Undisciplining Dance in Nine Movements and Eight Stumbles

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Edited by

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We could not have created this work without the loving support, understanding and kindness of our families, Jeffrey, Elena and Rosalind Holdaway, and Russell, Rafe and Cassidy Scoones.

INTRODUCTION

(UN) KNOWING DANCING

CAROL BROWN AND ALYS LONGLEY

The notion of discipline is ever-present in the terrain of dance studies, creating specific terrains of practice, defining professional attitudes, connoting forms of punishment that determine acceptability and unacceptability. Discipline can be a gate-keeper, a kind of shame, a pathway to virtuosity and professionalism, a form of sophistication and an application of control and power. Despite the "corporeal turn" of much recent academic discourse, dance studies as a field has produced disciplined bodies persistently subjected to the commands of writing.[1] If much of what we teach and come to know from within the disciplinary regime of dance is founded on a certain kind of mastery, what scope is there to challenge, criticize and undo this knowledge from within the academy? This was the provocation that Elizabeth Dempster offered the field with her essay re-published in this collection, "Undisciplined Subjects, Unregulated Practices: Dancing in the academy" (2004). In problematizing the identity of dance studies as a discipline within the academy, Dempster, writing from the perspective of an Australian dance scholar, claimed that "the disciplinary difference of dance practice and research has not yet been fully embraced and recognized."[2] Her critique called for a more precise and nuanced handling of the relationship between critical practices and dancing, between dance as a subject of study (*phrenesis*) and dance as an object of study (*techne*). She invites this ontological renewal through a strategy of "thinking through performance" and a critical unpacking of the foundational assumptions of professionalized

[1] André Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance: performance and the politics of movement.* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006).

[2] Elizabeth Dempster, "Undisciplined Subjects, Unregulated Practices: Dancing in the Academy," *Proceedings of Dance Rebooted: Initializing the Grid, July 1-4* (Melbourne, Australia, 2004).
http://ausdance.org.au/articles/details/undisciplined-subjects-unregulated-practices

embodied knowledge. Underscoring her writing is an understanding of the limitations of the academy as a place for "undisciplined" creative inquiry and endeavor. Much has of course changed since 2004 however the question remains, what possibilities are there for not just thinking through dance but engaging in radical acts of dancing that are courageously open-ended experiments in what a dance can become. This book and the Symposium that catalysed it, attends to the theme of "undisciplined dancing", through multiple registers of writing, moving and visual documentation.

The Undisciplining Dance Symposium, hosted by dance studies at the University of Auckland in June 2016, invited participants to attend to the changing status of disciplinary knowledge in dance and performance in the context of an increasingly transdisciplinary and decolonized field. Provocations we sent out in our conference call were to consider:

- What are the foundational assumptions of professionalized embodied knowledge in the academy?
- What is the impact of a persistent somatophobia on dancers in the academy?
- How does colonialism persist in contemporary discourses of the discipline of dance studies?
- What discipline-specific methods of practice and research have currency in contemporary academic contexts and how might these be part of a wider context of decolonization?
- How to create space for dance students to bring their diverse voices into the classroom and studio, while teaching international vocabularies (of dance technique, history, critical thinking) to a high level?
- What might be key acts, tropes or pedagogies of undisciplining in the context of various dance industries?
- What might it mean to undiscipline?

We proposed that this provocation might align with pulling down fences between ways of working, resisting hierarchies (in subtle and obvious ways), questioning power structures, celebrating difference and fluidity over normalization and control. The symposium suggested that the twenty-first century presents us with a huge task: to understand the inherited knowledge and embodied practices of previous eras, while allowing space to imagine different futures and ways of moving and creating in an evolving world demanding continuously adaptable forms of creativity. Inherent in this is the demand for recognition of those redundant

discourses that inhibit our ability to bring about a better future.

This book aims to make space for chaotic, permeable and leaky practices and ways of understanding the body from the periphery to the centre to celebrate rowdy, inspired, mobile, fluid, surprising, intent, bent, queer, non-conformist, inclusive approaches to dance making and research. It is sequenced through a series of nine movements and eight stumbles. The movements are in-depth essays exploring key themes that emerged through the Symposium. The eight stumbles disrupt these discussions, tripping up expectations of writing, discipline and dancing in different ways.

The first section of this book (chapters one to five) explore strategies and tactics for careful reappraisal of conventional tropes of choreographic research. Efva Lilja's chapter *Artists as Facilitators of Change* discusses the role of the artist through the politics of the everyday. According to Lilja, choreographic artists "find enhanced living in movement" through attending to the fabric of moments and relationships, to the hierarchies embedded in languages and the enabling of alternative forms of expression. Her article emphasises the need for engaging movement in making social and political change. Elizabeth Dempsters' *Undisciplined Subjects, Unregulated Practices: Dancing in the Academy* carefully reflects "upon the disciplinary identity of dance studies and dance research," and the kinds of critical spaces enabled and prevented for dance within the academy. She suggests that dance as a body of thinking can be highly disciplined in academic settings, in ways that may not be conducive to artistic thinking or embodied exploration. Dempster's article weighs up the compromises that dancers often make in order to be accepted into institutional frameworks for knowledge conceived out of traditions that have long histories of somatophobia and textual preference. She highlights that "when we take up the place the other reserves for us, there is a danger that key assumptions underpinning our discipline, specific methods of practice and research, and the discourse that has evolved around them may not be critically examined." Choreographer Zahra Killeen-Chance reflects on the fluid boundaries between embodiment, matter and atmosphere, recognising possibilities for creative practice through detailed haptic exploration in the conditions of exchange between human and non-human materials. Other-worldly states of physical presence move from performance to page, through forms of writing where the bodies of letters participate in choreographic exchange. These formulations of choreography work to "lead the spectator into a paradoxical realm of dynamic, emergent relations, and multiple meanings" (Killeen-Chance) – resisting fixed positions. In particular, these choreographic propositions undermine

assumptions that dance is defined by visual spectacle, instead emphasising modes of practice grounded in sensory, felt, aural and relational modes of exchange.

The field of dance education is not immune to conflicted discourses about cultural and racial difference, yet these are often underexplored in a field which remains dominated by Western dance theatre disciplinary practices such as ballet and contemporary dance. Alfdaniels Mabingo, who is a dance education researcher from Uganda, and Susan Koff, Associate Professor Dance Education at New York University, investigate the subject of race, education, and dance, problematising the hegemony of the Euro-American canon of dance history in education. African dance pedagogies, such as inter-generational learning, propose an undoing of "white privilege," not so much in who teaches but in the ways in which dance is taught and its referents. Through a diversification of dance education processes, Mabingo and Koff propose that students benefit from intercultural competencies, kinesthetic diversities and an expanded worldview.

The following stumble authored jointly by contemporary artist Shigeyuki Kihara and choreographer Jochen Roller can be seen to be a rejoinder to Mabingo and Koff's call for the diversification of not just dances but methods with their inherent cultural biases, that dance and performance studies addresses. Through an ironic and playful dialogue, Kihara and Roller reveal the tensions of creating work collaboratively in the intercultural space of 'folk' or indigenous performance between New Zealand and Germany. "Them and Us" challenges assumptions of decolonial thinking, by drawing upon two dance traditions which share some similar kinesthetic actions: the Samoan Fa'ataupati and the Bavarian folk dance, the Schuhplattler. Kihara and Roller's project involved both artists engaging in a cross-cultural encounter which was reciprocal, however not without problems. They claim that having cross-cultural experiences is not in itself sufficient, it is what you do with these experiences that matters. Roller and Kihara's writing brings to our attention the impact of their work as it toured Germany, the encounters with audience, the risks of re-exoticising Pacific traditions and the everyday struggles with racism and cultural mis-appropriation that persistently surfaced. Their unsettling of racial stereotypes through kinesthetically-based cultural exchange between European and Pacific dance traditions, proposes an exuberant practice of decolonised dancing.

Practices of indigenous performance in Aotearoa New Zealand are the focus of a discussion between performance maker Charles Koroneho and choreographer and researcher, Carol Brown. *Te Arai: Re-addressing the space of grief, bereavement and lamentation* takes as its starting point the

ancestral body, and Māori ceremonies that surround death. Koroneho's work in development presented as part of the Symposium programme, *Tua o Te Arai* activates spaces associated with pre-colonial Māori ceremonies of death and mourning and has emerged through his extensive research into indigenous ontologies and practices. Not so much an un-disciplining of dance through critique, but rather an exploration of how we are in our bodies, Koroneho engages with the performance of community through his work. *Tua o Te Arai*, returns to the customary space of *te atamira*, where the body of the deceased was part of a ritual recomposition through practices of *te hauhunga* (exhuming and cleansing bones). Koroneho's research seeks to re-affirm, not so much these now disappeared practices of exhuming bodies and recomposing their remains, but the sense of a common shared space that they activated.

Anything can be considered bloody if you think from inside the body. Choreographer Tru Paraha's chapter *& darkness* recalibrates simplistic notions of embodiment to consider bodies as post-human material entities always at the edge of horrors' precipice, inscribed by darkness as much as by light. In Paraha's writing, the affects of performance are translated to text with attention to the poetics, spatiality and graphic features of the page. This stylistic play allows the process of reading to be performative and active, at the same time the space to draw meaning out of material remains open and endless. Paraha fractures the stuff of type into blocks of light held by darkness, or darkness punctuated in light with the blackness of ink paralleling the blood in your hands sensing through to the touch of paper in an "obliterative palimpsest of choreo-graphic blackening." Paraha's work has clear parallels with André Lepecki's discussion of speculative choreographies of blackness, "Speculative theory opens our encounter with darkness to estranged territories advancing concerns for a shadow side of life, unbearable recesses in a cracked world, toward even more bewildering notions of a world without human."

