instance, in 2013 the term of protection of copyright in musical performances and sound recordings was extended from 50 years to 70 years.[37] Along with this came significant concessions on behalf of musical performers[38] including a requirement that sound recording producers must establish a fund of 20% of gross revenues received on the sale of records for non-featured performers, funds that are distributed by CMOs.[39] At present, the owners of copyright in dance have no collective means of having their voices heard in relation to the legislative agenda – a role that a collecting society for dance could take on.

Collective agreements negotiated by a CMO (or other representative organisation) are another way of providing assistance to copyright owners not only in respect of their copyright (and performing rights), but also in relation to a range of other matters. This is particularly so when individuals

are contracted by a large organisation – and so the bargaining power between the two is unequal. One example is the performers' trade union, Equity (Equity has established the British Equity Collecting Society[40] as a CMO to manage performers rights). One branch of the organisation is Equity Dance which is active in negotiating collective contracts for choreographers and dancers with a range of institutions.[41] Terms can include employment conditions, formal obligations applicable to the performer, and remuneration rates. What the collective agreements do, is to establish common principles that apply in the particular part of the cultural sector and seek to balance the interests of the parties – something that the individual dancer negotiating on her own would find challenging. Indeed, collective bargaining has been seen as key to ensuring that interests of creators are taken into account.[42] What the Equity contracts don't do however is to deal with choreographers' and dancers' copyright. This is because Equity has a mandate to deal with performers' rights and not copyright – something that a dedicated CMO for copyright in dance could do.

Regulation of CMOs

Because CMOs occupy a powerful position in relation to the management of copyright, they are subject to layers of UK and EU regulatory oversight to ensure that they act in the interests of their members.[43] This is so when they are owned or controlled by members, and organised on a not for profit basis.[44] Broadly the rules require the CMO to act in the best interests of its members, and to ensure that its processes are fair and transparent. Implementation is monitored by the Intellectual Property Office. In addition, the licences issued by the CMO are subject to the oversight of the Copyright Tribunal[45] whose primary purpose is to resolve licensing disputes between the CMO and the user of the work protected by copyright as to the reasonableness of the terms and the price.

Digitisation and dance

A CMO could thus fill an important role in the dance sector in brokering copyright relationships between creators and users, potentially facilitating new (business) (social) models, and fostering innovation and cultural

diversity. But what market and social conditions does dance face that add weight to an argument that establishing a CMO would be beneficial?

Digitisation is a key factor. While some may argue that performing arts more broadly are not a part of the creative industries where digitisation has much impact, cultural economist Ruth Towse does not agree.[46] She argues that digitisation has impacts on marketing, on production, on participation and on artists. In particular, Towse argues that costs and reliance on public funding change. Greater audience reach becomes possible with digitisation, and she uses the example of National Theatre Live and the number of cinemas in which it has a presence in which live stage performances are broadcast simultaneously in cinemas, a business model that has been extended by the introduction of *Encore*. Performances by The Royal Ballet are screened across the country in cinemas, thus extending audiences. Concerns were voiced when live screenings first started which included fears that cinema screenings of live performances would have significant detrimental impact on live showings when many organisations are too small to put in the investment needed for this strategy; that a potential superstar effect spotlighting individuals in leading roles may be deleterious within the sector; and that displacement of audiences would occur. But research to date, such as it is, does not seem to bear out these worries.[47] Rather, access has been increased with a resultant increase in social benefit, such as removing the elitist image of some of these art forms; facilitating sharing of costs and risks through co-productions and virtual collaborations; giving consumers greater choice; and enabling arts organisations to develop new business models and sources of revenue.[48]

What is noteworthy for this discussion is that the act of digitisaton fixes the dance; increasingly dance is fixed in digital form, and once fixed, copyright arises automatically.[49] Thus with the increasing capture of dance through digital methods, dance works protected by copyright become ubiquitous and capable of being shared in myriad ways. It is copyright that can be, and is, used to control this dissemination to these new audiences. But what a survey of dance projects shows, is that very different copyright licensing mechanisms are used to control reproduction and re-use of the dance.

Digital dance projects

One of the earliest digital projects to capture and record dance in a systematic way was The Siobhan Davis Replay Archive which launched in 2009,[50] a joint venture between the Centre for Dance Research at Coventry University (C-DaRE) and Siobhan Davies Dance Company. The archive brings together materials and documentation associated with Davies' choreographies and includes still images, audio-visual records of performances and rehearsals; text records; and profile records of dance works and biographies of dancers.

Materials in this collection are protected by copyright and accompanied by the following statement:

> The copyright of the entire contents of the Siobhan Davies Archive website is owned by the original authors. This includes filmed footage, music, photographs, publicity material, press and printed media, broadcast items and all other objects within the archive.

> The material on this site is for personal, non-commercial and reference use only and any description of commercial use of any part of the site is strictly prohibited.

As can be seen, the permissions are strict and seek to prohibit in particular any form of commercial re-use of the content. This does beg the question as to what 'commercial' might mean, a question that has vexed copyright lawyers for some time as they struggle to work out the parameters of the law. Does this, for example, cover academic research that is ultimately published, and for which the author receives royalties?

On first glance, a less strict approach to control through copyright has been taken by choreographer Jonathan Burrows in relation to his project, 52 portraits.[51] Here the licence is 'Feel free to share the portraits via social media'. While that may seem to provide broad permissions to re-use the portraits, 'share' would not in the ordinary sense of the term cover commercial use, and it might be questionable whether sharing would cover something as broad as educational use.[52]

On educational use, the Rambert archive has specific provision for educational use of the contents:

> You may download and keep a single copy of any part of the content on this website for your personal use. Except as permitted above, and our exemption for UK schools and educational establishments, you may not to copy, store in any medium (including in any other website), distribute, transmit, re-transmit, broadcast, modify, or show in public any part of this website without the prior written permission.

The carefully worded permissions for educational establishments thus allow a certain amount of downloading and copying within educational establishments for defined educational purposes – a strategy designed to fulfil a broad social function.

These leaders in the UK dance community should be lauded for making works available on the internet with no (or few) technical means to stop downloading and copying. However, each has chosen to make their works available under different conditions, with Rambert going so far as to develop a bespoke educational licence. None of these permissions are 'interoperable' in the sense that if one user wanted to use content from one repository for one purpose, it could not be combined with using content from another as the permissions do not say the same thing.[53] Those in charge of each of these projects will also have taken time and care to consider what the copyright strategy in relation to the content should be – a danger of which is that there is re-invention of the wheel. For instance, CMOs already have well worked out educational permissions in licences – indeed the Rambert licence makes reference to the ERA (the Educational Recording Agency), a CMO which provides blanket licences for the use of television and radio broadcast material to be used in education. A CMO could thus provide significant assistance to the dance sector in producing re-usable (and interoperable) licences.

These are not the only digital projects in dance. European funding is currently supporting cutting edge research into dance and technologies. WhoLoDancE, for example, is investigating the application of breakthrough technologies to dance in order to: investigate bodily knowledge; innovate in the teaching of dance; safeguard cultural heritage; and revolutionise choreography, among other aims.[54] Synchronous Objects, is a project which 'examined the organizational structures found in William Forsythe's

dance *One Flat Thing, reproduced* by translating and transforming them into new objects – ways of visualizing dance that draw on techniques from a variety of disciplines'.[55] In terms of copyright, very little is obvious on either website. WhoLoDancE states 'Copyright Wholodance 2016', while there seems nothing on the Synchronous Objects website, although copyright in one of the supporting essays on the site is claimed by Ohio State University.[56] This immediately raises copyright questions as to whether the contents can be re-used, and if so how, and from whom permission should be sought.

Copyright and the Royal Opera House

In the absence of a collecting society to manage copyright in dance and represent dancers' interests, dancers, and in particular individual dancers and small collectives, could find themselves in a vulnerable position vis a vis large organisations in the market place with regard to their copyright. This is particularly so as public funding becomes increasingly stretched, and organisations, large and small, seek to secure their financial position and use copyright to help reach that goal. This is illustrated by the strategy adopted by the Royal Opera House (ROH) in 2010 when it sought to enter into agreement with creatives from whom it commissioned works (including presumably dancers), to have the copyright in those works assigned to it. In other words, the ROH wanted to own the copyright in the works developed by creators who worked on their productions. Prior to this time, it would seem, that at the most a licence of copyright was taken which would have allowed the ROH to use the copyright works in the production for which they were commissioned, but not necessarily for other productions, or other purposes. The move by the ROH was particularly interesting because the arguments that it made for claiming ownership of copyright, echo many of the reasons why collecting societies exist. Four of the ROH arguments have been summarised thus:

1. As the ROH is commissioning new work it is entitled to acquire the entire copyright in the work it commissions.

2. Because there are many rights involved in making a production, the ROH should therefore be in charge of all these rights, making no

exceptions, because otherwise there would be lots of difficult administration details, and associated costs.

3. As the ROH will hold all the copyrights, the ROH will then be best placed to look after those rights – as that will be in its own interest: if artists held onto their copyright, they'd have to protect those rights themselves.

4. The ROH, in having all the copyrights in a production assigned over to it, is then the right place to allow future performances of the work.[57]

Two points are worth bearing in mind. The first is that the ROH's claims could be considered as both morally and legally questionable, and the second is that while a collecting society is mandated to act on behalf of the creators, the ROH was acting in its own interests.

In relation to the first argument made by the ROH, the law on ownership of copyright in the UK, found in the CDPA, is quite clear: commissioning a work, or being a publicly funded institution does not give rise to an entitlement of ownership of the copyright.[58] The law states that the author of a copyright work is the first owner unless the author is an employee acting in the course of employment unless there is an agreement to the contrary.[59] Pre-1989 the commissioner of a photograph for valuable consideration was the legal owner of copyright in the photograph, but the law was changed as from 1 August 1989 to bring ownership of copyright in photographs in line with ownership of copyright in other works. In other words, it has been an express legislative choice that, subject to the employee point, the author of the work is the first owner of the copyright. Despite that, publicly available documents show that the ROH still takes an assignation of ownership of copyright in at least some works that it commissions – and that of musicians is one example.[60] A copy of a contract agreed in 2017 between the Musicians' Union (MU) and the ROH is available on the MU website:

17. Rights

17.1. In exchange for the Media Fee payable under the terms of this Agreement, each individual deputy and/or extra engaged to play with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House hereby:

> 17.2. Grants and assigns to the ROH the Copyright and all Performer Rights arising in each case from all recordings made under the terms of this Agreement for the full duration of such rights, worldwide, and whether such rights vest under UK legislation (such as the Copyright Designs and Patent Act, 1988) or any other applicable legislation in any other country.[61]

What is notable is that the clause outlined above is included in a detailed contract as between the ROH, and the Musicians' Union acting on behalf of its members. In this agreement, the assignation of copyright by the musicians to the ROH is balanced by other clauses such as terms governing performance and pay. In negotiating this agreement, the Musicians' Union was, in other words, acting on behalf of its members to negotiate fair contractual terms with the ROH of which the assignation of copyright was only one part. Achieving fair contractual terms of which copyright is a part is something that would be challenging for creative artists – including dancers - to achieve on their own.[62]

The second and fourth points made by the ROH are essentially about managing multiple rights and go to the heart of the raison d'etre of a CMO. But consolidation of copyright in the hands of the ROH is not necessarily the best solution for the dancer. The ROH noted that it wanted to consolidate copyright to be able to schedule future productions – in other words to pursue its own interests. What if someone else wanted to use the dancer's copyright? Unlike a CMO there is no obligation on the ROH to licence the copyright to others, or to act in the interests of the dancer as copyright owner. Nor would the Copyright Tribunal have jurisdiction to adjudicate on the fairness of licence terms. In other words, the ROH is not subject to the regulation that a CMO is. As such, the dancer would be in a precarious position in her dealings with the organisation.

The final argument the ROH makes (the third point), that it would be best placed to look after the copyrights, is also questionable. CMOs do take action on behalf of their members to pursue copyright infringements. One topical example is that of Spotify which is being sued in the US by Wixen Music Publishing, an organisation that, like a CMO, takes copyright from many music publishers, and licences rights to others.[63] Spotify has used some of this music without a licence – hence the lawsuit. Would the ROH

take action in similar circumstances? Given that the ROH would only take a licence from those whose work it commissioned, it seems hardly credible that it would take a class action on behalf of what would be a relatively small number of individuals. Indeed, it would not be able to take action on behalf of others if the owners of copyright had not granted it the right to do so. Wixen can only take action because the music copyright owners have authorised it to do so on their behalf. At the most, therefore, the ROH might take action on behalf of a relatively small group of individuals from whom it took an assignation of copyright.

If one wanted to 'test' the resolve of the ROH in this regard, it would be interesting to speculate as to what, if any, action the ROH might have taken if faced with the circumstances surrounding the 'borrowings' in 2011 by Beyoncé in the video for her single *Countdown* co-directed by Beyoncé and Adria Petty.[64] This involved two dances choreographed by De Keersmaeker: *Rosas danst Rosas*,[65] and *Achterland*.[66] Hypothetically: if ROH had commissioned the works by De Keersmaeker and claimed copyright ownership in the works as a result, would the ROH have pressed for copyright infringement against Beyoncé (or more likely, Sony)? While the case for infringement seems strong (social media comment quickly drew attention to the similarities between the choreographies[67] and YouTube videos appeared showing the dances side by side[68] accompanied by loud, if somewhat legally inaccurate, cries of 'plagiarism',[69] 'stealing',[70] and 'striking resemblance'[71]) the result would certainly not be a foregone conclusion.[72] Litigation is not to be undertaken lightly. Not only are there significant financial costs associated with taking a case to court,[73] but in addition it inevitably takes time and effort which would otherwise be expended on the main business of the organisation. Ultimately though, if the ROH were unwilling to pursue a case to 'look after rights' assigned to it, then the argument that it should own copyright in commissioned works fails.

Collecting societies exist to act in the interests of their members – the owners of the copyright. While the arguments underpinning the claims of the ROH to take ownership of the copyright in commissioned works strongly echo those rationales, they do not stand up to scrutiny. Consolidation of copyright in the hands of the ROH would favour the ROH,

leaving the dancer vulnerable. A dedicated CMO for dance could thus add significant value for the dancer.

It is time for a copyright CMO for dance

Now is an exceptionally important moment in time for dance and copyright. The rise in digitisation means that more dance protected by copyright is created and available than at any time in the history of the art form. The law shows that ownership of copyright is fragmented, and digitisation projects in particular suggest that there are potentially large numbers of users who may be interested in re-using the dance. The current approaches to copyright are fragmented, both in relation to the underpinning reasons for pursuing a copyright strategy, and in relation to licensing terms. This fragmentation could leave dancers vulnerable in relation to their copyright vis a vis large organisations such as the ROH. While dance does have representative organisations in the UK, including OneDanceUK, an industry organisation that aims to be the 'go-to' industry body for dance and education, People Dancing, the organisation for community and participatory dance, and Equity Dance discussed above, none of these has a remit in relation to copyright. This therefore seems the perfect moment to establish such a CMO to look after the interests of copyright authors and owners in dance.

It would be for those who wished to establish such a body to decide what shape it might take. Bringing the diverse philosophical approaches to dance and range of styles under one umbrella organisation would be challenging, but not impossible. Individual CMOs in music, for example, represent diverse styles and approaches. A first step would be to decide on the type of legal entity that could best encompass the variety in dance. Across other sectors of the creative industries CMOs have been formed using a range of different (business) models including both for and not-for-profit, and corporate and charitable vehicles. It would not be hard to imagine that a not-for-profit organisation which managed copyright, and fulfilled a number of other functions such as facilitating the 'free' use of dance to make political comment,[74] or to promote equality and diversity,[75] could find favour with many. As with other CMOs, the organisation could take a role in lobbying for changes in the law; in negotiating industry

contracts dealing with copyright for dancers; in providing copyright advice to the community; and where appropriate, in pursuing infringements. Overall such a CMO could become a leader in the dance field through the development and implementation of a ground-breaking 'corporate social responsibility' strategy designed around its members, their social and cultural beliefs, and the public interest.[76]

A dance CMO would also be exceptionally well placed to take advantage of advances in technologies in the management of copyright. As noted above, there is a plethora of CMOs across the creative industries, each of which represents different right owners. A real challenge that these organisations face is that none of their databases containing information about the creative works produced within their industries and which they manage 'talk' to each other. Many rely on largely outdated technologies which are now difficult to change because of their complexity, and the complexity of the content, and many simply do not have the necessary metadata to be able to interrogate, and give permission, to use the content and disseminate royalties to owners. This means that it has been challenging to find ways in which new technologies, such as blockchain, could be used to automate the management of copyright and, importantly for the owners, to gather micro-payments from users and disseminate these to copyright owners. One initiative was set up to try and solve this conundrum. The Copyright Hub was established in 2012 as a result of a review of intellectual property and its role in the UK.[77] The Copyright Hub (or the Digital Copyright Exchange as it was first called) was (is) a "not-for-profit, industry-led initiative, … capable of linking scalably to the growing network of right registries, copyright-related databases and digital copyright exchanges, to facilitate cross-border and cross-sector copyright licensing".[78] At the time of writing[79] it appears that some progress has been made in the work of the hub, but its ambitious aims have not been realised. What it says it has achieved is the ability to give information about how content on the internet can be licensed for use, but only if the content can be identified. From this "some simple licence types" can be automated,[80] and a handful of applications seem to be using the technology. All of which is a very, very long way from its initial stated ambition and gives a small indication of the complexity in the field.

There are other initiatives that seek to link data in the creative industries. PRS for music has teamed up with PPL (a CMO which licences recorded music to be played in public) with a view to linking data to "promote a set of consistent and authoritative links between recordings and works that can be gathered from and shared across multiple parties".[81] Along with European and industry partners they are using blockchain technologies to see if a single authoritative database can be constructed to establish copyright ownership.[82] The field is, in other words, replete with initiatives, many of which are driven by CMOs, to try and bring some order to creative industries data. In this, dance has a supreme advantage: by comparison with other creative sectors, it is only at the very beginning of its 'data journey' and thus does not suffer from the data legacy that plagues other CMOs. One hesitation is the uncertainly around the capacity for technologies to recognise and encode movement(s), but constant advances in the field suggest that there will be a solution in the foreseeable future. While there are developing numbers of databases containing dance content, there are few by comparison with other sectors so there is ample opportunity to get the growing range of repositories in dance to 'talk to each other'. This would help to ensure longevity of digital projects in dance, that the contents are findable and reusable in accordance with the wishes of the copyright owners, and potentially pave the way for innovative new business and social models to be developed.[83]

For all of these reasons the time has indeed come to form a CMO for dance, and in so doing, to establish dance as a leader among the creative industries.

Notes

1 The focus of this contribution is on UK law in relation to dance, copyright and collecting societies. While intersections between copyright, collecting societies and (digital and collaborative) dance projects are relevant in many countries (legal jurisdictions) the issues that arise are similar, although the law may impact somewhat differently depending on the jurisdiction. For example, the UK requires a dance to be fixed for the subsistence of copyright Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 (CDPA) s 3(2), France does not. The law on collecting societies will be similar as between France and the UK in form and substance as much emanates from Europe (e.g. Directive 2014/26/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on collective management of copyright and related rights and multi-territorial licensing of rights in musical works for online use in the internal market), while US law differs in form if not greatly in substance. The purpose of this contribution is to examine the conditions in the UK, and should the case for a collecting society be made, then the findings can be used in other jurisdictions.

2 Johnson, "'Dedicating' copyright."

3 Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 as amended (the current UK law governing copyright). www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/48/contents s 3(2).

4 Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 1(1).

5 Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 12.

6 Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 16.

7 Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 16(2).

8 Copyright Designs and Patents Act, ss 90-92.

9 Ibid.

10 Copyright Designs and Patents Act, ch. VI.

11 Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 96(2).

[12] This has been an issue that has bedeviled the cultural heritage sector particularly in the wake of digitisation. The copyright owners of millions of artifacts are unknown and unfindable, making it challenging to make these objects digitally available to audiences. This is because the act of digitisation involves a reproduction of copyright in the work, which only the owner of the copyright may sanction. The result is that much cultural heritage languishes in analogue archives. It is one of the factors that led to the implementation of the "Orphan Works Directive," a European Directive which was designed to help facilitate the digitisation and making available of digitised cultural heritage works where the rights holder could not be found after a diligent search. See Directive 2012/28/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on certain permitted uses of orphan works: ec.europa.eu/internal_market/copyright/orphan_works/index_en.htm. For a project that explored the challenges around digitising archives, see "Digitising the Edwin Morgan Scrapbooks": www.create.ac.uk/edwin-morgan.

[13] Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*; Bentham, *A manual of political economy*; Landes and Posner "An economic analysis of copyright law."

[14] Waelde and Schlesinger, "Music and Dance."

[15] For an explanation of grand rights see PRS for music: www.prsformusic.com/royalties/theatre-royalties-and-grand-rights.

[16] It would be useful to get an idea of how much was brought in through royalty licensing, and how much was paid out. Unfortunately, however, this information is not apparent from published accounts at Companies House which only once refer to 'royalty' and that is in connection with Directors pay. Full accounts made up to 31 March 2017 available from Companies House.

[17] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_access.

[18] See for example Barron "Kant, copyright and communicative freedom," and Craig, *Copyright, Communication & Culture*.

[19] creativecommons.org.

[20] Hegel, Philosophy of Right.

21 Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 77.

22 Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 80.

23 The right of attribution has to be asserted before it can be enforced (Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 78), and the right of integrity is subject to significant limitations (Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 81).

24 For a chronology of developments in relation to music and copyright in the UK including the development of collecting societies, see Little, "History of copyright."

25 For general information on collecting societies and educational toolkits see "Collective Management of Copyright and Related Rights," available on the WIPO website: www.wipo.int/copyright/en/management.

26 www.prsformusic.com.

27 For an overview of the collecting societies in the UK see the Guidance promulgated by the Intellectual Property Office: Licensing bodies and collective management organisations: www.gov.uk/guidance/licensing-bodies-and-collective-management-organisations.

28 Kretschmer, "Access and Reward." On the question of cultural diversity, see: Graber "Collective Rights Management."

29 E.g. Waelde, Whatley and Pavis, "Let's Dance!"

30 Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 3(1).

31 Case C-5/08 *Infopaq International A/S v Danske Dagblades Forening* (Infopaq) paras 33 38. See also Case C-393/09 *Bezpečnostní softwarová asociace v Ministerstvo kultury* (BSA) para 45. What is not protected is expression, which is limited by its technical function. Case C-406/10 *SAS Institute Inc v World Programming Ltd* (SAS) paras 38-40; Case C-145/10, *Painer v Standard Verlags GmbH et al* (Painer). In the UK see *SAS Institute Inc v World Programming Ltd* [2013] EWHC 69 (Ch) para 27. Case C-604/10 *Football Dataco Ltd v Yahoo! UK Ltd and ors* (Football Dataco) para 38. Where choices are dictated by technical considerations, rules or constraints which leave no room for creative freedom, then these criteria are not met BSA, paras 48 and 49, *Football*

Association Premier League and Others, para 98; Football Dataco, para 39. There is a rich academic literature discussing these developments: van Eechoud "Along the road to uniformity". Handig "'The "sweat of the brow" is not enough!". Rahmatian *Originality in UK copyright law*. Rosati "Towards an EU-wide copyright?". Pila "An intentional View of the Copyright Work: Handig "*Infopaq International A/S*". van Gompel "Creativity, autonomy and personal touch."

[32] An analogous situation arose in the case of *Brighton v Jones* [2004] EWHC 1157 (Ch); [2004] EMLR 507 where contributions in the form of ideas for the dialogue were "contributions to the presentation and theatrical interpretation of the dramatic work" rather than to the work itself. They were therefore not of the sort to be capable of giving rise to joint authorship.

[33] A work of joint authorship is a work produced by the collaboration of two or more authors in which the contribution of each author is not distinct from that of the other author or authors (Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 10(1)).

[34] Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 11(1)

[35] Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 11(2).

[36] PRS for Music: www.prsformusic.com/what-we-do/supporting-music.

[37] Directive 2011/77/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 September 2011 amending Directive 2006/116/EC on the term of protection of copyright and certain related rights (Term Directive): eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32011L0077&from=EN.

[38] The first is that, if after a 50-year period, the record company does not exploit the sound recording "in such quantity as to satisfy the reasonable requirements of the public for copies of the sound recording" then the copyright in the sound recording expires and the performer is free to exploit the performance (Term Directive Article 2(c)).

[39] Term Directive Article 2(c).

[40] www.equitycollecting.org.uk.

[41] equitydance.org.

[42] "Collective bargaining offers perhaps the only guarantee that the interest of authors and performing artists will duly be taken into account when the times come to determine the level of remuneration" (Guibault and Hugenholtz, "Study on the conditions").

[43] Collective Management of Copyright (EU Directive) Regulations 2016: www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/221/pdfs/uksi_20160221_en.pdf. These Regulations implement the EU Collective Rights Management Directive 2014/26/EU: ec.europa.eu/internal_market/copyright/management/index_en.htm.

[44] Collective Management of Copyright (EU Directive) Regulations, 2016, reg. 2.

[45] See Copyright Designs and Patents Act, ss118–122. See also In Respect of the Appeal of Phonographic Performance Ltd v The Appeal of the British Hospitality Association and Other Interested Parties [2008] EWHC 2715 (Ch), 2008 WL 4975450. CT 4/05 CSC Media Group Ltd v Video Performance Ltd [2010] EWHC 2094 (Ch); CT 116/10 Archive Media Publishing Ltd v MCPS – the first decision on the small applications track in the streamlined Copyright Tribunal; PPL v British Hospitality Association [2010] EWHC 209 (Ch).

[46] Towse, "Performing Arts," 311.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., 320.

[49] See discussion above.

[50] The archive can be found at: www.siobhandaviesreplay.com.

[51] The portraits are available at: 52portraits.co.uk/allportraits.

[52] Even if the permission says only 'share', it is not possible to contract out of many of the fair dealing provisions such as parody, pastiche and caricature. So, for instance, Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 30A states that: (1) Fair dealing with a work for the purposes of caricature, parody or pastiche does not infringe copyright in the work; and (2) To the extent that a term of a contract purports to prevent or restrict the doing of

any act which, by virtue of this section, would not infringe copyright, that term is unenforceable.

53 As is well-known in the heritage sector, this creates challenges for both locating and re-using content, and causes much frustration. See above the discussion on the Orphan Works Directive

54 For the project see: www.wholodance.eu.

55 For the project see: synchronousobjects.osu.edu.

56 The claim on "The Dance, the Data, the Objects" essay by Palazzi is "copyright 2009 The Ohio State University."

57 Wheen, "Rights Grab at The Royal Opera House": www.theartsdesk.com/opera/rights-grab-royal-opera-house.

58 Sometimes the court will imply a licence notably where a work has been commissioned on a commercial basis, e.g.: *Griggs Group Ltd v Evans* [2005] EWCA (Civ) 11; *Orvec International Limited v Linfoots Limited* [2014] EWHC 1970*; Wilkinson v London Strategic Health Authority* [2012] EWPCC 48.

59 Copyright Designs and Patents Act, s 11(1), (2).

60 These can be found in the "ROH terms and conditions for Freelance Musicians from July 2017": www.musiciansunion.org.uk/Files/Rates/Orchestral-Rates/ROH-Freelance-Agreement.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid. Performers rights are a different matter, and Equity has a range of negotiated contracts for dancers and choreographers in relation to a range of different activities and their performers' rights. So, for example, Equity has standard form live performance agreements for choreographers in West End and subsidised repertory theatre, opera and dance, and also for performers in these categories (which presumably includes dancers). Performers rights are found in Copyright Designs and Patents Act, Part II.

63 www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2018/01/02/spotify-facing-16bn-copyright-lawsuit.

[64] Jennings, "Beyoncé v De Keersmaeker: can you copyright a dance move?" (*The Guardian*, 11 October 2011): www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2011/oct/11/beyonce-de-keersmaeker-dance-move; Mackrell, "De Keersmaeker – and a dance reinvented by everyone" (*The Guardian*, 9 October 2013): www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/oct/09/beyonce-de-keersmaeker-technology-dance.

[65] de Keersmaeker, *Rosas Danst Rosas*.

[66] de Keersmaeker, *Achterland*.

[67] Depland, "Beyoncé 'Countdown' Video Brings Charges Of Plagiarism" (*Billboard*, 10 October 2011): www.billboard.com/articles/columns/the-juice/466312/beyonce-countdown-video-brings-charges-of-plagiarism; Kaufman, "Beyoncé's 'Countdown Dancing 'Surprised' Original Choreographer" (*MTV*, 10 November 2011): www.mtv.com/news/1672317/beyonce-countdown-music-video-dancing.

[68] Such as Copyright Infringement Awareness, "Split Screen Beyoncé Countdown vs Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker" (*YouTube*, 21 October 2014): www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yj5Kp38Oz04; and Fundifferent1, "Beyoncé "Countdown" vs Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker" (*YouTube,* 9 October 2011): www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxbrHPAa9mE.

[69] Depland, n 67 above.

[70] Trueman,"Beyoncé accused of 'stealing' dance moves in new video" (*The Guardian*, 10 October 2011): www.theguardian.com/stage/2011/oct/10/beyonce-dance-moves-new-video.

[71] Hughes, "Beyoncé accused of plagiarizing 'Countdown' moves from Belgian choreographer (Video)" (*Washington Post,* 10 October 2011): http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/celebritology/post/beyonce-accused-of-plagiarizing-countdown-moves-from-belgian-video/2011/10/10/gIQA9Rb4ZL_blog.html.

[72] It would first have to be shown that copyright is infringed. If it has been, there are a number of fair dealing defences to an action of infringement

in the Copyright Designs and Patents Act which would undoubtedly be pled if the case were brought to court.

[73] Costs include court fees, solicitor's costs, often barrister's costs, and the losing party may have to pay the winning parties costs. Civil Court Procedure Rules Part 44 – General Rules About Costs.

[74] See for example the discussion surrounding *Fake! It* in Burt, *Ungoverning Dance*, 77.

[75] For instance, *11 Million Reasons*, a photographic exhibition championed by People Dancing. As the law currently stands in the UK, and without a permission, the images in the exhibition could be found to be infringements of copyright in the original films.

[76] For a discussion on collective management of copyright and human rights see Helfer "Collective Management of Copyrights and Human Rights"; and Brown et. al, "Corporate social responsibility."

[77] Hargreaves, "Digital opportunity: review of intellectual property and growth." *Department for Business, Innovation and Skills*. 2011. www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/32563/ipreview-finalreport.pdf.

[78] Hooper, "Rights and Wrongs: Is copyright licensing fit for purpose for the digital age?" *Intellectual Property Office*. 2012: webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120703105742; and Hooper and Lynch, "Copyright works: Streamlining copyright licensing for the digital age." *Intellectual Property Office*. 2012: www.ipo.gov.uk/dce-report-phase1.pdf.

[79] February 2018.

[80] www.copyrighthub.org/technology.

[81] www.prsformusic.com/what-we-do/protecting-music/data-initatives.

[82] Ibid.

[83] In this respect, dance is a veritable "virgin field, pregnant with possibilities." According to Paidoussis in *Fluid-Structure Interactions* this term was coined by M.T. Landahl who referred to a rotating field with no axial flow component as "Rotofluidelasticity," which he also said was "A virgin field, pregnant with possibilities (61)."

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Biography

Charlotte Waelde is Professor of Intellectual Property Law. Her research focuses on copyright, new technologies and the creative industries, in particular dance. She also has a keen interest in (contemporary) intangible cultural heritage and the mechanisms through which copyright can contribute to safeguarding and sustainability strategies.

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Katye Coe in Eustatic Drift. *London. Photo: © Keira Greene (2018) CC-BY-NC*

SHE DANCING[1]

KATYE COE

Keywords

feminine
dancer's experience
voice
ancient

Abstract

Performer Katye Coe argues in *She Dancing* for the spoken agency of the dancer and specifically the dancer's experience as one where rich information is often held in silence. This is a provocation to be spoken, a story to be told out loud and an invitation to listen.

I have been considering what remains unspoken,
not so much the questions that are not being asked,
but what might be unspoken.

And for a while I have been wondering about voices that are less heard or unheard,
not my voice so much as how to be an agent of experience for a less heard or unheard

Right now, I feel an old instinct rising,
to capitulate and speak about,
but I promised the she that I call dancing that I will speak her

and dancers have started to speak.
There is today, some rustling and some movement to hear the dancer.
I say yes.
Yes please.
but not the dancer as maker or the dancer as teacher or even the dancer as artist, but to hear the dancer herself.
Not tool, not muse, not conduit, but she

A few years back a small group of us were invited to perform throughout the *Dancer As Agent* conference at DOCH in Stockholm.[2] This conference marked (among many other events I'm sure) a turning point for me in arriving into a place as dancer performer. During the conference we ran, through groups of people, through buildings and forests on the edge of the city, in the dark and in the daylight. Occasionally I would stop running and join a conversation.
And when I did, I could listen and respond from an exquisite place of experience
my body full of vibration and
aches and fatigue as I sank into the floor
and then in one of these discussion groups on the last day of the

conference, Alva Noë asked me a question
I can't remember the question but as I spoke to answer it I began to cry

I wasn't sad and I was very tired.
And I had a sense that in that moment, I had been invited to speak from a place of brilliant fullness that I experience in the immediate aftermath of dancing
It isn't a rational place and it isn't rehearsed
it wasn't full of citation or activism
but there was something about the particular and disarming liveness of the voice I found that day, that materialized a re-orientated world
a world that might be usually silent or silenced
(I will come back to that voice in a while)

And so, I spluttered and crackled in those few tearful minutes
and when I left the conference I was full of wanting,
a wanting to speak more and more from that re-orientated world
not a mediated version of it but from that wobbly, felt sense, misty, undone place of experience

I am uncomfortable speaking in public,
I am uncomfortable now
and I'm overwhelmed by the responsibility that a voice given air time holds
so, excuse me, not for speaking,
but for wavering in all that response ability
and by responsibility I refer to an enacting of the ability to respond

Oh, and by the way I am often being asked to make myself clear
and this world that I am speaking from and these voices that inhabit it are not clear
and that is their collective power

So that silent voice
well I know that many dancers regularly experience and therefore have an implicit and embodied practice of a knowing
(or a nuanced set of skills that allow us not to know)
that is considered other
so other in fact, that I imagine that their voices could be felt as dangerous
or a threat to systems of production and to the patriarchy

not because they resist in conventional ways
(we do that too and it's necessary if futile)
or that we demand better working conditions and pay
(of course, it is vital that this is happening too and it is essential and yet still
a very, very long way from being met with intelligence and heart)
but, that I sense that they (we, I) could,
given the chance to be heard,
especially together, en masse, we could clamber underneath or round the
back of these old and calcified systems,
we could usurp and unpick assumed and lived privilege,
among humans and between humans and other beings too

I say loudly that I associate this voice to being that of the majority
or even perhaps universal Other it certainly is, but it is the other[3] that is
present in us all, not a separatist voice or an elite one, or one borne of a
class or a race or an order,
but it is still an other voice,
it is a queer voice,
it is a radical feminist voice,
it is an animal and an ancient voice
and this voice gets quieted by monetary power, by capital,
by possessions and by the possessive, by fear and by the corporation.