Alissa Mello's chapter, *Body Material, Material Bodies* discusses the contribution of choreographer Mary Underwood in the work of Company Phillipe Genty, a company that is internationally renowned for their creative and technical innovation in experimental performance and interdisciplinary practice. Mello outlines how Underwood's experience in diverse dance techniques has played a central (and widely under-rated) role in developing the idiosyncratic performance language of Company Phillipe Genty. This chapter clearly articulates how Underwood's approach to embodied practice has brought the conceptual, dramatic and narrative skills of Phillipe Genty's work into experimentation with kinaesthetic and spatial forms, leading to work that creates unique connections between

performance vocabularies. Mello describes specific interdisciplinary workshop tasks for diverse creative specialists (puppeteers, actors, dancers). Her descriptions provide insight into methods of rehearsal process that generate dynamic collaborative relationships and unsettle disciplinary boundaries.

Whether the gatekeepers of our creative institutions enable and encourage undisciplined approaches to artistry or not, many parts of our work are being undisciplined for us, as the rise and rise of screen based, virtual cultures reshape practices, audiences and means of production. Becca Woods' stumble *Choreoauratics: An unwiring* evokes digital choreographic methods that actively resist the scopic dominance of much screen-based dance work, prioritizing "listening as a counterpoint to the vision-centred and highly mediatized capitalist culture we inhabit." Wood examines how sound-and-site-based, participatory choreography can be enabled through digital sound based choreographies, focussing on somatic and sensory modes of engagement. Wood's dance work creates ephemeral communities of dancers, who together move through sophisticated choreographies of sensing and moving in works that are both improvised and choreographed, pre-determined and inviting of new possibility.

Caroline Broadhead and Angela Woodhouse discuss choreographic methods that untether dance from conventional vocabularies of motion to amplify intensity in "minute yet charged interactions," with subtle movement and physical touch between dancers and audiences. Their chapter *Between: Intimacy and Spectacle in Dialogue* evokes an ontology of dance in which an intensity of feeling and relationship is organized in subtle yet carefully structured passages. In *What would it be, if it didn't have to be like that? Undisciplining the travel of dance ideas in the neo-liberal university* Jenny Roche and Alys Longley present a series of poetic stumbles regarding expected academic structures for collaborating, sharing knowledge, and defining research, prioritising somatic, improvisational and choreographic thinking in their account of shared research practices. This stumble reflects on processes of conditioning toward success in the university system and asks, "What happens when we don't behave? What happens when we find integrity in resisting the tropes of institutional properness? What is radical in this context?"

Rules, in contemporary choreographic practice are often broken. For to make a dance or a performance you have to deal with the reality of what it is to make a dance or a performance, beyond the process of coming up with an idea. Practitioner writing in this volume draws attention to, not only practice or choreographic thinking, but the processual corporeal logics of the work through affective and empathetic relations. Nisha

Madhan discusses contemporary participatory performance in the context of Jacques Ranciére's concept of performance as assembly, bringing bodies together in a shared place and time. Critiquing the manipulation of the audience as participant by privileged performers who confer a kind of fake autonomy on audience members invited to perform with them, Madhan discusses the gentle inter-relational operations at stake in work by Auckland-based performance artists val smith and Sean Curham. Through uncertain, volatile and subtle operations, these artists, she contends, propose a benign rebellion, one in which the political is staged through empathic relation rather than the exertion of power over the audience. What Madhan brings to awareness is the unsettling of the relation between performer and participating audience within collective events in which both are implicated through forms of agency that are porous and in flux.

Gentling the choreographic is a method also explored in Christina Houghton's stumble, *Don't Hold your Breath: Choreographing Lilos and Life Rafts*. Houghton's serious play, involving water-based safety drills with lilos, follows a methodology that responds to Efva Lilja's call for artists to engage in exercises that activate a role for them akin to being survivors in troubled times.[3] Participants in Houghton's exercises and drills listen attentively, the usual sense of urgency that accompanies such drills is softened with humour and a lightness of enquiry drawing upon somatic and kinesthetic technologies of care. As a further instance of undoing the disciplining of performer and audience relation, Houghton explores the potential for being-with as fulfilling what Lepecki describes as choreo-political in the contemporary present.

For both Madhan and Houghton, the political is not given in advance but is a kind of experiment. Their work calls for evidencing how the political emerges through relations, between people, between people and things, and between us and the weather. It comes into the world through experience. Dissensual and non-policed, they propose techniques for reinventing choreography as, following Lepecki's description of the choreo-political, the possibility for the political to emerge.[4]

For Janine Randerson, the choreo-political can be found or discovered through an attunement to the non-human biota of our rapidly technologizing world. Discussing site-based augmented choreography by Zahra Killeen-Chance, *Breath of Air (Overpass),* and the screen dance and machine vision

[3] Lilja, Efva, 'Artistic Creation in Troubled Times' Accessed 29th Sept. 2017. http://www.radionz.co.nz/concert/programmes/upbeat/audio/201806684/artistic-creation-in-troubled-times.

[4] André Lepecki, "Choreopolice and Choreopolitics of, the task of the dancer," *The Drama Review* 57, no. 4 (2013): 14.

work, *Study # 1* and *Study # 2,* by Jennifer Nikolai and Gregory Bennett, Randerson draws attention to the invisible flows of energy that swirl beyond the edges of the body. Her essay brings together the work of Vilém Flusser on the universe of technical images, and Rosi Braidotti's post-humanism to articulate how such work, generated in proximity of technology, can be read through an attunement to the ambience generated by the less visible qualities of particles that "dance" as air, atmosphere, sound waves, and through the invisible apparatus of the camera. Randerson proposes we consider the choreo-political dimensions of this "dance," through the non-human agency of flows as a further dimension of experience that brings about a state of attunement that is non-hierarchical and beyond the binaries of representational apparatus.

For Michel Foucault, the intellectual's role is not to report on the truth but "to struggle against the forms of power that transform us into its object and instrument."[5] The political anatomy of a "discipline" can be seen to mould the postures, attitudes and sensibilities of those who are subject to it. In this way, disciplinary techniques can be both coercive and productive. Disciplinary techniques in the fields of writing, dance and film operate in Rhea Speights contribution to this volume as the catalyst for a cross-talk highlighting the ways in which we might perform the post-disciplinary. In *The Carpet,* Speights uses conversation, between herself as a film-maker and herself as a dancer, to deconstruct patterns of fixity between disciplinary registers, uncoupling them and, at the same time seeking to explore the potential for new methods of making and experimenting in the space between.

Writerly and corporeal gestures that propose a kinetics of un-disciplining the canon come together in the mobilising of twentieth century dance history's hidden stories. *Shouting Across the Centuries: Affective archives and the politics of transmission*, takes hold of Foucault's claim that the new can be discovered in the returns of history. Proposing an "insistent dialogue," Brown explores the possibilities of returning to the diasporic traces of the Gertrud Bodenwieser method of Central European Ausdruckstanz as a method of "release" from historical fictions which perpetuate injurious discourses of erasure. Beyond the mastery of a discipline, Brown's project develops new gestures and offers for the future, through a prosthetic extension of history, as a form of corporeal genealogy in relation to embodied archives and dancers' agency.

[5] "Intellectuals and power: A conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze" https://libcom.org/library/intellectuals-power-a-conversation-between-michel-foucault-and-gilles-deleuze accessed 15th November 2016.

Embodied knowledge operates as homage and/or critique in many of the writings in this volume as they zig-zag transversally between movements, actions, pedagogies, critical theories, and artistic processes. But what is the status of these diverse ways of thinking through dancing within the academic, community-based, professional and educational contexts they are located within?

Recent debates in dance studies identify tensions between dance as art and dancing as culture.[6] The growth of Performance Studies has seen dance as a medium-specific discipline challenged by a renewed emphasis on the performativity of things as much as bodies. At the same time, there is an ongoing divide in many dance programmes between an emphasis on Western Theatre Dance, read as "contemporary dance," and "cultural dance" approaches to the field.[7] In this book, contemporary practitioners such as Moana Nepia, Yuki Kihara, Jochen Roller and Charles Koroneho, blur distinctions between ethnographic and choreographic, between professional and community, between theory and practice.

Theory and practice operate co-extensively in Māori contexts, and are rooted in the environment; in landscapes, seascapes, and cosmological narratives, and in genealogies of knowledge transmitted through oral and performative traditions. The weaving of words, actions and language through the land and in the physical pathways of learning the student embarks upon frame the post-disciplinary, not as something new, but ancient and enduring in indigenous Māori ontology. One way of understanding "theory" in this context is as *whai whakaaro,* which literally translates as "to follow the thought." Emerging as it does through an event initiated in Aotearoa New Zealand, many of the essays in this collection engage with this conceptual space. The concluding essay in this collection by Māori scholar and artist Moana Nepia, returns us to the *powhiri* (Māori welcome) that initiated the Undisciplining Dance Symposium, at the University of Auckland's Waipapa Marae. Nepia took up the *wero* or challenge in the question of what it is to become undisciplined in his opening keynote performance. Nepia's practice and thinking, developed here in essay form, is rooted in *mātauranga* and *tikanga Māori*, in particular the Māori concept of void, *Te Kore*. Māori time-space, characterised by interconnectedness expressed as movement and positioning through *whakapapa,* a genealogical paradigm, is positioned here by Nepia as an invitation to contemporary practitioners and scholars into a conceptual-

[6] Solomon, Noémie, "Inside/Beside Dance Studies: A Conversation: Mellon Dance Studies in/and the Humanities," *Dance Research Journal* 45, no. 3 (December 2013): 5-28.

[7] Ibid, Manning, S. 8.

corporeal-divine space that acknowledges and reconciles ancestral, cosmological and contemporary dimensions of experience. At the same time, he calls for accommodation of the maverick and the strange in this concluding essay that resonates with his performative voice.

Dancing, and especially the patterning of movement we call choreography is understood here as a mode of theorizing. The essays contained in this volume illuminate how dance practice theorizes corporeality, identity, otherness, non-material agencies, the taking place of performance and its relations with the divine. This vision of the field, as an undisciplined discipline, posits that dance studies differs in kind from other modes of enquiry within the humanities and social sciences. And, it proposes that creative documentation and performative writing is a way to mark that difference. Scholarship in this context has something to learn *from* the wisdom of the body as it directs our attention to contemporary issues of inclusion, diversity, indigeneity, radical forms of expression, hidden histories and movements of the choreo-political.

This un-disciplining of the discipline of dance proposes a choreo-politics of simultaneity. In resisting disciplinary silos, in working in the spaces between, matrices of exclusionary practices are contested and we open new "geometric possibilities"[8] through unbinding limits to thought. This vibratory scholarship draws upon bodily sensation, movement memories and embodied difference to mark a new kind of work. Beyond the drive for mastery we move into unknown and partial spaces. Like Koroneho's vivid articulation of how movement operates in ceremonies that activate space between the dead and the living, there is movement at the threshold between.

If dance studies as a field draws upon diverse contexts, knowledges and histories, it is also in the twenty-first century an assemblage of corporealities, agencies, environments and designs, both human and non-human. The growth of practitioner-scholars, the impact of somatic approaches to dance, performance studies and indigenous ontologies are strongly in evidence in these writings as they address the un-disciplining of discipline. Returning to Dempster's call to think with and through performance, we propose a model of scholarship that foregrounds movement, and blooded thought as the ontological ground of (un)knowing.[9]

The prefix "un" in our title, *Undisciplining Dance* and in this introduction, *(Un)knowing Dancing,* proposes an opposing force of tension to what is assumed by the noun discipline and the verb knowing.

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[8] Donna Jeanne Haraway, 'A Cyborg Manifesto' in *The Haraway Reader*. (New York, Routledge, 2004) 32.

[9] Dempster, ibid.

Like a dance that is never singular, but always moving in at least two directions or orientations of space at once, these terms acknowledge that the construction of dance knowledge through an emerging process that combines somatic-corporeal, material, conceptual, ancestral, situated and choreo-political dimensions, seldom follows the sequence of disciplinary norms in the humanities and social sciences. Whereas to be an academic conventionally requires a thorough-going knowledge of one's discipline, its contexts and discourses, to make and create through dancing requires a continuous practice and a reflexive process of questioning and reconfiguring the registers of the discourse itself. Deborah Hay uses the analogy of house renovation to describe this process:

> The questions that guide me through a dance are like the tools one would use for renovating an already existing house. Like a screwdriver being turned counter-clockwise, or a crow bar prying boards free from a wall, the dancer applies the questions to re-choreograph his/her perceived relationship to him/herself, the audience, space, time, and the instantaneous awareness of any of these combined experiences. The questions help uproot behaviour that gathers experimentally and/or experientially.[10]

Choreographic artists like Hay see their practice as a form of enablement for the invisible perceptual potentials of the body's conscious articulation of space and time. This rigorous process arising from a fidelity to practice and a reflexive engagement with what constitutes that practice involves unlearning how to dance as much as undoing the accretions of habitual thought patterns and movement codes. It does not presuppose an acquaintance with past models of practice or contemporary theory and philosophy, although these may help contextualize that practice and provide resources for facilitating the kind of critical and tacit knowledge that supports the construction, performance, teaching and reading of dances. Like Hay's description of her process, dance studies as a field entered the academy relatively recently and has been tasked with renovating an already existing house of knowledge. The "un" in un-disciplining in this context might be less a force of negative opposition than a turning, corkscrewing, spiralling action that rotates, releases and reconfigures our critical and creative "homes."

[10] Deborah Hay, "How do I recognize my choreography?" (2007.) *The Deborah Hay Dance Company*. http://www.deborahhay.com/Notes_how_do_I.html.

It was twentieth-century Anglo-American discourses of modernism and postmodernism that created the "canon" for dance studies scholarship into the 1990s. However in the twenty-first century, claims of "racial blindness" have led to critiques of the historical hold of dance modernism on dance studies as a field.[11] Calls for both interdisciplinary and medium-specific dance research, challenge us to engage critically and imaginatively with the specificity of choreographed movement and the publics it addresses. Internationally, a diversified and decentred dance studies field embraces non-Western approaches to dance making and performances of (un)knowing. Dancers working in University programmes today draw on intellectual traditions other than those of Western modernism, including the relational thinking characteristic of Māori and other Pacific life worlds.

While we can come to know difference through dancing as a practice of somatic intelligence and interdisciplinary potential, the difficulty remains in getting this epistemological difference acknowledged and understood by the gatekeepers and regulators of academia. Predecessors chose to "play the game" and work within institutional constraints to change regulations and shape the professionalization of the field. They legitimized the discipline by relying on the canon of Western theatre dance, but this strategy was one of losing a place of openness "outside" what is known and enunciated by established discourses.

If dance studies is to find ways to theorize through states of performance marked by disorientation, instability, not-knowing, and indeterminacy in order that we might learn from them, how might it also become attentive to different of ways of knowing, including cosmological thinking in the worlding of dance? Our hope is that the multifarious responses to the question of un-disciplining dance in these essays activates further dancing as serious play in the ebb, flow, and interruption of the spaces between academic and non-academic contexts, between scholarly and community practitioners, between professionals and non-professionals, and, crucially, between non-Western and Western forms of dance. If, as Dempster (citing Threadgold 1996) claims, becoming "disciplined" means being able to enact successfully the favoured discourses and narratives of the academic field and its genres, then we can also ask how doubt, uncertainty, and failure might create disorientation and loss of place, simultaneously offering challenging ways to learn of new potentialities within and across disciplines as well as genres of dance.

[11] Ramsay Burt, "The Specter of Interdisciplinarity" *Dance Research Journal* 41, no. 1 (2009): 3–22.

An evolving world demands continuously adaptable forms of creativity, it also demands recognition of the redundancy of those discourses that inhibit our ability to bring about a better future. Dance as research probes the angles and rhythms at the interfaces of performing bodies and performatively-constructed worlds. We overcome the division between thought and action through body gesture. The silent understanding of a gesture allows for the discovery of forgotten and misrecognised movements, shedding a different light on our corporeal generation, inventing new structures of thought.

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CHAPTER ONE

ARTISTS AS FACILITATORS OF CHANGE

EFVA LILJA

The setting: When the audience enter they hear some "feel good" music, images projected on the screen, drawings and a lot of paper on the floor (the script from my last book), a monitor showing the documentation of The Art of Dance in a Frozen Landscape (Arctic Ocean 2002), a music stand holding my text and some of my books, the score from my performance on the floor, handwritten text (my script for the talk) on transparent thin paper, me dancing, making drawings and more… a multitude of impressions. Just like in daily life.

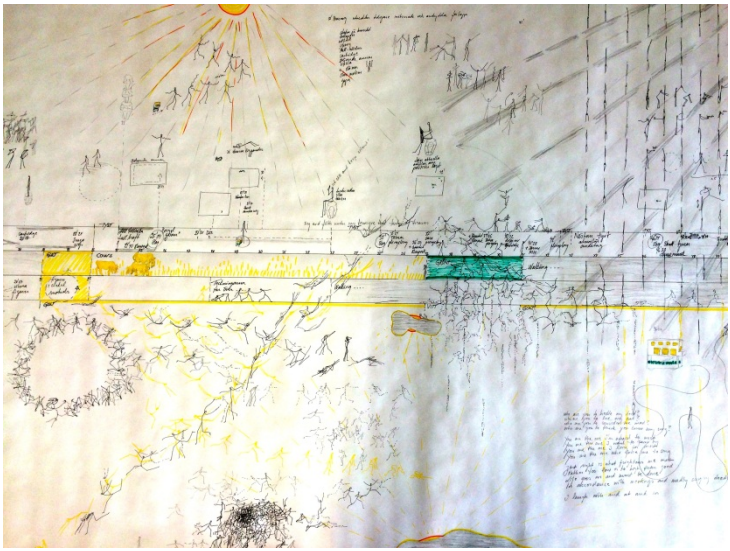

Figure 1.1 Efva Lilja, excerpt from the score *A House, A Cow, A Woman*, solo performance, 2015.

Whispering, squatting downstage left: The mists of what has been rise from the ground. The dead are taking a rest. Being able to lean on all they have said and done is a good thing, but what is it I have to do? It is the HERE and NOW I have at my disposal. It is now I am. All the rest will be played out in the future.

I am constantly reminded that the now I am living is the outcome of what I have previously lived and thought. What other people have lived and learnt. No single person can ever begin their life without baggage, nor can they live that life - or conclude it - without the past being present. Furthermore, we are supposed to live this now on the understanding that it will also determine what is to come, the future. Our existences, the world we live in, encompass memories, experiences and dreams about the future. It is in encountering this that we come into being. I inhabit an in-between space, the space between what was and what will be, the space between the person I was and the one I will be. History often blinds you. We dress conventions up as traditional figures and hesitate before the innovative, as if we are encountering a foreign language. Choreography becomes textual, a way of inscribing movement into the contemporary.