By the way these words do not properly refer to all the people who are
already saying these things
and I am not here to make lists.

And so here is she, dancing and standing a little bit wobbly but surely on
this branch.

Often as the dancer enters an organisation of hierarchy, she quickly learns
to re-identify herself through alternative roles: choreographer; maker;
writer; teacher; artist. This additional or substitute identity appears to
validate her in the eyes of that organisation, while simultaneously quieting
or translating the complex and ephemeral and often deeply experiential
voice that she, the dancer articulates.

And it is that very validation that can keep her dangerous, brilliant voice,
the voice that I am learning to speak from and listen to, quieter, easier to

put into the background or into relief.
And sometimes this dancer's voice even gets taken and represented by others, spoken for and sympathised with,
thank you, but absolutely no thank you

And so here is where I begin and end today.
This voice sings with a deep significance that is bigger than dance. This significance is the voice of the feminine.
And I acknowledge the problem of placing the feminine voice as other and I know that feminine is often assumed to be a binary gendered term and this is not intended as a binary argument.[4]

But yesterday I kept seeing adverts for skin products in a London railway station, with famous rugby players showing their caring side and my blood was boiling so I don't care about semantic etiquette;
I say listen to Anonhi speak her Future Feminism[5] if you want to know who inspires me relative to that these days.

Dancing potentially changes the world
because in dancing one can hear the voice of the land, of the fish that are being slowly cooked in our oceans,
of the nearly extinct species with which we share our genetic make up,[6]
the voice of the shaman and of the healer,
of the witch,
and dancing is the voice of the worker.

When I dance, I can have a deeply felt connection with all of my self,
and dancing makes space way beyond that self
for a connection with other sentient beings.

And there is more.
There is a wildness and a potency in this dancing voice that is not to be caught hold of or described or patronised.

It is to be invited into the fold and given space and opportunity for its transformative quality to live.
To live in its own language and in its own way.
Then what can be offered by dancers is an alternative way of organizing rather than old, tired and rational principles.

An other way of being alive in and in support of and in care of the world.
Dancers can express in performing dancing, an utter open-ness, an un-
separatedness, a heart-full ness and an unordered but deep kindness.
Dancing arrives in us a particular capacity for love and empathy
and what is evoked in dancing might (pause) does change the world
not from underneath, not from a scramble towards or a want to climb up
anything or oppose or resist,
but from the inside, outside, inside.

Acknowledgements

In memory of Doran George (1969-2017).

Notes

[1] NottDance 2017 was co curated by dance artist Matthias Sperling. He invited me to speak at the final Nottdance debate of this festival, titled *What Next?* The original recording of *She Dancing* can be found at dance4.co.uk/nottdance/project/nottdance-debates-documentation/news/2017-12/nottdance-debates-what-next-documentation.

[2] The Dancer as Agent conference took place at DOCH in Stockholm in November 2013. A collection of commissioned reflections from this conference can be found at sarma.be/pages/The_Dancer_as_Agent_Collection.

[3] Karen Barad refers to otherness as: "En-tanglements are relations of obligation – being bound to the other – enfolded traces of othering. Othering, the constitution of an 'Other', entails an indebtedness to the 'Other', who is irreducibly and materially bound to, threaded through, the

'self' – a diffraction/dispersion of identity. 'Other-ness' is an entangled relation of difference." 2012, 48.

[4] I listened to Beatriz (Paul B) Preciado in their talk *The Return of the Dolls*, when they speak of "an international movement not to identify with the political regime that maintains heterotypical gender norms."

[5] Singer and Visual Artist, Anohni (formerly Antony and the Johnsons) speaks to the "future as female". *Future Feminism* is track number 2 on the Album *Cut the World*.

[6] "In nature gender cannot be reduced to the binary." Barad, 22.

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Biography

Katye Coe is a dancer based in the UK. Katye uses her dancing practice in different contexts: performance, teaching, speaking, convening and writing.

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SECTION 5:
DATA AND THINKING

DANCE BECOMING DATA: VERSION TWO[1]

SCOTT DELAHUNTA

Keywords

digitisation
documentation
embodied knowledge
creative coding
interdisciplinary

Abstract

This chapter explores the transformation from dance to digital data in a series of research projects that explored the role software might play in the context of contemporary dance creation. The chapter looks at two aspects of these projects. The first involves descriptions of collaboration between people with software knowledge and people with dance knowledge. The second relates to what dance becoming data might mean considering advances in computer technology and questions that should not to be ignored when digitising dance. However, the conclusion affirms the positive value of creative collaborative approaches to exploring connections between dance and digital data.

In his introduction to *Documenting Performance*, the book's editor Toni Sant makes a distinction between the "generic term documentation" and "systematic documentation, ideally through standard methods of archiving."[2] For Sant, systematic documentation points toward the need for "data management," requiring specialist knowledge and skills to be obtained from fields such as "library and information science."[3] This is also not data in the generic sense, but data that "follow the logic of digitization after the emergence of modern computational machines" to borrow a description from digital philosopher Yuk Hui's new book *Digital Objects*.[4] *Digital Objects* is an investigation into epistemological questions brought about by the existence of data. And indeed every contribution to Sant's 2017 edited volume makes reference to this kind of data, data that is available to computation, to be processed by today's computers. These two recently published works, one from a performance studies scholar who specialises in "digital curation,"[5] the other a computer scientist turned philosopher called "exceptional"[6] by Bernard Stiegler, the French philosopher whose work has shaped current intellectual thought on digitisation, point toward the contemporary context for 'Dance Becoming Data' which is both the title of this chapter and a reference to a transformation from dance to data. What kind of dance and what kind of data will be clarified in the following pages.

There are two aspects to this idea of a transformation from dance to data. One derives from a series of research projects described in the following sections involving close collaboration between people with knowledge of computers and programming and people with knowledge of making dances. These collaborations brought a critical perspective to the transformation from dance to data in the context of processes of questioning, evaluating and iterating (designing together) toward a variety of outcomes. The other aspect relates to what dance becomes when it becomes data. Given advances in computer technology most forms of dance documentation, both time-based recordings and static objects such as photographs and documents, now originate in digital form. There is a need to manage these data appropriately, in part, as Sant proposes, by applying the evolving standards of information science.[7] But for a philosopher like Hui, becoming data goes beyond engineering, or information science, which he writes "falls short in the sense that it

[engineering] limits its understanding […] to practical applications."[8] This idea of a limit is crucial. The notion that computer technologies are there to provide useful tools for individuals and society, from on-line shopping to smart phones with video cameras and driver-less cars, is incredibly persistent. Philosophers and artists are in the unique position to disrupt and push back on this assumption, against, for example, what constitutes most Big Data research. Until now, the projects referenced here within the frame 'Dance Becoming Data' have gone beyond these limits to understanding proposed by Hui, mainly through collaborations with artists working in software or creative coders. While creative coders ARE engaged in writing functional code, they do not seem themselves constrained by the requirement to produce practical applications as the main outcome of their work. In one description from artist, researcher and developer Anton Koch published recently in the online journal *Computational Culture*: "Creative coding, artistic practice and research converge in a constant oscillation between development, hacking, field testing and communication with partners across disciplines, while only following a very broad vision or intuition."[9]

Software for Dancers

Beginning in 2000, this series of research projects mentioned above explored the various roles that software and software development might play in the context of contemporary dance creation and performance. The inaugural project for which four choreographers, five software artists/ developers and additional guests were invited to take part was titled *Software for Dancers*.[10] The motivation for the project was the need to question more extensively the historical and cultural accumulation of bodily skills, sensory knowledge and tacit understanding, which would be the domain of dance artists, as a critical precursor to engaging with software. The title of the project came from the book *Software for People: collected writings 1963-80* of the American composer Pauline Oliveros. *Software for People* was originally the title Oliveros had given to a paper she presented at a seminar on 'musical creation and the future' in 1978.[11] In the third part of this paper, she presents some of the "theory concerning my 'software for people'"[12] in which she aligns ideas from psychology and information processing[13] to explain her model for the organisation of sensory attention.

Oliveros follows this by leading the audience in an exercise to help them "experience directly some of the theory I have been talking about."[14]

While not explicitly influencing the organisation of the *Software for Dancers* project, the content of *Software for People* suggested a metaphorical use of the word 'software' rather than taking it to literally mean computer software, a result of writing code. This gave a certain license to *Software for Dancers* to be primarily a conversation about practices and their histories,[15] not only from the perspective of the dance artists, but also from the perspective of the invited software artists/developers.[16] While the group ostensibly shared the task of developing concepts for rehearsal tool(s) for dance, there was the chance in this exchange to question assumptions on both sides, including the assumption that software has to be useful.[17] Two pieces of writing emerged from the project, one is by dance critic Sanjoy Roy, who was invited to join the project and report on its outcomes. Roy's article, published in *Dance Theatre Journal*,[18] explores the results of the shared task of developing a rehearsal tool together, to make something functional for choreographers. The other writing, titled "Software for Dancers: Coding Forms"[19] takes another perspective, contemplating the implications of software as a material and coding as a practice. This is more aligned with the approach of *Software Studies* as articulated in the introduction of Matthew Fuller's edited book, published in 2008, where he writes: "programming is also a result of a live process of engagement between thinking with and working on materials."[20]

Coding as a Practice

The *Software for Dancers* project made possible a conversation about creative process in dance to take place between choreographers and coders; a conversation focused on methods, approaches, histories and contexts. This conversation remained the central feature in a cluster of four seminal research projects that would emerge over the next decade (2000-2010). Each of these projects took their starting point from a particular dance artist and embraced digital technology to document and communicate their unique choreographic approaches. Two of these artists, both London based, had participated in the *Software for Dancers* project; these were Wayne McGregor, who had the long-standing ambition to

create an artificially intelligent 'choreographic agent', and Siobhan Davies, who embarked on research into how to use digital media to translate the 'liveness of dance' making into archival material. Joining them were the Amsterdam-based choreographers Emio Greco | PC (Pieter C. Scholten) exploring how interactive technologies might support the notation and transmission of 'inner intention' and William Forsythe, based in Frankfurt, who had the aim to make the complex 'choreographic organisation' visible using computer-aided design. From these motivated starting points, four ambitious artist-led projects involving interdisciplinary research teams, inter-institutional support structures and significant funding emerged. Between 2005 and 2010, these four projects were under intense development as captured in two articles published in *Performance Research*.[21] The first in 2006 opened with a discussion of the potential of dance documentation as exemplified by these four projects; the second was published in 2008 as an update on the developments of the last two years. In 2008-2009, researchers involved in these projects came together for a series of three workshops titled *Choreographic Objects: Traces and artefacts of physical intelligence* centering on the output of these four research teams bringing "choreographic ideas and processes into newly productive exchanges with both general audiences and other specialist knowledge areas."[22] These unique workshops offered a critical engagement with social anthropological perspectives on the implications of contemporary dance claiming to take part in "'knowledge production' and towards recasting relationships with audiences."[23]

As mentioned at the outset, *Software for Dancers* grounded its initial reflexive questions and concerns in deepening understanding of the embodied practices of dance artists and bringing this into a relationship with coding knowledge and practices. The quality of the social relationships that emerged from the *Software for Dancers* conversations underpinned the four follow up research projects mentioned above, with each taking those conversations beyond deepening understanding only amongst the choreographers and coders involved to collaboratively translating this understanding into new communicative forms. The *Choreographic Objects* meetings then drew these projects into a connection on the basis of their shared aims for making some of the fundamental but tacit principles of dance more explicit using the support of digital media. Because of how

they draw attention to a particular integration of practices and concepts involving these fields of practice, two of these projects are described below in more depth.

Choreographic Agents

The departure point for the project with Wayne McGregor was an idea he had for an artificially intelligent choreographic agent that would "generate unique solutions to choreographic problems and augment McGregor's creative decision-making processes in the studio."[24] The collaborations which were to emerge from this idea began in 2003 and involved nearly continuous interdisciplinary research with cognitive psychologists focused on studying the 'choreographic and physical thinking' of McGregor and his company in the context of creation.[25] The *Choreographic Agents* project went through two main iterations involving a significant amount of software development by digital artist Marc Downie/ *Openended Group*[26] working in collaboration with digital artist composer Nick Rothwell/ *cassiel.*[27] The first iteration was given the name *Choreographic Language Agent* (*CLA*). The *CLA* was completely implemented within *FIELD*, an "open-source software project initiated by *OpenEndedGroup*, for the creation of their digital artworks."[28] The *CLA* was designed for exploring variations in choreographic instruction, drawing inspiration from how McGregor and his dancers work with visual imagery to generate movement material.[29] A key member of the team involved in building the *CLA* was Cambridge-based cognitive scientist Alan Blackwell. In writing about the *CLA*,[30] Blackwell described it as a "programming language" that emphasised "transience, ambiguity and creative flow rather than the conventional requirements of (…) software engineering contexts."[31] It was designed with the aim of bridging "the intellectual and embodied improvisation aspects" by using language, grammar and syntax to build a complex 3D geometric form whose behaviour might not be entirely predictable. In this sense, the *CLA* functioned like a sketching tool, generating dynamic geometries as moving ideas for the dancers to work with in the studio.

Company dancers working with Becoming in the studio during the creation of Atomos. Photo: © David Bickerstaff (2013). Becoming screen shots. Photo: © Marc Downie, OpenEndedGroup and Nick Rothwell, cassiel (2013)

The second iteration of the artificially intelligent choreographic agent was given the title *Becoming*.[32] *Becoming* was created in close collaboration with social anthropologist James Leach, the Principal Investigator on the *Choreographic Objects* workshops mentioned above. Marc Downie and Nick Rothwell were also invited to work on this version, which again was implemented entirely in the *FIELD* environment. Similarly to the *CLA*, *Becoming* was to rely on the dancers' abilities to work with moving images as inspiration for the creation of movement material in the studio. However, with this second iteration of the choreographic agent, the focus shifted to the creation of something that would have a physical presence in the studio and generate moving images autonomously. *Becoming* was again built around the manipulation of geometric shapes composed of points, lines, and planes (similar to the *CLA*). But rather than being programmed by the dancers and viewed on small computer screens at the side of the studio, *Becoming* had a virtual body the same scale as a human one displayed in portrait mode on a six-foot 3D screen. The movement stimulus for this virtual body came from an iconic 1980s science fiction film,[33] parsed into its 1240 shots, sections of continuous film that exists between cuts, each

section was analysed using computer vision to extract geometry, colour and movement. Downie describes the actions of the virtual body as follows:

> The abstract agent then enacts a heuristic search through the space of all the configurations and muscle activations of its own peculiar body to match the movement of each shot. It works out its approximations through a series of iterations, stopping only when satisfied that it has come as close as it can.[34]

This description gives a sense of the autonomy of this particular iteration of the choreographic agent concept.[35]

Experimental sketching of a new movement sequence, followed by dance exploration of the geometry created. Dancer: Jessica Wright. Photo: © Luke Church (2011) All Rights Reserved.

In summary, these two software iterations (both programmed in the same *FIELD* environment by the same digital artists) made manifest two distinctly different approaches to the idea of the thinking dancer's body. The first was built on the concept of the thinking body as an instrument of cognition and the value of deliberative thought integrated with intuition as a means of perturbation, of shaking up habits of working. The second relied on an entirely different idea of the thinking body, emphasizing empathic relations between dancers (thinking bodies) in the space and the role that sensing and presence play in achieving social connection. This was less about breaking habits (deliberatively) and more about an elicitation of a

kinaesthetic response, through the sensation of movement. From the perspective of 'Dance Becoming Data' the significance of these projects has to do with the variety of outcomes resulting from engaging individuals with very different intellectual and artistic practices. For both versions of the *Choreographic Agent*, Downie and Rothwell needed to write functional code, but the *CLA* and *Becoming* were inspired by diverse modes of thinking with and about the body. In the iterative, continuous shaping of abstract ideas from different fields and their implementation in both code and the actions of dancers in the studio, the result is a kind of software arguably more like what Pauline Oliveros was thinking of when she wrote her essay in 1978, less instrumental and more from and for the imagination.

Capturing Intention

The research project with the Amsterdam-based dance company Emio Greco | PC (Pieter C. Scholten) emerged in the early 2000s from a background of questions the artists had regarding the documentation and transmission of their repertoire which at the time comprised six or seven major works. This was a process of searching for alternatives to existing approaches to the documentation and in particular notation of dance, and digital technology was thought to be one of the ways forward. A key driving question was: what kind of notation system[36] can "capture inner intention as well as the outer shape of gestures and phrases?"[37] This inspired the title of the research project *Capturing Intention* which began in 2004 and continued in its first phase through the launch of an interactive installation, book, film and DVD-ROM.[38] The central line of enquiry involved the close analysis and articulation of a physical/mental training system Greco and Scholten had developed called *Double Skin/ Double Mind* (*DSDM*).[39] The analysis of the workshop broke its structure down to several themes (e.g. breathing, jumping, expanding) and sub-chapters within each theme, and this was the basis for the development of an interactive installation[40] that would communicate the principles of the *DSDM* training. Leading this enquiry was Research Coordinator Bertha Bermudez, who had been a dancer with Emio Greco|PC. Bermudez gathered a group of specialists in notation systems, cinematography, interactive media design, cognitive linguistics and computer-based gesture analysis to work on the project.

This included a close collaboration with Frédéric Bevilacqua,[41] a member of the team at IRCAM[42] researching gesture analysis and interactive music systems. For the purpose of the discussion about 'Dance Becoming Data', the role Bevilaqua played in the research with Emio Greco|PC on *Capturing Intention* will be the focus of the following brief exposition.

Emio Greco | PC performer Barbara Meneses in the Double Skin/ Double Mind interactive installation. Photo: © Thomas Lenden (2009) All Rights Reserved.

Since he joined IRCAM in 2003, Bevilacqua's main focus has been on gesture analysis for the performing arts with the aim of being able to

> compute from gesture data 'high-level parameters' of movements […] that could refer for example to 'movement qualities' and would be thus more graspable by artists.[43]

When he was invited to take part in the creation of the *DSDM* interactive installation, Bevilacqua brought his work on the so called 'gesture follower'[44] to the project. The 'gesture follower' uses a recognition scheme "based on a set of labelled examples that allows the computer to 'learn'."[45] Following this approach, selected movement phrases from the *DSDM* workshop were recorded on video and combined with sensor data simultaneously collected from accelerometers attached to the dancer. These were used along with manual annotation to train the gesture follower in a series of experiments that generated 'interaction paradigms,' which were incorporated into the *DSDM* Interactive Installation.

Bevilacqua covers his motivations and methods of research in a chapter for the *Capturing Intention* book.[46] This chapter gives insights into the continuity of the research supported by IRCAM and related communities into gesture analysis for the fundamental purpose of carrying out "research and development on interactive systems dedicated to music and performance."[47] Sarah Fdili Alaoui, another specialist in human computer interaction, joined the research team in 2008 for a new phase of research (*Inside Movement Knowledge*[48]). Working within a more scientific paradigm than the *CLA* and *Becoming* coding projects, both Bevilacqua and Fdili Alaoui's efforts were motivated by an interest in how "careful case studies will eventually produce general results in the field," results that might provide the necessary standards to support scientific research with its requirement for verification and repeatability.[49] Bevilacqua and Fdili Alaoui were also founding members of the annual *International Symposium on Movement and Computing*, a project that "references the challenge of representing embodied movement knowledge within computational models, yet it also celebrates the inherent expression available within movement as a language" and "seeks to explore an equal and richly nuanced epistemological partnership between movement experience and movement cognition and computational representation."[50]

This interest in seeking a new 'epistemological partnership' within the *International Movement and Computing* community (where scientific and engineering goals generate interesting friction with artistic ones) is similar to the goals of *Software for Dancers*. What has been distinctive about the *Capturing Intention* and *Choreographic Agents* research projects is how

they reflected a keen motivation on the part of these particular dance artists for a wide research landscape to pursue questions related to movement and meaning, writing and dance, documentation and notation, transmission and dissemination of dance knowledge. Both projects drew attention to the idea that the complex embodied creative process in dance is available to systematic interdisciplinary investigation and that collaboration with coding practitioners can be a part of this research. In this sense, both software and dance artists are contributing to and learning from the same research environment in ways that can be understood to be collaborative, but also distinct. From the perspective of 'Dance Becoming Data', these projects represent a decade when a certain kind of research project, emergent around a handful of key choreographers, is bringing specialists from other fields and involving coding artists and programmers in the work of deepening understanding of dance for the purpose of communicating some of its fundamental embodied principles. For these projects, dance was becoming data as a consequence of and enabler for collaboration, as dancers, coders and scientists worked together toward shared and divergent intellectual and artistic goals. One of the major contributions of these projects has been simply working on the challenge of translating tacit, collaborative and embodied forms of knowledge in dance into digital formats, and sharing both the successes and the failures of these attempts. But the conversation around 'Dance Becoming Data' has shifted, and the following description of two recent projects seeks to give a sense of where this tipping point lies.

Everything is Data

Firstly, for the two projects just described (*Capturing Intention* & *Choreographic Agents*), the management and storage of dance-related data, resulting from either production or coding, the two "dominant forms of digitization" according to Hui,[51] and/ or providing systematic access to this data, as proposed by Sant, was not such a concern for the artists and scientists involved. The coding work was generally focused on direct implementation, not on building frameworks; in some cases without much regard for future-proofing, data preservation[52] or digital obsolescence.[53] *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced*, a web-based project led by William Forsythe, departed significantly from this approach.[54] The

driving research aim for Forsythe and his collaborators at The Ohio State University was, as mentioned before: how to help audiences see complex choreographic organisation. Their source material for the project was a performance of the dance, *One Flat Thing, reproduced*, filmed in high resolution from the front and above. In their essay titled "Dance, Data, Objects,"[55] Norah Zuniga Shaw, Forsythe and Maria Palazzi (co-creators of *Synchronous Objects*) explain how the dance was analyzed, decoded and quantified into the data to be used as material to generate the visual interpretations or what they refer to as "Objects" that exist on their website. Relying on manual annotation to apply coding schemes corresponding to three different types of choreographic structure (cues, alignments and thematic material) dancers and animators studied and processed the material into mainly two forms of data, *Spatial* (location coordinates of the dancers) and *Attribute* (built from the dancers' first-hand accounts of the choreographic structure).

Still from annotated video illustrating alignments, the way in which Forsythe designs relationships in space and time Photo:

In parallel with the development of *Synchronous Objects* and following the launch of its website in 2009, Forsythe and others began work on a project with the title *Motion Bank*.[56] The aim of this project was to explore how computer-aided design might aid in the explication (or publication[57]) of choreographic ideas with a diverse range of dance artists, effectively requiring unique approaches for each. With funding from the German Federal Cultural Foundation and other sources, *Motion Bank* began its first phase in 2010.[58] Building on the approach of *Synchronous Objects* to the idea of developing and working with dance data, the *Motion Bank* team in Frankfurt emphasized digitization as an integral part of *Motion Bank* from the start and designed recording setups to ensure that everything captured could be available to computation (processing with the computer). All recording situations were installed and calibrated to allow for as little 'noise' as possible, to help the software algorithms extract features and recognize relevant patterns in the data. This was combined with the use of a video annotation tool titled *Piecemaker*, a software project developed by The Forsythe Company member David Kern to support the organization and recall of materials created by Forsythe and his performers in the rehearsal studio (in use from 2007 to 2013), making it possible to tag, annotate and search across the many video recordings generated during creation. In the context of *Motion Bank*, this software was reprogrammed for use in the development of the on-line digital scores and as a standalone tool for use in the studio. Renamed *Piecemaker2* (PM2), it made it possible for annotation sets or markers to be easily related and provide access to multiple versions of the same event (e.g. video, audio, motion capture, scores, etc.). This enabled the building of connections that could generate visualizations or other representations both during and post-annotation that would help readers gain deeper insight into the source materials. As with the *Synchronous Objects* project, the quantification of the dances of the *Motion Bank* guest artists into data involved a combination of computational and manual work. This often required many hours spent on computer-based video processing, for example subtracting the background of the image leaving only the silhouettes of the performers, alongside watching the same video for many hours in order to manually annotate and describe time- based events the computer would not be able to recognize on its own.[59]

The work with guest choreographer Deborah Hay provides an important contrast with the descriptions of work with other choreographers (McGregor, Greco, Forsythe). Hay has a unique choreographic approach, which cannot be exposed by recording repeatable movement phrases, studying the way dancers generate such material or by analysing the choreographic structures in a single version of the work. The choreographer/dancers who work with her know how to interpret the written scores she provides them with; each score uniquely combines questions (referred to as 'tools' for the dancers) alongside images, reminders and instructions. Only very rarely is there something that might constitute a stage direction or body movement. These are all left up to the choreographer/dancer to discover as they practice the score for a prescribed number of days, individually, eventually arriving at their own solo adaptation. Body movements and timing are rediscovered each time they perform their adaptation. This means that there is a lot of variability to be found across performances of the same written score, each cannot be seen to be a repeat of the previous – although Hay is clear that "the movement may change, but the choreography itself does not change."[60]

Based on this choreographic approach (the structure of the written score remains the same, whereas performances vary in terms of movement and timing) as many versions of each adaptation were recorded as possible in order to compare them and look for other kinds of patterns in and across the performances. Five digital video cameras were used to record each performance (21 in total, seven times for each adaptation performed by three different artists Jeanine Durning, Ros Warby and Juliette Mapp). These recordings were then synchronised and annotated using PM2.[61] The background of each recording was subtracted leaving only the silhouette of the solo artist. From this data the 3D pathway of each performer could be extracted. Thus, the dance data collected for Deborah Hay's on-line score includes these 21 digital video recordings, extracted silhouettes, 3D pathways, the score text and the annotations. This material is used in the on-line publication of the *Motion Bank* score website for Deborah Hay, alongside extensive interview fragments organised in relation to six conceptual themes framing her choreographic methods. One of the main research results of the project with Hay was the identification of unexpected patterns across the various 21 adaptations, a discovery only

made possible using the computer to process the recorded data. *Motion Bank* continues to probe and explore this dance dataset, a total of 4TB, for example in the context of *Choreographic Coding Labs*[62] and other research and creative contexts.[63]

Video still from digitally rendered overlay of 21 versions of the solo adaptations of No Time To Fly *by the dancer/choreographers Jeanine Durning, Ros Warby and Juliette Mapp. Photo: © Motion Bank (2013) All Rights Reserved.*

Motion Bank had as one of its goals the development of software that might be used by others to create their own on-line scores to add to the *Motion Bank* collection. This was achieved through the development of two systems. One of these is the reprogrammed version of *Piecemaker*, *PM2*, based on the original research of David Kern.[64] *PM2* is currently in use by several organisations including the Pina Bausch Foundation; MA Contemporary Dance Education, Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts; Codarts, Rotterdam; and the International Choreographic Arts (ICK) Amsterdam. The other software is *MoSys*, the publishing system developed for the publication of the on-line scores. *MoSys* consists of an editor to browse collections of recorded, analyzed and annotated material and arrange it into 'views' as sets and a front-end to see the content. Each set comprises a grid-like system of cells that can interact with each other using a unique messaging system. Since 2013, an additional system, *Piecemeta* (*PMa*) has been in development. *PMa* is a platform for sharing and collaborating on dance-related data, e.g. the Deborah Hay dataset. It enables simplified data storage through a variety of import formats and

recording tools and offers the possibility to play back, remix and extend the stored data sets through the services' programming interface. These data sets can be made public to be further analysed, transformed and enhanced by other researchers and artists.[65] Currently, *Motion Bank* is developing a concept for a 'Dance Data Network,' which will feature local, affordable data storage at each network location and sharing methods and systems.[66]

Summary

The future trajectory for research into 'Dance Becoming Data' (the work *Motion Bank* intends to do) will continue to rely on critical conversations occurring at the meeting point of various disciplines where, as an enabler for collaboration, as described in the above projects, becoming data opens questions and enables connection at the intersections between artistic, scholarly and scientific practices. While the projects described above offer innovative and useful models for translating dance as tacit and embodied knowledge into digital data without losing context and meaning, that particular challenge still remains. And this challenge takes on added complications when it comes to scaling these activities to the wider field of dance, which means losing some of the intensity and customised approaches these particular projects were able to resource. At the same time increased access to digital recording and on-line storage means increasing amounts of heterogeneous dance data is on its way. Therefore, Sant makes the right proposals in *Documenting Performance* for more cooperation with the fields of library and information science to help organise, care for and make accessible digitised dance documentation. But in light of the rapid and continuous development in digital networked media, it might be argued that this cooperation can only go so far. In the increasingly connected milieu of intelligent machines, where 'choreographic thinking' encounters other forms of cognition in non-organic agents, there will be a need to keep going beyond engineering to the edge where software is not just a tool, where coding remains part of a process of discovery, communication and critique.

Notes

1 The first version of this article was originally published in the Comment section of "Computing the Corporeal", a special issue of *Computational Culture, a Journal of Software Studies* edited by Nicolas Salazar Sutil and Scott deLahunta. computationalculture.net (accessed 17 December 2017). The Comment section includes an interview with Anton Koch, artist researcher and senior developer with Motion Bank.

2 Sant, "Documenting Performance," 2.

3 Ibid., 15.

4 Hui, *On the Existence of Digital Objects*, 50.

5 Sant, "Acknowledgements," xxiii.

6 Stiegler, "Foreword," vii.

7 For more on these evolving standards, in particular those associated with the Semantic Web and W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) read Anton Koch in conversation 'Dance Becoming Data Part Two' (2017).

8 Hui, *On the Existence of Digital Objects*, 3.

9 Koch, "Dance Becoming Data Part Two."

10 There were three versions of the *Software for Dancers* project taking place from mid-2001 to early 2003. For reports and outcomes see: www.sdela.dds.nl/sfd/index.html (accessed 8 October 2017). It is the first version being addressed here with choreographers Wayne McGregor, Shobana Jeyasingh, Siobhan Davies, Ashley Page and software artists/ developers Guy Hilton, Joseph Hyde, Bruno Martelli, Ade Ward, Christian Ziegler.

11 International Studies Seminar on Musical Creation and the Future at Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico. Referenced in: Oliveros, *Software for People,* 177.

12 Oliveros, *Software for People*, 177.

13 In her text Oliveros cites the influence of Robert Ornstein, *The Psychology of Consciousness* (Harcourt Brace, 1972). Another possible influence may have been the work of Peter H. Lindsay and Donald A. Norman *Human Information Processing. An Introduction to Psychology* (Academic Press Inc, 1977). Oliveros, *Software for People*, 184.

14 Oliveros, *Software for People*, 188.

[15] The early 2000s also marked a certain institutional entry point for 'new media' art. See: Tribe, Jana and Grosenick, Eds. *New Media Art*, 23. According to Manovich, the computer-based artistic field "began to really take shape only in the end of the 1980s" ("New Media from Borges to HTML," 13).

[16] A precedent for this conversation took place on 15 December 2000 as part of the Monaco Dance and Technology Festival where a group of software artists who collaborate in the making of dance works gathered to discuss their work. A full transcript can be downloaded here, accessed 9 October 2017, www.sdela.dds.nl/sfd/monaco.html.

[17] One of the software artists who participate in *Software for Dancers* was Ade Ward who had just been awarded the first Software Art prize from transmediale.01 in Berlin for his work 'auto-illustrator' a parody of the popular Adobe Illustrator – rendering Illustrator "useless" in conventional terms.

[18] Roy, "Technological Process." 32-35.

[19] deLahunta, "Software for Dancers." 96-102

[20] Fuller, "Introduction." 10.

[21] deLahunta and Shaw. "Constructing Memories: Creation of the choreographic resource" and "Choreographic Resources Agents, Archives, Scores and Installations."

[22] *Choreographic Objects*: *traces and artifacts of physical intelligence.*

[23] Leach, "Choreographic Objects," 458.

[24] deLahunta, "Wayne McGregor's Choreographic Language Agent," 141-142.

[25] For an overview of this interdisciplinary research see documentation of the Mind and Movement Exhibition Wellcome Collection (2013), accessed 9 October 2017. wellcomecollection.org/thinkingwiththebody.

[26] Downie's website, accessed 27 April 2018, openendedgroup.com.

[27] Rothwell's website, accessed 27 April 2018, cassiel.com.

[28] From the on-line description of FIELD, accessed 9 October 2017, openendedgroup.com/field.

[29] See project materials on these websites, accessed 9 October 2017, openendedgroup.com/artworks/cla.html and waynemcgregor.com/research/choreographic-language-agent.

[30] L. Church et. al., "Sketching by Programming."

[31] Ibid.

[32] Developed as a follow up to the Choreographic Objects network meetings 2008-2009 (see footnote 10 above) with funding from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, UK. See Research Council's Report, accessed 9 October 2017, gtr.rcuk.ac.uk/project/EF772A21-502F-4A7E-B105-A7B35407485C.

[33] The source film was the original *Blade Runner* (1982)

[34] Downie, "Thinking with the Body Exhibition Documentation".

[35] Leach and deLahunta, "Dance Becoming Knowledge," 461-467.

[36] Specific notation systems have been developed for the scoring and documentation of dance since at least the 1600s, but only a handful are currently in use. For the Capturing Intention research project both Benesh (Eliane Mirzabekiantz) and Laban (Marion Bastien) notation specialists were engaged as part of the research team, see: deLahunta, Ed., *Capturing Intention,* 42-55.

[37] deLahunta, *Capturing Intention*, 5.

[38] deLahunta, *Capturing Intention.*

[39] Read about the training system on the ICKAmsterdam website, accessed 9 October 2017, www.ickamsterdam.com/en/academy/education/ick/double-skin-double-mind-the-method-20.

[40] See short documentary film explaining the installation here on the Inside Movement Knowledge project website, accessed 9 October 2017, insidemovementknowledge.net.

[41] More background on Frédéric Bevilacqua, accessed 9 October 2017, frederic-bevilacqua.net.