Walking in a circle: introducing myself and my plan for the talk.

Whispering, squatting centre stage, facing back: Dependence. We are all dependent. We human beings become human beings by being with other human beings. We are dependent on meeting others in order to catch sight of ourselves, of our ideas, thoughts, opinions and tastes. In my case, I feel that my powerful need to be alone comes from a need to work on all the things that come rushing at me when I encounter other people, impressions, and events. I cannot catch up with myself unless I get time to think about what each new experience amounts to, to feel my way around it, to try it out. I keep coming back to the question of meaning. Some people believe in God, I don't. Not believing in God means that I have to profess a different belief or a different view of meaning.

Dancing/humming

Standing by the stand: What makes us human? Perhaps it is our capacity for thought, our ability to communicate, or to love? Perhaps it is our capacity to imagine worlds and situations that are totally different to the ones we find ourselves in from day to day. We can make reality different. All we have to do is find the tools that suit us best, whether it's ideologies, politics, religion or the arts - as long as we don't get stuck and

stay enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is not incidental. As contemporary artists, we seek strategies to influence society through art, arouse individuals to be active and capable of taking a stand, of making a difference. To do this, we must move.

Exercise no. 7: Run barefoot as fast as you can in a small room. Put on good shoes. Run the fastest you can, as far as you can, across an open space. Walk back in and, standing still, express your experience of running.

Do it.

Stillness is the foundation of all movement. Stillness offers rest and awards our thoughts some space. To depart from stillness, you need a trigger. You may be out of balance, forced to make a movement to avoid falling, you may need an action to still your hunger or you are in a fit of coughing that seizes your entire body with spasms. Or, you are motivated simply by a thought that demands movement - a shift. Thinking pushes you forward, by intuition and other unconscious strategies.

We must work to expose alternative expressions, to bring spatial as well as conceptual sites into dialogue with both the contemporary and the traditional, to find enhanced living in movement. That is how attention is sharpened. That is how alternative expressions are created. The act of living embodied in and through movement. We see, hear and feel movements that are space and time at the same time. Some of that is dance.

Walking: To live and be observant demands training. Part of the training is undressing. *Taking my shoes and socks off.* The body is exposed to impressions that activate all the senses. The receptors on your skin react to mild or violent touch, to heat or frost. Your reaction is movement. You observe and read your surroundings, shifts in the terrain or in events, and respond with movement. You hear and react by moving. The body expresses experiences through movement. Training your sensitivity, your attention and your ability to move is a precondition for applying what you have lived, and for retelling this with new imagery and narratives. A measure of distraction serves to obstruct a precipitous clarity.

Standing on paper/ crumpling paper with my hands. In a loud voice: I choreograph the processes of thinking, transforming them into linguistic and audible layers. Through choreographed movement I speak of experiences, from experience, about the hierarchies that guide language, art and everyday life, about infrastructure, power and about who owns the right of interpretation. HALLO – CAN YOU HEAR ME? Much of this

daily brain wracking is unarticulated, a given state like breathing or coughing. Through observation of actions, by documenting, drawing, writing, dancing and engaging in dialogue with others, I train myself in the techniques of unmasking.

Singing something… dancing…
Putting socks and shoes on

Standing by the stand: Working is a way of dealing with imbalances. Choreography offers tools for the composition of physical and cognitive movements. Through choreographic actions we are stimulated to think beyond the commonplace, beyond what we have already seen and learnt to believe. All our senses are activated to see other improbabilities than those our so-called reality offers. Choreography operates dialectically and discursively; altering, preserving and transforming as a proactive artistic dimension in society. It offers a wealth of linguistic expressions for action, thought, reflection and awareness. You think and act through movement. Language has its abode in the body that is the foundation for thinking. Choreography is the practice of thinking transformed into survival strategies through action.

Talking/humming: Through these actions we unfold all the creases in the juxtaposition of layers that block our view. A well-developed ability to move, to observe movements, offers a language and a voice to the individual that is the foundation of democracy. Whoever listens carefully, will hear and interpret the on-going world and will be able to express whatever creates new movements. Whoever is in command of choreographic techniques can make use of experiences, insights, questioning and other strategies to influence others.

Talking normal: Dance and choreography are often referred to as silent art forms, since we are expected to work outside of verbal or literary formats. The presumption is that those who do not speak are silent. This is underpinned by how the dancer's identity is formed, generally dominated by physical skills training based on imitation and repetition. Studios are still equipped with mirrors to certify the physical progress. Dancers are to this day mostly supposed to work from the idea that the body is their only tool. This attitude is devastating, undermining both the dancer's confidence and understanding of the self. The dancer turns silent, since she is not expected to have a voice.

White book page 100, mild voice: The body is closing. It is fogging over with fatigue and the thought is blinded when only the eyes are open. I can hear myself speaking but not what about. Everybody is just sitting and sitting and sitting. My body is deaf and numbed. There is neither sensitivity nor listening left, just silent, muted sitting. When I've finally given up, the thought starts moving. It leaves the sitting, tired, closed-in, deaf and numbed body where it is and starts moving about freely, around and toward other tired sitters.

Walking: The thought is I and it is flying. In flight I can hear what others think. In this ugly, boring, unidentifiable environment the tired think of food, of sex and of love. The sound is pleasant. Pleasant mixed with ugly, good with bad. I sing when I fly around to drown what I don't want to hear. There is some thinking that nauseates me. La la la la la la la.

Standing new position upstage left: I concentrate on landing within myself. Back into my body. Fatigue has a different meaning after the flight and it turns into a pretext for sleep. If I just dare fall asleep the dream will take over and I can invite myself into other people's thoughts. Then we can enjoy food, sex and love together. Or else I will dance.

The body is fogging over with fatigue. The thought is blinded when only the eyes are open. I'm sitting again, so bored that I'm suddenly unable to even imagine a dream.

Exercise no. 11: Go for a swim. Try to remember what you last did, but under water.

Do it.

Standing centre stage: I sometimes get it into my head that there are a limited number of words, a limited number of movements. Having used them up, I find myself without a language. Mute. Silence and stillness take over. What then? No poetry, no songs, no conversation; arguments, laughter or cries for help no longer to be heard. No dance, no steps; no climbing, rolling or making love. One could imagine that it all continues inside the body as inner thoughts or movements. You cannot laugh without movement, but can you cry? Tears travelling down my cheek, is that movement?

Movement challenges stillness to a fight! Words lock in movements. That is why they sometimes must be swallowed and exchanged for listening, to give movements meaning. Choreography becomes a text that fades away and is blotted out by a new one. What's the worst thing that can happen? Do what you want, and you'll end up using clichés. There is no freedom without limitations.

Every day bears witness to cruelties, worse than anything imaginable even in the world of horror movies. This hurts. Watching images far beyond any concept of civilization and culture, reading words that describe these events and conditions, it hurts. Even watching people's shortcomings on my everyday bus journey, it hurts. Hearing all those silent screams. Where does it take us, this inner movement?

Maybe it is futile to waste time on hypothetical questions. But somehow it helps me value words and movements I actually need and reduce the use of those that are unnecessary. Maybe it helps me rephrase the practice of thinking, talking and doing, in a process of peeling away the body's protective barriers, so that I, through choreography, can expose something else with dance.

Dance

Standing by the stand: Reality must be made real, reframed into alternative imagery and events that can motivate living. Through choreographic action we are stimulated to think beyond what has been said, beyond what we have already seen, beyond what we think we know. All our senses are activated by other incomprehensibilities than those presented by so-called reality for us to decipher. Language lives in the body, which moves us into thinking.

Walking: So – what about research? Knowledge is power. We have to have knowledge about what has been, about what underpins the culture we live in, about what underpins our ideas of right and wrong, of goodness or of art, if we are to be able to ask questions and contribute to change. Artists engaged in research create peer environments that hone our ability to critically reflect upon each other's practices, to share processes and learn about other methods. This in turn puts new demands on society's systems of governance.

Standing: The artistic researcher develops art, artistic education and insists also on a redefinition of markets and commercial values. This is how education, research and the profession are woven together. Conventions from a distant past are a well-packaged burden we carry with us. Art and artistic research create movements, which develop in a cultural and political environment where conventions are questioned and new traditions established. Innovative art keeps its focus on the contemporary and shines its strongest light towards the future. Through research we can take over the right of interpretation and assume responsibility over questions where art may hold the answer.

Closer to the audience: A general definition of scientific research would be 'A process by which systematic work can generate new insights and increased knowledge,' or as in the Frascati Manual definition: 'Creative work undertaken on systematic basis.' These definitions can include also artistic research if you accept artistic methodologies as 'systematic work.' To me artistic research is research conducted with artistic practice as its base and artistic practice as its object, or in a more simple way: artistic research is research conducted by artists, who research within and through the arts. Artistic methodologies are applied and the end result is presented in the way that is best suited for the content and theme of the project. It may be as a performance, a concert or an exhibition, a text or a mixture of different media. The research can take place within groups with cross-disciplinary and/or scientific competences or as a solitary effort. The process and the results are documented and made available for peers, in this case colleagues with relevant competences from the same field (of study/art form/discipline), who meet in the research environment for an exchange of views, project reviews and critical dialogue.

INVITE AUDIENCE ON STAGE for a close encounter – then back again

Figure 1.2. Efva Lilja, drawing, ink and spray paint on paper 2015.

There are those who find new ways of organizing and producing art within peer networks that seek to deepen knowledge and improve conditions; others turn to art institutions for support; others yet enter the academic world to do research. We artists as researchers can also claim that it is artistic research that adds legitimacy to the artistic process as a method and acceptance to a complimentary definition of knowledge. Research is simply a way to wider knowledge and insights about what we want to know and a way to improve as artists.

Exercise no. 88: Convince yourself that you can manage everything you want to do if you just do it one thing at a time. One thing at a time.

Do it.

Exercise no. 77: Give yourself a chance.
Do it.

Back to centre position: Asking questions and the desire to change something demand in their turn a form of risk-taking, which means that I must be prepared to fail. Risk-taking and the sense of "threat" have to do with the understanding that what I am and do is an extremely tiny part of existence. Both life and dance have existed before and will exist after I have gone. Experiencing one's smallness becomes part of a vast process of doubt, which can whisk me away into a sense of meaninglessness. Time and time again I have to confront my notions of what is creative, of and about the world, by means of the experiences I create out of it.

There is so much to tell, affirm, question and portray. What does it mean to know the same as others? If we stand opposite each other without speaking, can I influence the encounter with my mind? Or, if I close my eyes and smell your shoulder, will I be able to perceive what I am looking for? What other methods are there? How do people come together?

Whispering, squatting, downstage right:
Consciousness builds a wall between us, between self and the other. The fabric of our social lives requires us to act and behave rationally, but for this there is a price to pay. The only possible response must be to soldier on. We look around us and try to understand what is going on, who other people are, what they are like. We are all thrust helplessly into loneliness. That solitude is our home, which we make bearable or even pleasurable, in all kinds of different ways. Existence can be like perception or resemble a problem formulated by our conscious minds.

Standing by the stand: Creativity presupposes dissatisfaction with current conditions. You want something more, something beyond what you already know, feel and have. If you feel doubt, you have to look for answers. If you are hungry, you must make something to eat. If you were dissatisfied, you would like to do something about it. If you do not like what you see, you have to create alternative images. So let us start from the premise that we should defend sensitivity, attentiveness, questioning and the possibility of doubt.

The creative act is inseparably linked to a degree of torment. It requires willpower. We know that as soon as someone has thought an idea somewhere this affects the stream of my own thoughts. The same thing

applies to movement. Nothing happens in isolation or as something entirely unique. What comes into being in thought and action takes on existence against the background of what has been.

Talking/humming: The passage of time and the experiences we have gone through are what we use to design our internal spaces. The external ones are shaped by politics, ideas about the construction of society and school, for example. The external spaces determine a great deal of the evolution of the internal ones. Our creativity develops in relation to the support or opposition offered by space.

Talking normal: A major threat to creativity is posed by the obstructive nature of clarification: where the middle way holds sway and the goal is overshadowed by the utilitarian aspect. This makes our awareness less acute, and we are reduced to using simplified and more acceptable solutions out of an erroneous ambition to make the middle ground palatable for everybody. Misguided benevolence renders people passive and indifference comes to reign over the aestheticized surface of a blended and jumbled consensus that has as its sole aim to reflect the expectations of the world around us. Creativity requires attentive observation as well as a kind of recognition of the madness inside us. An affirmation of the ugly as well as the beautiful, of the violent, of passion or of the poetry peculiar to silence. Without this, existence loses its meaning.

Going to a corner, White book p.25, mild voice: Messing about and getting dusted by bad memories only to occasionally be cleansed by good ones feels suspect. Storages should be sealed. Storages should be shrunk to an impenetrable substance. All colours, scents, materials and sizes should melt down so that no one can remember. What is, is what I see. Nothing else can intrude (or penetrate) to disturb you. Hooray!

Back to centre position by the stand: Do you understand what I am not saying? It's absolutely fine if you feel doubt, but being present is essential. Your presence gives dance meaning. What does it mean, then, to be present? Why do I find it easier to be present in my body than in my mind? Perhaps this is owing to inertia, that sluggishness or slowness of the body moving through time and space. Slowness relative to the flightiness of thought. The mind can change faster than the capacity of our awareness to perceive what is going on. The body as matter and the mind as memory. Your body is easier to remember than your name.

We work with embodied experience. We acquire our skills by "doing". This bodily, practical foundation of knowledge and skills can then be developed by us from the perspective of theory – but it is the practical dimension of the project in particular that generates insight and provides the work with its content and meaning. The art of dance constitutes a field

in which our need for both emotional and intellectual stimulus can be given free rein. It's performative and relates to re-ritualization, a way of re-thinking the present. Dance as a tool for creating reality anew, to make it even more real, to make it possible to live.

Every day we create ourselves anew. Who am I today? Why? We step into our separate living spaces and look around. Tired – happy – hungry – thinking – feeling… strong-willed or without any willpower. Nothing is predetermined. Every day a process of examination begins that is without qualification. It takes time. What do we discover? That varies. Sometimes nothing more than the confirmation of what we already know. Sometimes wonderful things, sometimes depressing insights about our inadequacies and shortcomings. Sometimes things that are completely incomprehensible - which can be so provocative they provide energy for several days (or years) of work. That is how daily life is. The world, or reality, is coloured by our thoughts. If we concentrate on thinking good thoughts, the colours are different than when we despair.

White book p.78. Mild voice that turns to loud…: Hell it's high! My eyes are swimming. My body empties. Birds fly under me. The wind is strong and ice cold. I sing out loud, no I scream! All of it to get rid of fear and grip the instant. Hell it's high! Must save my breath. Take a breather. How much space should I allow for fear? There is a little fear both here and there. Many threats. Sometimes I'm afraid of the dark. Sometimes a fear of being beaten. Often I'm afraid of the evil in man, cowardice or ugliness. Sometimes I'm afraid of fire, afraid that all I know and all I am will be destroyed by fire. The body hardens. My breathing comes to a halt. All outside sound is cut off and all inside is roaring; it is almost unbearable.

Every day we have to re-acquire our creativity, re-acquire movement and its communicative capacity. The body is never mute. We stand, walk, look, close our eyes and laugh… We reach out a hand. We take pleasure in touching or are revolted by an undesired contact. We live. We do. Let us grab hold of those imaginations and live them. Let us put our efforts into our various visions. Let us think about what is wonderful and positive in this challenge and every now and then put aside the resistance of the body and the inadequacy of the mind.

Exercise no 57: Make friends with an enemy.
Do it.

Standing: A system is made up of a number of components, which interact towards a common goal. Different systems are separated by real

and fictive boundaries. Many of these boundaries are arbitrary, others permanent by tradition and convention. In artistic practice this becomes obvious, not least in terms of bureaucratic rules that regulate and guide activities and markets. They are in turn dependent on the perceived position of art and the artist in society, in our culture as well as in our own aspirations as artists.

We need to question established truths, which limit and demarcate attitudes towards artistic representation. We must think positively and present constructive alternatives when the systems are faulty.

Whisper/squatting: It is easy to trip up one another with mistrust, defense of old conventions and flirting with those we define as bigwigs, instead of speaking up, offering ideas about how it should be, what we need to work, research, live… We mustn't be afraid. *Singing*….

Standing: Innovative activities develop the collective memory. Art engages, activates and gives many people a voice. At its best, contemporary art integrates and creates participation, dialogue and activity through new forms of presentation and representation. When we have managed to create systems that favour our needs, we must be able to take responsibility for them. Many artists shy from responsibility, abdicate and blame others for systemic malfunction and political failures, cowardly escaping through loopholes in democratic structures that should work for us, not against.

We must choose to tackle what is known as the system from a conviction that everything is affected by our choices in the meeting with fellows and events over a lifespan. If we take a mild view, envy is softened, inabilities and even stupidity are perceived as less frightening. By always training to think positively and focus on possibilities, we make an impact on 'him/her/the other' and their systems, just as we force ourselves to a welcome that makes others feel well. We must dare to chip away and shake loose that which conserves, prise into the armour and raise the belief in intuition, lust and curiosity as driving forces. Good demarcations stimulate, poor demarcations limit. Other decisive factors for our ability to live creatively and responsibly are time, mental space and relevant tools. If you have all of that, you just need courage.

Artists are facilitators of change. We are the bearers of an enormous body of knowledge, which needs to be communicated, reflected on and analyzed critically in our encounters with others. Our skills and knowledge may be rejected or adopted or dressed up in a different form. The contribution to be made by the encounter is based on enjoyment, desire and educational skills, on trust, respect and mutual ability. Why else would we meet? Love's conversation is – dance.

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CHAPTER TWO

BREATH OF AIR

ZAHRA KILLEEN-CHANCE

How can performance be exposed as a self-actualizing, dynamic system that destabilizes meaning, and challenges the notion of a stable presence by highlighting dynamic relationships between binary values?

Figure 2.1 Zahra Killeen-Chance, *Breath of Air* 2015. Oceanic Performance Biennial, Te Vara Nui, Rarotonga. Photograph by Noel Meek.

Breath of Air is a performance work, which seeks to disrupt oppositional binaries such as seen and unseen, ocularity and aurality, embodiment and technology.

Breath of Air seeks to challenge the logocentric notion that a performance represents a stable, pre-existing ideal. Derrida's strategies of deconstruction provide a framework for contesting classical representation, which elevates the ideals of presence, idealism, and ocularity at the expense of absence, embodiment, aurality. My performance does not seek to invert these values, but rather to destabilise them in order to lead the spectator into a paradoxical realm of dynamic, emergent relations, and multiple meanings.