[42] See IRCAM website, accessed 27 April 2018, www.ircam.fr.

[43] Bevilacqua, "Momentary notes on capturing gestures," 27.

[44] Bevilacqua and Muller, "A Gesture follower for performing arts."

[45] Bevilacqua, "Momentary notes on capturing gestures," 28.

[46] Bevilacqua, "Momentary notes on capturing gestures".

[47] See Sound Music Movement Interaction, IRCAM website, accessed 27 April 2018, www.ircam.fr/recherche/equipes-recherche/issm.

[48] See project website, accessed 27 April 2018, insidemovementknowledge.net.

[49] Bevilacqua, "Momentary notes on capturing gestures," 28.

[50] See website for Movement and Computing, accessed 27 April 2018, www.movementcomputing.org.

[51] Hui, *On the Existence of Digital Objects*, 50.

[52] Preservation of the *Becoming* project was accomplished through providing a description of the basic components and FIELD modules that could be accessed to reinstall the work. These are available online: r-research.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/ECHO_implementation_hardware.pdf and r-research.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/ECHO_implementation_software.pdf.

[53] For a distinctly data related focus, the *Choreographic Objects* project of Siobhan Davies involved the digitization and publication of a large amount of existing archival material which necessitated system and meta-data level implementation. Project website: www.siobhandaviesreplay.com.

[54] See project website, accessed 27 April 2018, synchronousobjects.osu.edu.

[55] Shaw, Forsythe and Palazzi, "Dance, Data, Objects".

[56] See project website, accessed 27 April 2018, motionbank.org.

[57] deLahunta, "Publishing Choreographic Ideas."

[58] Motion Bank Phase One (2010-2013) was funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, the Hessian Ministry for Science an the Arts, the Kulturfonds Frank-urt RheinMain and the ALTANA Kulturstiftung. Its partners included the Frankfurt LAB, The Forsythe Company, the Offenbach University of Art and Design, the Fraunhofer Institute for Computer Graphics Research, the University of Applied Sciences in Darmstadt, the Advanced Computing Center for the Arts and Design and Department of Dance at The Ohio State University, the Palucca Hochschule für Tanz Dresden, and Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts.

[59] These paragraphs are adapted from a chapter by deLahunta, "Motion Bank: a broad context for choreographic research," 128-137.

[60] *No Time to Fly (written score)*.

61 For an in-depth interview with Motion Bank researchers Florian Jenett and Scott deLahunta about this process see, accessed 9 October 2017, www.perfomap.de/map6/medien-und-verfahren-des-aufzeichnens/a-conversation-on-motion-bank.

62 See project website, accessed 9 October 2017, choreographiccoding.org.

63 A next level of analysis will involve the extracting of pose data from the 2D videos, e.g. using OpenPose, see github for related library, accessed 9 October 2017, github.com/CMU-Perceptual-Computing-Lab/openpose.

64 The original version of *Piecemaker*, programmed by David Kern, was in use by The Forsythe Company from 2007-2013. *Motion Bank* is currently conducting research into this period of time with e-Heritage funding from the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

65 This perspective is similar to the *Loops* project of the OpenendedGroup, making movements recordings of Merce Cunningham's "dance solo for his hands" available for further artistic development, website accessed 9 October 2017, openendedgroup.com/artworks/loops_open.html.

66 Current international network partners include Hochschule Mainz University of Applied Sciences, Deakin Motion.Lab, Deakin University, Melbourne and Centre for Dance Research, Coventry University, UK.

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Biography

Scott deLahunta has worked as a writer, researcher and organiser on a range of international projects bringing performing arts with a focus on choreography into conjunction with other disciplines and practices. His current interest is in how to communicate embodied forms of knowing in the absence of the body and the many issues that arise from this.

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VIDEO ANNOTATION FOR THE ARTICULATION AND TRANSMISSION OF DANCE

REBECCA STANCLIFFE

Keywords

notation
annotation
movement thinking
dance analysis
transmission

Abstract

Codified movement notation systems are perceived as time-consuming to learn and limited in their application to contemporary movement practices because they prescribe how dance is analysed and documented. The articulation and transmission of dance through video annotation, a comparatively recent method of dance analysis, has the potential to change what is, and what can be, known about dance and to illuminate otherwise hidden knowledge. This chapter situates video annotation as part of a rich heritage of documentary practices in dance and contemplates what it offers as an editorial analytic practice.

Since the late 1990s, video annotation has shifted the way that a handful of researchers have analysed, articulated and transmitted dance. *Improvisation Technologies: A Tool for the Analytical Dance Eye*[1] is generally acknowledged to have set the precedent for video annotation in dance. The CD-ROM was comprised of a series of lecture demonstrations that are layered with graphical drawings to illuminate the imagined spatial constructs, thinking and logic behind choreographer William Forsythe's artistic practice. Yet, the potential of graphical annotation was already being explored more than a decade earlier, revealing a history of annotation that pre-dates *Improvisation Technologies* and subsequent media publications.[2] Other recent projects that explore the graphical potential of drawing on top of video materials include *Material for the Spine*[3] and *Synchronous Objects for One Flat Thing, reproduced.*[4] Textual forms of annotation are employed in *Using the Sky*[5] and *Seven Duets*[6] to provide a commentary of thinking and link or organise this with video materials.

In this chapter, I propose that video annotation is the most recent stage of an ongoing trajectory in dance analysis and documentation that has roots in the notational endeavours of Renaissance ballet masters and which accelerated in the early twentieth century. I suggest that the limitations and capacity of traditional codified dance notation systems relate directly to experimentations in video annotation today.[7] I begin by discussing the aspirations of two modern dance pioneers Rudolf Laban (1879-1958) and Margaret Morris (1891-1980) who both published the beginnings of their notation systems in 1928. I draw from Laban's writings and those from his former student dance scholar Valerie Preston-Dunlop. For the discussion of Morris I consult publications and primary sources housed in her archive at the Fergusson Gallery in Perth, Scotland. Laban's Kinetography and Morris's Danscript are selected because of what they can tell us about the incomplete nature and evolution of representational systems. They are also useful examples because both Laban and Morris recognised the need to develop a suitable method of analysis and documentation whilst demonstrating an awareness of the capacity and limitations of their systems. I propose that the motivations and enquiries that guided these notation systems underpin the analytic endeavours of dance researchers today, and I use Bertha Bermúdez Pascual's work with the Emio

Greco|Pieter C. Scholten (EG|PC) dance company to illustrate this. In the discussion of video annotation, I reference three media publications; *Using the Sky*, *Improvisation Technologies* and *Synchronous Objects*, each using different approaches reveal something about movement thinking.[8] I do not present an in-depth account of their annotation use in this chapter, rather I discuss what they offer dance analysis while characterizing annotation as a time and labour intensive method of analysis.[9] The rise in digital, collaborative and interdisciplinary working supports an artist-led search for suitable modes of movement representation that emphasise the articulation and transmission of movement thinking in which video annotation is, arguably, a logical next step in movement analysis and documentation.

The 20th Century concern for universality, communication and standardisation was, in part, rooted in the information overload of earlier centuries that arose from the proliferation of texts following the advent of the printing press. In dance, there was a significant increase in the number of new notation systems to emerge in comparison to previous eras and many of these sought to be applicable for all kinds of movement genres and to traverse language barriers. Dance notation expert Ann Hutchinson Guest estimates that a new movement notation system was created every four years after 1928, hitting a peak in the 1950s.[10] Three systems make up the now established twentieth century canon; Labanotation, Benesh Movement Notation (BMN), and Eshkol Wachmann Movement Notation (EWMN). These notations sought to document movement without restriction to a particular dance idiom that would require prior knowledge of style and performance as a prerequisite. This was also the case for Danscript, a lesser known system devised by Morris which, like Labanotation and EWMN, was an abstract symbol system. Morris argues that:

> It is comparatively easy to invent a system for recording any one method of dancing, whatever that may be […] But I have always had in mind the *future* development of dancing, there must be progress and variation, to prevent stagnation.[11]

The 1928 publication of Danscript and Laban's Kinetography[12] are snapshots of the notation systems at a moment in time after which they continued to develop in a non-linear fashion alongside advancements in

their creators' practices and, for Morris, in response to the success of Labanotation and BMN.

Kinetography was influenced by the notation system devised by Pierre Beauchamp (1631-1705) and published by Raoul Auger Feuillet in 1700 (c1653-1709).[13] Reportedly, Laban "began to see his own experiments as a development of Feuillet's and Beauchamps's work" to which he paid homage through the title of his first publication *Choreographie* (1926).[14] The Beauchamp-Feuillet notation is a noteworthy development in dance history as it is the first known widespread system to analyse, deconstruct and classify dance steps.[15] The notation emerged in response to an order from King Louis XIV of France (1638-1715) to find an adequate notation for dance,[16] which dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster contextualises as part of a widespread concern for the classification of knowledge.[17] Jean-Noël Laurenti, scholar of 17th and 18th century performing arts, suggests that the Beauchamp-Feuillet system helped to enrich and evolve the tradition of ballet by arriving "at a kind of universal language of dance."[18] This leap forwards in the analytic tradition of dance is reported to have originated in Thoinot Arbeau's (1519-1595) *Orchésographie* (1588), "a detailed treatise on the society dances in vogue throughout the sixteenth century."[19] Foster suggests that "Arbeau had anticipated these new foundational principles [in Beauchamp-Feuillet] by specifying some of the positions to which the body should return between movements" which set forth the criteria for technical skill and study.[20] The connection to Arbeau's work reveals a practice of looking to the past to advance practice in the present day, which is characteristic of the some of the examples used in this chapter.

Laban was attracted to the Beauchamp-Feuillet system because of its "rational observation of dance movement."[21] He adopted its principles to form the basis of his own system including the division of the right and left body halves, the metric division of time, and directional signs. Laban believed that

> dance-thinking, or the thinking connected with movement, is almost diametrically opposed to ordinary thinking, thinking connected with words. This is why so little literature about dance exists.[22]

According to dance anthropologist Suzanne Youngerman, Laban "proclaimed that 'the ultimate goal of kinetography is not the Dance Script [*Tanzschrift*], but the Script Dance [*Schrifftanz*]'."[23] Although science had enabled the classification of the body into its constituent features, a strictly anatomical approach could not contribute to the understanding of movement if one believes in the unity of the body and mind.[24] He emphasised literacy and the advancement of dance discourse rather than written dance, the notation score, as the only outcome.[25] Laban intended to create a grammar and syntax that was capable of

> dealing not only with the outer form of movement but also with its mental and emotional content. This was based on the belief that motion and emotion, form and content, body and mind are inseparably united.[26]

Lahusen and Preston-Dunlop explain that the notation published in *Choreographie* was not a workable system as Laban had yet to solve the problem of writing the continuous motion of the body on paper. This was because the notation staff was designed as a series of crosses which did not have the capacity to represent linear time.[27] At this time, Laban's work on Space Harmony[28] formed the basis of his notation and word abbreviations (adopted as a letter code system) were used. This meant that the notator would require knowledge of Space Harmony as a prerequisite. The notation was limited, therefore, to his colleagues and students, or those prepared to study the theory behind it. Choreographer Kurt Jooss (1901-1979), a student of Laban, is reported to have made the suggestion to adjust the design of the staff to the four vertical columns that form the basis of the notation system today.[29] The transition from letters to abstract symbols to represent movement, which could be elongated to show movement duration, allowed for different movements of the body to be documented simultaneously.[30] Nonetheless, Laban's vision of depicting motion as a continuous progression through space was compromised as it necessitated pre-existing understanding of movement pathways. Instead Laban's Kinetography was used to record key positions that the body passed through in movement.[31] This example reveals that Laban's vision for dance documentation exceeded the capacity of the available technology (pen and paper and the notation framework).

Like many who came before her, Morris believed that dance should have a notation system to rival that of music. In the early years of her professional practice Morris adopted a notation shorthand developed by Raymond Duncan (1874-1966), the brother of dance pioneer Isadora Duncan (1877-1927). Of this system, Morris writes:

> Duncan recorded the Greek positions he used with lines giving a diagrammatic representation of the position of the arms, this was quite satisfactory as they were always done in profile, and the position of the feet and legs was always the same; but when I tried to apply the same method to other positions where the arms were stretched towards – or obliquely to – the audience, the position has to be drawn in profile, and then a new sign made to indicate that it was not performed as it looked, but facing audience, which was very confusing.[32]

This account reveals that the shorthand was adapted to suit Morris's practice and signs for the legs and feet, and indications for directions were added also.[33] Nevertheless, in recognising the limitations of Duncan's shorthand for recording movement other than Greek dance, Morris started work on an abstract notation system to correlate with her vision of dance.

Despite intending to develop a notation capable of recording all kinds of human movement, Morris claimed that Danscript was suited only to the most pioneering work rather than for classical ballet which, she argued, could be documented through ordinary writing. This was because ballet was constructed "almost exclusively of standard steps and positions, which all have names."[34] Morris stated that the only way to perfectly record movement was through film, which could capture a series of positions at high speed. Morris emphasised movement as a series of positions, which contrasts Laban's conceptualisation of movement, and thought that her 1928 publication should have been called *The Notation of Positions* rather than *The Notation of Human Movement*.[35] Yet, remarkably, she continued to develop her notation throughout her lifetime.[36] The ability to write notation symbols quickly was a key factor in her argument for superiority of Danscript over Labanotation and BMN. A tension arises between the desire for the speed of writing combined with comprehensiveness in documentation.

Notation is commonly understood to be a way to record dance, a *mnemotechnical* tool, and many believed that it would be as beneficial to dance as it is to music; that it would expediate dance education or allow dancers to learn their parts during their commute to rehearsals.[37] However, notation use is far removed from how dance is learned and knowledge transmitted in contemporary movement practices. Codified and sharable systems of movement notation did not become as ubiquitous as many advocates may have hoped them to be. Notation translates aspects of choreography in a reductive manner and the specialist notator works within a requisite analytic and conceptual framework usually with the aim of capturing what the choreographer asks for. Hutchinson Guest proposes that the "truly authentic work is that notated by the choreographer him or herself," or at least in collaboration with the choreographer,[38] which is problematic given that so few dancers today are versed in reading and writing movement notation. Furthermore, it often omits the perspective of the mover, meaning that 'movement thinking' is often not prioritised nor captured in the final notation score.

I use 'movement thinking' to refer to the experience, perception, and knowledge that arises in, with, and through movement practices. I propose that this develops not only in the lived experience of the choreographer and dancer but also in relation to artefacts, or *mnemonics,* and systems that support and enhance communication (*hypomnemotechnics)*. *Hypomnemotechnics,* which might include writing, notation, and video annotation, help to stabilise aspects of the choreographer or dancer's thinking, which might be characterised as implicit, tacit or embedded, providing the possibility for it to become collective knowledge. This means that questions about how movement thinking is articulated and characterised through different technologies are important in understanding what is, and can be, known about dance.

The notation score is, in part, characterised by the absence of the qualitative and intentional principles of movement practice that contribute to artistic philosophies. This means that additional provision might be necessary to transmit what the score cannot. For example, the Dance Notation Bureau stipulates that a movement coach may be required for reconstructing dance works from the Labanotation score to coach the

performers in the quality and style necessary for performance.[39] The notation score is a set of instructions that reveals a gap between movement thinking and the limitations of notation as a recording technology. Nevertheless, notation systems have greater potential than is usually and commonly assumed and their consciousness-raising properties are often overlooked. For example, Youngerman argues that notations are

> far more than tools for documentation; they are systems of analysis that that can be used to illuminate many aspects of the phenomenon of movement.[40]

The requisite analytic and conceptual frameworks of notation systems determine what details of the dance are selected and recorded. Subsequently, the notator develops a particular way of seeing and understanding movement through the interplay of these frameworks and the knowledge they have gained through prior experience, which shapes what they attend to and expect to see in movement. The translation fixes and stabilises movement details in the form of an artefact, a notation score, and not only provides an account of the notator's perception, but characterises how future notators will read the dance.

Movement notation is part of a larger history of technological advancements that shapes and advances movement thinking and knowledge. The need to find a suitable method of recording movement is as much true today as it was for Renaissance and modern dance, yet there are crucial differences. Given the affordability, immediacy and common usage of video as a recording technology, which can record a time-based visual representation of movement, there is, generally speaking, less of a concern for the accurate translation of dance work. Instead, a need arises for the articulation and transmission of artistic praxis. Video annotation, which combines a visual record of dance with a discursive layer, is not restricted by pre-existing and codified analytic frameworks but is driven by the dance artist's and/or annotator's research questions. This makes it possible to advance what is, and can be, known about movement practices by interrogating how movement thinking is articulated.

The awareness and exploration of already existing analytic and documentary methods in dance research has, for some, provided a useful starting point for further research. *(Capturing) Intention* (2004-2008) was

an interdisciplinary project led by Bermúdez Pascual with the Amsterdam School of Arts and is a rich example of research into the documentation and transmission of artistic praxis.[41] The project was inspired by EG|PC's interest to "delve deeper into the relationships between dance, language, and documentation" and focused on "the specific ways in which verbal language can be better organised to help capture and communicate concepts that might arise initially from the experience of moving."[42] To examine the best way to represent the experiential and intentional information about the dance, Bermúdez Pascual consulted notation experts, and studied Labanotation and BMN.[43] This created something of an anchor grounded in an existing body of work and provided a valuable departure point for recognising the capacity and limitations of notation and exploring alternative methods for articulating and transmitting movement thinking.

For Bermúdez Pascual, the involvement of the choreographer and dancers is crucial: "[It] represents a new paradigm in which dance as an art form and those involved in its praxis are not data for new hypotheses, but form the subject of the research from which knowledge can be gained."[44] Whereas documentation practices are usually the purview of expert notators, the work by Bermúdez Pascual enables the questions and developments at the heart of the practice to be integrated into the documentation.

EG|PC developed a practice of physical and mental preparation to deepen the relationship between the dancers and "an acute awareness of the inner body."[45] This common language of knowledge transfer, a codified system of sorts, became concretised in their workshop *Double Skin/Double Mind*, which is comprised of structured exercises and a particular and conscious use of terminology.[46] Bermúdez devised a glossary of terms and better organisation of verbal language to capture concepts that might arise initially from the experience of moving.[47] This is important research that directly addresses the friction between language and movement and what kinds of knowledge are available. The interdisciplinary research allowed "new tangible representations of dance where its 'tacit' knowledge can become visible, audible and articulated" and gradually enabled "a very healthy detachment […] from their [Greco and Scholten's] own questions,

needs and praxis," which facilitated curiosity.[48] While the examination, clarification and indexation of artists' terminology perhaps fails to immediately conjure the image of annotation, it supports the development of folksonomical and/or taxonomical frameworks that contribute to how dance is digitally mediated and circulates in the digital milieu. Such an approach is pertinent given the development of the semantic web where the meanings of objects are understandable by computers and human agents alike.[49] Subsequently, it would be possible to search for online dance content according to principles of movement thinking.

A more tangible use of annotation can be seen in *Using the Sky*, which examines choreographer Deborah Hay's *No Time to Fly* (2010). *No Time to Fly* is based on a written score which does not identify what movement is to be performed, as is the case with traditional understanding of scores, but consists of a set of instructions, questions, and notes and provides the tools to heighten the mover's attention to, and perception of, the body: an invitation to "open up the realm of possibility."[50] For *Using the Sky*, three dancers with experience of working with Hay were invited to practice with the score to create their own solo adaptation, each of which was recorded seven times resulting in twenty-one versions of the dance. All these recordings were analysed and annotated "in order to look for structures consistent with the multiplicity of possible expressions of the same dance," a process that took approximately one year.[51] The textual annotations operate as linked data, creating a spatial and temporal pathway between the written score and video materials, giving the materials a hypertextual quality that supports their organisation and navigation and enables the reader to move back and forth to points in the dance.

The terminology used by the choreographer and dancers provides the content of the annotations.[52] The dancers' insight provides a commentary of their thinking in relation to the score and provides access to their decision making and experience. Florian Jenett, Co-Director of *Motion Bank*, indicates that the annotations reveal a disparity between the dancers' perception and what can be determined through video analysis alone.[53] In other words, a difference was uncovered between the subjective and embodied experience of the dancers and the objective perspective

gained through viewing. In *Using the Sky*, annotation illuminates otherwise hidden details of movement thinking.

The graphical drawings layered over video materials in publications such as *Improvisation Technologies* are closer to what many might understand as annotation as they contrast the aesthetic of the video source. This is, in part, what makes annotation powerful as it directs the reader's attention to particular aspects of the work. The annotation illuminates how Forsythe and his dancers generate movement through a vocabulary of virtual spatial constructs revealing an approach that does not emphasise the movement design of the body (as is the case with movement notation) but the thinking behind the movement.[54] Steve Dixon, a researcher in media and computer technologies, suggests that the "acclaimed technical 'innovations' [in *Improvisation Technologies*] had in fact been developed and honed years earlier by lesser known artists and educationalists."[55] He cites research conducted in the 1980s by the former Bedford Interactive Institute that superimposed "computer-graphical lines over video footage to trace and analyze arcs of movement."[56] Jacqueline Smith-Autard, a dance researcher who was based at the Bedford Institute, developed multi-modal interactive materials for dance pedagogy that incorporated drawing on top of video (graphical annotations) to illuminate spatial pathways. The annotated video sat alongside corresponding Labanotation scores and contextual information for a particular dance work.[57] These examples reveal a difference in the motivation for annotation: Smith-Autard explored the illumination of actual and virtual spatial concepts that had become distorted in the video representation while *Improvisation Technologies* sought to illuminate virtual and imagined concepts to reveal the thinking behind the movement generated. The extent to which Smith-Autard's resources were adopted in dance education is unknown, but Dixon proposes that the relative obscurity of this research can be accounted for by developments in hardware systems and, notably, the shift from CD-ROMs to the internet. This, he suggests, "rendered years of painstaking research and digital dance-analysis materials largely obsolete."[58]

A history of annotation emerges that pre-dates the media publications and digital tools developed since the late 1990s, along with a continued interest in bringing together video materials and analytic perspectives which has

the potential to enrich the representation of movement thinking. Nevertheless, while annotation has started to gain currency for those working to digitally mediate movement practice, there appears to be no clear understanding of its mechanics and value. Findings from the development and testing of digital tools such as Rekall, the Creation-Tool and Rotosketch have been published but there are no accounts of how they impact dance scholarship.[59] The 2015 *Performance Research* special issue *On An/Notations*[60] is the first collection of literature dedicated to annotation in the performing arts and its contributors point to a broad spectrum of thinking about what annotation is and how it operates. However, *while On An/Notations* illustrates diverse conceptualisations of annotation, it does not provide a clear understanding of exactly what annotation is. The absence of annotation in current discourse creates a need for further investigation into how annotation impacts the way dance is seen, analysed, and understood and, thus, how annotation supports and extends thinking and communication of movement thinking.

It is particularly interesting that, in a conversation with Digital Artist Paul Kaiser, Forsythe explains that for thirty years he dissuaded artists from publishing books and films of their work because dance was missing an intelligent kind of notation for the dancing body.[61] Exploring the potential of computer graphics, Forsythe suggests, is "[n]ot out of any dissatisfaction with the tradition, but rather in an effort to alter the temporal condition of the ideas incumbent in the acts, to make the organizing principles visibly persist."[62] Forsythe's thinking, particularly the imagined abstract spatial constructs he uses to generate movement, and the trace forms that movement leaves behind are stabilised and made visible through graphical annotations in *Improvisation Technologies*.[63] Documenting these organising principles clearly necessitates an approach other than movement notation that can capture movement continuity and foreground the thinking behind the unfolding of movement. Subsequently, video annotation becomes an important tool for illuminating Forsythe's movement thinking.

Video annotation supports a transition in dance analysis and documentation from creating a representation of a dance work towards examining and depicting movement thinking. This means that the

outcomes are not known in advance but can emerge through the research process. An example of this can be seen in *Synchronous Objects.* Norah Zuniga Shaw, one of the creative directors of *Synchronous Objects*, explains that because there were no pre-existing methods to conduct the types of analysis that the interdisciplinary team were interested in the "research process [… became] a process of developing new methodologies in order to progress."[64] Zuniga Shaw alludes to the iterative and recursive nature of the research process by stating "[w]e deliberately start by not knowing in order to move into new spaces and encounter the unfamiliar […] Nothing is outside the boundaries in the beginning."[65] This was grounded in "messy beginnings" that arose from the different perspectives of the research team and allowed the "research to emerge from the materials at hand."[66]

Annotation helps to exploit the rich visual resource of video that has become commonplace in studio practices and can be used to articulate the knowledge arising from the research enquiries in dance. Video annotation concretises and reveals movement thinking in a way that, theoretically, makes it possible to share with heterogeneous audiences. This is unlike movement notation which is designed for expert audiences and, arguably, video annotation enables a more democratic approach for the articulation and transmission of dance. Importantly, video annotation has the potential to facilitate a change in the status of dance research if dance is no longer restricted to a particular community but becomes accessible to all.

It is important to recognise that analytic endeavours are not merely outcome-oriented processes and that the process of trying to capture or (an)notate dance has great value beyond its stabilisation. Notation and annotation are perception-enhancing technologies that create a particular lens through which movement is seen, analysed and understood. Unlike notation, however, annotation is not driven by predetermined analytic and conceptual frameworks but is (more or less consciously) determined by the annotator and guided by their research enquiries or those of the choreographer, dancer, and/or collaborative team. This provides the potential to challenge and expand what is and what can be known about movement.

Video annotation is a time and labour intensive process that is characterised by a close and deep reading of, and dialogue with, video materials. The result is a layer of commentary or analysis that increases the utility and value of the source. This layer draws the viewer's attention towards certain details of the movement practice and impacts how dance is engaged with. This is because what is articulated through annotation becomes part of the dance record and creates a map through which a reader, expert and novice alike, can approach dance materials. Video annotation creates a particular account of movement practice and essentially re-authors the video materials by way of a selective and editorial practice. Subsequently, the perspective of the annotator becomes privileged and characterises how viewers see, analyse, and interpret dance. It is not necessarily, therefore, a solution for the holistic documentation of dance.

The discussion of (an)notation reveals a tension between the need to create a tangible record of dance, the desire to articulate and transmit movement thinking, and the limitations of available technologies. The limited uptake of movement notation in the dance community, combined with the emergence of video recording technologies, has paved the way for video annotation as a method of analysis and tool for transmission of movement thinking. While it is possible to argue that traditional notations, such as Labanotation, are not suitable for the explorations of, and research into, contemporary practice, it is important that different systems have different applications. It is not that any one system is wrong per se, but that it is perhaps unsuitable for the research questions, aesthetic, and conceptualisation of dance at a given time. As the dance milieu shifts so too do the analytic needs of artists and researchers, and thus the technological systems of representation also shift. Video annotation is the most recent stage in the trajectory for understanding and analysing dance that will continue to develop and evolve in the search for the articulation and transmission of artistic praxis.

Notes

1 Forsythe et al., *Improvisation Technologies*.

2 See for example: Dixon, *Digital Performance*; Smith-Autard, "The Essential Relationship;" Smith-Autard and Schofield, "Resource-based Teaching."
www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/1464789032000130363.

3 Paxton and Contredans, *Material for the Spine*.

4 Forsythe and OSU, *Synchronous Objects*.

5 Hay and Motion Bank, *Using the Sky*.

6 Burrows, Fargion and Motion Bank, *Seven Duets*.

7 I use 'notation' to refer to codified systems while recognising that the term is now widely adopted to describe other modes of representing dance.

8 It is useful to recognise that annotation sits on a scale of formality that ranges from informal and idiosyncratic approaches usually intended to remain private to formal and published annotations. The cited media publications sit at the formal end of this spectrum.

9 An in-depth analysis of *Improvisation Technologies*, *Synchronous Objects*, and *Using the Sky* can be found in Stancliffe, "Video Annotation."

10 Hutchinson Guest, *Dance Notation*.

11 Morris, *The Notation of Human Movement*, 7-8.

12 Labanotation is used in the UK and the USA while Kinetography Laban is preferred in Europe. Hutchinson Guest, founder of the Dance Notation Bureau, proposed the name Labanotation but, according to Preston-Dunlop, this was disliked by Laban (*Rudolf Laban,* 247). Disagreements in naming Laban's Kinetography are documented in correspondence between Albrecht Knust (1896-1978) and Ann Hutchinson (now Hutchinson Guest) housed at the National Resource Centre for Dance (e.g. Knust, *Principles*; Knust, *Answer*; and Hutchinson, *Comments*).

13 Laban was also inspired by the writings of Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), a reformer of classical ballet and critic of Beauchamp-Feuillet notation who believed that dance ought to be sufficient for expression and should not have to rely on the spoken word or costumes for communication (Cohen, "Dance as an Art of Imitation"). During his time in Paris, Laban watched the functional movement and behaviour of

people and documented his findings in, what Preston-Dunlop and Lahusen describe as, a "crude symbol system" (*A view of German dance*, 24). Preston-Dunlop identifies that Laban also observed the everyday movements of people in 'lunatic asylums' to further his understanding of harmonic and disharmonic movement patterns (*Rudolf Laban*).

[14] Preston-Dunlop and Lahusen, *Schriftanz*. For a translation of *Choreographie* see Longstaff. www.laban-analyses.org/jeffrey/2011-Rudolf-Laban-1926-Choreographie/contents.htm.

[15] Before this, the first letter of a step's name was commonly used to document dance because performance style was widely known in the Renaissance era.

[16] de Moroda, "Choréographie"; Foster, *Choreographing Empathy*; Laurenti, "Feuillet's Thinking."

[17] Foster, *Choreographing Empathy*.

[18] Laurenti, "Feuillet's Thinking," 87.

[19] Arbeau, *Orchesography,* viii.

[20] Foster, *Choreographing Empathy*, 23, 16.

[21] Laban, *Laban's Principles of Dance and Movement Notation*, ix.

[22] Laban, *Rudolf Laban Speaks about Movement and Dance*, 11.

[23] Youngerman, *Movement Notation Systems as Conceptual Frameworks*, 110.

[24] Laban, *Rudolf Laban Speaks about Movement and Dance*.

[25] Preston-Dunlop and Lahusen, *Schriftanz*.

[26] Laban, *Choreutics,* viii.

[27] Preston-Dunlop and Lahusen, *Schriftanz*.

[28] Maletic proposes that Laban's search to understand the inner structure of movement can be divided into four categories; the objective classification and description of movement as underlying principles for Labanotation, the theory of spatial structure and relationships of movement known as *Space Harmony* or *Choreutics*, a theory of movement dynamics known as *Effort* (for everyday movement) or *Eukinetics* (for dance), and the relationship between *Effort*, and spatial unfolding referred to as *Movement Harmony* (172). These categories are intrinsically woven, but it is their complexity that results in the separate discussion of each (126, 172).

[29] Preston-Dunlop and Lahusen, *Schriftanz*. Preston-Dunlop, *Rudolf Laban*.

[30] Preston-Dunlop, *Rudolf Laban*.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Morris, *The Notation of Human Movement*, 8-9.

[33] Morris, *My Life in Movement*.

[34] Morris, *The Notation of Human Movement*, 7-8. Daniels and Morris, *Margaret Morris Dancing*, 78.

[35] Morris, *The Notation of Human Movement*.

[36] Morris, *My Life in Movement*.

[37] Hutchinson Guest, *Labanotation*. Benesh and Benesh, *An Introduction to Benesh Movement Notation*.

[38] Hutchinson Guest, *Is Authenticity to be Had?*

[39] Dance Notation Bureau.

[40] Youngerman, *Movement Notation Systems as Conceptual Frameworks*, 101.

[41] Two other research projects of interest are 'Inside Movement Knowledge' – insidemovementknowledge.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/RTRSRCH_Notation_CoverSpread.pdf – and 'Pre-choreographic Elements' (deLahunta and Bermúdez Pascual). www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1386/padm.9.1.52_1.

[42] Bermúdez Pascual, (*Capturing) Intention,* 67. deLahunta and Bermúdez Pascual, *Pre-choreographic Elements,* 54.

[43] Bermúdez, *Reflection on the Process of Learning Benesh and Labanotation*.

[44] Bermúdez Pascual, (*Capturing) Intentio*n, 63.

[45] Ibid.*,* 65. Fernandes and Bermúdez, *Inventing the Interactive Glossary*, 31.

[46] Bermúdez Pascual, (*Capturing) Intention*.

[47] deLahunta and Bermúdez, *(Capturing) Intention*.

[48] Bermúdez Pascual, (*Capturing) Intention,* 70.

[49] Hui, *On the Existence of Digital Objects*. libertar.io/lab/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/On-the-Existence-of-Digital-Objects-Yuk-Hui-45-731.pdf.

[50] Hay and Motion Bank, *Using the Sky.* scores.motionbank.org/dh/ -/set/sets.

[51] Interview with Florian Jenett, co-director of Motion Bank and the annotator for *Using the Sky*.

[52] Interview with Florian Jenett

[53] Ibid.

[54] I use the term 'virtual' in the choreological sense, following Preston-Dunlop (*The Nature of the Embodiment of Choreutic Units in Contemporary Choreography,* 56) to mean illusory forms "perceived to be there by the dancer's intention and/or performance."

[55] Dixon, *Digital Performance*, 30.

[56] Ibid., 31.

[57] Smith-Autard, *The Essential Relationship Between Pedagogy and Technology in Enhancing the Teaching of Dance Form*. Smith-Autard and Schofield*, Resource-based Teaching and Interactive Video*.

[58] Dixon, *Digital Performance*, 30-31.

[59] Bardiot, *Rekall*. hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01572188/document. Cabral, *Video Interaction using Pen-Based Technology*. Cabral et al., *Evaluation of a Multimodal Video Annotator for Contemporary Dance*. www.infomus.org/Events/proceedings/AVI2012/CHAPTER 12/p572-cabral.pdf. deLahunta and Zuniga Shaw, *Constructing Memories*. repository.falmouth.ac.uk/421/1/Constructing-Memory-creation-of-the-choreographic-resource.pdf.

[60] deLahunta, Vincs and Whatley, "On An/Notations."

[61] Forsythe, *Improvisation Technologies*.

[62] Forsythe, *Choreographic Objects*.

[63] Laban's choreutic theories became a stimulus for Forsythe's "own method of generating choreographic material." Driver, *William Forsythe*, 11.

[64] Groves, Zuniga Shaw and deLahunta, *Talking About Scores*, 94, 95. leseprobe.buch.de/images-adb/41/99/41994a8b-f4d2-45e9-81a6-092b2ca2cb19.pdf.

[65] Zuniga Shaw, *Allowing for the Unknown*, 57. dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30064106/delahunta-motionbank-2013.pdf.

[66] Ibid.

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Biography

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Familiar Capers. *Dancers: Shailer Kern-Carruth, Ariel Zablocki, Alison Liney. Philadelphia, USA. Photo © Bill Herbert (2011) CC-BY-NC*

CREATIVE COGNITION IN DANCE CHOREOGRAPHY: A REVIEW

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Keywords

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Abstract

What does it mean to be creative in dance? Cognitive psychologists have studied creativity for over fifty years, yet little has focused on dance. This chapter offers a review of existing research on creativity in contemporary dance choreography. After offering a selection of creativity models previously applied to dance, it presents findings from the Unspoken Knowledges project, studies supporting social theories of creativity, research stemming from Wayne McGregor|Random Dance, and some perspectives from somatics. Drawing from this nexus of research, this chapter illustrates the strides made in choreographic creativity research and highlights some areas in need of further attention.

Introduction

Cognitive psychology is the study of higher order mental processes[1] like attention, reasoning, decision-making, problem-solving, analysis, synthesis, evaluation and so on. These processes combine to form the act of creative generation. Therefore, creativity, as a research discipline unto itself,[2] is situated in the field of cognitive psychology. Choreographing dance is a creative act, yet there has been relatively little research to understand creativity in dance.[3] The existing research on creativity often lacks definitional rigour,[4] and, when considering dance, fails to examine cognitive processes involved in producing creative choreography.[5]

However, there is a small but growing body of research examining creative cognition in dance, and this chapter offers a narrative, status quo review of existing research with a specific focus on creativity in contemporary dance choreography.[6]

First, I offer a selection of influential models of creativity. This is not an exhaustive list – such an undertaking would be beyond the scope of this chapter – but rather it focuses on the models which have been applied to dance: Geneplore, evolutionary (Blind Variation and Selective Retention) and social and distributed theories. Second, I outline the existing research applying these models to dance and have categorised this research into four groups:

- Unspoken Knowledges
- Support for Social Theories
- Wayne McGregor | Random Dance
- Perspectives from Somatics

This collation reveals a nexus of research that has been conducted across cognitive science, dance studies and somatics which illustrates the strides made in choreographic creativity research and highlights some areas in need of further attention.

Creativity Research: Cognitive theories

Following J. P. Guilford's[7] address admonishing psychology's neglect of creativity, research in the area has blossomed since the 1950s. In its "first wave" (1950s and 1960s), creativity research was dominated by a focus on individual/personality traits.[8] In the following decades (1970s and 1980s), the "second wave" focused on individuals' mental processes when they are involved in creative thought or behaviour.[9] The "third wave" approach, in the 1980s and 1990s, incorporated the sociocultural contexts for creative generation. Today, this third wave also includes "interdisciplinary"[10] or "confluence" approaches,[11] combining elements of both the cognitive and sociocultural approaches as well as research from other disciplines. Throughout this history, *creativity* is defined as producing something that is a) useful and b) novel.[12] This definition offers a domain-general understanding, meaning it is applicable to studying creativity across a wide variety of 'output' or product forms, including dance.

Originally, as in cognitive psychology, creativity research in dance was largely focused on individual accounts; since the 1980s, research into creativity in dance has moved beyond anecdotes and personal accounts, but still is heavily qualitative and descriptive[13] with little consideration for embracing empirical traditions of cognitive research.[14] These descriptive methods offer little assurance that the findings are generalizable to large populations, and are therefore viewed of as less valid by the social sciences. However, recent research has attempted to bring together qualitative subjective experience with (often quantitative) empirical testing methods. This cross-disciplinary approach draws on many pre-existing models, often stemming from research into other art forms.[15] These studies mostly look at the generative process in dance – i.e. creativity in dance as occurring in the choreographic process – drawing on theories emphasising divergent thinking and ideological variation (SOI, BVSR), generative and exploratory processes (Geneplore) and situated cognition.

Structure of Intellect Model and the Evolutionary Approach (BVSR)

Historically, many theories of creativity are grounded in Guilford's[16] Structure of Intellect model. Guilford introduced the concept of divergent thinking, an approach to problem solving where individuals seek

unconventional responses that are useful, numerous and varied instead of the convergent (one, usual or 'correct') answer. Divergent thinking is to this day commonly used as a measure of creative potential.[17] Variation in thinking also plays a role in subsequent creativity models, such as the evolutionary model of Blind Variation and Selective Retention (BVSR).[18] BVSR is a two-step process of creativity: a non-teleological variation in idea production (blind variation), followed by a test of the idea's applicability and the progress resulting from it (selective retention). BVSR remains an important model today.[19] Perhaps the most salient aspect of the BVSR theory's application to studying choreographic creativity is the importance of variation – or the ability to generate a wide range of movement possibilities from which to selectively retain the most novel and useful option.

The Geneplore Model

Another process-based creativity theory is the Geneplore model of cognitive functioning.[20] The Geneplore model "was intended as a broadly descriptive, heuristic model rather than an explanatory theory of creativity."[21] It is characterized by a two-stage model of creative process: the generate stage, or "initial generation of candidate ideas or solutions," followed by an extensive exploration of those ideas.[22] Finke et. al.[23] claim that the initial ideas are "preinventive," or an untested germ of an idea that has potential to prove novel and useful. Though in the model, these processes are not discrete but cyclical, in dance we might consider this the generation of ideas (intentions, problems) and exploration of resulting movement options or "solutions."

Social Models of Creativity

Most of the approaches in the second wave of creativity research accepted as standard that creativity is an intrapsychic – that is, occurring within the mind, psyche, or personality – process. Questioning that assumption, the sociocultural approach to creativity was pioneered by Teresa Amabile in the 1980s.[24] She introduced a consensual definition of creativity: that a product is creative when domain experts agree that it is as opposed to a purely intrapsychic process. Likewise, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi[25] posited that creativity went beyond the individual, and was a property of societies,

cultures and the historical zeitgeist within which individuals are embedded. He created the systems model of creativity,[26] in which the social organization – or gatekeepers of an entire discipline, similar to Amabile's domain experts – determine the value, or usefulness, of a creative product.

Distributed Systems

Situated cognition is a term for theories that claim cognitive processing occurs beyond the brain alone.[27] These include *embodied cognition,* or the theory that the body plays an integral role in cognitive processing, and *distributed cognition*, the claim that cognitive systems themselves extend beyond the boundary of the individual organism. Distributed cognition is another theory that attends to the impact of the sociocultural environment.[28] In this view, features of an agent's physical, social and cultural environment can do more than distribute cognitive processing: they partially constitute that agent's cognitive system. Distributed cognition has been a focus of a large portion of research into creativity,[29] and, as I will present in the following section, in creativity in dance.

Creative Cognition Research in Choreography

Unspoken Knowledges

Unspoken Knowledges, a project developed by Robin Grove and Shirley McKechnie,[30] investigated cognition in the choreographic process and produced a small body of research.[31] Two Australian choreographers' creative processes were documented using digital camera, logbooks, interviews, discussions and workshops. Sue Healey in conjunction with performer Michelle Heaven created a 20-minute solo, *Not Entirely Human,* while Anna Smith composed *Red Rain*, a 40-minute ensemble piece for seven dancers. Cognitive psychologists Kate Stevens and Steven Malloch joined Grove and McKechnie in observing Smith's process and analysing it using phenomenological methods and the Geneplore model of creativity.[32] Stevens et al[33] argue that some issues with studying creativity may be resolved by approaching research in large-scale contexts and over an extended time when artistic work is developed. The creation of *Red Rain,* they state, "may be summarized as a cycle of generative and exploratory actions."[34] They give examples of generative ("retrieval, association,

synthesis, analogical transfer and categorical reduction") and exploratory ("attribute-finding, conceptual interpretation, functional inference, contextual shifting, hypothesis testing and the search for limitations") aspects within Smith's process.[35] The authors argue that the cyclical nature contributes to the resultant work being more than a collection of initial movement sequences generated, and they point to the importance of connecting movement sequences to an overarching, unified whole. They claim, "thus creativity in composing dance lies as much in sequencing, melding and linking the parts of the work, as in the creation of the parts themselves,"[36] pointing to the importance of not only generative aspects but of elaborative ones in choreographic creativity.

Throughout the Unspoken Knowledge project's outputs, the authors assert that, "Dance phenomena challenge existing cognitive theories that assume only propositional or verbal forms of imagery and knowledge in human creativity."[37] Proposing a more holistic theory, Stevens et al (2000) introduced a coupling of perceptual, cognitive and emotional processes involved in dance creation, termed *choreographic cognition*. The theory argues that contemporary dance's movement vocabulary, form and structures are the bodily expression of mental processes in space and time,[38] therefore situating their theory within situated cognitive approaches that consider multimodal aspects of cognition extending beyond the mental. Indeed, Stevens et al[39] make a case for dance as embodied cognition. This claim is echoed in a subsequent 2005 article, in which Stevens and McKechnie claim that contemporary dance, whether professional or pre-professional, involves both declarative and procedural knowledge and operates as a non-verbal and multimodal language, stating that in choreographic practice, "Declared through movement, the idea becomes a visible thought."[40] Continuing a predilection for situated cognitive approaches, the researchers outline a dynamical system, composed of the choreographer, performer and audience each as actors, to conceptualise choreographic cognition.[41] They emphasise not only the individual contributions to a creative product, but also the context inherent in dance creation, stating, "An explanation of creativity in choreography must therefore address the complex of dynamics and interactions among dancers and choreographer in this community of creative minds."[42] Their

dynamical system highlights the social nature of choreographic creative process and outcomes.

Social Theories of Creativity in Dance

Recent dance cognition research emphasises the social aspects of choreographic creativity, supporting distributed cognition theories. One study on undergraduate dancers argues that dancers practice "embodied creativity," physically solving problems through their bodies-in-motion;[43] it argues that dance improvisation is a co-agentive, supportive process, distributed across interactions within the group. Another study[44] on creativity in improvisational movement generation gave ten professional dancers from the Australian Dance Theatre (ADT) improvisational tasks; these were undertaken either alone, with a familiar partner, or in an unfamiliar pairing. Sharing a framework with divergent thinking theories, dancers were asked to self-identify the number of movement ideas they generated, as well as rate their experience during the choreographic tasking exploration. The study reported slight but likely insignificant increases in number of movements generated. However, dancers reported a difference in subjective, qualitative assessment of the movement generated. They rated the movement generated in pairs as more interesting and enjoyable, carrying implications for the "usefulness" criterion for choreographic creativity, and supporting a social theory of creative movement generation. Further, a study on creative choice-making in dance rehearsals argued dancers are impacted by the collaborative environment.[45] Arguing that rehearsals are a distributed cognitive system, the study claimed that patterns of interactions shape individual creative choices in producing movement, and that choreographic instructions are necessarily socially interactive.

Wayne McGregor | Random Dance

Cognitive psychologist David Kirsh[46] researched social choreographic interaction in a longitudinal cognitive study also grounded in theories of distributed creativity and embodied cognition. In the study, established choreographer Wayne McGregor and his contemporary dance company were observed over the course of a month-long creative process. The study argues dancers use embodied cognition to translate information from

one form to another. It suggests that dancers not only use their body as a medium in which to think when creating choreography, but also that they think in various, non-propositional (that is, not-verbally-reportable, non-rational) sensory modalities. Multimodal transfer between various forms of mental imagery (aural, visual, spatial and more) becomes the impetus for movement generation in McGregor's process. As such, the study both suggests engaging in lesser-used modes of imagery may offer ways of providing more variance in generated movement and places it within a distributed social system.

The 2011 Kirsh study stems from a decade of collaborative research on creativity and cognition in contemporary dance between McGregor, his company Random Dance[47] and its research branch R-Research, cognitive psychologists, a social anthropologist and neuroscientists.[48] The interdisciplinary collaboration aimed to "develop new understandings of the choreographic process" and involved the Choreography and Cognition project[49] which led to the creation of McGregor's *AtaXia*[50] and development of the *Choreographic Thinking Tools*[51] still used by the company. The project also included studies using data collected throughout McGregor's creation of a new dance work in 2009.[52] The research led to several articles[53] and follow-on research is continuing.[54] Much of this research supports theories of situated cognition. In one example, Kirsh argues that in "marking" (or "dancing a phrase in a less than complete manner") during rehearsals, "dancers think better about their full-out phrase. Physical movement replaces mental computation in the rehearsal process."[55] In Kirsh's argument, bodily movement and form serve as external, representational vehicles, therefore supporting embodied cognition models. Marking is not only used in rehearsals for memory, but also in choreographic problem-solving to select appropriate movement in generative or exploratory phases of creativity. That is, choreographers may use their bodies, and the bodies of their dancers, as external representations of ideas to be conveyed: dancing is the way choreographers work out creative solutions to their 'problems.' They may 'try out' various movement options, selectively retaining the most novel and useful possibilities. The choreographer's awareness of the movement affordances[56] occurs through the process of dancing itself.

Looking at the same choreographic process, Kirsh et al[57] analysed the video footage, interview data, observations, motion capture, reflective journals and testing on the company, and found three main methods that the authors argue McGregor uses to produce high quality and novel content. These were showing (e.g. demonstrating), making-on ("using the bodies of specific dancers as targets on which to shape the form and dynamics of a move or phrase," for themselves or as a model for others) and tasking (posing a choreographic problem).[58] Both the Kirsh study and a subsequent study by Muntanyola[59] on the same data demonstrate congruence with the Stevens et al[60] and Stevens and McKechnie[61] findings by emphasizing that choreographers, in the process of creating dance, engage in multimodal direction. That is, "choreographers communicate with their dancers in diverse physical ways,"[62] including through the common modes of talking, gesturing, positioning, or demonstrating physically, but also through touch and sounding – forms determined to be "uncommon outside the dance domain."[63] They argue that these choreographic generation methods and multimodal forms of communication reveal that the choreographic environment is an example of a distributed creative system.

May et al[64] offer a further example of creativity research that supports a theory of embodied cognition. This research features two studies. In the first, McGregor's company dancers recorded the forms of mental imagery they engaged during choreographic processes using experience sampling methods. In the second, fMRI was utilized to study the neural underpinnings of choreographing movement tasks. Dancers reported using a variety of forms of mental imagery, and found that reflecting on their own mental habits of how they approach movement creation offered more variation in movement generation. Greater variation was achieved by consciously choosing a less-frequently used form of imagery – a possibility that may have implications for the Variation and Selective Retention in a BVSR model or the Generation-exploration processes in a Geneplore model. Which is to say, if dancers are able to consciously select and explore less-common forms of multimodal inspiration for their movement generation, then presumably they may generate more divergent, and thus more creative, movement options. The impact on training in metacognitive awareness of mental imagery is currently being researched with

undergraduate choreographers[65] with initial analyses offering encouragement that such training may increase choreographers' creative aptitude.[66] May et al also describe differences in dancers' thinking patterns when they were physically active as opposed to static, passive states during thinking, further supporting the theory that "choreographic movement creation is an embodied cognitive activity" and thus theories of embodied cognition.[67]

Other studies[68] from collaboration between McGregor and cognitive scientists looked at how dancers view and parse movement material (or identify and break up into smaller units or 'phrases') and how interdisciplinary research collaborations can not only contribute to scientific knowledge, but also help to create new choreographic work.[69] Cognitive psychologist Phil Barnard and interdisciplinary dance researcher Scott deLahunta developed a theory of creative development, the Process Model. It models creative development as a process of design that bridges inspiration and artistic product – a process presented through choreographic processes in dance, but which can be applied to other creativity domains.[70]

A 2012 article, deLahunta and Barnard discuss the generation phase of McGregor's process with noted contemporary dancer, educator, activist and somatic practitioner Gill Clarke. The article covers how their research on imagery involved in choreographic creativity led to the development of the *Choreographic Thinking Tools*,[71] how these ideas relate to somatic practices and the scientific theory underpinning each of these perspectives. Here, Clarke suggests that somatic practices, a field of mind-body integration techniques that emphasize the first-person, subjective experience,[72] help to train dancers' perceptual systems. She claims that somatic practices may offer the "experiential time and space to explore sensations and images that might invite a non-habitual and more subtle movement response."[73] Therefore, Clarke implies that such awareness may avoid habit to increase novelty, and thus creativity – a claim I examine in my current research.[74]

Somatic Practices

Clarke's claims that training in somatics may impact dancers' creativity is a commonly-held belief in the somatics community, though little research has considered cognitive perspectives. However, as a field invested in enhancing one's sense of embodiment, somatic approaches emphasize sensory, perceptual processes underlying movement skill[75] and sensitivity to intricate bodily relationships.[76] Some research[77] suggests that embodiment facilitates creativity in the classroom, regardless of discipline. Other research shows that somatics also gives rise to a deeper sense of embodiment, one that allows for a focused attention, enables a greater sense of autonomy and allows dancers to exercise greater choices in dance making[78] – further supporting Clarke's claims. Furthermore, Somatic Movement Education pedagogy allows for individual authority in exercising greater choices in dance making,[79] which carries implications not only for variation in divergent thinking, but also the choice-making inherent in *selective* retention in the BVSR model. I have recently argued that refined perceptual ability, combined with an increased sense of agency developed in somatic practices may facilitate greater creativity in dance choreography.[80] I offer a cognitive audit-trace[81] of the ways in which somatic practice may facilitate choreographic creativity.[82] Indeed, my earlier research on integrating somatics into dance education illustrates that, in both student and teacher's perspectives, training in somatic practices increases students' creativity in dance.[83] Further, Jill Green's postpositivist, qualitative research on the intersections between creativity and somatics suggests that somatic practices may facilitate change (or, in the cognitive psychological terms, novelty) on not only a personal level, but potentially on a sociopolitical level as well.[84] Though she does not engage cognitive psychological paradigms, Green proposes a posthumanist reconceptualization of creativity that situates a changing self-in-process in relationship to the sociopolitical world. Green's somatics research reflects the shifts within cognitive science's creativity research towards a situated, social and potentially distributed understanding of creative cognition: cognitive processes involved in choreographic creativity are not only mental, but embodied and social as well.

Conclusion

The kinetic, multilayered nature of dance challenges existing methods of cognition; as Wachowicz and Stevens emphasize, "There is no single method to study choreographic cognition."[85] The compilation of research presented in this chapter reflects this diversity of perspectives, influences and multi- and inter-disciplinarity needed to approach a holistic understanding of creativity in choreography. Furthermore, research into choreographic practices and the complexities within movement generation support a variety of creativity theories including: stage models explaining the generation and exploration of ideas, the processes involved in variance of idea generation, and social processes involved in the generation, selection and retention of appropriate solutions.

As mentioned earlier, however, though this area of research is burgeoning, it is new and therefore limited in scope. Firstly, it is mostly focused on the creation of choreography, not creativity in the *performance* of movement or as viewed from audiences' perspectives. As noted above, the forms of dance considered in this research have been limited to Western, contemporary, performative dance and therefore excludes other forms of choreography in more traditional Western forms (like ballet) or social, popular/urban, non-Western cultural and indigenous forms that warrant further investigation. Also, even in contemporary dance, the choreographer's role ranges in hierarchical positioning, from executive to collaborative approaches to making; an awareness of this range is missing in much of this research, particularly those focused on individual artists' creative processes which cannot represent the full spectrum of choreographic practice. Furthermore, existing research, when not on student populations, has mostly been done on these well-known (and well-funded) professional choreographers; a gap concerning independent artists and smaller-scale companies/choreographers is apparent. Such a focus may even shed more light on, and potentially problematize, the "big-C/little-C" debate in creativity research,[86] where greater creativity is linked to expertise, genius and fame.

This focus on expertise and fame also points to a question of who determines whether a product (in this case, a dance work) is creative or not. As noted above, Amabile[87] has proposed a form of inter-rater reliability, where experts in the field judge the creativity of works – yet even this consensual definition begs the question of who determines who the "experts" are? Indeed, some research shows experts often have implicit theories of creativity, yet are not often offered opportunities to articulate these.[88] The question of taste or aesthetic preference of "experts" is one that has yet to be considered in creativity studies, much less in dance, where such experts often serve as gate-keepers for assessing creative work (as educators in choreography and composition courses, as presenters, or funders of work). I suggest that somatic practices, focused as they are on subjective experience and internal authority, question the necessity of external expertise in the context of meeting the "useful" criterion for creativity.[89]

Finally, though it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss in depth, the field of creativity research is closely linked to empirical scientific traditions; thus, assessing creativity, even in some of the above studies,[90] is often linked to psychometric testing. Yet, the bevy of research I have presented here argues, in dance, creative generation is not only a cognitive act, but also a kinaesthetic one, a form of embodied cognition.[91] Embodied cognitive processes are not captured by the verbal, propositional and written forms of input typical to psychometric testing. As such, I have argued that, to fully understand creative cognition in choreography, future research must not only take on complex, mixed-method forms, but perhaps even develop discipline-specific measurements to reflect the forms of cognition choreographers are engaging and more accurately test their creative development.[92]

Though more research remains to be done to fully understand the complexity of creative choreographic cognition, it is clear from the literature thus far that dance is a highly multimodal, embodied and inherently social art form. It follows, then, that the cognitive processes involved in making novel and useful choreographic decisions would also be multimodal, embodied and affected by the wider sociocultural contexts within which dance is created. This is reflected in the trends, in both cognitive science

and dance research, towards frameworks which emphasise more embodied, and more social, understandings. The nexus of research presented in this chapter, collectively, offers support for situated perspectives on creative cognition while suggesting exciting areas for future development.

Notes

[1] Stevens, Malloch, and McKechnie, "Moving Mind."

[2] Isaksen and Murdock, *The Outlook for the Study of Creativity*. www.cpsb.com/research/articles/creativity-research/Outlook-for-Creativity.html.

[3] Press and Warburton 2007. This is true even in arts-focused texts. For example, Winner 1982, Sternberg 1999 and Runco 2007 each make no mention of dance, while it is mentioned only in passing as a creative domain in Weisberg 2006 or Kaufman 2016. Even in an effort to create an 'interdisciplinary' overview, Sawyer 2012 features art forms such as visual arts, writing, music, and theatre, but lacks dance entirely.

[4] Plucker, Beghetto, and Dow, "Why Isn't Creativity more important." www.researchgate.net/publication/233298152_Why_Isn't_Creativity_More_Important_to_Educational_Psychologists_Potentials_Pitfalls_and_Future_Directions_in_Creativity_Research.

[5] Press, *The Dancing Self,* is one example. It explores personality traits, individual processes, and pedagogical approaches associated with creativity, but lacks a clear definition of *creativity* and often conflates creative engagement or creative process with the core concept of *creativity*.

[6] This is primarily because the existing research on the intersection of dance and cognition has looked at contemporary dance in particular. By which I mean current, often fusion or hybrid styles from the post-post-modern era, sometimes, especially in the US put under the umbrella of more general 'modern' dance (though separate, in practice, from the modern-era roots of the form), which is often also identified on a spectrum alongside 'new dance' or 'experimental' dance. A fuller discussion of dance genres is beyond the scope of this chapter. There is also a particular lack of research on creativity in classical, popular/urban, non-western, social, and cultural or indigenous forms. Further, the

existing research largely focuses on the generative aspects of making movement for choreography as the subject of inquiry. I acknowledge the limitations inherent in that focus later in this chapter.

7 Guilford, "Creativity."

8 Albert and Runco, "A History of Research on Creativity," 28, and Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*.

9 Sawyer, *Explaining Creativity*.

10 Ibid.

11 Sternberg and Lubart, "The Concept of Creativity," and Weisberg, *Creativity.*

12 Amabile 1996, Campbell 1960, Kaufman 2016, Kirsh et al. 2009, Koestler 1964, Runco 2007, Sawyer 2012, Sternberg 1999, Stevens, Malloch and McKechnie 2001.

13 Press and Warburton, *International Handbook,* 1274.

14 Though it is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss these, Clements and I, in "Making Space for Creativity," offer some explanation of the myriad reasons for why there has historically been a lack of such creativity research into dance, which is partially due to this tension between subjective/qualitative and objective/empirical positioning.

15 Wachowicz and Stevens, "The Role of Attention," 218.

16 Guilford, *Intelligence*.

17 Wallach and Wing 1969, as cited in Runco, *Creativity Theories*; Wallach and Kogan, *Modes of Thinking*.

18 Campbell, "Blind Variation."

19 Simonton, "Creativity as Blind Variation," and "Creative Thought as Blind-Variation."

20 Finke, Ward, and Smith, *Creative Cognition*.

21 Ward, Smith, and Finke, "Creative Cognition," 191.

22 Ibid.

23 Finke et. al., *Creative Cognition*.

24 Amabile 1982; Amabile 1983; Amabile 1996; Sawyer 2012.

25 Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow*, and "Implications of a Systems Perspective."

26 Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi, and Gardner, *Changing the World*.

27 Gibbs, *Embodiment*; Robbins and Aydede, "A Short Primer."

[28] Wilson and Foglia, *Embodied Cognition*; Robbins and Aydede, "A Short Primer."

[29] Kirsh 2011; Robbins and Aydede 2012; Sawyer 1999; Ward, Smith and Finke 1999; Wilson and Foglia 2011.

[30] Grove and McKechnie, "Introduction."

[31] Including, as relevant to this review: Grove, Stevens and McKechnie 2005; Stevens and McKechnie 2005; Stevens et al. 2003; Stevens, Malloch and McKechnie 2001; McKechnie and Grove 2000; Stevens et al. 2000; McKechnie & Stevens 2009. A more comprehensive list of outputs can be found in Grove, Stevens, and McKechnie 2005, 200-202.

[32] Stevens et al. 2003. Available online at www.researchgate.net/publication/233690236_Choreographic_Cognition _The_Time-Course_and_Phenomenology_of_Creating_a_Dance; Stevens 2005a and Stevens 2005b, both available online at www.katestevens.weebly.com/uploads/5/3/0/6/5306174/thinking_entire_ book.pdf.

[33] Stevens et al., "Choreographic Cognition."

[34] Ibid., 318.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid. This argument is also echoed in Stevens et al., "Moving Mind," 60.

[37] Stevens, Malloch, and McKechnie, "Moving Mind," 63. Available online at katestevens.weebly.com/uploads/5/3/0/6/5306174/stevens_malloch_mck echnie_brolga_2001.pdf.

[38] Stevens, Malloch, and McKechnie, "Moving Mind."

[39] Stevens et al., "Choreographic Cognition," 319-320. Available online at www.researchgate.net/publication/233690236_Choreographic_Cognition _The_Time-Course_and_Phenomenology_of_Creating_a_Dance.

[40] Stevens and McKechnie, "Thinking in Action," 244. Available online at www.researchgate.net/publication/5611890_Thinking_in_Action_Thought _Made_Visible_in_Contemporary_Dance.

[41] Stevens et al., "Choreographic Cognition." Available online at www.researchgate.net/publication/255609603_Choreographic_Cognition _Composing_Time_and_Space.

[42] Ibid., 2.

[43] Lucznik, "Between Minds and Bodies," 303.

[44] Stevens and Leach, "Bodystorming." Available online at www.researchgate.net/publication/280613436_Bodystorming_effects_of_collaboration_and_familiarity_on_improvising_contemporary_dance.

[45] Muntanyola Saura, "Expanding the Space." Available online at csjarchive.cogsci.rpi.edu/proceedings/2011/papers/0414/paper0414.pdf.

[46] Kirsh, "Creative Cognition." Available online at adrenaline.ucsd.edu/Kirsh/Articles/CreativeChoreography/Creative_Cognition_in_Choreography_Final.pdf.

[47] In this research, the company is called Random Dance, however it has recently been re-named Company Wayne McGregor.

[48] Barnard and deLahunta, "Intersecting Shapes."

[49] Liquid Press/i-DAT and the Journal of Performance Research 2005. Choreography and Cognition was "a joint research project initiated by arts researcher Scott deLahunta and choreographer Wayne McGregor to engage practitioners from the field of cognitive science in seeking connections between creativity, choreography and the scientific study of movement and the mind" (Liquid Press/i-DAT and the Journal of Performance Research 2005). More info can be found at www.choreocog.net.

[50] McGregor and Random Dance, *AtaXia*.

[51] deLahunta, Clarke, and Barnard, "A Conversation about Choreographic Thinking Tools." Available online at curve.coventry.ac.uk/open/file/084aa003-3d21-a8f8-9293-ae4c55ed1d8b/1/delahuntaconvcomb.pdf.

[52] Kirsh, "Thinking with the Body," 2865. Available online at quote.ucsd.edu/cogs1/files/2012/09/reading_kirsh.pdf.

[53] deLahunta and Barnard 2005, deLahunta, Barnard and McGregor 2009, deLahunta, Clarke and Barnard 2012, Kirsh et al. 2009, Kirsh 2010, Kirsh 2011, Kirsh 2014.

[54] *In the Dancer's Mind* and May, "In the Dancer's Mind."

[55] Kirsh, "Thinking with the Body," 2864.

[56] Affordance is a concept first introduced in James Gibson's (*The Ecological Approach, The Senses Considered*) theory of embodied cognition, which focuses on high-quality, direct perceptual access to the world; this direct perception, in his theory, replaces traditional mental

representations. Affordances are directly perceivable attributes which offer functionality to organisms.

57 Kirsh et al., "Choreographic Methods." Available online at adrenaline.ucsd.edu/kirsh/Articles/Interaction/kirshetal2009.pdf.

58 Ibid., 191.

59 Muntanyola Saura, "How Multimodality Shapes." Available online at revintsociologia.revistas.csic.es/index.php/revintsociologia/article/viewFile/598/621.

60 Stevens et al., "Choreographic Cognition."

61 Stevens and McKechnie, "Thinking in Action."

62 Kirsh et al., "Choreographic Methods," 189.

63 Ibid.

64 May et al., "Points in Mental Space." Available online at dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30064425/may-pointsinmental-post-2011.pdf.

65 In the Dancer's Mind.

66 May, "In the Dancer's Mind."

67 May et al., "Points in Mental Space," 429.

68 deLahunta and Barnard 2005, deLahunta, Barnard and McGregor 2009. The latter is available online at dro.deakin.edu.au/eserv/DU:30064142/delahunta-augmenting-2009.pdf.

69 Ibid.

70 Barnard and deLahunta, "Intersecting Shapes."

71 More info can be found on the tools at waynemcgregor.com/research/choreographic-thinking-tools-mind-and-movement.

72 Eddy, "An Overview of the Science and Somatics of Dance," ISMETA.

73 deLahunta, Clarke, and Barnard, "A Conversation about Choreographic Thinking Tools," 248.

74 Weber, "Interacting Cognitive Subsystems"; Weber "Somatic Movement"; Weber, *Somatics*.

75 Enghauser, "Developing Listening Bodies in the Dance Technique Class." Available online at ccsesaarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/DevelopingListeningBodies.pdf.

76 Johnson, "Intricate Tactile Sensitivity."

[77] Snowber, "Visceral Creativity." Available online at www.academia.edu/29838354/_Visceral_Creativity_Organic_Creativity_in_Teaching_Arts_Dance_Education_.

[78] Batson and Wilson 2014, 129; Fortin, Long and Lord 2002, Fortin, Vieira and Tremblay 2009 (Available online at www.seer.ufrgs.br/Movimento/article/viewFile/10243/27315), Fortin 1995.

[79] Fortin, Vieira and Tremblay, "The Experience of Discourses in Dance and Somatics."

[80] Weber, "Somatic Movement Dance Education."

[81] In this, I propose a map of cognitive processing, e.g. the flow of information within the Interacting Cognitive Subsystems model, derived from dancers' reporting of their own experience.

[82] Weber, *Somatics.*

[83] Weber, "Integrating Semi-Structured Somatic Practices."

[84] Green, "Choreographing a Postmodern Turn"; Green, "Moving through and Against…Part 1"; Green, "Moving through and Against…Part 2."

[85] Wachowicz and Stevens, "The Role of Attention," 221.

[86] Csikszentmihalyi, "Implications of a Systems Perspective for the Study of Creativity," and its offshoots such as Kaufman and Beghetto, "Beyond Big and Little," available online at www.normanjackson.co.uk/uploads/1/0/8/4/10842717/the-four-c-model-of-creativity.pdf.

[87] Amabile, "Social Psychology of Creativity."

[88] Maksic and Pavlovic, "Educational researchers' personal explicit theories."

[89] Weber, "Somatic Movement."

[90] *In the Dancer's Mind*, May et al., "Points in Mental Space"; May, "In the Dancer's Mind."

[91] Batson and Wilson 2014, Huddy and Stevens 2014, Kirsh 2011, May et al. 2011, Stevens, Malloch and McKechnie 2001, Stevens et al. 2003, Tweney 2005.

[92] Weber, "Somatic Movement"; Weber, "Interacting Cognitive Subsystems and Dance."