Breath of Air foregrounds my breath in order to decentre the dominance of ocularcentrism, and draw attention to the dynamic relationship between our sense of sight and our sense of hearing. Breath is the constant, ongoing dynamic between the organism that we are, and the living world that we are in. It entails a reciprocal exchange between our environment and our bodies, and it is a reminder that our relationship to the world is part of a complex dynamic system.

Don Ihde contends, "a deliberate de-centring of visualism" is necessary "in order to point up the overlooked and the unheard." The "ultimate aim is not to replace vision as such with listening as such. Its more profound aim is to move from the present with all its taken-for-granted beliefs about vision and experience and step by step, to move toward a radically different understanding of experience, one which has its roots in a phenomenology of auditory experience."[1]

[1] Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of* Sound (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007), 15.

Figure 2.2 Zahra Killeen-Chance, *Breath of Air,* 2015.
Oceanic Performance Biennial, Te Vara Nui, Rarotonga. Photograph by Noel Meek.

My performance uses amplified live breathing and pre-recorded breath scores singularly and in combination to bring attention to the sounds of the corporeal performing body. This "auditory turn" does not seek to invert the sight and sound binary and elevate auditory experience, but rather it seeks to bring attention to the relationship between sight and sound. As Ihde argues, our sense of hearing is a relative experience that is embedded in a "global" experiential context.

Ihde observes, "I can focus on my listening and thus make the auditory dimension stand out. But it does so only relatively. I cannot isolate it from its situation, its embedment, its 'background' of global experience. In this sense a 'pure' auditory experience in phenomenology is impossible, but, as a focal dimension of global experience, a concentrated concern with listening is possible."[2]

[2] Ibid., Ihde, 44.

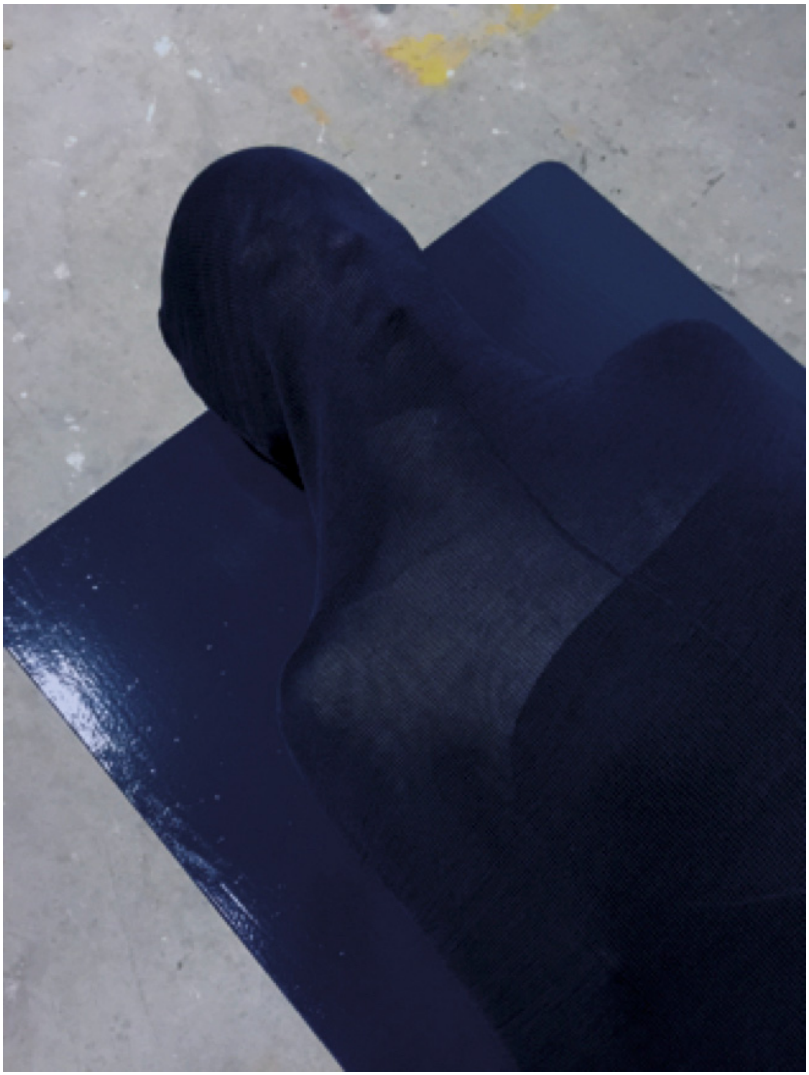

Figure 2.3 Zahra Killeen-Chance, *Still Breathing,* 2015. St Paul Street Galley III, AUT, Auckland. Photograph by Richard Killeen.

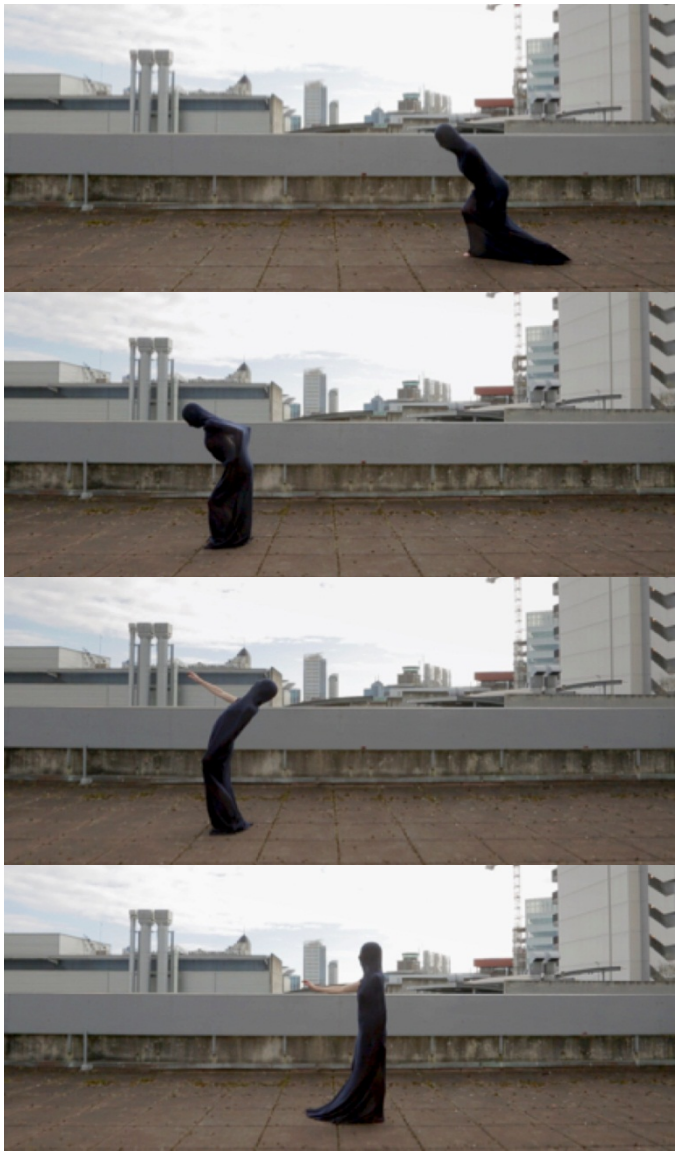

Figure 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7 Zahra Killeen-Chance, *Breath of Air (Rooftop),* 2015. Level 5 WW, AUT, Auckland.

The interrogation of perception across the senses in performance is called a "visuo-sonic practice" by Freya Vass-Rhee.[3] Vass-Rhee argues, that: "An intermodal approach to the study of perception and (inter)action (with)in the world, interrogates the dichotomy between visual and auditory experience, fostering awareness of the connectedness of the senses."[4] I explore the dynamic relationship between the ocular and aural by foregrounding a breath soundscape in relation to the unseen body. This exploration has the potential to disrupt the audience's perspective of the relationship between sound and sight by allowing a re-thinking of what is traditionally hidden and shown in performance.

Figure 2.8 Zahra Killeen-Chance, *Still Life,* 2015. St Paul Street Gallery (foyer), AUT, Auckland. Photograph by Ngahuia Harrison.

[3] Freya Vass-Rhee, "Auditory Turn: William Forsythe's Vocal Choreography," *Dance Chronicle* 33, no. 3 (2010): 389.
[4] Ibid., 410.

The costume for my performance of *Breath of Air* acts as a porous membrane between an anonymous body and the audience. The knit of the costume allows the outline of my body to be clearly seen by the audience but also denies the identity of the body to be shown. This can create a liminal space where I am seen and not seen, identified as a person but anonymous in identity. This liminal space can dismantle the expected boundaries between performer and audience, and resist the dominant narrative. Cindy Baker contends, "By de-emphasizing their own bodies, performance artists refocus attention away from themselves, privilege others' experiences, dismantle boundaries between performer and audience, and disrupt unequal power dynamics in the presentation space."[5] The porous costume challenges logocentric notions of the dominance of presence and sight through highlighting the absent presence of the performer.

[5] Cindy Baker, *The Missing Body: Performance in the Absence of the Artist* (Lethbridge: Minuteman Press Leduc-Nisku, 2014), 6.

Figure 2.9 Zahra Killeen-Chance, *Still Life,* 2015. St Paul Street Gallery (foyer), AUT, Auckland. Photograph by Ngahuia Harrison.

The sustained movements and costume of my performance could evoke a sense of a gradual metamorphosis, an image that could be read as both cocoon and mummy. It is an ambiguous image, which is suspended between cocooned life and mummified death.[6] The double folding motion between cocoon and mummy means that it is not possible to determine what it is one sees. This is a characteristic of the fold, which for Derrida, is irreducible to a single meaning. Derrida argues, "the fold which, being neither one nor the other and both at once, undecidable, *remains* … irreducible to either of its two senses."[7] The sheath of the costume in combination with the movements allow for an ambiguity where I am neither one nor the other, and both at the same time. As a result the audience may experience a sense of un-decidability about my body, which is partially obscured.