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Biography

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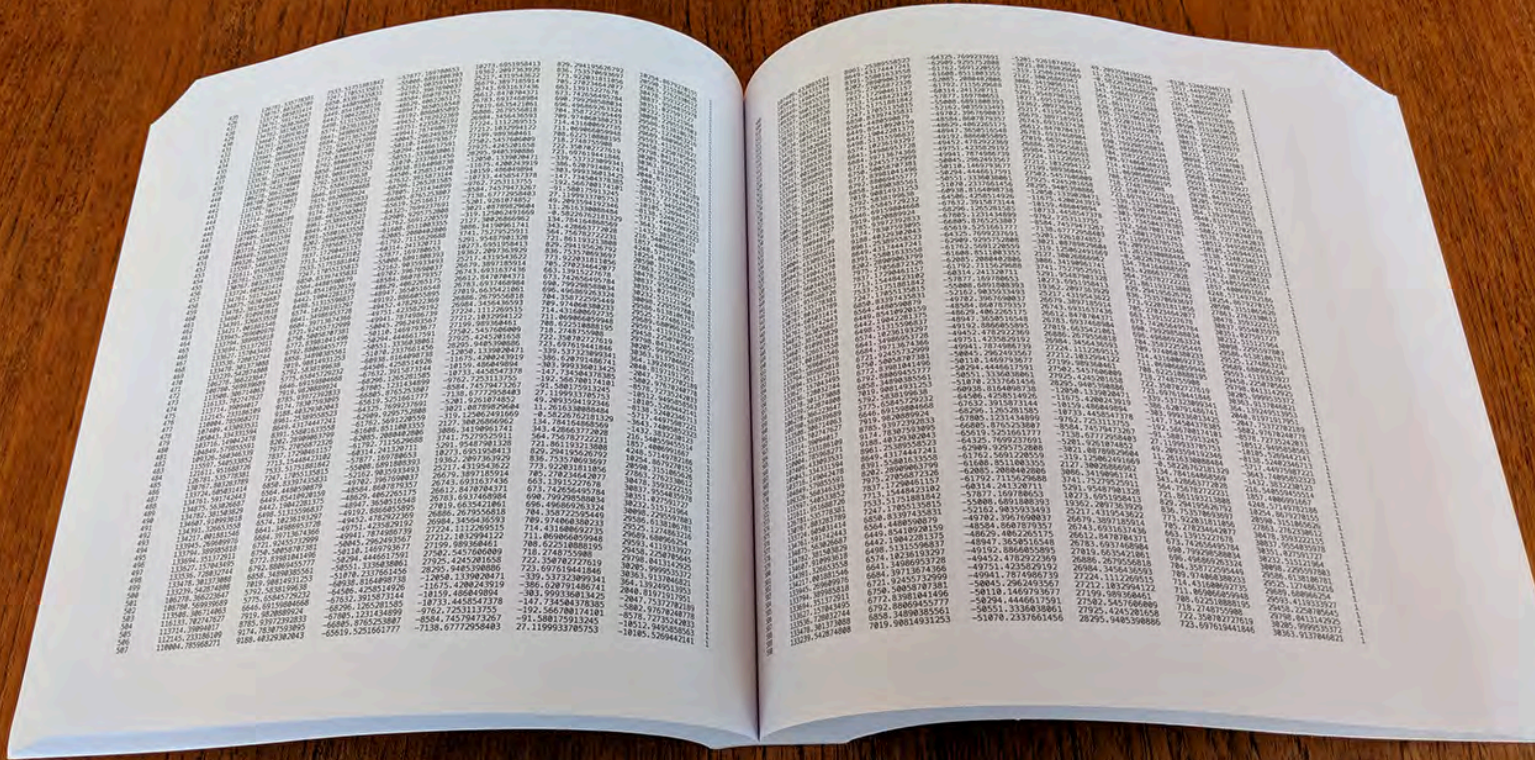
CRYPTO-CHOREOGRAPHY / SOMA SPY

RUTH GIBSON

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Abstract

The Bronze Key: Performing Data Encryption is an embodied and performative intervention in discourses and practices around data privacy and security, the result of a collaboration between artists within the rubric of a major research project at Malmö University (Sweden) called *Living Archives*. It points to one of the most urgent issues around archiving in the contemporary climate: we archive but we are archived. If we realise that our data – in particular our bodily data – are archived often without our awareness or consent, then encryption becomes a necessity that filters down to everyday usage.

Introduction

This piece of writing is speculative and arose out of the responses to three of my keynote presentations at three separate conferences – *Everything is Data*, *A Data Journey* and *Full Circle Towards VR*[1] – and through a new research project, *The Bronze Key: Performing Data Encryption.* I don't have any answers yet, there are a lot of questions being generated and therefore many gaps in my thinking. A series of conversations rather than a single narrative *Crypto Choreography/ Soma Spy* offers the reader the opportunity to meander. Written down are musings, this is no manifesto, but in a quantified world where everything is indexed, analysed, stored and used, and as a researcher with an expansive digital footprint I feel it is important to align arising ethical issues with artistic ideas. The reader is asked to be nimble, light of foot and skip across the page, making of these converging and diverging ideas and issues what they will. There is also ambiguity as these are reflections on practice, making room for mistakes and speaking the unconsidered.

The Bronze Key: Performing Data Encryption is a collaboration between Ruth Gibson, Bruno Martelli and Susan Kozel at Malmö University and is a performative re-materialisation of bodily data. The collaborative experiment in data encryption expands research into practices of archiving and critical discourses around open data. It integrates movement, motion capture and Virtual Reality (VR) with a critical awareness of both data trails and data protection.

But first let me give the reader a little context …

Background

In the mid 1990s I began collaborating with Susan Kozel, exploring the use of performance technology in live works. *Contours*, *Ghosts and Astronauts*, *Liftlink*, *Exiles*, and *Figments*[2] challenged choreographic and somatic potentials of telepresence, motion capture and live camera techniques in theatre and outdoor public settings. We were attracted to how these new technologies opened up the potential to transcend the boundaries of our own skin. As *Mesh Performance Practices* we collaborated with architects, scientists, engineers and animators amongst others, grasping at any opportunity to advance our knowledge in this seductive new arena. This

was the cusp of the internet and a synergetic crossover between interactive media with dance began something that became known as the 'dance tech'[3] movement. Enjoying the possibilities, transformation and extension that working across media could bring, twenty years ago, we were willing to give away our data. This was in return for experience and access to motion capture equipment which was astronomically expensive and mainly used in the movie industry, totally out of reach of the independent dancer. Kozel and Gretchen Schiller both experimented with me at Riverside Studios in 1997 alongside Bruno Martelli, Joanne Fong, Mark Bruce, and the electronic musicians UVX, to begin realising *Daylight Robbery*, a motion capture animation, using the Ascension MotionStar Wireless and Flock of Birds.[4] At this time, I had been working with companies developing motion capture systems and in particular the Vicon Optical Motion Capture system at Oxford Metrics.[5] During my time at Vicon I saw the camera system make its way to real-time from prerecorded. In other words, instead of waiting for your motion capture performances to be rendered you could view your output immediately. Amongst the dance community an uncomfortable idea began to surface — that with digitisation, motion capture might take away the spirit, the essence of performance. For example choreographer Bill T. Jones's comments on his motion capture transition to visualisation in *Ghostcatching (1999)*: "Is it a ghost? (It is certainly not me) Has it taken a piece of me?"[6] Recently these fears have resurfaced,[7] only this time, it's not what is being taken away, but what might eventually become of the human movement datasets, who will benefit and how can we protect our performance and personal data. It is against this background that the *Performing Data Encryption* project takes place.

Jacob Appelbaum provides a succinct description of the cultural context:

> Over the last forty years, a revolution has swept the planet. It happened quietly and those who noticed were ridiculed at best. It is a revolution where nearly all of our data is devoured in an automated fashion – machine to machine, person to person, voice, text. Communications, movements, all of life is consumed, quantified, searched, and catalogued.[8]

Camouflage

In concert with my mocap experiments I was artistically collaborating with Martelli as *igloo*.[9] A number of our stage and video works used costumes designed by *avant garde* fashion label Vexed Generation. Vexed clothing brand developed in response to increased CCTV surveillance, the Criminal Justice Bill (1994) and rising air pollution. Vexed designs hoped to raise awareness and debate providing protection to wearers from cameras, bad air and overzealous riot police. The clothes covered the face, this protected individuals from being identified, protecting them from cameras and shielding them from dirty air. They crafted a futuristic aesthetic, with stab proof parkas which covered the face. *igloo*'s interest in Vexed's clothing came from my obsession with camouflage and protective colouration and the streamlined silhouettes the clothing lent to our performers. The face being covered meant that the audience focused on the contours and outline of the body and the movement itself rather than the identity of the performer. Vexed's ballistic nylon was used by the military in bulletproof applications and I had long been captivated by *Ghillie*[10] suits, worn by elite snipers.

Ambiguous appearances and disappearances are recurring themes of my practice considering the digital double and duality of the performer/spectator. A concept came about to simultaneously hide and reveal the performer: blending with the landscape or revealed by a camera onstage or detected by using infra-red cameras. Stage works at the time tended to incorporate technics to emphasize the performer in some way for example against a projected backdrop of imagery. My obsession with camouflage meant that I wanted to go the other way and to hide the performer onstage with black costumes against a black backdrop; so how to show the performer to the audience? One solution was to use infra-red cameras and custom software I commissioned that converted the video imagery into ascii text.[11] A logical step was to turn to game engines, where we could place the viewer into the same space as the performance. What I began to understand from working with game engines was that I could create immersive encounters for the user, navigating their own path to create a unique experience. They could witness avatars, question identity, agency, anonymity, illusion and representation, and a sense of presence

began to emerge creating new experiences for audiences. Simultaneously I was shooting, performing and editing companion pieces, video works where performers are concealed or revealed within spectacular vistas, acting as a counterpoint, giving a real view of place to compare with the unreal computer-generated landscapes.

In these few paragraphs I am taking the opportunity to reflect on previous art works that touch lightly on my continuing interest in ideas of disguise, concealing identity, making the obvious unrecognizable, hiding in plain sight, making obscure, highlighting performer as conduit, prolonging detection, invisible yet visible, notions of secrecy and of transparency.

In *Ghillie* and *where the bears are sleeping* the performer wears a ghillie suit in respectively, the New Forest and the Rocky Mountains. Our *Ghillie* films were conceived as part of a process aimed at understanding more about landscape, movement and stillness in nature from an experiential basis, and to create virtual environments from these experiences. The films become companion pieces to their virtual counterparts. In a series of locked-off shots a single performer is recorded in still poses. The duration of the shots suggests the audience should look in a sustained way.

> The viewers eye is drawn to the movement in nature, a landscape that dances with life, that is constantly moving, bringing the environment to the foreground of visual attention. The relationship of figure to ground is reversed; the figure is present but almost invisible.[12]

The *Ghillie* films:

> … show the figure camouflaged, concealed from the world and open to possible changes at work in the environment. But this disappearance, the suspended animation is itself a danger, because vitality is lost, and so in movement the figure exposes itself to the perception of others, breaking from the camouflage in order to break from the peril of integration.[13]

When writing about mimicry in the animal kingdom, Roger Caillois notes that when animals exhibit mimicry/camouflage, "a decline in the feeling of personality and life […], takes a step backwards."[14]

Perhaps in a similar way the performer in these films becomes the cipher (non-person), the sign, the image where individuality is taken away, and is lost. Also, the motion capture process reveals the signature of performance, yet at the same time disguises the bodily makeup features, skin, hair etc. Although this cipher retains something of the essence of the performer and their signature, it hides their character.

Artists have long been interested in privacy, encryption, security and biometric technologies. For example, Adam Harvey's *CV Dazzle* uses bold patterning to break up the features targeted by computer vision algorithms. Modern gait analysis techniques make it possible to identify individuals from a video feed. Unlike facial recognition which requires the subject to at least be facing towards the camera, gait analysis can be detected from any angle of the subject. However, this digital algorithm can be easily defeated, obfuscated by the analogue method of merely putting a stone in your shoe.

Now we move to *The Bronze Key: Performing Data Encryption* …

At the nexus of performance and technology - performative methods used in interaction design can be refined and expanded using dance improvisation. Developing new encryption practices begins with aesthetic, metaphoric and digital experimentation. The premise to be explored is whether by enhancing the ability to perform encryption we might increase our agency within the culture of widespread data surveillance and archiving.

Cryptography

Cryptography refers broadly to the history and science of keeping information or communication secret. *Encryption* is a stage within this process, made up of a set of practices that render confidential communication unintelligible, or intelligible only to those with whom we desire to communicate.[15] This standard definition of encryption can be refined for performance and affective exchanges. The performance of encryption is not based on creating impermeable barriers or permanent containment, rather it emphasises a re-patterning or a distortion of a flow of communication. Ambiguity and translation of bodily movement into other material forms are foregrounded, making translation and interpretation essential to the process.[16]

A cryptogram is a puzzle, normally a short piece of encrypted text that can be solved by hand. A famous example appears in the Sherlock Holmes detective novel *The Adventure of the Dancing Men*.[17] A mysterious sequence of stick figures drawn in chalk forms a substitution cipher, the messages with curious dancing figures, in fact are a code which Sherlock has to crack through frequency analysis, this is where the common letters E, A, I, occur more frequently in the English language than other letters. With short cypher texts with repeating 'figures,' in this case, it is possible to guess what plaintext characters they might be.
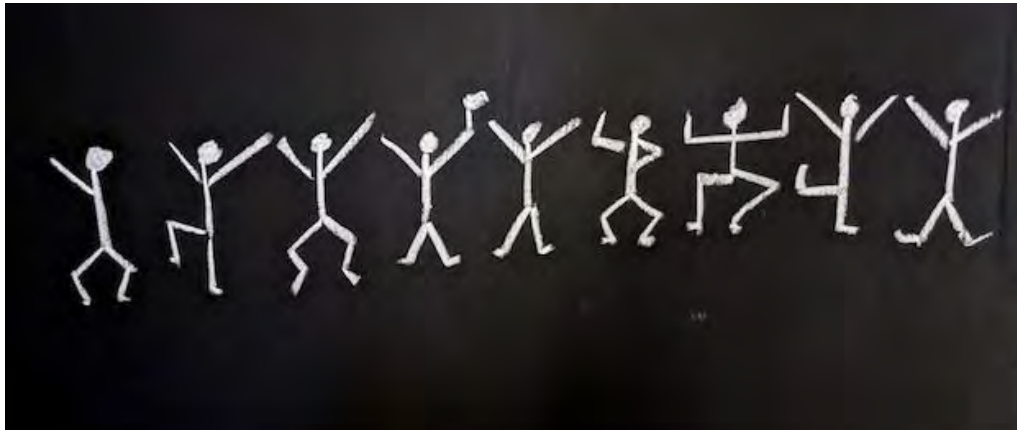
Figure 1: 'The Criminal's message' chalk drawing by Ruth Gibson (2018) from Conan Doyle's "Adventure of the Dancing Men."

"Cryptographic substitution ciphers are a method of encryption where each unit of a plaintext is replaced with a cipher text. The receiver deciphers the text by performing the inverse substitution."[18]

1718
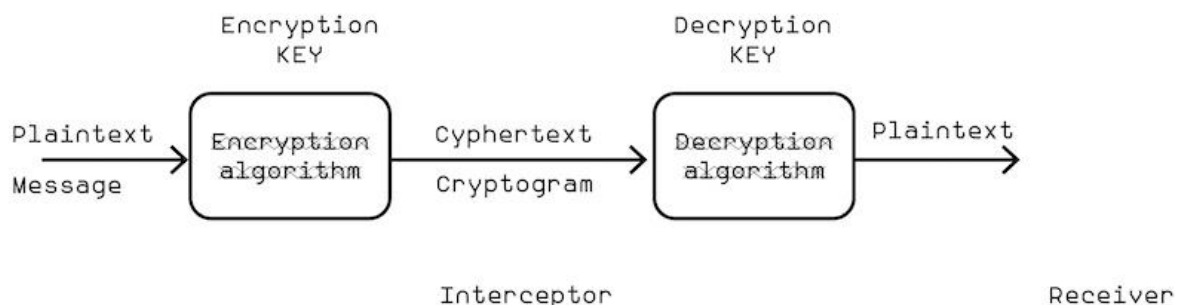
Figure 2: Basic cipher system.[19]

A basic symmetrical cipher system (Figure 2) has the following stages: A plaintext (readable message) is encrypted by means of an encryption algorithm embedded in a key. This is used to translate the plaintext into an incomprehensible ciphertext (or cryptogram). The ciphertext is decrypted by a recipient who already possesses, or is able to guess, the key. After decryption, the plaintext is revealed once more. Classic encryption systems are symmetrical, meaning the sender and the receiver know each other and use the same key. They are also dynamic, meaning the passage of material information through time and space is usually implied. In a

symmetric system the encryption and decryption algorithms are the same. It is worth noting that the contemporary encryption system securing all confidential internet transactions – such as banking – is asymmetrical for the negotiation phase but then follows a symmetrical protocol.[20]

For *The Bronze Key* experiment data traces of bodily movement captured in 3D by digital systems are re-materialised into audio, bronze and print. The three objects of *The Bronze Key* represent the performance of the first three steps of the basic symmetrical encryption system, the Plaintext, the Key, and the Ciphertext (or Cryptogram).

The *Plaintext* is a full body movement sequence (30 seconds) captured by the *Perception Neuron* motion capture system producing approximately 57,000 lines of numerical data representing the spatial and rotational information of each limb (See Figures 3 & 4).

```
[Hips]
1    460.0622864    918.8140869    505.571228    -7.992126465    167.2848511    2.848373413     1.0
2    433.5059814    921.8872681    507.545929    -8.662185669    169.1450043    -0.04707336426  1.0
3    404.3694458    915.4085693    513.8096924   -8.367080688    169.7112122    -2.480880737    1.0
4    376.5358887    903.8632202    522.197876    -8.287628174    169.3835449    -4.371566772    1.0
5    349.8157349    897.3797607    533.6395264   -7.439422607    168.468689     -6.027801514    1.0
6    329.8762207    893.1182251    543.2485352   -7.121734619    167.2019653    -7.347183228    1.0
7    315.6757813    890.5787354    551.1899414   -7.746368408    166.3924408    -7.926071167    1.0
8    305.4942017    890.3097534    559.1853027   -8.569732666    165.7667542    -8.052474976    1.0
9    297.0140381    892.4169922    567.6560059   -9.422988892    165.0471039    -8.542327881    1.0
10   289.859436     894.0926514    573.7145386   -10.7658844     164.6524963    -9.371078491    1.0
11   284.7634277    896.5829468    581.2072144   -11.82014465    165.0344696    -9.895721436    1.0
12   281.4893494    899.4150391    590.7549438   -12.13838196    165.9728088    -9.709991455    1.0
13   278.4888916    902.545105     599.3973999   -12.48449707    166.5226135    -9.630874634    1.0
14   276.5436401    904.4711304    607.3267212   -12.79432678    166.2769775    -9.565170288    1.0
15   274.6030884    906.0499268    616.4387817   -12.67449951    165.4002686    -9.227828979    1.0
```

Figure 3: The Plaintext mocap data in .htr format. Screen capture: Ruth Gibson (2017)
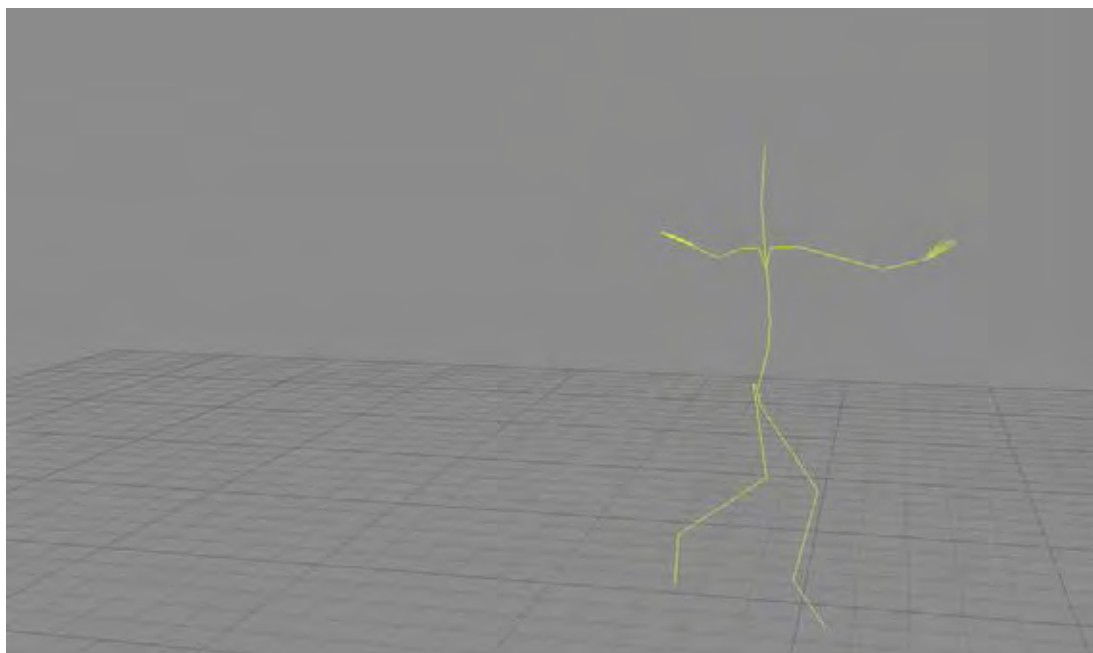

Figure 4: The Plaintext in mocap animation. Screen capture: Ruth Gibson (2017).[21]

One phrase representing the Plaintext or unencrypted sequence was converted into audio using text-to-speech. Using Apple text-to-speech the project was connected to sound and this sound was recorded onto an excellent long-lasting format, audio tape. However, the standard C120 cassettes would form a giant amount of tapes to hold the 400 plus hours created from just one 30 second dance phrase. The numerical data was eventually recorded on magnetic audio tape and played on a reel to reel player. All 46 voices in the Apple speech to text system were used sequentially as the file needed breaking into manageable chunks. Each section was approximately 1-1.45 mins long and spoken by a range of languages and genders. The voices have wildly differing speaking speeds for example the Spanish sections are really quick compared to the gentle Japanese voice which is much slower paced. We decided that to get the best amount of storage possible we would need a vintage reel to reel recorder that uses 10.5" tape reels which at the correct speed can hold over 6 hours per tape. After a mammoth research session, a vintage TEAC machine was procured from funnily enough the former DDR part of Berlin.

The collaborators cannot help but wonder if this equipment was ever used by the secret police or some bands in the German underground music scene (Figure 5).

The *Key* is an arm and hand gesture (1 second) intended to unlock the movement sequence. It was captured and recorded with the same method as the plaintext using the *Perception Neuron* motion capture system, but this time only data from one hand was retained. Using the *Quill* software the data was visualised with a VR headset

Figure 5: Reel to Reel with text to speech audio. Exhibition photo: © Ruth Gibson (2018).

Figure 6a: Key capture, Susan Kozel using Oculus Rift.
Photo: © Bruno Martelli (2017).

Figure 6b: Key capture, Ruth Gibson using Oculus Rift.
Photo: © Bruno Martelli (2017).

(Figures 6a, 6b and 6c). The 3D path of the gesture captured in VR space (looking like a squiggle) was then cast as a bronze object. Again, an analogue process was employed to preserve the data. The artists looked into casting processes and decided to try and fabricate the shape in bronze. As the reader may know bronze is an alloy of steel and copper and has long been used by artists for centuries its great properties include a low 'fiability' and malleability. Long lead time for casting meant that for our first exhibition we finally had to settle on 3D printing as a compromise to create a working maquette. A life-sized version is something we are working towards in the future.

The *Encryption Algorithm* was a mathematical process whereby the mocap data were scrambled by applying the data from the key: each line of movement data was subject to modification by a rolling series of mathematical functions (basic addition and subtraction) of the data from the key.
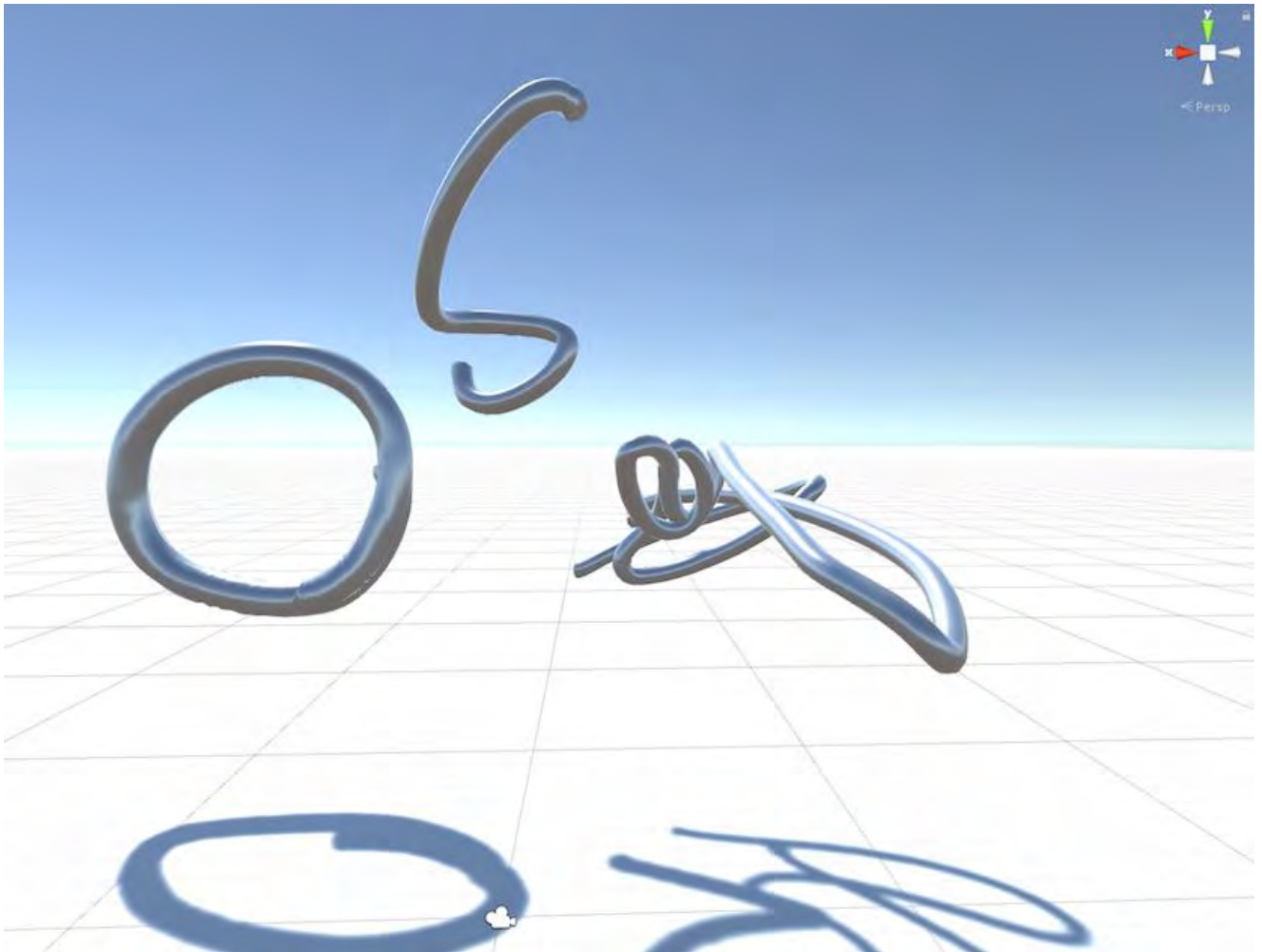
The *Ciphertext* or Cryptogram was the scrambled mocap data. When fed into an animation program such as *Motion Builder* the movement it generated was an obfuscation of the original sequence, making the affective and movement qualities unintelligible (Figures 7 and 8).

The second phrase was encrypted and was materialised as a book containing the raw scrambled numerical data. Paper is a really good archival material, there are two main types, cotton rag which is widely considered the best type and acid free, but really compared to formats like CD the average paperback will last around 100 years without any special storage treatment, CDs are becoming delaminated after 10 years. So many of my earlier works are now in the process of degradation. Ephemerality of the digital, go figure!

Figure 7: Multiple Ciphertexts in VR using Unity. Screen capture: Ruth Gibson (2017).
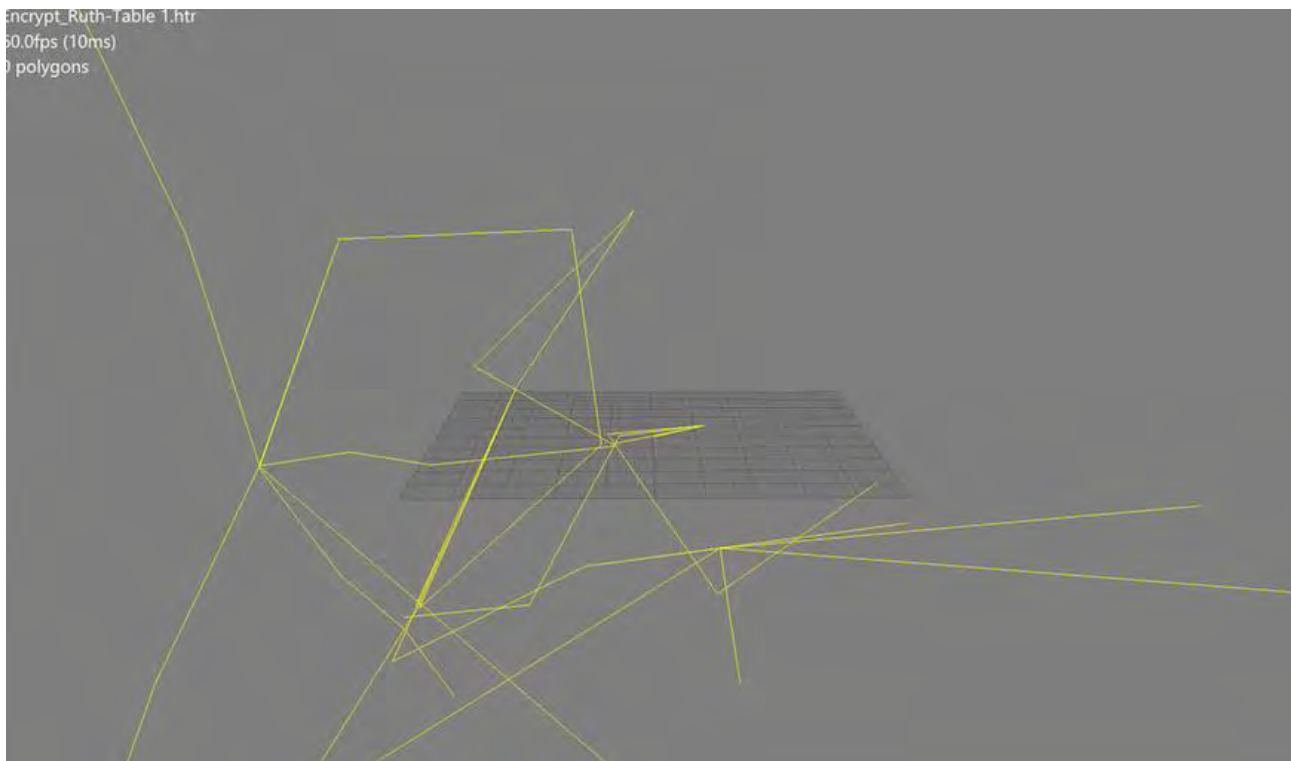
Figure 8: Single Ciphertext, in FBX Viewer. Screen capture: Ruth Gibson (2017). [22]

Decryption

During our residency in Malmö[23] we considered and started developing a conceptual decryption game where participants would look at the shape of the key which is a gesture and then replicate the gesture in VR this would be reconfigured by a neural network which we had trained with the correct gesture.

Decryption, or 'guessing the key,' was a sort of game by which the recipient of the message wore the Oculus Rift running a neural network gesture recognition software. By repeatedly attempting to perform the gesture represented by the bronze shape of *The Key*, the recipient could eventually hit the right gesture that the originator of the message provided. Once the gesture was recognised the scrambled data could – in theory – be decrypted and returned to plain text of coherent motion data, fed into Motion Builder again to produce an animation of the original sequence.

The Bronze Key: Performing Data Encryption

The Bronze Key is not really in any way a practical approach to concealing movement; it's purely conceptual. A symmetric crypto-system was enacted producing a post-digital cipher system, along with archival artefacts of the encryption process. A performative approach to encryption emphasises the dynamic and affective dimensions of communication, refined and ambiguated. Encryption is not a wall or a cessation of communication, "it is a re-patterning, or a distortion, of a flow."[24] The ambiguity becomes a sort of protection, based on opacity. "I would say that privacy and data protection are two slightly different rationales of power relations: one of privacy based on the 'opacity of the individual' and one of data protection on the "transparency and accountability of the powerful."[25] Material re-mappings are one way of enhancing opacity.

In the case of *The Bronze Key* the re-patterning is a series of re-materialisations. Each materialisation is effectively '3D plus time.' By this I mean that the project captures movement in space over time, not as a sequence of moving images like a film which is a flat representation of space. In the cast of the *Key*, it is possible to read the start and end points of a one second long gesture (the starting point is painted black, the end white). The ripples in the mould (Figure 6c) represent wrist movements and

the relation between the shape and speed of motion is also materialised: the thinner sections are fast, the thicker relatively slower. The detail of the captured data was mapped into the 3D print and then casting processes.

During the Performing Encryption Improvisational Workshop[26] hosted by the Living Archives Research Project at IAC two years earlier, Kozel experimented with inserting movement into the generation of a digital encryption key (GPG).[27] For this second research installment,[28] we opened the processes by integrating specific somatic performance modes (such as Skinner Releasing and affective improvisation) with Motion Capture and Virtual Reality. The results take the form of algorithmic manipulation, visual traces and live performance practices culminating in *The Bronze Key*.

General attitudes towards encryption are that it is complex, mathematical or only used to mask illegal activities. An aesthetic approach to encryption explores the potential for new performances of encryption, removing it from the domain of the paranoid, criminal or hacker elite.[29] Obfuscation practices can be performative, playful and daily, as simple as switching off a device.[30] The design materials for *The Bronze Key* experiment are: movement sequences; the digital data they produce; motion capture (via the *Perception Neuron* system); VR (using the *Quill* software); visualisation (animation software *MotionBuilder* and game engine *Unity*) and the three material extractions from the encryption process.

At the time of publication, this ongoing research process has produced objects for the *Tangible, Embedded and Embodied Interactions (TEI) Conference* held in Stockholm[31] and *The Living Archives* symposium at Malmö Konstmuseum.

The goal is for the rematerialised performances to foster an awareness of the need for encryption and to spark a range of ideas around what shape encryption might take – whether or not these processes are functional is less pressing than to generate ideas around control over our own bodily data traces.

Context: Embodied, Somatic and Political

The Bronze Key is located at the junction where embodied interaction opens onto an interdisciplinary domain, taking in politics, performance, data security and legal issues around media privacy.[32] The work is post-

digital by playing across the ways human physical interactions are digitally captured and then re-materialised once again in the physical world. The material translations reveal how digital materials and digital culture are not peeled away, like the unwanted skin of an orange, but remain within the newly designed object.

A somatic dimension is implied, because gestures and bodily motion cannot be disconnected from deeper affective and somatic states. Practices of somatic attention (in other words inner-sensing) that subsequently radiate into designed prototypes and design thinking are increasingly influential in the interaction design community,[33] as are performative approaches to engagement with designed systems.[34] However, this project adopts an approach to somatics (and by extension somaesthetics) that expands outwards from these respected perspectives in the design community. We attempt both to capture a frightening aspect of the human condition in digital culture and to operate with a definition of performativity that is based on transformation[35] and emergence.[36]

The feeling of surveillance, and powerlessness in the face of it, produces strong affective and emotional states. Laura Poitras is the film maker who worked with Edward Snowden in 2013, witnessing his release of NSA documents which revealed the extent to which daily communications of the citizens of the US and UK are intercepted, analysed, recorded and archived without consent. She kept a journal from that time. In it she combines strategies for data and personal security with poignant phenomenological descriptions of her somatic state.

> The sound of blood moving in my brain wouldn't stop. I need to decide what to carry today. Very strange – I'm less worried about crossing borders in Europe than in the U.S. But still I need to consider the danger of taking a computer. This is all total madness – this level of feeling watched and feeling I could be causing harm to others.[37]

From somatics and politics two ideas emerge: 1) that the embodied/somatic/affective is rarely far removed from the digital in our culture of pervasive computing; 2) given that our data are manipulated constantly, very soon all of us will have to decide what data we carry with us and whether to find our own ways to encrypt these data. Or as Danah

Boyd says: "we need to reconsider what security looks like in a data driven world."[38]

Data journeys

> The permanent co-evolution of cryptic characteristics, or camouflage, and the ability to detect camouflage for what it is a simulation of the real, forms the dramatic theatre of forest life. This dense eco-system is delicately balanced between moments of visibility and invisibility - the dappled light on a leaf turns out to be a clever duplication created by a leaf insect. When the same leaf insect turns out to be a computer-generated simulation of the real thing, the interplay of encrypted layers reminds us of the problematic status attributed to fixed notions of reality.[39]

Appropriation of military camouflage techniques can be seen in earlier Gibson/Martelli works like *Summerbranch* [40] (described above), which bring to the foreground our politically-charged preoccupations with topological interior and exterior – the dialogue of reconciling a sophisticated, highly technologised world with competing narratives about resources and uses of our environment. Through simulating and reconfiguring representations of our environment *Summerbranch* implicates itself in the continually changing narrative of nature and its parallel development with technology. By prompting connections between simulation and camouflage, and providing civilian sympathies and applications for military practice, *Summerbranch* repositions critical themes of current cultural production. "On reaching the edge of the installation, we come face to face with legacies of land(art) and the future of earthly habitats …"[41] The very idea of camouflage has recently taken on a more abstract form in the growing popularity of privacy protection techniques and software including VPNs, SMS encryption, GPS spoofing, and TOR network. The irony is that these tools, like most emergent technologies, are themselves products of the military entertainment complex (a concept relating to the cooperation between the military and entertainment industries to their mutual benefit, especially in such fields as cinema, multi-media and virtual reality). The military entertainment complex has been bizarrely like its big brother the military industrial complex, responsible with its endless funding, in forming

many of the scientific and technical breakthroughs we take for granted now; e.g. microwave oven, advanced graphic processing that makes 3D games possible, mobile telephones, etc. A similar irony is at play in *MAN A*[42] where transposition of the high contrast geometric patterns of 'dazzle' camouflage as a ready-made tracker for a computer vision algorithm for Augmented Reality was originally designed to obfuscate and evade in the analogue era of WW1.[43]

Through my AHRC-funded research project: *Capturing stillness: visualisations of dance through motion capture technologies* to its present incarnation as *MAN A VR*, the research takes a data journey. Seventeen Skinner Releasing Technique dancers were motion captured to test how embodiment is 'read,' visualised and transmitted. I realised that it could be empowering to give the performers control over their own data, so we developed *MocApp*, a mobile app which can download and view any mocap file, sidestepping the need for high-end PC and specialist software. Clips can be trimmed and added to playlists. The App also experiments with Augmented Reality to get the motion capture back into the world. The team decided to charge the minimum price for an App in the Appstore to limit users to specialists and serve to discourage 'griefers' who may not understand the app's purpose and may leave inappropriate comments. The app was specifically aimed at those interested in Skinner Releasing, mocap and dance and a desire to spread the word of Skinner Releasing Technique. It was not intended for a mass audience seeking casual amusement. One dancer did comment, even after having given informed consent that their takes could be used as demos in the app, that from such an intimate research process it was strange that their data was "out there in the world," others were really excited by the prospect. This highlights how some dancers are open with their data and some are not. We must be mindful not to lose sight of these issues which matter a great deal to some. After all who is watching and who is storing? How does the dance materialise and re-materialise in these different contexts?

Perhaps the *Performing Encryption* project goes some way to opening up these concerns – re-materialisations of the ephemeral, performances transmuted from analogue to digital and back again. On one side the

viewer, the player and the performer in these artworks and on the other side the government, the corporations and surveillance capitalism.

Feeding forward to feedback – inside the virtual imaginary

At the 6th Choreographic Coding lab[44] in Auckland, we experimented with motion capture and Virtual Reality to question how choreography and relational thinking of the Pacific inform agency in virtual environments. These experiments were intended to solicit kinaesthetic responses from the user and in this way choreograph a relationship between physical and virtual dimensions. Here we asked questions about the design of virtual environments, creating a number of VR environments experienced by expert movers who were simultaneously motion captured. Eventually we took our investigations out into the landscape, further applying our findings through fieldwork in real-world situations. Exploring working with agencies that are both physically real and virtual we found our processes looping around as the dancers' responses were motion captured again - a feeding forward to feedback. The performers are motion captured again, this time wearing VR headsets and responding to their original data selves. With our digital bloat have we come full circle – "swimming in a sensual digital pool of reciprocity"?[45]

In the motion capture studio we are tracked and mapped through technology, on location we are located, surveyed and watched, our movements monitored by drones. When new technology emerges misuse of systems that are designed to protect leave us at risk. Steven Cooke, a biology professor at Carleton University in Ottawa, calls for encryption to secure data and limit the use of telemetry tools. Tagging for example makes it easy to find rare creatures in the wild and simple for anyone to find in real-time, giving rise to the cyber poacher. Counter viewpoints to the open data movement or sharing on social media sites emerge. The right to wander, the right to stalk, the tracker tracked, the hunter hunted … In the future there will be so much going on that no one will be able to keep track of it …[46]

Curator Rosalind Davis writes:

> In an ever more frenetic and information saturated society the above line resonates, with our digital footprints emblazoned across numerous systems and the development of AI, our ghosts are left in computers, phone or surveillance cameras, more information than we could ever keep track of …

She continues,

> some artists seek to trace and to track, creating repositories of knowledge that look both forward and back, that address technology, organisational methods and information systems…. Others investigate things, not so easily tracked or measured; our values or our memories, the material possessions that represent love and desire; the things we hope not to forget, and what we want to take with us, that make us who we are or what we want to hold onto *in the future* ...[47]

Enigma

Flying back from Berlin in 2012, in front of me on the conveyor belt stood an Enigma Machine about to go through X-ray. I have always wondered whether it was used in the movie *The Imitation Game* – a film about Alan Turing and the WWII codebreakers. Passing through Bletchley Park on my way to Coventry, it seems Turing is never far away. It is under this lens that *Performing Data Encryption* came about — our eagerness to advance and our heightened awareness of hiding, displacing, offsetting, fooling, disrupting, possibilities of privacy and re-making making. *The Bronze Key* installation is the result of performative re-materialisations of bodily data, pointing to a complex or layered notion of the post-digital in an attempt to *perform encryption*. The downside of archiving is surveillance and the trails that we leave open us up to danger and risk.[48] The premise that bodily gestures and motions are fundamentally personal, acting as identifiers in the wider domain of data analytics and forensic data analysis. What if things could be different? Retaining power over whether not to be seen is important. What if we escape embodied perception and think anew?

This data life
The key, a single slice to reveal the whole
Txt msging to trees, agent zigzag
Spies in the leaves
Trackers, antennas hacking a phrase
Miss Communicators
Revealing the corporeal trace
Mast to signal, harvest, farm, breach
Detect, track, record, analysis
Willingly expose, unwittingly disclose
We are marked markers, the self surveying surveyors in a networked web of connected devices – abstracted and controlled. Profiling perspectives of our embodied agency
Convenience enabled by technology
Tapping into our unconscious, secrets, clues, a corrupted vulnerability
Unveiling habits, inner experiences, behaviours, moments, locations
Halls of gestures, mirrored edges
Internet of shit
Crapularity
Markerless Pirates of Privacy
Wearable resistance, Malwear Malware masks
Untrackable, unattributable, traits and tropes
Troll factories

Digital bloat
Exploiting a common algorithmic preference computer vision anonymity
Precarity of protection, personal, intimate
Letters without envelopes
Eavesdrop
Automated away
We are all psychological and physiological cyborgs now

Notes

1 *Everything is Data,* Singapore 2015; *A Data Journey*, Digital Echoes, UK 2016; *Full Circle: Towards VR,* DRHA, UK 2017.

2 *Contours* (1999-2000), *Ghosts and Astronauts* (1997), *Liftlink* (1998), *Exiles/Multi-Medea* (1997), *Figments* (1999).

3 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dance_technology and digital dancing www.braunarts.com/digidancing/index.html, Dance Tech TV dance-tech.tv/videos/1203mocaa/, and the Dance and Tech List www.freelists.org/archives/dance-tech/.

4 Ascension Electromagnetic Motion Capture Systems.

5 Vicon optical motion capture systems employ retro-reflective markers worn by a performer, which are seen by an array of infrared cameras creating multi-viewpoint black and white imagery at high frame rates.

6 Jones, in Bunn, "Machine Age," 33.

7 SAG-AFTRA www.sagaftra.org/sag-aftra-gets-backing-aea, and GDPR en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Data_Protection_Regulation.

8 Applebaum, "Letter to a Young Selector," 55.

9 gibsonmartelli.com/about/ *WindowsNinetyEight* (1996), *PuppetSprite* (1997) and later on the *WarStars Trilogy* (2002-06) *WarStars* vimeo.com/215830765 and *Goodbye Venus* (2004).

10 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghillie_suit. Taken from the 16th Century Scottish gaelic word 'gille,' a traditional ghillie is a type of tweed worn by gamekeepers. The modern-day version is a net covered with many long strips of cloth and worn over a combat suit which disguises the body shape and can be accessorised with local fauna to blend in better with the surrounding foliage.

11 *Viking Shoppers* (1999-2001), www.vimeo.com/15359589.

12 Gibson, "Eyes to See Nobody," 51.

13 Surman, "Performance in Disguise," 24.

14 Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," 18.

15 Piper and Murphy, *Cryptography.*

16 See Kozel, "From Openness to Encryption"; and "Performing Encryption."

[17] Doyle, "The Adventure of the Dancing Men." en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Adventure_of_the_Dancing_Men.

[18] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Substitution_cipher

[19] Piper & Murphy, *Cryptography*, 8.

[20] Ibid*.*

[21] See video by Gibson/Martelli at www.vimeo.com/238730550.

[22] See video by Gibson/Martelli at www.vimeo.com/238730451.

[23] livingarchives.mah.se/2017/10/performing-encryption-with-motion-capture-and-virtual-reality-2017-10-09-2017-10-14/.

[24] Kozel, "Performing Encryption," 131.

[25] Bellanova, "Data Protection, with love," 112.

[26] livingarchives.mah.se/2015/05/invitation-performing-encryption-improvisational-workshop/.

[27] GPG or GNU standard. Using GPG you can encrypt (and decrypt) files that contain sensitive data, such as protected health information (PHI) regulated by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy and security rules. For more on GPG, see the GNU Privacy Guard website.

[28] livingarchives.mah.se/2017/10/performing-encryption-with-motion-capture-and-virtual-reality-2017-10-09-2017-10-14/.

[29] Kozel, "Performing Encryption."

[30] Brunton and Nissenbaum, "Obfuscation."

[31] TEI.acm.org/2018/.

[32] See Bellanova, "Data protection, with love"; de Goede, "Chain of Security"; and Fuller and Goffey, "Evil Media."

[33] See Höök, Ståhl, Jonsson, Mercurio, Karlsson and Banka Johnson "COVER STORY"; Schiphorst," Really, really small."

[34] See Dalsgaard and Koefoed Hansen, "Performing perception"; Kozel, "Affexity."

[35] Fischer-Lichte, "The Transformative Power of Performance."

[36] Kozel, "From Openess to Encryption."

[37] Poitras, "Astro Noise," 94.

[38] Boyd, "Your data is being manipulated."

[39] Lally and Wee, "Igloo," 16.

[40] *Summerbranch* by Gibson/Martelli, (2005-6) Computer game environment, www.gibsonmartelli.com/portfolio/summerbranch.

[41] Ibid.

[42] *MAN A* by Gibson/Martelli, Lumen Prize Gold Winner 2015, is a series of works that draw inspiration from Dazzle camouflage. Seemingly flat geometric surfaces, are activated by a user's mobile app to reveal performances. The work reminds us of both tribal war paint and zebra's stripes, playing on the idea of concealment and revelation with the technology acting as the catalyst. www.gibsonmartelli.com/MANA/.

[43] Dazzle camouflage developed by British marine artist Norman Wilkinson in WWI, contrasting interrupting and intersecting geometric shapes painted onto ships to confuse enemy rangefinder direction and class of vessel.

[44] Choreographic Coding Lab 2016 Auckland choreographiccoding.org.

[45] Kozel, "Motion Capture," 245.

[46] Byrne, "In the Future." Line 41.

[47] *In the future,* Art Exhibition Press release, Collyer Bristow, February – June 2018.

[48] The EU Proposal for a General Data Protection Regulation and the roots of the "right to be forgotten," Mantelero, "Computer Law & Security Review," 637.

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Biography

Ruth Gibson works across disciplines to produce objects, software and installations in partnership with artist Bruno Martelli. She exhibits in galleries and museums internationally creating award-winning projects using computer games, mixed realities, print and moving image. Ruth is a certified teacher of Skinner Releasing Technique which underpins her research.

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SECTION 6: EPISTEMOLOGY

ARTISTIC PRACTICE-AS-RESEARCH: A GENEALOGICAL ACCOUNT

TEOMA NACCARATO[1]

Keywords

practice-as-research
practice-based PhD
geneaology
discourse
ethico-onto-epistemology

Abstract

In this chapter I address the processes of exclusion by which the discourse of practice-as-research is constituted and sustained. I ask: what is or is not practice; what is or is not practice-as-research; and why or why not choose to call practice research? By interrogating the boundaries of practice-as-research – within which I practice research – I probe the value systems through which entangled knowledges become differentiated.

Introduction

Answer me this: Why would artistic practice *not* be considered research? Further, why would practice-as-research *not* belong in a university? As an artist in academia, I share these questions with sceptics and advocates of practice-as-research alike to interrogate the implicit values that circulate as doubt about what practice-as-research is, where it belongs, and why and for whom it *might* matter.

A word of caution before we proceed: the request to explain how artistic practice relates to research is a trap. Describing the interaction of practice and research reinforces the assumption that these are independent processes to begin with, which come into contact in ways that can be observed, or even designed. In reflecting on unfamiliar and emergent research practices with the logic of familiar and dominant methodologies, divergent expressions of knowledge remain illegible – or even invisible – within established systems of interpretation and evaluation. What might be considered practice and research 'become' together, in context, and are ontologically and epistemologically bound.

Consider this: there is no research without practice, because the doing of research is itself a practice. In research practices, the motives and methods of the researchers are entangled with the knowledges produced. As Karen Barad emphasizes:

> We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are *of* the world. We are part of the world in its differential becoming. The separation of epistemology from ontology is a reverberation of a metaphysics that assumes an inherent difference between human and nonhuman, subject and object, mind and body, matter and discourse. Onto-epistem-ology – the study of practices of knowing in being – is probably a better way to think about the kind of understandings that we need to come to terms with how specific intra-actions matter.[2]

As researchers, we are part of research cultures in their differential becoming; this differentiation involves the continual exclusion of voices and knowledges as a means to sustain the boundaries within which contributions to knowledge become significant – or non-signifying. In the

political positioning of practice as a form of research in universities, advocates must account not only for what constitutes knowledge in practice-as-research, but also for what knowledges are excluded – intentionally or not – from this privileged frame. Such accountability entangles onto-epistem-ology with ethics:

> […] what we need is something like an ethico-onto-epistem-ology – an appreciation of the intertwining of ethics, knowing, and being – since each intra-action matters, since the possibilities for what the world may become call out in the pause that precedes each breath before a moment comes into being and the world is remade again, because the becoming of the world is a deeply ethical matter.[3]

In bringing awareness to the ethical weight of exclusion by which the boundaries of knowledge in a given practice of research – including practice-as-research – are continually enacted, the implicit value systems of its advocates and sceptics (myself included) may be examined.

In the subsequent sections I propose a genealogical account of the discourse of practice-as-research: firstly, I query what it means to have a practice, as the basis from which this practice may be deemed research; secondly, I entangle interpretations of practice and theory, from phenomenology to positivism; thirdly, I interrogate what is *not* considered research within the frame of practice-as-research, as well as how, why, and by whom qualifying practices-as-research are evaluated.

What is (not) practice?

Practices within and between disciplinary boundaries

In order to pursue practice-as-research, it follows that one must pursue a practice. Artistic practice. Somatic practice. Medical practice. Legal practice. Spiritual practice. At times, one may fall out of practice. If an individual stops practicing, or practices less, at what point does their activity no longer qualify as a practice? Does a surgeon who has not performed surgery in one, five, or even ten years still have a medical practice? Does a choreographer who has not created work for an extended period of time still have a choreographic practice? Conversely, if one

begins a new activity, like playing the piano or taking ballet lessons, at what point is this activity elevated to the status of being an artistic practice – this individual's practice as an artist? According to the Wikipedia entry for 'Practice (learning method)': "Practice is the act of rehearsing a behavior over and over, or engaging in an activity again and again, for the purpose of improving or mastering it, as in the phrase 'practice makes perfect'."[4] This suggests that establishing a practice requires repetition, duration, and mastery – but how much repetition, how much duration, and how much mastery – and according to whom?

According to Malcolm Gladwell: "the magic number for true expertise: ten thousand hours" – with the caveat that training must begin in childhood.[5] Other researchers argue however that factors such as "general" and "central" intelligence, "working memory capacity," and heredity must also be taken into account in paths to "success."[6] The quantitative measures of disciplinary expertise espoused by the 'practice makes perfect' camp versus its critics invokes a sticky debate between the role of biological determinism versus cultural constructivism in the 'road to success.'

In what ways, however, are the above narratives of success undermined when practices are understood as *disciplinary*, i.e. self-regulatory systems wherein cause and effect between objectives, behaviours, and outcomes are not predetermined or distinguishable? Michel Foucault describes the disciplinary effects of power as:

> […] a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme, it constrains or forbids absolutely; it is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions.[7]

Any judgment of what constitutes either having or falling out of a given disciplinary practice is highly subjective and situated, owing to the disciplinary effects of power operating within and as attitudes-towards-attitudes over time. In the arts, qualifications for practitioners are largely self and peer-defined, with measures that vary within academic and professional circles, as well as geographically. In scientific traditions such

as surgery, psychiatry, or pharmacy, attempts to standardize qualifications are important for public safety, yet still vary across regions and over time.

The implicit and explicit assessment procedures of various practices work to define and maintain the local membership of a practice, i.e. which practitioners can claim to *have* this practice, as well as the external borders of a practice, i.e. how this practice is different than other practices. The mutual constitution of the boundaries within and between practices means that these boundaries are always already in shifting relation, with the threat of disruption and transgression from one another.

The Practice/Theory Trap

Supposing that a person indeed has a practice, attempts to qualify this practice in relation to theory reinforce the assumption that practice and theory emerge as separate processes. Oxford Dictionaries provides multiple definitions of practice as it relates to theory, stating firstly that practice is: "the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it."[8] Simply put: through practice, we apply theory – not produce it. The separation of theory and practice in this explanation has deep roots in Cartesian metaphysics with its hierarchic split of mind over body, immaterial over material, and abstract over concrete. In *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), philosopher René Descartes urges scepticism regarding subjective, sensory perceptions derived in human experience, and proposes that through the mind and soul one can attempt to overcome the deceitful nature of mortal matter in search of certainty, truth, and ultimately God.[9]

> I will suppose then, that everything I see is spurious. I will believe that my memory tells me lies, and that none of the things that it reports ever happened. I have no senses. Body, shape, extension, movement and place are chimeras. So what remains true? Perhaps just the one fact that nothing is certain.[10]

The doubt regarding experiential knowledge seeded by Descartes is consequential with regards to embodied practices – which all practices are – as *meaningful* modes of research. Whether in somatic or medical practice, physics or philosophy, if phenomenal processes such as vision, memory, body, and movement cannot be trusted, what then is the

relationship of these processes, if any, to constructions of knowledge? In his 'Objections and Replies' to the *Meditations,* Descartes elaborates:

> Although there is deception or falsity, it is not to be found in the senses; for the senses are quite passive and report only appearances, which must appear in the way they do owing to their causes. The error or falsity is in the judgement of the mind […]. Nevertheless, when deception occurs, we must not deny that it exists; the only difficulty is whether it occurs all the time, thus making it impossible for us ever to be sure of the truth of anything which we perceive by the senses.[11]

The uncertainty expressed by Descartes must be understood contextually in the era during which he lived, i.e. before the rise of Cartesian dualism, certainty, and objectivity, and before Edmund Husserl's phenomenology.[12] Susan R. Bordo proposes that Descartes' practice of first-person intentionality in the *Meditations* "may be understood, loosely, as a 'phenomenology' of Cartesian skepticism,"[13] taking note of "how unresolute a mode of inquiry they embody: the dizzying vacillations, the constant requestioning of the self, the determination, if only temporary, to stay *within* confusion and contradiction, to favor interior movement rather than clarity and resolve."[14] And yet, the "model of knowledge that Descartes bequeathed to modern science […] is based on clarity, certainty, and detachment."[15] Reframing the *Meditations* as a "'phenomenology' of Cartesian scepticism" brings into question oppositional accounts of Cartesianism versus Phenomenology, as well as the ways in which these ideologies have become associated with practices of objectivity in the *hard* sciences versus subjectivity in the *soft* research of the arts and humanities. Doubtful as it may be, this binary between objective and subjective research is reinforced time and again by adherents of both sides in a reactionary battle to validate the continued membership and support of their chosen disciplinary practice.

Entangled practice: Positivism and Phenomenology

Discussing the radical orientation of both Descartes and Husserl towards ontological uncertainty, Paul S. MacDonald suggests that:

Both Descartes and Husserl envision an overall response to the sceptical challenge as a demand to renovate the principles under which claims to 'scientific' knowledge are made at all. For each thinker this involves demolishing a false picture or model of what a scientific theory of the world would seem to require a mind to be: for Descartes the mind was another 'object,' but of a unique kind; for Husserl, the mind could never be another kind of object encountered in the world. Their radicalization of pregiven structures of scientific knowledge disclosed an entirely new world […] not simply a new way of looking at an old problem, or new terms for expressing an accepted distinction, but rather an entirely new philosophical discourse in which that problem or that distinction can be articulated.[16]

Only through these emergent contexts, i.e. 'new worlds,' could Descartes' and Husserl's discursive conceptions of bodies and minds become salient. Short of deconstructive methods, if and when practices and theories stretch beyond the boundaries of existent discourse, they may remain incomprehensible – or even invisible – as contributions to knowledge within pre-existing cultures of research. As Foucault describes:

This *a priori* is what, in a given period, delimits in the totality of experience a field of knowledge, defines the mode of being of the objects that appear in that field, provides man's everyday perceptions with theoretical powers, and defines the conditions in which he can sustain a discourse about things that is recognized to be true.[17]

While contemporary texts may frame practices of research in "'modernity,' 'the scientific paradigm,' 'the Cartesian model,' [and 'phenomenology'] as discrete, contained, historical entities about which coherent 'closing' narratives can be told,"[18] investigating the effects of such movements across cultures and disciplines over time points to their entanglement, and potential destabilization, within situated conceptions of knowledge. These situated discourses – as practices – must be interrogated not only for the knowledge they produce, but also for the ways in which they constrain the production and distributed activity of other forms of knowledge. In emergent and hybrid processes of discourse – which may involve reading,

writing, discussing, moving, making, or even stillness and silence – it is critical to remember that "[discourse] is not what is said; it is that which constrains and enables what can be said. Discursive practices define what counts as meaningful statements,"[19] and likewise, what constitutes a meaningful contribution to knowledge within a given frame of reference.

In deconstructing the operation of disciplinary power throughout the history of medical, psychiatric, penal, and religious discourse, Foucault argues "contrary to the phenomenologists," that constitutions of knowledge cannot be accounted for solely "by historicising the subject," i.e. positioning the researcher as the producer and transmitter of situated knowledge. Rather, the deconstruction of disciplinary power requires a process of:

> […] genealogy, that is, a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects, etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to the field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history.[20]

Taking, for example, Foucault's genealogy of medical discourse, he notes a transformation starting at the end of the eighteenth century and spanning twenty-five to fifty years, during which the field:

> […] broke not only with the 'true' propositions which it had hitherto been possible to formulate but also, more profoundly, with the ways of speaking and seeing, the whole ensemble of practices which served as supports for medical knowledge. These are not simply new discoveries, there is a whole new regime in discourse and forms of knowledge.[21]

In Foucault's account of knowledge, practices and theories are inextricably entangled through the disciplinary effects of power that regulate the boundaries of disciplinary discourse from within. The disciplining of "ways of speaking and seeing" is not a matter of determinism and prohibition, but rather involves continual processes of discursive constraint, through which particular practices contribute to the salient knowledge of a discipline – thus gaining the status of being a practice, or even, a practice that is research.

What is (not) practice-as-research?

The discourse of PaR

Since the 1960s in the UK and internationally, practitioner-researchers have advocated for the value of alternative methods of knowledge production in an academic context.

> Sometimes called the 'practice turn' the trend was widespread across many disciplines – from philosophy through science and technology to cultural studies – and characterised by post-binary commitment to activity (rather than structure), process (rather than fixity), action (rather than representation), collectiveness (rather than individualism), reflexivity (rather than self-consciousness), and more.[22]

The discourse of PaR is not exclusive to the arts: "Indeed, practice is precisely the thing that artists have in common with other forms of scholarship and research."[23] Across academic disciplines, what differentiates practices that are research, from those that are not?

In an attempt to reconcile artistic PaR with academic research Robin Nelson outlines three categories of research: personal, professional, and academic, and argues that while all of these types of research "involve investigation, finding things out and drawing conclusions":

> […] only academic research requires that you must *establish new knowledge* or, to use the slightly softer phrase, afford *substantial new insights* (again the emphases are used to indicate the importance of these phrases). These criteria apply in all disciplines and, while it is possible to challenge established doxa – and indeed many challenges from practitioner-researchers have seen adjustments within the academy – these fundamental tenets of academic research as they have emerged in the modern scientific tradition since the Enlightenment would be hard to shift, even were it desirable to do so.[24]

While few artists associate their research explicitly with scientific discourse, traces of the scientific method endure in curricular and assessment frameworks for PaR in academia. The perseverance of scientific discourse

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in PaR is evident in seemingly innocuous imperatives for practice-based researchers to identify research questions, objectives, methods, and contributions to knowledge. In the same vein, the recent 'Florence Principles on the Doctorate in the Arts' published by the *European League of the Institutes of the Arts* (ELIA), specifies that PaR doctorates must "[comply] with the prerequisites for a PhD, as formulated in the sciences and humanities."[25] The report states further:

> […] that all which holds true for doctoral research and the establishment of doctoral studies […] is also valid for doctoral studies in the arts. As different as research results might appear to be, the processes, epistemological drive and consistency with which research projects in the arts are undertaken remain the same.[26]

Similarly, the 'White Paper' published by the *Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen* insists that: "Artistic Research should aspire to the same procedural standards that apply across the whole research spectrum – replicability (especially of procedures), verifiability, justification of claims by reference to evidence" – although they subsequently soften this claim of comparative rigour by pointing "to the individual and subjective nature of artistic practice."[27]

As *disciplined* artists, what is it that we hope to gain by insisting that artistic practice is, or can be, research? Conversely, what do academic communities hope to gain by convincing artists to pursue and present their activities in the frame of PaR?

Foucault muses at the motives – as well as the consequences – when researchers (in his example Marxists, but this is equally relevant to artists), attempt to equate their practice with scientific methodology and discourse:

> What types of knowledge do you want to disqualify in the very instant of your demand: 'Is it a science?' Which speaking, discoursing subjects – which subjects of experience and knowledge do you then want to 'diminish' when you say: 'I who conduct this discourse am conducting a Scientific discourse, and I am a scientist'? Which theoretical-political *avant garde* do you want to enthrone in order to isolate it from all the discontinuous

forms of knowledge that circulate about it? When I see you straining to establish the scientificity of Marxism I do not really think that you are demonstrating once and for all that Marxism has a rational structure and that therefore its propositions are the outcome of verifiable procedures; for me you are doing something altogether different, you are investing Marxist discourses and those who uphold them with the effects of a power which the West since Medieval times has attributed to science and has reserved for those engaged in scientific discourse.[28]

Through the continual transposition of value systems from the sciences to the humanities to the arts within curriculum and assessment frameworks, PaR advocates invest the discourse of PaR – and also themselves as upholders of PaR – "with the effects of a power which the West since Medieval times has attributed to science and has reserved for those engaged in scientific discourse."[29] Invested with this discursive power, advocates of PaR enforce the boundaries of PaR by differentiating practice itself, from practice that is research.

Evaluating PaR

In recent years there has been much debate regarding how to demonstrate and evaluate rigour in PaR. Such debate, raised at symposia and on blogs, relates to institutional imperatives for knowledge production, such as those set forth by the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the United Kingdom.[30] On a blog titled 'The Future of Practice Research,' Ben Johnson outlines three key pressures faced by practice researchers: 1. "the pressure to demonstrate value for money;" 2. "the pressure to align practice-based research with institutional strategies;" and 3. "the pressure to identify and engage with a wider research 'standard' or 'definition' that comes from practising in a university context."[31] On this same blog, a post by Victor Merriman responds to the question: "how can we best demonstrate excellence in practice research," stating: "The short answer is that the international academic standard for excellence – rigorous peer review – should be applied, and subject associations should be approached to test levels of interest in piloting practice research peer review networks."[32] This sentiment is furthered in the European University Association's 'Salzburg II Recommendations' with regards to peer review

as integral to the "[assessment] of the academic quality of doctoral education" with "[sensitivity] to disciplinary differences."[33]

In 2015, the *Journal of Studies in Theatre and Performance* announced a new section titled 'Curating Practice-as-Research,' the goal of which is to "evidence the methodological rigour and the research imperative of PaR projects that, ultimately, should strive towards the production of new knowledge."[34] In the call for contributions, Rachel Hann and Victor Ladron de Guevara state that suitable projects, submitted in the form of a "curated portfolio," will be peer reviewed based on their ability to identify clear research questions and aims, and contextualize the work in relation to previous scholarship and artistic practice.[35] Regarding curated portfolios, Hann emphasizes in a blog post that:

> The narrative of the research project is paramount. Yet, it is also to be concise and to the point – we are not, necessarily, interested in two hour long videos […]. It is vitally important that these documents offer a clear organisational principle and allow individuals to move in and out of particular sections. Ideally, a reader should be able to skip content in a logical manner, as well as pick up from when they left off. The experience should not be too far removed from the manner in which we are able to navigate a book. Nevertheless, the focus must remain on evidencing the knowledge claims. Additional information relating to a full documentation of a performance, for instance, is supplementary.[36]

The insistence in this description of PaR portfolios on adhering to traditional organizational principles, as well as a conventional time scale for reviewing, is an example of transposing the value system of one research culture onto another. This transposition of values is not only a prohibitive act, but rather, involves the continual differentiation of the boundaries within which certain articulations of knowledge become elevated "in order to isolate [them] from all the discontinuous forms of knowledge that circulate about [them]."[37] In PaR frameworks in which artist-researchers are encouraged, often by other artist-researchers, to evidence knowledge claims in a "logical manner" that is similar to the "manner in which we are able to navigate a book," the exclusion of alternative modes of articulation acts to sustain the boundaries within which practice-as-research *is*

research. Positioning the documentation of events as well as performances themselves as supplementary to textual discourse "constrains and enables what can be said" and further, "[defines] what counts as meaningful statements"[38] – linguistically or otherwise – in a given conception of PaR.

My interest here is not to determine the validity of one conception of research over another, but rather, to interrogate the value systems involved in the constitution and regulation of artistic PaR in different contexts. In a certain regard, positioning artistic practice as a form of research has potential to challenge institutional and cultural notions of 'what gets valued as knowledge' and therefore, to expand the scope of which endeavors receive life-sustaining resources.[39] In another regard, the concept of PaR can be understood as a regulatory device employed within communities of practice in order to standardize practices of research within and across disciplinary cultures, in service of establishing 'common ground' and 'shared knowledge.'

PaR as/and Research

When choosing to associate artistic practice with the concept of research, one may wish to consider that:

> Research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized. It is regulated through the formal rules of individual scholarly disciplines and scientific paradigms, and the institutions that support them (including the state). It is realized in the myriad of representations and ideological constructions of the Other in scholarly and 'popular' works, and in the principles which help to select and recontextualize those constructions in such things as the media, official histories, and school curricula.[40]

To this end, the concept of practice-as-research, when differentiated only cosmetically from research itself, can act as a strategy to recruit outlying practitioners into the frame of dominant and centrist discourse, such that these new 'allies' – including many artists – willingly reinforce, rather than destabilize, the status quo of what counts as knowledge.

This is not to conclude, however, that artistic practice should not be associated with research, or that artistic practice does not benefit from

being positioned in academia. From an idealistic standpoint, the encounter of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies with critical and counter-methodologies, such as feminist, indigenous, and artistic practices-as-research, has potential to destabilize the boundaries of cultures of research. In turn, this destabilization may lead to unfamiliar ethico-onto-epistemological entanglements – in other words, 'new worlds,' in which other(ed) knowledges becomes visible.

Addressing different ways of knowing in PaR, especially in cases of cross and interdisciplinary collaboration, requires deconstructive methodologies and pedagogies that dismantle not only hegemonic power, but also the distributed and regulatory effects of power that sustain conceptions of knowledge within and across the boundaries of communities of practice. As Sandy Grande argues: "unless educational reform also happens concurrently with an analysis of colonialism, it is bound to suffocate from the tentacles of imperialism."[41] In a genealogical analysis of colonialism in research, the dismantling of assumptions regarding ontology, epistemology, and ethics in methodologies also calls into question the values that uphold assessment frameworks for research 'outcomes' as 'original contributions to knowledge.' Transposing the criteria for rigour and excellence from one disciplinary culture to another fails to account for knowledges that are excluded from, and invisible within, the frame of reference of a given assessment framework. Simon Jones argues that:

> […] the epistemological difficulties inherent in the phrasing of a judgment of practice-as-research are analogous to those encountered by physicists in their attempts to measure the quantum world using the experimental machinery developed to demonstrate Classical or Newtonian mechanics. The aporia between these realities – the everyday and the quantum – challenged the belief that systems could be finally known through measurement.[42]

Encounters between disciplinary cultures, from the sciences to the humanities to the arts, require deconstructive analysis of ways in which the value systems of the respective communities have become differentiated, but not disentangled, over the course of centuries. Resisting the transposition of disciplinary norms across practices is not a matter of

critique, at least not exclusively; rather, it involves continual processes of mutual destabilization of disciplinary boundaries, in order to shift the frames of reference within which different knowledges come to matter differently for different people.