Breath of Air is an ongoing research project that investigates different approaches for staging deconstructions using modalities of visibility, stillness and aurality. This is in order to expose a "double, contradictory, undecidable value" that is neither one thing nor the other.[8]

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[6] This paradoxical image was noted by an observer on June 2nd at the critique of *Breath of Air (Test Space)*: 'The fabric also evoked a sense of both mummification and cocoon.'

[7] Original emphasis. Jacques Derrida, "The Double Session," in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 259.

[8] Ibid., 221.

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CHAPTER THREE

UNDISCIPLINED SUBJECTS, UNREGULATED PRACTICES: DANCING IN THE ACADEMY[1]

ELIZABETH DEMPSTER

This is a working paper in process. It is concerned with the changing status of disciplinary knowledges, in dance and performance, in Australian universities. Although I have been working as an academic within the fields of dance and performance studies for some twenty years, it is only relatively recently that I have begun to reflect critically upon the disciplinary identity of dance studies and dance research, and with some more concrete sense of how these endeavours might be engaged differently.

If I have been tardy in my attention to these matters, it may be in part because the institutional structures and contexts within which the disciplines of dance and performance are practiced have been in a process of more or less continuous change since the mid-1980s. However I must acknowledge that the title of this essay does betray a certain nostalgia for a pre-Dawkins era, when dance, if it was present at all in the academy enjoyed an outsider status. There was power and authority, however constrained and transient, in the positioning of dance and performance studies, as "other" to the major disciplines in the arts and humanities.

The situation is more complex today. Dance is in the academy, but its presence in university programs is as much an effect of the pragmatism of university administrations, as it is a reflection of ethical concern for equity and diversity. Dance scholars and researchers in Australian universities know that the disciplinary difference of dance practice and research has not yet been fully embraced and recognized. And despite the recent

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[1] This piece was previously published as Elizabeth Dempster, "Undisciplined Subjects, Unregulated Practices: Dancing in the Academy," *Proceedings of Dance Rebooted: Initializing the Grid, July 1-4, 2004* (Melbourne, Australia, 2004). http://ausdance.org.au/articles/details/undisciplined-subjects-unregulated-practices

expansion of practice-based creative arts research degree programs, we also know that the subjection of dance and performance to textual paradigms has not yet been overturned.

Part 1 Becoming (un)disciplined

I first began teaching in a university context in 1984. It was at Deakin University and I was employed as a movement/dance tutor in what was widely regarded as the most innovative performing arts program in the country at that time. The program was the brainchild of classics scholar and theatre maker James McCaughey and dancer/choreographer Nanette Hassall. The program, offered through the Humanities Faculty, revolved around dynamic, practice-based, heuristic learning. The students made a lot of art.

In this context, dance was not identified as a discrete discipline and it was not offered as a stand-alone subject. However it played an integral role in the multi-disciplinary performing arts major. The Cage/Cunningham aesthetic philosophy informed curriculum development and many of the compositional ideas and strategies explored in the course were borrowed from Cunningham and later post-modern dancers. In this way, avant-garde dance, a body of contemporary artistic research, was drawn into relationship with the academy. Practice-based dance research provided an intellectually rigorous conceptual framework for a contemporary performing arts education, along with many innovative pedagogical activities and experiences.

I should remind the reader that this was back in the 1980s, before the implementation of John Dawkins' reform agenda. There was not much dancing going on in the universities of Australia at that time — *that* happened in Colleges of Advanced Education and Institutes of Technology, where course offerings in dance were expected to be more instrumental, technical and vocational in orientation. I had been working in the Performing Arts Program for a couple of years when a lecturing position came up and I applied. I did not have a post-graduate qualification at that time and still very much thought of myself as an artist first, university teacher second. I met with the dean to discuss my application and we talked about the qualification issue. He said (and I will paraphrase), "It is not so critical that you have a higher degree. What is important is that you demonstrate an aptitude, that we see in you the makings of an academic; you need to be the right kind of person."

In the Humanities Faculty at Deakin in 1986, there still existed a residuum of old collegiate feeling and structure. The corporatization of the

university sector had certainly begun, but was not yet in full force. Something of the culture of the gentleman scholar was still alive. As it happens, I must have persuaded someone that I was, or could learn how to be, the right kind of person. I was offered the lectureship and took up my position as a gentleman scholar in training, albeit a rather oddly proportioned one.

I understood that my task was to develop as a researcher, master the relevant meta-languages and demonstrate competence in the reproduction of valued theoretical registers of writing and commentary. I recall a conversation with two colleagues, one a philosopher of science, the other a historian, who were anxious to establish some grounds for equivalence between our different areas of study and research. "What term defined academic and scholarly engagement in the practice of dance and choreography? Would choreo-*logy* serve as a disciplinary equivalent to musicology, sociology or anthropology?" they asked. No, it would not serve.

Back in 1986 dance was not recognized as an academic discipline; it had no departmental home, unlike theatre, which was linked through the study of dramatic literature, with university English departments. In Australia, as in Britain during this period, dance research was pursued by a very small numbers of scholars "scattered across many more or less sympathetic university departments."[2] My academic mentors made various well-meaning but not extremely appealing suggestions as to how I might become suitably disciplined — through sociology or history, for example, notwithstanding the fact that I had no background in these fields. They regarded dance as *techne*, not *phrenesis*, an object of study, but not a subject.

Terry Threadgold has something to say about everyday life in the academy and what becoming recognized and accepted as the right kind of person, becoming academic, might entail:

> To be disciplined in any of the major disciplines in the sciences or the humanities/social sciences is to learn to embody, to perform and to enact on a daily basis, in the workplace, in everyday pedagogy, not only the academic genres that constitute the theories and practices of the discipline, but also the genres of social relations and embodied subjectivity that construct the discipline as a "body" of knowledge, and that determine its intersections and social relations with other disciplines and other

[2] J. A. Lansdale "The Role of Doctoral Research in Cultural Change," Proceedings of CORD. Dance, Identity and Integration Conference, 2004 (Taipei National University of the Arts, 2004).

> institutions, other bodies of knowledge. To succeed in a discipline means to be able to perform its genres and to speak and write and embody its favourite discourses, myths and narratives.[3]

Now, as Amy Koritz observes in her essay "Re/Moving Boundaries: From Dance History to Cultural Studies" being proficient in more than one disciplinary language has many benefits, both to the scholar and to their field.[4] The dance scholar swims in a larger, more challenging intellectual pond; she invites greater connectivity. In Koritz's view, interdisciplinary approaches to dance research "have helped bring dance closer to the intellectual mainstream" and should be welcomed and encouraged.[5] But there are also risks and dangers in becoming inter-disciplined, insofar as that may entail learning to embody and enact a powerful discipline's discourse and genres, be it sociology or anthropology or psychology or even cultural studies.

How are these bodies of knowledge to relate and on whose terms? The fact that a lectureship in a performance field was established at Deakin in 1986 might imply recognition of the difference of performance, but it was accompanied by an injunction - that both the lecturer and her field of practice become academically disciplined. For Threadgold, becoming disciplined presents particular dangers for the feminist subject:

> When those (discourses) are patriarchal to the core, the female disciplined subject may be seduced into occupying the positions offered by the discourses and genres of various versions of the male 'other', or she may find her labours of rewriting, of not being seduced the subject of critique and appropriation.[6]

I have already mentioned in passing the seduction of otherness, the (limited) pleasure accorded to the subject in taking up the small place offered on the university ticket as a counterpoint —the colour, light and movement — to the sobriety of "serious" masculine identified disciplines.

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[3] Terry Threadgold, "Everyday Life in the Academy: postmodernist feminisms, generic seductions, rewriting and being heard." In *Feminisms and Pedagogies of Everyday Life,* ed. Carmen Luke (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 194.

[4] Amy Koritz, "Re/Moving Boundaries: From Dance History to Cultural Studies." In *Moving Words: Re-writing Dance,* ed. Gay Morris (London and New York: Routledge**,** 1996).

[5] Koritz, 89.

[6] Threadgold, ibid.

Additionally, and perhaps more positively, in certain styles of poststructuralist theorising within the academy during the 1980s, the idea of dancing acquired a kind of metaphorical force; dancing exemplified fluidity and dissolution. It "represented" the un-representable. However I would suggest that neither of these forms of 'othering' has advanced an understanding of the disciplinary difference of dance and performance. And, as I have remarked elsewhere, the dance academic must also contend with an implicit "somatophobia" that subtends many if not all of the major disciplines.[7]

I am suggesting that there are two levels of difficulty consequent on being disciplined within the academy. The first involves a silencing of difference, not being heard. The second difficulty — being seduced and accepting (more or less) the place that is offered — is I think the more challenging of the two problems we are facing today. In this situation, when we take up the place the other reserves for us, there is a danger that key assumptions underpinning our discipline, specific methods of practice and research, and the discourse that has evolved around them may not be critically examined.

With the Dawkins' reform agenda of the late 1980s the dance programs and degree courses offered in colleges and institutes of technology were propelled into new university environments where the pressure was on to create a research culture, where perhaps none had existed before. What paradigms of research have been adopted? And what models of scholarly practice?