In *Science and the Modern World* (1926) Alfred North Whitehead cautions that direct critique of entrenched values systems is ineffectual:

> When you are criticizing the philosophy of an epoch, do not chiefly direct your attention to those intellectual positions which its exponents feel it necessary explicitly to defend. There will be some fundamental assumptions which adherents of all the variant systems within the epoch unconsciously presuppose. Such assumptions appear so obvious that people do not know what they are assuming because no other way of putting things has ever occurred to them. With these assumptions a certain limited number of types of philosophical systems are possible, and this group of systems constitutes the philosophy of the epoch.[43]

In Whitehead's call for subversive tactics that address change over the course of an epoch and beyond, we are reminded that even what Nelson describes as the "fundamental tenets of academic research"[44] – its assumptions – are subject to transformation over time. While glacial shifts of value systems may not be perceptible within our situated frame of reference, and are certainly not under our individual control, the distributed effects of power across epochs means that we are always already implicated in the continual stabilization and destabilization of personal-professional-political boundaries. Through our mutual differentiation as subjects, our individual frame of reference is co-constituted with and within these boundaries – not to the point of stable determination – but as a dynamic lens that is itself invisible to us.

Attending to the ethical weight of exclusion by which the boundaries of knowledge in a given practice of research – including practice-as-research – are continually enacted, illuminates the invisible values of its advocates and sceptics alike, as well as its visible value within ethico-onto-epistemological entanglements.

Conclusion

As artists in academia, we have a lot to lose by questioning and deconstructing the machinery of PaR – for example our own jobs, funding, and resources – and so, we spend a lot of time defending it. After reading an earlier draft of this chapter, one of the volume editors commented:

> I do think it's important to figure out how to place you and your research here. You are, of course, not at arms length from these shared frames of reference. Your work at C-DaRE (for example) is funded by such frames (as is my salary). I really like that you are biting the hand that feeds you [...].[45]

As an artist in academia currently pursuing my third practice-based degree in dance (BFA, MFA, PhD), I appreciate the privilege that framing my choreographic practice as a form of research affords me in terms of interdisciplinary collaboration and mentorship, as well as time and money. I benefit from advocacy for artistic practice-as-research, and indeed participate in it. My goal is not to attack or undermine the discourse of PaR. Conversely, I want to understand the seeds of doubt that I perceive within and beyond PaR communities, and within my own work, regarding what PaR both enables and constrains in the construction of entangled knowledges.

In the introduction I asked: "Why would artistic practice *not* be considered research? Further, why would practice-as-research *not* belong in a university?" These questions were not an end in themselves, but rather a means to enter into a genealogical account of "the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects, etc.,"[46] which continually differentiate conceptions of knowledge in PaR from other "forms of knowledge that circulate about it."[47] Within and across generations, cultures, and disciplines, the differentially constituted boundaries of practice versus research as well as practice-as-research, constrain and enable what may come to signify as an original contribution to knowledge in this domain – not once and for all – but continuously, through the distributed effects of disciplinary power within ethico-onto-epistemological entanglements.

Notes

[1] The discourse about PaR that I develop here is informed by and part of my long-term collaboration with composer John MacCallum.

[2] Barad*, Meeting the Universe Halfway,* 186.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Wikipedia, "Practice (learning method)."

[5] Gladwell, *Outliers*, 39-40.

[6] Macnamara et al., "Deliberate Practice and Performance," 1. scholarship.rice.edu/bitstream/handle/1911/76260/Oswald_Deliberate_Practice.pdf.

[7] Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 789.

[8] Oxford Dictionaries. "Practice."

[9] Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*.

[10] Ibid., 16.

[11] Ibid., 63.

[12] Bordo, *The Flight to Objectivity*, 34.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., 14, orig. italics.

[15] Ibid.

[16] MacDonald, *Descartes and Husserl*, 8.

[17] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 158, orig. italics.

[18] Bordo, *The Flight to Objectivity*, 2.

[19] Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity," 800-801. www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/345321.

[20] Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 117.

[21] Ibid., 112.

[22] Kershaw et al., "Practice-as-research," 63-64.

[23] Ellis, "Giving Up On Practice-as-research," 4.

[24] Nelson, *Practice-as-research in the Arts*, 25, orig. italics.

[25] European League, "Florence Principles," 3.

[26] Ibid., 2.

[27] Académies de Musiques, "Key Concepts for AEC Members," 3.

28 Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 85, orig. italics.

29 Ibid.

30 Eastwood, "Future framework for research assessment and funding."

31 Johnson, *Rising to the Challenge*.

32 Merriman, *Reflection on Breakout Session 1*.

33 European University Association, "Salzburg II Recommendations," 6.

34 Hann and Ladron de Guevara, *Curating Practice-as-Research*.

35 Ibid.

36 Hann, *Practice Matters*.

37 Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 85.

38 Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity," 800-801. www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/345321.

39 Riley and Hunter, "Introduction," xv.

40 Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 8.

41 Grande, "Red Pedagogy: The Un-Methodology," 236.

42 Jones, "The Courage of Complementarity," 30.

43 Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World,* 17*, qtd.* in Gillett*, "*Reduction and Emergence in Science and Philosophy," 1.

44 Nelson, *Practice-as-research in the Arts*, 25.

45 Personal communication with Simon Ellis, 2017.

46 Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 117.

47 Ibid., 85.

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Biography

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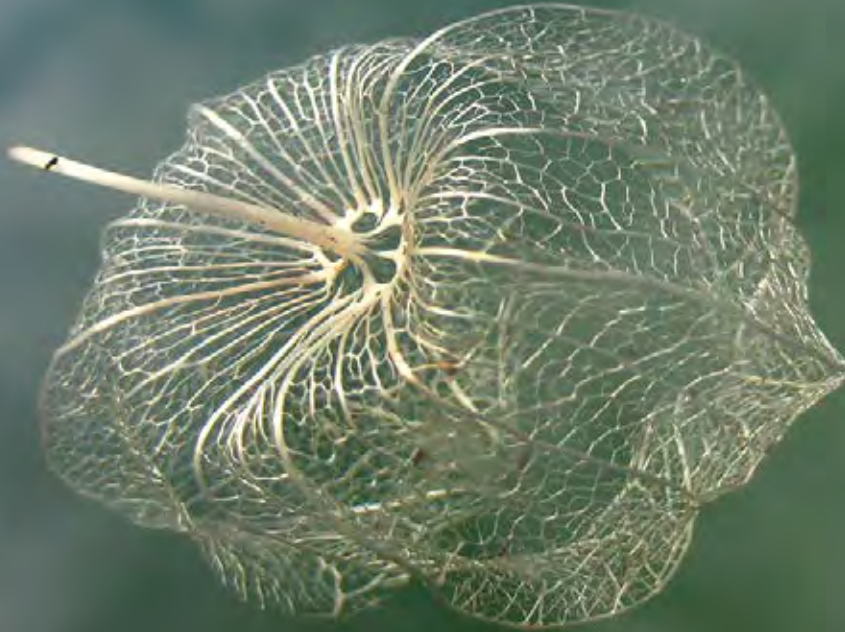
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CLEARING THE WAY TOWARDS SOULFUL SCHOLARSHIP[1]

ELINE KIEFT

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ways of knowing

Abstract

Have you ever had an inexplicable experience that was so tangible and real that it challenged everything you have been taught, or could rationally comprehend? Have you ever tried to write about it academically? This chapter describes my search for understanding why it is so challenging to include intangible and often mysterious encounters into our work, and what might be necessary to create a soulful scholarship where this is not only welcome but seen as a fertile research strategy. It discusses other ways of knowing beyond but inclusive of rationality in a multidisciplinary 'alchemy of the soul.'

> To write down the soul, then, is to attend to its 'greening,' to its motion and its movement, to its elusive quality, which resists our efforts to enunciate it.[2]

Introduction

Between 2005-2015, I followed three distinct yet intertwined, and ongoing paths of learning: my shamanic training with the Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies; my dance training with the School of Movement Medicine; and my academic PhD training at the University of Roehampton. In each of these rigorous apprenticeships, I had profound encounters with soul and spirit that could not easily, if at all, be understood through traditional western methods of scholarship. During my PhD I grappled with the methodological challenges of including such experiences in my scholarly work. In that process, academia appeared to me a one-legged and lopsided creature that overemphasised tangible and measurable outcomes, and had few tools to include spiritual or soulful dimensions of life. I wondered if academia could become stronger, richer, and, perhaps paradoxically, more trustworthy when we include the "more subtle realms of being" and knowing[3] alongside our rational abilities? Rather than dismissing experiences that do not fit prevailing academic canons, I am curious to develop a soulful scholarship that recognises parts of our existence as immeasurable and mysterious, and seeks possibilities to include those dimensions within existing academic parameters.

This chapter emerges from my belief that, when science moved away from religion during the European Age of Enlightenment, we lost skills that are essential to, and can strengthen both knowledge domains. My aim is not to devalue the significance of positivist methodologies in understanding parts of reality, but rather to give credence to additional epistemologies. Such other ways of knowing (through meditation or intuition for example), exist unacknowledged in the margins of western scholarship, but have potential to support and inform research processes. I believe that including these other ways of knowing can broaden the academic endeavour, as well as increase our mental and emotional wellbeing as researchers, and potentially create healthier and more sustainable scholarly communities.

Attempting 'scholarly writing' on a 'belief' creates two interesting challenges. First, is the difficulty of communicating soulful experiences through writing. As I notice in everyday encounters with many academic colleagues, even *using* the word 'soul' or 'soulfulness' in a conversation or paper is controversial. And how can we begin to define the subject? What I mean by 'soulful' includes stirring, (com)passionate feeling qualities of the heart, with a commitment to searching for deep meaning, and an awareness of being connected to something beyond ourselves. It acknowledges our being part of an (invisible) energetic matrix or 'web of life,' which, through applying specific tools and practices, can add interesting dimensions to our knowing. Whatever we call this 'soulful' quality or substance, it is part of our "core human reality."[4] Therefore, it is not essential to subscribe to a spiritual outlook on life in order to engage with soul as a source of inspiration, strength and creativity.[5] Synonyms for soul could be life force, vitality, original nature, inner compass or intuition.[6] These words imply motion in metaphoric and literal sense, and therefore it seems more accurate to describe soul as a fluid process, rather than as static or fixed object. Soul then becomes a movement of reflecting, deepening, and re-balancing, an activity of embracing paradoxes that melts boundaries between spirit and matter.[7] It could be seen as the seed of individuation within the human blueprint that drives us to wholeness from within.[8] This seed is always present and always responds to the relationship between self and surroundings.

The second challenge concerns the very foundations of positivist scholarship: replicability, objectivity, empiric data, distance, known variables, validity and reliability. These seem the antithesis of values that encourage the soul, such as beauty, depth, openness, vulnerability, ambiguity, equality, interconnection and inclusion. There are few publications that write about soul within academia. Some focus on soulful pedagogy as teaching strategy within education;[9] others on the downsides of a mechanistic worldview influencing science, making a call for a return to the sacredness of life within scientific undertakings.[10] Todres[11] and Romanyshyn[12] write about the role of the soul within research from a psychoanalytical perspective. All these authors emphasise the significance of lived experience, relationality, heart and compassion, immersion, participation and the importance of action. They underline self-reflexivity

within research and the possibilities, or indeed, requirements of conscious personal transformation: a return to wholeness. There is a mystical quality to their work that embraces the paradox of opposites, not-knowing and the innate unfinishedness of everything we do, and this type of writing challenges, by its very nature, the foundations of positivist scholarship mentioned above. The question needs to be asked, can soul be integrated in academia at all, or is 'soulful scholarship' a contradiction in terms? Can we 'immerse' ourselves in a soulful practice while maintaining critical distance? Can we represent metaphysical experiences through a written medium?

I do not know the answers to those questions. In this chapter I unpack my observation that certain encounters in my life, including those represented by my PhD data, could not be included in my academic work. Why was that the case, and what would need to change to make their inclusion possible and valuable? This piece is informed by my movement and shamanic practices, as well as by my scholarly training in anthropology. Part 1 briefly outlines our current scientific landscape and how we got here. I explain why and how I think our horizons need widening again. Part 2 concentrates on some initial qualities that I believe are necessary to create a space for the soul within academia. Finally, part 3 explores the potential benefits of integrating body, heart, mind and soul in academia, and I suggest modifications to research spaces and the institutional environment that are necessary for a soulful change.

Part 1: On current academic landscape and horizons

Science and religion were originally closely interwoven, as God was thought to show engagement with humanity through nature. Indeed, many scientists were deeply religious, and tried to understand creation through their work. The disciplines were not seen as competitors, but rather as derived from the same source.[13] During the Enlightenment however, knowledge became secularised. Scientists started to "base their knowledge on fact not faith" and also avoid offending the church by zooming in on physical matter and avoiding the metaphysical.[14] Indeed, religious institutions excommunicated or even killed scientists for their theories.[15] This historical development created a separation: science would look at

matter and practical aspects of reality, while theology concentrated on the intangible, mysterious and more spiritual dimensions of life. Over time the split, underlined by René Descartes, has become more pronounced. Nowadays the various ways of understanding phenomena no longer communicate with each other. Figure 1 shows four different ways of knowing and perceiving the world. The bottom two rows represent academia as we know it today, while the top two rows show the more elusive knowledge domains:

Figure 1: Different ways of knowing or 'what we know,' 'how we know' and 'who knows'[16]

Academia is based on matter and mind, while the other dimensions are largely absent. Religious and Consciousness studies form two somewhat uncomfortable exceptions – their ontologies focus on soul and spirit, while their epistemologies are still founded in reason and the senses. Dualism was, for a time, necessary to balance and protect the mystique, and also give science a chance to establish itself more firmly. Although understandable and historically necessary, the distinction between matter and spirit is now harder to maintain, especially with advancing discoveries in quantum physics such as entanglement, superposition and non-locality principles.[17]

How could we bring matter and spirit together again? The first step is to acknowledge that something has been lost during this split, through the severing of something that was once connected. This might be different for every individual, whether it be qualities such as 'wholeness,' 'innocence,' 'faith,' 'trust' or 'inner peace.' In shamanic terms, we could speak of soul

loss.[18] The 'loss' is like an injury, and can lead to illness. We lose our power to discern, creating both a sense of righteous justification as well as helplessness, two attributes I often observe within academia. There are many ways to find and retrieve what was lost, but all require willingness and commitment. Psychoanalyst and traditional 'curandera' (healer/storyteller), Clarissa Pinkola Estés,[19] offers means to reclaim our 'wild soul' through working with archetypes in folk tales from all over the world. She underlines that such a return needs to happen gradually and with consideration. This process will also never be finished, and will always require ongoing attention and re-visiting.[20] We need to keep our senses open, examine what we experience, and not take things for granted just because they are the way they are. Pinkola Estés invites us to "look into everything, see what you can see."[21]

Seeing being one of our senses, Professor of Music Education Peter Gouzouasis[22] unpacks Gadamer's notion of 'horizon.' A horizon indicates how far our vision stretches, what we are able to see from where we stand. We need to find "the right horizon of enquiry"[23] for meaningful engagement with our questions. Can we see beyond that which is near us? Is it possible to see beyond the horizon? Whose horizons are we talking about? Recognising the gaps created by the separation of science and religion is particularly difficult from any 'reasonable' paradigm, which simply does not provide credence to the non-tangible as it has no methods to observe it. Can we fuse different horizons of, for example, writer/researcher/reader or artist/researcher/teacher to come to a more holistic understanding? To bridge interdisciplinary ways of writing and talking about (metaphysical) phenomena, we need to be patient with different vocabularies, explain jargon, and pay attention to the process of interpretation of texts, artworks, contexts and situations.[24]

However, we also need to look at conditions for recreating a soulful space in academia in the first place, conditions that include cognition but also value additional qualities such as intuition, creativity, mystique, beauty and the intangible essence of being and presence. The following part outlines three specific qualities that could serve as starting points for creating soulful spaces.

Part 2: Conditions for (re-)creating a soulful space

Gapping the mind: moving beyond rationalism

To include soul within our scholarship, we first need to mind the gap of its absence, but more difficult is to gap the mind as well. With this, I mean creating the willingness to go beyond mind (see Figure 1), while simultaneously using its assets to analyse and integrate experiences. This can be a challenge, as cognitive processes inspire most (if not the only) confidence in academia.

Many cultures recognise a continuum between matter-mind-soul-spirit.[25] In the west, we generally consider evolution as a process developing from matter to mind (Figure 2). Shamans however, acknowledge that the reverse also happens, a process that is considered equally important and influential: spirit influences the soul; soul in turn influences the mind, which affects matter (Figure 3). They recognise that a culture's survival depends on the abilities and skills to connect with less tangible levels. When our connection to this 'reverse' knowing from spirit to soul to mind thins, or is lost altogether, it creates an imbalance.

Figure 2: Evolution[26]

Figure 3: Involution[27]

Imbalance is of course a subjective concept. Klaas van Egmond,[28] emeritus professor in environmental sciences and sustainable development, uses the image of a circle with two intersecting lines to represent a balanced and sustainable community. Vertical polarities include heaven and earth, material and immaterial domains, religious and profane. He compares this to the *axis mundi*. The opposites of 'I' and 'Other' are illustrated horizontally, addressing unity and diversity, individual and collective orientations, and represent the *anima mundi* or World Soul.

There needs to be *movement* (!) between these polarities, otherwise life will become lopsided, stagnant or in extreme cases even fundamentalist. In this representation, western science in the past 300 years has focused on matter and uniformity, for reasons outlined in part 1.

More recently however, a variety of fields, including physics and medicine, are beginning to explore the relationship between matter and energy.[29] Understanding our capacity for different ways of gathering knowledge becomes more important. In my shamanic practice I learned concrete tools to access an altered state of consciousness (see below) in order to fluidly move between different ways of knowing and integrate insights from soul and spirit realms back into the 'matter' of daily life. Shamanic, nature-based practices generally aim to support the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. They are based in a close relationship with the natural world, which is recognised as alive and attributed with meaning and intentionality. Animism, pantheism, panentheism and panspsychism are worldviews that recognise nature as imbued with spirit in varying degrees.[30] Animism sees nature and inanimate objects as suffused with life, life force or soul. Pantheism considers the divine present within all beings (immanence), while panentheism sees the divine as being both immanent as well as transcendent. Finally, panpsychism underlines "that everything in the universe has some form of consciousness or mind."[31] Here we stumble upon one of the first challenges to integrate shamanic techniques into scientific paradigms, which generally oppose the idea that souls or spirits "inhabit the world outside human minds."[32] For a long time, fuelled by Sir Edward Tylor's influential ethnography *Primitive Culture*,[33] animism was considered as a rudimentary way of looking at life, which western societies supposedly left behind after the Enlightenment. However, anthropologist Michael Winkelman argues that animism can be seen as a normal human tendency that helps us to adapt to social context, make sense of the world and other people's behaviour, and aide personal development and social integration. Spirits are central to our "symbolic relationship to the environment" and "key aspects of the human search for meaning."[34] Indeed, we can recognise animist (anthropomorphic) elements in all major religions; in the way we consider teddy bears, pets, or even towns to have a soul; and in speaking of the earth as a living entity as in some contemporary ecologies.[35]

In order to interact with and learn from spirit essence, the ritual specialist induces an altered state of consciousness (ASC). Dancing, or other intensive physical (repetitive) movement, is one of the widely recognised tools to access such states of consciousness.[36] ASCs can also be reached through music, food and sleep deprivation, isolation, exposure to extreme weather conditions, physical pain, or the use of hallucinogenic plants or fungi.[37] However, such severe measures are context dependent, and most people can simply access ASCs through, for example, listening to rhythmic drumming. In ASCs the practitioner can gather information and insights from a different perspective in time or space that can inform learning and decision-making. Tools to induce ASCs can easily be adapted to and implemented within a research context. The challenge for academics is to temporarily switch off our analytical abilities and suspend disbelief and criticism in order for different levels of awareness to inform learning and create space for new discoveries, while simultaneously endorsing the value of the mind.

It seems dualistic to acknowledge and yet go "beyond rational arguments and logical analysis, and be open to alternative 'shafts of wisdom.'"[38] Insights gained through meditation or shamanic practice are perhaps extra-rational and beyond reason, but not irrational. We simply need other ways of recognising their value. We can apply a rigorous and systematic approach (POR) to any topic of inquiry: if we follow a specific recipe (Procedure), we create a data set (Observation) that can be communicated and shared (Report).[39] Using this "core essence of the scientific method, we can begin to bridge the perennial gap between science and spirituality," and "open science to a much vaster realm of knowledge beyond merely human consciousness."[40] From my personal dance practice, my PhD data, as well as my teaching practice in Movement Medicine, I can share many examples of the 'Procedure' and 'Observation,' while the difficulty of 'Reporting' is what I am addressing in this chapter. This anecdotic evidence shows that the Procedure of inviting body, heart, mind and soul to become present and focused in each and every movement, while dancing with a specific question, or indeed with an 'other-than-human-person' such as the ocean or a grasshopper, can lead to very concrete Observations, insights or answers to that question. Again, the challenge is to articulate those insights because there are so many levels on which a translation

needs to be made: how can we 'dance' with something in many ways abstract to our human experience, a dance partner who may not have cognition, agency or means of expressing that we are commonly used to, or who might appear to exist in an entirely different time or place?

Attending to heart: the space between

Objectivity in academic scholarship creates abstracted research representations, in which subjectivity, vulnerability and the personal voice are concealed. In an effort to clear our results of messy, untidy and loose ends, we hardly notice that we underplay or ignore polarities between objectivity/subjectivity, group/individual, researcher/researched, tangible/intangible, between different groups represented in our data, in short between any and all polarities that are present within our research. Post-modern questions of truth and representation, the search for appropriate criteria to measure the quality of qualitative research and insights from quantum physics show that we are always implicated in our research. Unbiased observations are indeed an illusion. Our responsibility is not to produce 'unbiased' research, but to be clear and transparent about our stance, where we come from, and what might influence our observations.[41] Also, knowledge production is always a process of co-creation. The concept of 'intersubjectivity' recognises exchange between people and cultures, between researchers and research informants, between researchers and the communities in which we disseminate our work. Intersubjectivity is present throughout the entire research process, including observations, interviews, transcription of data, analysis, writing, peer review and presentations.[42] By embracing intersubjectivity as inherent and constructive, we can systematically draw meaning from shared subjectivity emerging in wider cultural contexts.

However, even while acknowledging intersubjectivity, it is impossible to capture the intricacy and complexity of people, behaviour and culture. What it means to be human is hard to articulate, and often evaporates in the process of analysing and representing our 'data.' Apart from phenomena that we cannot describe fully (or at all), the boundaries of any study will be determined by our position as researchers, our framework for analysis; the discourse that that framework is based on; and the places where results are shared and discussed.[43] In other words, experience is

always larger or richer than any possible summary or representation. This challenges assumptions of predictability, as well as the limits of analysis and articulation.

To actively and boldly consider uncertainty as a potentially fertile research strategy requires including our heart and vulnerability as researchers. Clinical psychologist Les Todres developed the concept of a soulful space, or a "clearing," that offers possibilities to embrace ambiguity, openness and vulnerability in intimate participation and relationship.[44] Not only do we need to let go of what we think we know, we also need to risk letting in the new, the unknown, the other. If we assume that we can grasp wholeness, we discard an essential source of freedom that

> gives room to perceptions and meanings. It is a kind of freedom that both reveals and conceals, and which co-participates in the event of being. Living on the edge of time I occur as a gathering and am the 'there' for the coming together of possibilities and relationships that can be carried forward into the aliveness of something new.[45]

When we dare to go to this place brimming with creative potential, 'doing research' becomes life-giving, enhancing and nourishing. Our emergent understandings become participatory, pre-personal and transpersonal. The Taoists referred to this "paradoxical form of knowing (…) as 'no-knowledge.'"[46] The heart is the place where such (not-)knowing can be cultivated. Attending to the heart as a place between mind and body, between subjects and between sites, is part of an ever-ongoing exchange of thoughts, emotions and sensations. It can be a scary step into unchartered territory, to include the vulnerabilities of our hearts within our research. Our bodies can provide an anchor, a familiar place for departure and return, if we choose to journey beyond what we are used to and what we think we know.

Conscious, improvised movement and the antennas of the body

Whatever research we do, in effect our bodies are the primary research site: it is through the agency and filter of our researchers' bodies that questions are asked and data are collected. How can we consciously apply our body as research tool and site of knowing and what role can movement

play to increase this? I use the term 'conscious, improvised movement' (or simply 'movement'), to describe a way of meditating in motion. The body becomes an instrument for awareness and communicating with self and surroundings. No specific training is required, as it can concern everyday movements and gestures, such as walking, stretching, turning, rolling, when done with full attention. This type of movement does not aim for aesthetics or 'bringing a message across' to an audience. It is rather a means for personal exploration in a different way.

The body is a living archive of sensorial, kinaesthetic, proprioceptive information; it is also a vehicle for sending and receiving information. Physical, emotional, mental and spiritual experiences are interlinked, if not inseparable, and movement permeates and connects them all. If one level is addressed, the other levels are simultaneously affected.[47] Conscious, improvised movement enables an awakening and realigning of these various aspects within ourselves, and it always takes into account our surroundings, including "the embodied presence of others."[48] Furthermore, such movement can draw our attention to the fact that we are continuously oscillating between and finding our way through "political, personal, social and cosmological realms."[49] These characteristics not only imply movement, but also make conscious movement a potent medium for discovery and connection.

The skills of conscious, improvised movement can help us to:

> solve problems that our limited mind in its habitual patterns cannot; (…) can bring our larger mind to the surface and make it available to consciousness. This can happen when we quiet the will and relax the mind in somatically focused bodywork and dance improvisations.[50]

Through movement we can access a larger 'relational,' 'sacred' or 'universal' mind,[51] which "touches, awakens, and deepens our connection with one another and brings us inside the mind of nature."[52] This links with the shamanic ways of knowing described earlier. It starts, perhaps, with an acknowledgement of various layers of 'reality.' Dancing with the natural world and spirits, or 'other-than-human-persons,'[53] whether they be rocks, rivers, mountains, trees or ancestors, is common in many cultures around the world.[54] When I dance, I realise I am part of an immense energy matrix

around me. My body becomes both a sender and a receiver, apparently able to cross time and space. By simply paying attention, a relationship of inter-being starts to emerge. This is a two-way experience. First I ask for permission to be in that place, or dance with that specific being. Even though there might not be a 'verbal' response, my body experiences a physical answer that I have learned to interpret. This is different for everyone, and a matter of 'fine-tuning' the unique instruments that we are. In my case, I interpret a sense of opening/warming/soft tingling as a "yes please, be welcome," while I take a feeling of closing/cooling/prickling as an answer of "no, thank you, not now." Sometimes it literally feels as if a drawbridge comes down, or barbed wire appears. If that is the case, of course I honour that and leave with respect. If there is an invitation to continue, it depends on my intention for the specific dance. It might simply be to be present together, it might be a time for appreciation and gratitude, I might offer my dancer's body to the rainforest or an endangered species for a time to express something they want us human-beings to know, or it might be to ask for help and insight regarding a specific issue or question. Whatever the intention, something always happens, whether I feel refreshed by spending some time in the liminal zone between land and sea, experience a playful exchange of joyous co-existence, receive a poignant call to action, or find comfort, solace, encouragement or specific answers to a question. After dancing, I give thanks and ask what I can do in return, and surprisingly often the answer is "come dance with us again."[55] Just as with any relationship, there is a moment for goodbye and perhaps a "see you next time!"

Returning from this danced shamanic excursion to our academic endeavour, even if such approach would not generate the latest 'data' in itself (although it might!), it allows us to draw much more consciously on our resources of embodied imagination, spatial awareness and bodily intelligence,[56] informing our research in additional ways. Each of the four experiential layers of body, heart, mind and soul offer different, and yet inseparable routes into understanding. Our personal experience does not stand isolated and alone, but includes, transcends, bridges and mutually interacts with all life on earth, including human and non-human communities. When we dare to let go of compartmentalisation, and apply, for example, shamanic techniques, it becomes clear that realities of other

non-cerebral, non-cognitive forms of knowing permeate all areas of life. However, as our culture favours and emphasises one cognitive modality, we seem to have lost our capacity to fluidly move between other layers of experience. Movement is an ideal medium to re-create a multi-levelled literacy, to (re)discover, deepen understanding and strengthen connections. The body-in-movement provides an essential addition to our mental faculties, one that merits equal respect and training. With its embodied, relational, imaginative and intuitive qualities, movement can support the academic challenge to embrace research that is big enough to acknowledge vulnerability and hold the tension between complexity and unfinished-ness.

Part 3: Alchemy of the soul: towards a new epistemology

To develop an effective approach that deepens our understanding of the continuum between body, heart, mind and soul in a fruitful way, we need to draw on various fields including (but not limited to) anthropology, psychology, philosophy, consciousness and religious studies, environmental sustainability studies, agriculture and neuroscience, as well as dance and shamanism. I propose 'alchemy of the soul' as a poetic term to honour the old alchemists who, in their laboratories, combined insights of various fields to work on the integration, synthesis and transmutation of elements.

We are now addressing the implications of soul for epistemology, not just as "a way of knowing the object, [but as] a way of knowing knowledge itself."[57] It is essential that we consider the limits to our understanding and can contribute to widening our comprehension. I have discussed three initial steps to include the soul into our epistemic thinking: gapping the mind, acknowledging the paradoxes of the heart and giving space for the body-in-movement within research. We need to attend poetically "to the images in the ideas, the fantasies in the facts, the dreams in the reasons, the myths in the meanings, the archetypes in the arguments, and the complexes in the concepts."[58] In order to achieve this, "the researcher has to 'die' to the work so that the work can speak through him or her."[59] The soul's way of knowing is a mystical process:

knowing is a backward glance, a way of moving forward with regard for what has fallen in the gap, for what has been left behind, *dis*regarded, neglected, otherwise forgotten. (…) As such, research is re-search, a searching again for what was once known and is making a claim upon us to re-turn with re-gard for the sake of re-membering.[60]

The sense of "dying to the work" also includes a (partial) dying to, or a transcending of, specific epistemologies that we may have previously considered as the only truth. This requires letting go of the cognitive as the only infallible source of knowing, and includes a process of mourning its loss.[61]

Rather than adding a separate methodology to research, soulful scholarship might inform existing paradigms. It would consider personal experiences, imagery and artistic expressions, and respect subjective, non-rational, intuitive knowing as a source of relevant information. This would infuse existing research approaches, including 'pure science,' with additional sources of knowing, leading to a quality of wisdom that does not generally emerge from hard data.

Approaching research in this manner requires fluidity of awareness and attention, openness, courage, and perhaps a childlike curiosity. We need to move with and through denial, resistance, disbelief, ridicule, discomfort and fear of the unknown. As soulful scholars we are not only cognitively literate, but literate on multiple levels. Physically, we engage with research situations, data and written texts in a present and embodied way. We know how to navigate emotions, deal spaciously with uncertainty and failure, and accept that making mistakes is okay. Mentally, we have a strong relationship to imagination and intuition, and realise that we are on an ongoing journey of integration and change. We are equipped to deal with the challenges that that may create. And finally, we realise that we exist in a matrix of information and energy that not only surrounds us, but also informs our research work.

In addition, soulful scholarship requires certain pre-requisites from the academic environment. It will not necessarily offer a safe recipe with guaranteed results. How can we create space for relatively open-ended explorations? There needs to be a general willingness to transcend

dichotomies of self/other, subjective/objective, scientific/shamanic, and move beyond epistemologies that were previously considered to be the only truth. This requires different criteria for validating quality, including a shift from objectivity, via subjectivity to intersubjectivity. A deepening of interdisciplinary collaborations will strengthen a shared search and vocabulary for such 'other' experiences.

This paper has been gestating for years, and even as I re-edit it, it keeps changing. It almost seems to evade structure and scaffolding, and despite my passion for the subject, I have been very close to giving up on it many times. Yes, the soul is a slippery shape-shifter, hard to grasp and impossible to pin down, but isn't that its strength? I try to apply Rabindranath Tagore's spacious invitation to "let [my] life lightly dance on the edges of time like dew on the tip of a leaf," as an adage in life in general, but perhaps *especially* in my research work. Yes, research is serious business, *and* it needs to be airy, spacious and full of wonder as well for the soul to be present. Light a candle on your desk or in the studio, and please join me in dancing an alchemy of the soul. I would love to hear how you get on and how we can collectively strengthen soulful spaces within academia. See you there!

Notes

1 Soulful thanks to Simon Ellis, Vero Benei, Rosemary Cisneros, Henk Kieft, Kerri Cripps, Anne Mette Thøgersen, Maria Hovi, Ya'Acov and Susannah Darling Khan, Iain Lang, Jerome Lewis, Chris Lüttichau, and Charlotte Waelde for fruitful dialogues regarding the topic and/or feedback on earlier drafts of this text. I would also like to thank Christian de Quincey, Jonathan Horwitz, and Stephan Harding who co-facilitated a workshop called 'Soul in Nature.' This life-changing experience at Schumacher College, Devon, returned me to direct and immediate experience of spirit and the mysteries of time, space and the unseen.

2 Romanyshyn, *The Wounded Researcher*, 6.

3 Christian de Quincey, *Radical Knowing*, 136.

4 Palmer, "Teaching with Heart and Soul," 377. www.couragerenewal.org/parker/writings/heart-and-soul.

[5] See also O'Malley, "Conceptualizing a Critical Pedagogy of Human Soul."

[6] Kieft, "Soul Loss and Retrieval."

[7] See also Williamson, "Falling in love with Language."

[8] Villoldo, *Mending the Past and Healing the Future with Soul Retrieval*, 28.

[9] Lauzon, "In search of a future;" O'Malley, "Conceptualizing a Critical Pedagogy of Human Soul;" Palmer, "Teaching with Heart and Soul." www.couragerenewal.org/parker/writings/heart-and-soul.

[10] Reason, "Reflections on Sacred Experience and Sacred Science." bobdick.com.au/whyar/Reason3.pdf; Wendell Berry, *Life is a miracle*.

[11] Todres, *Embodied Enquiry*.

[12] Romanyshyn, *The Wounded Researcher*.

[13] Landsman, *Requiem voor Newton*.

[14] Simpson, *The Healing Energies of Earth*, 10.

[15] Bertrand Russell, *Religion and Science*. Famous examples are Galileo Galilei, Giordano Bruno and Baruch Spinoza, even though some scholars state that the opposition came more from their academic colleagues than from the church (such as for example Bergman, "*The Great Galileo Myth,*" users.adam.com.au/bstett/ReligGalileoMyth95.htm; "Giordano Bruno: The First Martyr of Science or the Last of the Magicians?").

[16] Adapted from de Quincey, *Radical Knowing*, 240.

[17] Capra, *The Tao of Physics*; Zukav, *Dancing Wu Li Masters*; Zohar, *The Quantum Self*.

[18] Morris, *Religion and anthropology,* zodml.org/sites/default/files/%5BMorris%5D_Religion_and_Anthropology_0.pdf; Harner, *The Way of the Shaman*; Horwitz, "Coming Home," www.shamanism.dk/soulretrievalarticle.htm; Ingerman, *Soul Retrieval.*

[19] Pinkola Estés, *Women Who Run With The Wolves*.

[20] Ibid., 242-54.

[21] Ibid., 254.

[22] Gouzouasis, "The metaphor of tonality in artography."

[23] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 302.

[24] Gouzouasis, "The metaphor of tonality in artography," 11-2.

[25] de Quincey, *Radical Knowing*, 136-7.

[26] After de Quincey, *Radical Knowing*, 136-7.

[27] Ibid.

[28] van Egmond, *Sustainable Civilization*.

[29] Umpleby, *Physical Relationships among Matter, Energy and Information*.

[30] For a useful discussion and critique of the word 'spirits' and his alternative term 'other-than-human-persons' to address the diversity of beings and appearances in shamanic cosmologies, please see Harvey, "General Introduction."

[31] Larson, "Pantheism."

[32] Bailey, "Animism," 74.

[33] Tylor, *Primitive culture*.

[34] Winkelman, "Shamanism and the Evolutionary Origins of Spirituality and Healing," 62. www.neuroquantology.com/index.php/journal/article/download/390/379.

[35] Lee Bailey, "Animism."

[36] Hume, *Portals*, 1; Lange, *The Nature of Dance*, 66.

[37] Morris, *Religion and anthropology*, 20.

[38] de Quincey, *Radical Knowing*, 124.

[39] Ibid., 138-140.

[40] Ibid., 140.

[41] Alvesson and Sköldberg, *Reflexive Methodology*, 211; Musante, "Participant Observation," 272.

[42] Vysma and Tankink, "Introduction," 6. www.medanthrotheory.org/read/7118/introduction.

[43] See for example, Marcus, "What Comes (Just) After 'Post'?" 391.

[44] Todres, *Embodied Enquiry*, 111-2.

[45] Ibid., 113.

[46] de Quincey, *Radical Knowing*, 143.

[47] See for example Halprin, The Expressive Body in Life, Art and Therapy.

[48] Csordas, "Somatic Modes of Attention," 138. voidnetwork.gr/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Somatic-Modes-of-Attention-by-Thomas-J.-Csordas.pdf.

[49] Henry, Magowan and Murray, "Introduction," 256.

[50] Fraleigh, "Consciousness Matters," 57.

[51] Keeney, *Bushman Shaman*, 39; Halprin, *The Expressive Body in Life, Art and Therapy*, 105.

[52] Keeney, *Bushman Shaman*, 39.

[53] Harvey, "General Introduction."

[54] Other-than-human-persons tend to appear in ways that we can recognise according to our cultural frames of reference, as is argued for example by Young, "*Visitors in the Night*"; and Moss, *Conscious Dreaming*, 246. Similarly, 'communication' happens in different ways. It might be understood as language and words in our minds, or appear as images, symbols, colours, sounds or abstract figures – depending on our receptivity. Again, this is a matter of fine-tuning our instrument. There are many studies of worldwide ritual dance practices that engage with the natural world, see for example Sohei, "The deity and the mountain" (nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/nfile/886); Ikuta, "Embodied Knowledge, Relations with the Environment, and Political Negotiation."

[55] For a long time, I thought that "please come dance with us again" was a personal response to my question of what I could offer to spirit in return, simply because I happen to love dancing so much. To my surprise however, shamanic teachers Horwitz and Waldeback reflected in an interview that many of their students receive this request (unpublished interview: "Dancing with the Spirits").

[56] See also Grau, "On the notion of bodily intelligence."

[57] Hillman, *Re-Visioning Psychology*, 131.

[58] Romanyshyn, *The Wounded Researcher*, 12.

[59] Ibid., 14.

[60] Ibid., 13-4, italics and hyphens in original.

[61] Ibid., 14.

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Biography

Eline Kieft combines her passion for anthropology, qualitative research methodologies, shamanic paradigms, experiential pedagogies, movement as a way of knowing and her intimate knowledge of the dancer's body. She is Associate Editor of Dance, Movement and Spiritualities as well as a qualified Movement Medicine teacher.

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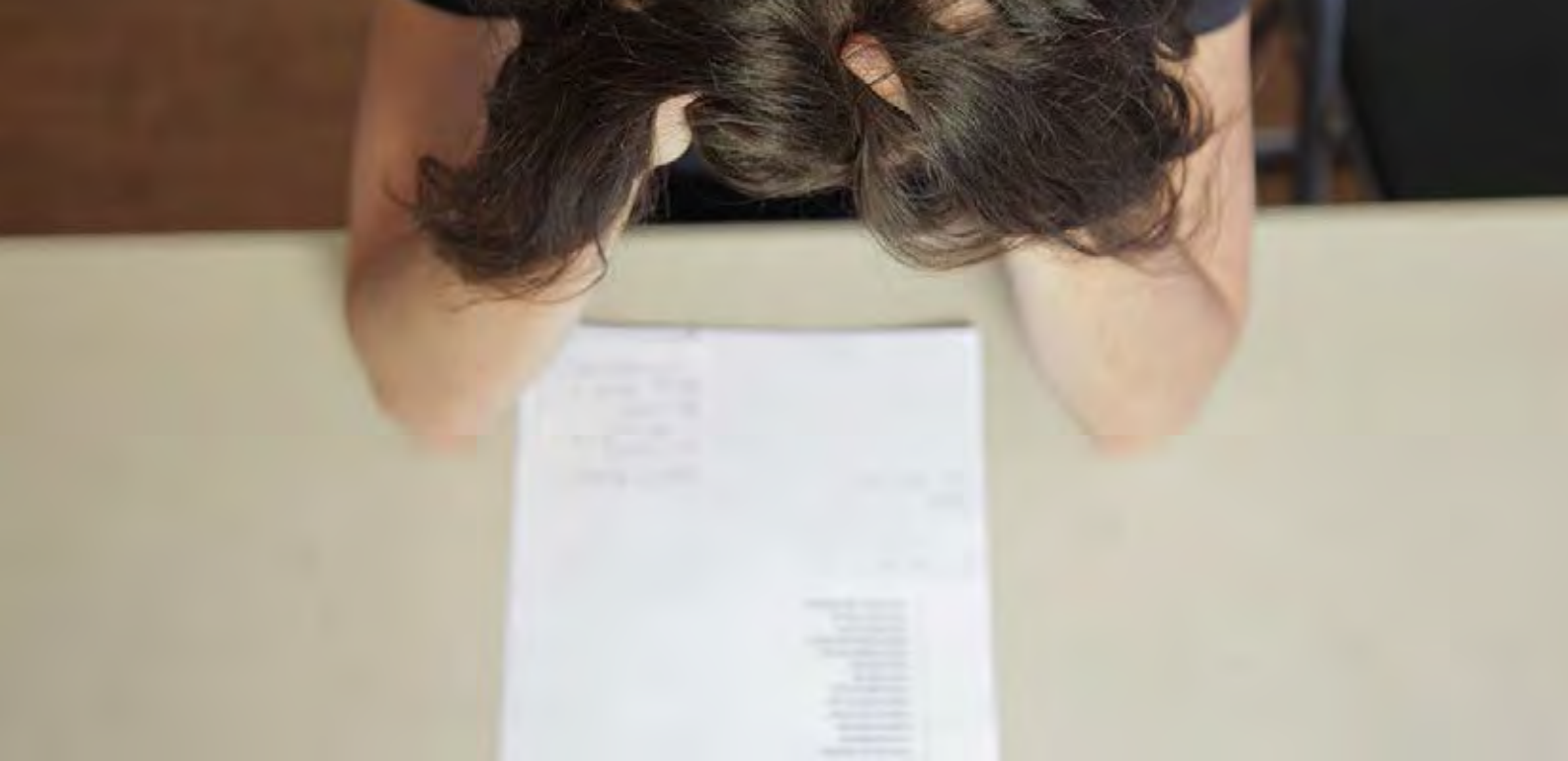
Shannon Bott in We Like Lists Because We Don't Want to Die. *Melbourne. Photo: © Jayden Stevens (2017) CC-BY*

THAT THING PRODUCED

SIMON ELLIS

Keywords

practice-as-research
epistemology
knowledge
ignorance
contempt

Abstract

Practice-as-research continues to struggle with its epistemic value. For the most part we seem to have stopped grappling with the complexity of what it is that we might know or understand as a consequence of artistic research. Instead, it is now assumed that artists producing art in the context of the academy are, by default, producing knowledge. In this writing I explore the epistemic conditions of producing artistic research, and imagine PaR's vital and disruptive role in the so-called knowledge economy.

Introduction: Curious times

We live and work in curious times. These are times in which human beings are thought of as "profit-and-loss calculators;"[1] in which "the attitude of the salesman has become enmeshed in all modes of self-expression."[2] In higher education scholarship, it is the time of "research capitalism,"[3] when we – academics that is – are expected "to produce knowledge that is directly applicable to the needs and priorities of the community at large as identified … by the private and government sectors."[4] This is the time of the corporate university; founded on language that Stefan Collini – a professor of Intellectual History and English Literature – calls *Prodspeak*: "technology transfer, knowledge economy, grant generation, frontier research, efficiency, and accountability."[5] We are (re)producers of the knowledge economy.[6] Curious times indeed.

But I am wasting time. It is the curse of the idealist. I am an academic idealist; and I'm an artist. More specifically I am a dance-artist, and in the UK, Australia and New Zealand, being an artist-in-the-academy in these curious times means making artistic work to be part of the same economy of knowledge production as scholarship in science or the arts and humanities. This activity is called various things, mostly practice-as-research in the UK, but I quite like the term artistic research that tends to be used in continental Europe; and I agree with Henk Borgdorff, Professor of Theory of Research in the Arts at Leiden University in The Hague, when he writes that in artistic research "art practice is paramount as the subject matter, the method, the context, and the outcome."[7]

I am writing about practice-as-research, knowledge and production because I suspect that artistic research has a vital role to play in corrupting and contaminating these curious times in higher education. I also suspect that this role is part epistemic and part ethical; it is ethical in the sense of what might be good for our society. Indeed, in many respects this writing is an attempt to conjure up an ethics of epistemology in practice-as-research.

This chapter has three sections. In *The knowledge economy,* I outline the relationship between dance research and knowledge production. Next, in *Epistemology of practice-as-research*, I look to clarify the epistemic limitations of practice-as-research, and make a case for an epistemology

that expands into a *crowd of understandings*. Finally, in *Contempt and the thing-produced*, I discuss the materials produced in practice-as-research, and the role they might have in reconfiguring or challenging research in higher education.

The knowledge economy

The term knowledge economy was introduced by the American management consultant Peter Drucker in 1969. He wrote that "what matters in the 'knowledge economy' is whether knowledge, old or new, is *applicable.*"[8] Drucker was not seduced by the age of knowledge, but rather the "imagination and skill of whoever applies" it.[9] At the heart of the knowledge economy is the knowledge worker: "the man or woman who applies to productive work ideas, concepts, and information rather than manual skill or brawn."[10] Drucker distinguishes intellectual knowledge from knowledge work. Intellectual knowledge is "what is in a book;"[11] it is only information or data, and usually thought of as something new. He suggests that knowledge is a form of energy that exists in the work of applying *something* to that information.

Contemporary scholarship is caught somewhere between pursuing intellectual endeavour and generating useful research for the knowledge economy. When academics read, hear or say 'knowledge-production,' it is difficult to pry apart the various histories, goals, systems and ideologies at play when we do our research. I can imagine the feeling when we come to understand that what we think we are doing (scholarly and intellectual endeavour) is utterly different from what we are actually doing (producing useful knowledge for the knowledge economy). This is the scholarly equivalent of believing you are in Radiohead when in reality you play bass for Coldplay.

Perhaps such delusion is a mechanism to cope with varying degrees of uncertainty about how our work is culturally valued or understood. Perhaps we want to have our cake and eat it by producing intellectual knowledge while serving the knowledge economy (and keeping our jobs). It is certain, and certainly less palatable, that we now chronically conflate the production of intellectual knowledge with contributing to the knowledge economy. It is even more unfortunate that academics are being cajoled and

conditioned by the corporate university to understand our scholarly worth as being about the extent to which we can apply our scholarship; that is to produce useful knowledge for the knowledge economy.

While it may be that Drucker initially separated the knowledge economy from intellectual knowledge, for academics in contemporary higher education doing scholarly work is synonymous with the production of knowledge for the knowledge economy; they are seamlessly integrated. Such integration exists in our rhetoric, in the language we use as writers, and in the public assessment of research (through processes like the Research Excellence Framework in the UK).[12] How we understand or come to know things, experiences and sensations is shaped by ideological systems of production. And what is forgotten or passed over, unknown, misunderstood or mysterious is similarly shaped – or *deformed* – by those same systems. We have absorbed the ideology of the knowledge producer who serves the knowledge economy, and when we use the term knowledge, we leave the ambiguity hanging.

In this chapter, I use the term *knowledge* in the conflated and ambiguous way – both intellectual endeavour and a tool for the knowledge economy. I do so to recognise its common usage in contemporary higher education, and to acknowledge that the absence of nuance enables academics rather fortuitously to speak with different audiences in the academy (with different goals, desires, histories and understandings) as if we are talking about the same thing. For example, even the statement "I am doing research" comes loaded with ambiguity because of how different people might understand differently the epistemic value and purpose of *doing research*.

In dance research, we have busily created our own lexicon of words to do with thinking, intelligence and knowledge: embodied knowledge, choreographic thinking, physical intelligence, somatic knowing, bodily knowledge, choreographic knowledge, knowledge practices, choreographic intelligence, bodily lived (experiential) knowledge, kinetic intelligence.

Our willingness and ease to attach these knowledge-knowing-intelligence-thinking suffixes to dance and choreographic ideas is telling. Perhaps it is about a relatively new academic discipline grappling with how to discuss and describe phenomena. Or perhaps we in dance are simply following higher education or cultural trends to *knowledge-ify* our language.

Nevertheless, together the terms imply that we have welcomed the demands of the knowledge economy – to apply our imaginations and skills as means of production – to the practices of choreography and dance. I wonder though if the easy addition of suffixes also reveals a certain insecurity: that we in dance research are a little too desperate to sit at the big table with the knowledge-producing grown-ups regardless of what we might be giving up or denaturing, or who we might be alienating, or indeed what it is that choreographers and dancers actually do.

The culture of reifying knowledge and knowledge production (and all their ambiguities) has also infiltrated the artistic world of dance. The dance critic and artist Jamie Conde-Salazar has suggested that "the dance of the future produces knowledge."[13] Similarly, the anthropologist James Leach wrote that "there is a conscious attempt on the part of contemporary dance to elevate itself in public perception through transforming its processes into 'knowledge production', to make it a practice commensurate with other valued spheres of action in the 'knowledge economy'."[14] Yet just because a field – for example dance research, professional artistic dance, or even practice-as-research – *says* it produces knowledge does not make it so.

Perhaps the apotheosis of the knowledge production *push* in dance studies – and as Leach states, in the professional community too – has been the funding, research and development of dance *archives*.[15] The big expensive ones have names like *Motion Bank*,[16] *Synchronous Objects*,[17] and *Siobhan Davies RePlay*.[18] These archives – each with different emphases – are important assets to our community. They make it possible for people to access aspects of the inaccessible. It is also their usefulness that helps dance to nestle neatly into the knowledge economy. Their utility and value to the knowledge economy is strengthened because the archives are (by and large) tech-driven, they are tangible and reasonably permanent enough, and their outcomes are relatively easy to measure through online user analysis. Speaking and writing as a choreographer, I would suggest that these kinds of archives tend to attenuate the epistemological value and tangled messiness of choreographic practice.

Dance research's relationship with the knowledge economy has as least two divergent strands. The first strand relates to the politics and economics of simply making dance research happen. Like the examples of archives

above, it contains research that is highly visible and dependent on relatively large-scale funding bids that are themselves linked to research agendas staged by Government and private organisations. This kind of dance research is important not least because it helps *place* scholarly dance research on cultural, economic and political maps. But it is also limited because of the adaptive demands of fitting dance research into general funding calls. In other words, what needs to happen to any dance research in order for it to fall within the limitations of funding agendas? In the case of dance archives, the fit is – as I have already suggested – comfortable; the same might be said for dance research projects involving other contemporary technological preoccupations like augmented reality, virtual reality and motion capture that satisfy the technological myopia of contemporary culture (and its funding bodies).

The second strand is epistemic and involves the tangled messiness of choreographic practice that is more at odds with broad funding agendas. It is also predicated on the sense that practice-as-research is a growing subset of all dance research (and I would guess that it is, at least in the UK, Australia and NZ). This second strand of dance research's relationship to the knowledge economy is built on two questions: What is the epistemic project of practice-as-research in general, or perhaps in other words how does practice-as-research participate in the knowledge economy? What happens to that economy when practice-as-research participates in it?

The next two sections deal with this latter *strand* of dance research, but the ideas are certainly not limited to dance thinking and practices. Rather, I use my biases and experience in dance practice and research as a platform to reveal the kind of epistemic messiness that underscores the contribution of practice-as-research to research in general.

Epistemology of practice-as-research

Erik Knudsen, the filmmaker, practice-as-research specialist, and Professor of Media Practice at University of Central Lancashire in the UK, says that "research is research, knowledge is knowledge, but there are many different ways of generating that knowledge."[19] Knudsen's work here is equivalence: to compel us to believe that scholars from all disciplines are

all in the same boat trying to "generate new knowledge … in original ways."[20]

I appreciate Knudsen's desire to put an end to some of the anxieties of artist-scholars grappling with epistemic questions, but I think he's wrong saying that knowledge is knowledge regardless of how it is produced and in what contexts it is produced. I think he's wrong because the key ideological project of practice-as-research has been to get art "on the books as research"[21] by bending it into the dominant epistemic systems of the academy. There are good reasons for wanting to do these kinds of gymnastics: status, legitimacy, resources. Performing these back-flips – mostly injury free – has certainly kept me in a job.

Similarly, although with a focus on choreographic research, dance philosopher Anna Pakes from the University of Roehampton in London writes that:

> Unless we can identify the choreographer-researcher's claim to knowledge, it remains difficult to maintain that choreographic research has equivalent status with other, more traditional forms of scholarly enquiry.[22]

I suspect that the desire for equivalent status is actually a distraction from the profound epistemic possibilities of artistic research. These possibilities do not lie in concepts like *phronesis* (practical wisdom) that Pakes herself has discussed.[23] She suggests that phronesis is "a creative sensitivity to circumstances as they present themselves."[24] The simple problem with *phronesis*, and its cousins *techne* and *poiesis*, is that I possess them regardless of the research project, regardless of whether or not anything happened at all. Research is, after all, fundamentally about noticing change: as a consequence of *this* process, *this* experiment, *this* intervention, *this* grappling with historical evidence (etc), what is different? What has changed? What do I, we, you understand differently, and how are these differences shared? I might be able to articulate what is different or changed, but in the case of practice-as-research how do the artistic works – those *things-produced* – do their own work?

Henk Borgdorff from Leiden University in The Hague favours "unfinished thinking" as being central to the epistemological work of practice-as-research.[25] For Borgdorff, artistic research involves a "paradoxical invitation"[26] in which art invites reflection but "eludes any defining thought"[27] or "explanatory gaze."[28] This is the work of the artist-scholar: to leave or create room for "our implicit, tacit, non-conceptual, non-discursive relations with the world and with ourselves;"[29] what Susan Melrose called "disciplined unknowing."[30] By doing so, "our thinking is set in motion"[31] by artistic-research (or art for that matter), with no attempt to finish that thinking. This is, at least in part, a constructivist perspective, and it seals off the epistemological heavy lifting of practice-as-research from the so-called knowledge producer. Such a separation between *producer* and *produced* invites radical epistemic exchanges – or creative encounters – between research and its audiences. The distinctiveness of these exchanges rests with the ambiguity and slipperiness of the affective responses and thinking set in motion by artistic-research. That is, any performative offer through artistic-research, makes possible an unpredictable and unimaginable number of understandings and affects.

At the other end of the world, in the University of Canberra's *Centre for Creative and Cultural Research*, Paul Magee is making similar propositions to Borgdorff but in relation to writing and poetry. His suggestion – with a nod to how universities have their "artistic moments"[32] – is that artist-scholars do no more than produce something "like a compelling, mesmerising question."[33]

Magee also discusses a multi-voiced epistemology in practice-as-research; a type of crowd epistemology of unlike minds. He writes that "we think not in monologue but in dialogue, that is, in a medley of voices that variously propose, reply, interject and argue, all within the head we might refer to as 'I'; that is what you do when you think … there's actually no 'you' there, unless in the plural."[34] Although Magee is describing the plurality of a single mind, what if we take his words more literally? That we extrapolate his thinking such that it is research itself that fundamentally involves a medley of voices, and only *you* in the plural form? Magee also suggests that a modern poem is a "device for generating creative desire – the desire for meaning, for resolution, for further aesthetic experience, for an infinite

number of things – *in others*."[35] These others – public audiences and critical research *friends* – extend the artist-scholars' understanding of their own work, and make experiences of newness, surprise and difference possible for the artist. It is the audience's relationship and exchange with the *thing-produced* that drastically set apart practice-as-research from other forms of research. The epistemic value of practice-as-research – what the arts and research community understand differently because of the research – is created through the act of the *thing-produced* being experienced. Practice-as-research is dependent on its audience to do its epistemic work.

The politics and ethics of these epistemic propositions are important. By relinquishing ownership of knowledge, by resisting the singular author (and her, his or their knowledge-producing ambitions), we tend towards a crowd of understandings that diminish *my* contribution, that diminish any claims I might like to make, that fold in my ignorance as a key epistemic component of practice-as-research. This is different from washing my hands or not taking responsibility for what is made: the *thing-produced*. Rather, it is recognising that, as the philosopher Stanley Cavell said, "our relation to the world as a whole … is not one of knowing."[36] Further, even the possibility of first-person not knowing (that is, under certain conditions, and in certain circumstances, 'I am ignorant') is built on collective understanding. Theologian Stephanie Berbec says of Judith Butler that she "writes from the perspective that there is no I without first a we …. [pushing] toward a politics of alliance, cohabitation, and interdependency."[37]

The American poet and writer Wendell Berry wrote that one of our problems as humans is we "cannot live without acting: we *have* to act. Moreover, we *have* to act on the basis of what we know, and what we know is incomplete. … And so the question of how to act in ignorance is paramount."[38] My proposition is an *expanded epistemology* in practice-as-research where artist-scholars push willfully into the crowd while staying mindful that how we understand our practices and actions is predicated on incompleteness. By acknowledging our ignorance, we can test and work with ideas through practice that exist at the border of our awareness, understanding and ignorance. That we expand into mystery, uncertainty and "moral complexity,"[39] in which the academy might once again become

a place for grappling with the spirit, the divine, the unknowable, and ignorance itself. It makes perfect sense that centres of understanding – places of knowledge – should openly welcome and encounter such things. It is at such borders – between knowing and not-knowing, ignorance and understanding, vulnerability and certainty, mess and clarity, tangle and order – that the most fecund forms of friction are manifest.

It is how practice-as-research relates to epistemic vulnerability that becomes so vital and powerfully tenuous. The members of the *After Performance* research collective, writing in *Contemporary Theatre Review*, suggest that:

> To profess to not know in today's knowledge economy … seems to be an act of making oneself vulnerable. … One might claim there is indeed 'capital' attached to the practices of not knowing … To share that raw intellectual vulnerability incites a process of exposure and giving of oneself to others, to be held and supported, so that our own truths can be aligned, and then re-calibrated, via our collectivity and adjacency.[40]

With such vulnerability in mind, what I am calling for here in practice-as-research is an expanded epistemology: that we understand the *ontology* of practice-as-research to be dependent – at least in part – on its crowd-based or communal epistemic conditions. Practice-as-research is brought into being by its artistic cells or components, and it is research predicated on *we*. The ways of knowing in artistic research become unspeakable dialogues between the artistic/creative works and their audiences, and unspeakability is a terrifying possibility for the academy. The various and unpredictable dialogues are unspeakable because they are built on ignorance and mystery, and because they are only ever approaching *knowledges* asymptotically. We – artist-scholars together with our audiences – are producing something that can never arrive as knowledge – whether its purpose is intellectual endeavour or applied knowledge for the knowledge economy.

Contempt and the thing-produced

I propose that in practice-as-research we are not producing knowledge, and that our work is all the more important for doing nothing of the kind. Art

and design scholar Steven Scrivener[41] has tried to make epistemic sense of practice-as-research by using the "standard account" which defines knowledge as justified, true, belief. That is, "where the thing that we know appears true, we believe it to be true and we can justify our belief."[42] He argues for an artwork to claim new knowledge it must communicate and justify that knowledge, and stridently believes that no art work can make such claims. In other words, the *thing-produced* is by no means producing knowledge as justified, true, belief, even if and when accompanied by some form of supporting or contextualising text in which the author makes and stakes claims for what-is-known. And if – like Pakes – we try and make epistemic sense of practice-as-research through the work of Aristotle, David Carr and Gilbert Ryle[43] then this only accounts for the phronetic *know-how* that underpins all practice-as-research projects by any given group or individual. Such know-how is common to all research (not just the creative kind), and – as I have argued earlier in this chapter – does not account for the potential changes in *understandings* that arise from research; changes that are fundamental to understanding the epistemic value of any and all research.

For performance theorist Adrian Heathfield, one of the strengths of research through and in performance is about "staging processes of knowing that can't easily be resolved into identifiable knowledge products that will then circulate smoothly in the 'knowledge economy'."[44] Heathfield is implicitly proposing research through performance to be a thrombus or clot in the circulatory system of the knowledge economy – that how performance might do its most valuable work is when it is in relationship to *ways of knowing* that are not able to shape – or be shaped by – the various tools and systems of the knowledge economy. But what does he mean by a 'process of knowing' and how would we recognise it if we were involved in one? Heathfield prefaces his ideas by suggesting that "we could leave behind the whole framework of thinking of research as knowledge production entirely."[45] Of course, it is not clear if he means *entirely* in the context of that particular discussion in *Contemporary Theatre Review* or as a guiding principle to understand research generally.

We – artist-scholars that is – are certainly producing *something* that the academy recognises as knowledge through its research monitoring and

assessment exercises (like the Research Excellence Framework in the UK). Such recognition is the case even if the epistemic nature of those *things-produced* remains contested in practice-as-research scholarly literature. Given the historic and ongoing epistemic uncertainty of practice-as-research, its acceptance as a knowledge producing activity in the academy is a remarkable phenomenon. It is akin to a relatively new sport, played in only a few pockets of the world each with markedly different rules, being invited to be an official sport in the Olympic Games. Gold for practice-as-research!

But what if – as I argue – these *things-produced* are not knowledge? What are the conditions of production for practice-as-research and what are their epistemic implications for Universities and artist-scholars? There are two key conditions:

Condition 1: Artist-scholars are clearly producing something. I have already argued – based on the work of Magee[46] and Borgdorff[47] – that the epistemic nature of the *things-produced* is something akin to asking questions, "unfinished thinking,"[48] or a crowd-oriented medley of voices.[49]

Condition 2: Despite the recognition of practice-as-research in international research assessment exercises and peer-reviewed journals,[50] artist-scholars do not produce any version of knowledge that is accepted and valorised within knowledge economies.

If the above two conditions are accurate or true then what follows is either: a) the things that are produced by artist-scholars should not be 'counted' or involved in the labour of universities; or b) in order to unconditionally accept practice-as-research then universities need to adapt or change what is considered to be *knowledge producing work*, and even the nature of research itself.

What is most curious is that in UK higher education the current situation would appear to be some paradoxical combination of a) and b) in which artist-scholars do not produce knowledge and yet their work is still circulated (even if not always smoothly) in the higher education knowledge economy.

What makes such a paradox possible? Who or what is making the compromises that sustains the paradox? If I were to imagine that as a

researcher I am making few if any compromises in the development, production and presentation of the *things-produced*, but they are still participating in or contributing to the so-called knowledge economy, then the knowledge economy – and its epistemic fundamentals – has changed without even knowing or recognising it. This situation is like a glitch[51] or an 'other world' of ignorance, imagination and messiness that the epistemic hegemony of the academy is not even aware of; or that by accepting practice-as-research the scholarly hegemony thinks it has swallowed another version or epistemic iteration of itself without needing to clear its throat. Even more curious is that under these conditions practice-as-research ought to have no fiscal value in the market-place of the knowledge economy.

The Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe wrote that "As a result of the conflation of knowledge, technology and markets, contempt will be extended to anyone who has nothing to sell."[52] I can imagine that in practice-as-research, rather than producing knowledge and with nothing to sell in the economy of knowledge, we are merely producing contempt.

It is by working closely with ignorance, and the subsequent production of contempt that practice-as-research work – the *thing-produced* – becomes vital in these curious times. That as people not producing knowledge while participating as a bug-like glitch in the knowledge economy we help to create the thinnest of openings for imagining how research – and its epistemic underpinnings – might change, adapt or evolve, and even what the work and function of universities might become. In such a way, those of us who are contempt-producing knowledge workers, along with our "subterranean, interpersonal, muddy, and emergent"[53] research, might play an un-productive and ethical role in ways of knowing and their place in our culture and society.

In 1969, Peter Drucker wrote of the knowledge economy that the "key to productivity was knowledge, not sweat."[54] If "being ethical may actually mean being inefficient at times,"[55] then even in my role as a knowledge worker, producing sweat might be a way to be less productive, and more aware of my ignorance. After all, I am quite open to a bit of sweat.

Simon Ellis producing sweating in Our White Friend, *by Colin, Simon and I. © Stephen Wright Photography (2016). CC-BY.*

Acknowledgements

Notes

1 Metcalf, "Neoliberalism." Accessed 20 August 2017.

2 Ibid.

3 Coleman & Kambourel in Berg and Seeber, *The Slow Professor*, 53.

4 Ibid., 53.

5 Ibid., 63.

6 Ingold, "How Scholars at One UK Institution Are Reclaiming Their University." Accessed 12 August 2017.

7 Borgdorff, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, 146.

8 Drucker, *The Age of Discontinuity*, 253.

9 Ibid., 253.

10 Ibid., 247.

11 Ibid., 252.

12 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research_Excellence_Framework

13 Conde-Salazar, *La Danza Del Futuro*, 78.

14 Leach and Davis, "Recognising and Translating Knowledge," 220.

15 Of these examples, only *Siobhan Davies RePlay* describes itself as an archive. *Synchronous Objects* and *Motion Bank* are digital *responses* to various works. Nevertheless, all play a role in how the works of the artists involved are remembered.

16 Forsythe, *Motion Bank*. Accessed 11 February 2015.

17 Forsythe, Palazzi, and Zuniga Shaw, *Synchronous Objects*. Accessed 11 February 2015.

18 Davies and Whatley, *Siobhan Davies RePlay*. Accessed 10 February 2015.

19 Knudsen, "Research Is Research Is Research." Accessed 20 July 2017.

20 Ibid.

21 Magee, "Introduction. Part 1: Beyond Accountability?" 6. Accessed 5 March 2015.

22 Pakes, "Knowing Through Dance-Making," 10. www.academia.edu/1615507/Knowing_through_dance-making_Choreography_practical_knowledge_and_practice-as-research.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 18.

25 Borgdorff, *The Conflict of the Faculties*,143.

26 Ibid., 145.

27 Ibid., 145.

28 Ibid., 147.

29 Ibid., 171.

30 Melrose, "Words Fail Me." Accessed 12 June 2008.

31 Borgdorff, *The Conflict of the Faculties*, 234.

32 Magee, "Introduction. Part 1: Beyond Accountability?" 5.

33 Ibid., 5.

34 Ibid., 7-8.

35 Magee, "Is Poetry Research?" my emphasis.

36 Cavell, *The Claim of Reason*, 45.

37 Butler and Berbec, "We Are Worldless Without One Another." Accessed 2 July 2017.

38 Berry, *Life Is a Miracle*, 10-11.

39 Ibid., 8.

40 After Performance, "Vulnerability and the Lonely Scholar". Accessed 20 May 2017. Thanks to Amaara Raheem for first alerting me to this writing.

41 after Dancy, *Introduction to Contemporary Epistemology*.

42 Scrivener, "The Art Object Does Not Embody a Form of Knowledge." Accessed 18 March 2015.

43 Pakes, "Knowing Through Dance-Making."

44 Adrian Heathfield in Butt, Heathfield, and Keidan, "Performance Matters" 114.

45 In ibid., 114.

46 Magee, "Is Poetry Research?"; "Introduction. Part 1: Beyond Accountability?"

47 Borgdorff, *The Conflict of the Faculties*.

48 Ibid., 143.

49 Magee, "Introduction. Part 1: Beyond Accountability?" 7.

50 e.g. the Research Excellence Framework in the UK, the Excellence for Research in Australia, and the Performance Based Research Fund in

Aotearoa/New Zealand. Journals that publish practice-as-research include Journal of Artistic Research, *Screenworks*, and Choreographic Practices.

[51] This term is on my mind because of the work and thinking of artist-scholar and C-DaRE PhD student Claire Ridge who is working with the concept of the glitch through screen-based practices.

[52] Mbembe, "The Age of Humanism Is Ending." Accessed 6 January 2017.

[53] Heathfield in Butt, Heathfield, and Keidan, "Performance Matters," 114.

[54] Drucker, *The Age of Discontinuity*, 254.

[55] Berg and Seeber, *The Slow Professor*, 60.

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Biography

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