Susan Melrose has spoken cogently about some of the issues that arise as creative arts and performance disciplines enter university research cultures. In her inaugural professorial address at Middlesex University she posed the following questions to performance makers and researchers:

> What does the disciplinary in performance–making — and in devised performance-making, in particular — "look like" and to what extent can it be identified by those who have not trained in these disciplines? .... How might we identify the expert knowledge- practices, their operations and boundary markers, within work which we also require to be challenging, innovative and offer new insights? And what might be its most productive relationship to writing?[8]

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[7] Elizabeth A Grosz. *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994).

[8] Susan Melrose "Entertaining Other Options: Restaging 'theory' in the age of practice as research." *Professor S F Melrose.* Accessed Nov. 11, 2004. http://www.sfmelrose.u-net.com/inaugural/ 4.

At Victoria University, where I have been working since 1991, we use the phrase *thinking through performance* to characterise our approach to the study of and research in performance. The phrase implies a careful, thoughtful approach to performing arts scholarship and research inquiry. It also places performance and artistic processes in the foreground as distinctive and (perhaps) irreducible modes of thinking. In a polemical essay titled "Dancing the Bridge: Performance /Research," my colleague Mark Minchinton outlines a rationale for the recognition of artistic practice as research within the university context. His argument draws out both the pragmatic and ethical dimensions of the relatively recent expansion of practice–based, higher-degree places in Australian universities. He argues that the universities should not only be sites of commentary on difference, but they also should be active in their *production* of difference.[9]

It is time, I believe for dance scholars and researchers, especially those of us committed to the pursuit of practice-based research, to work toward a much more precise and nuanced articulation of the production of our difference. If we are no longer willing to occupy the place of the other we need (and I borrow Melrose's words again) "to make a much better fist of accounting ... for the operations of disciplinary difference within the generally defined arts and humanities."[10]

Part 2 Unregulated, unprofessional practice

I have been interested for many years in the approach to postural reintegration developed by Mabel Todd, now widely known as ideokinesis. Ideokinesis is an empirical, in-body research, whose vitality is contingent upon its ongoing resistance to professionalization and regulation. The influence of ideokinetic method on post-modern dance has been noted by many commentators, most recently by Steve Paxton.[11]

In her preface to *The Thinking Body,* Mabel Todd notes how she delayed setting down the details of her method for some thirty years, not only so that she could be confident that her ideas had been validated, but so as to prevent "the premature appearance of a 'school' or 'system,' which so often spells the end of a creative process."[12]

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[9] Mark Minchinton, "Dancing the Bridge: Performance/Research: A Polemic," *Writings on Dance* 16 (1997).
[10] Melrose, ibid.
[11] Steve Paxton, "Brown in the New Body." In *Trisha Brown: dance and art in dialogue - 1961-2001*, ed. Hendel Teicher (Andover and Cambridge, Mass: Addison Gallery of American Art**,** 2002).
[12] Mabel E. Todd, *The Thinking Body* (New York: Dance Horizons, 1972).

Todd was resistant to any codification of her discoveries and although the principles and technique elaborated by her now enjoy quite widespread institutional recognition, ideokinesis continues as a relatively unregulated practice. There is no system of certification, no centralised process of accreditation and there is no academy or school of ideokinesis or Todd alignment. Todd taught in the Physical Education Department of Columbia University between 1928 and 1931 and it seems that she was concerned in that period to establish some degree of academic credibility for the work. However, notwithstanding her achievements during her tenure at Columbia, she did not find the university environment conducive to her ongoing research and what she regarded as fundamentally a creative investigation.

According to Pam Matt, "Todd was bored with the usual academic preoccupation with matters of methodology and was unable to think in terms of limiting, segmenting, defining and manipulating her approach according to experimental models."[13] Needless to say, Todd did not pursue an academic career. She did not become a professional teacher or researcher in a university context. And the unregulated, non-professional status of ideokinesis today is I think consistent with the principles of creative inquiry first outlined by Todd.

I am following Todd and beginning to suggest that professionalization may be an impediment to creative thinking. It may also be an impediment to new forms of creative research. Mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead has this to say about the problem of professionalization:

> Another great fact confronting the modern world is the discovery of the method of training professionals, who specialise in particular regions of thought and thereby progressively add to the sum of knowledge within their respective limitations of subject .... The situation has its danger. It produces minds in a groove. Each profession makes progress, but it is progress in its own groove. Now to be mentally in a groove is to live in contemplating a given set of abstractions. The groove prevents straying across country, and the abstraction abstracts from something to which no further attention is paid ... Of course, no one is merely a mathematician, or merely a lawyer. People have lives outside their professions or their businesses. But the point is the restraint of serious thought within a groove.[14]

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[13] Pam Matt "Mabel Elsworth Todd and Barbara Clark – Principles, Practices and the Import for Dance" Unpublished MA Dissertation (University of Illinois, 1973, p.10).

[14] Alfred N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Free Press, 1925), 196.

Whitehead characterises professionalism as the mental groove, which defines a specific field, with its specific ways to understand and analyse, its specific values and aesthetic judgments. Discipline specific embodied habitus also plays a significant part in the constitution of a profession. What are the implications of Whitehead's critique for dance professional practice and practice-based dance research in the professionalised university milieu?

I will approach this question via Sally Gardner's discussion of the professionalization of dance in her paper "Gendering Discourses in Modern Dance Research."[15] I was especially struck by Gardner's identification of the non-professional status of the early modern dancer as a pre-condition of her innovation. Gardner's paper suggests, rather forcefully to me, that we need to be circumspect, even cautious, about the kinds of claims we might want to make for the creative research capacity of our discipline. In a similar vein Steve Paxton, in a recent essay on Trisha Brown, comments on the locus of research in early post-modern dance. He corrects a common misconception concerning the radicalism of the Judson dancers when he writes:

> It might be assumed that because dance is a medium employing the human body, foregrounding the body would be essential and inevitable, but in reviews of Judson Dance Theater it has been seen that the bodies and movements of the non-dancers (who were actually painters, composers and musicians) are mentioned more than those of the dancers. It is as though the term dancer suggested a generic body type, already known all too well. A dancer's job was to dance in work by a choreographer. What was seen was not their body, but the movements their body made, their technique, perhaps their interpretation.[16]

The intensive, in-body research of Trisha Brown, which has been claimed for "dance," here arises from a critique of dance and as a critical response to dance's professionalization. Paxton discerns in Brown's work a capacity for sustained critical inquiry, but clearly not all performance practice is research. Dancers and choreographers are not necessarily researchers and their hard-earned professional skill and expertise may impede certain kinds of open-ended creative and critical inquiry.

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[15] Sally Gardner, "Gendering discourses in modern dance research." In *Dance Re-booted: Re-Initializing the Grid Proceedings*, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia. (4 August 2011). http://ausdance.org.au/publications/details/dance-rebooted-conference-papers

[16] Paxton, 56.

I am suggesting that it may be time to examine our assumptions about the nature and value of the embodied knowledges, the capacities and sensibilities that dancers, choreographers and performers bring to the academy. Now that practice-based dance research is gaining wider acceptance within the academy we need to revisit the question of the relationship between dance professional and research practice. Does dance professional training and experience provide the most relevant and productive models and methods for research inquiry? Does such training strengthen and facilitate the kind of critical thinking one might need to think through performance?

It is not my intention to re-enact the theory-practice divide, nor to subject dance anew to "the tyranny of certain conventional registers of higher degree writing."[17] But I am suggesting that if we are claiming to produce difference, we need "to make a better fist of accounting for that difference." The challenge of articulating what counts as foundational knowledge in our (various) disciplines has not yet been met, except in the most general terms. The second challenge, consequent upon the first, is to ask how such knowledge might be produced differently. If professionalization produces expert minds and expert bodies "within a groove," perhaps we should not be afraid of behaving unprofessionally, or being judged as such, so that we might regain the freedom to stray across country.

I will conclude with a brief return to Susan Melrose. In a passage outlining her interest in performance that "challenges symbolic structures." Melrose coins a useful term, which has applicability for dancing both within and without the academy. She identifies challenging performance work under the heading of *critical meta-practice,* by which she means

> a disciplinary practice or practices which both maintain conventions specific to the discipline (and the judgements it entails) while challenging and/or interrogating certain of its practices.[18]

In elaborating this notion of critical meta-practice Melrose cites examples of professional devised performance such as Tadeusz Kantor's *Wielopole, Wielopole*, but it is clear that her analysis could equally be brought to bear on instances of creative arts practice pursued as research, within a university context.

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[17] Melrose, 2.
[18] Ibid., 1.

My hope is that we too might begin to identify with more confidence, and celebrate with greater élan, critical meta-practice in dance, that is, dance practice and performance work that performs a critique of its own disciplinary conventions, whether that be without or within the academy.

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CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT WOULD IT BE, IF IT DIDN'T HAVE TO BE LIKE THAT? UNDISCIPLINING THE TRAVEL OF DANCE IDEAS IN THE NEO-LIBERAL UNIVERSITY

JENNY ROCHE AND ALYS LONGLEY

This is a stumble about how dance practices might unravel academic conventions, conventional habits of thinking, research, conventional modes for the movement of ideas. This is a slight unpicking at the level of pages. We are interested in inclusion, exclusion, feeling, space.

We are Jenny Roche and Alys Longley – both artist-academics, working in Brisbane, Australia and Auckland, New Zealand respectively. This is a chapter about the travel of dance ideas, and about a friendship as it develops through us meeting at different events – sharing our experiences working in increasingly neo-liberal university settings.

We are interested in placing detailed care in the gravity of each movement

in this practice of dance writing

as we stumble with you as you make these pages alive by reading them

We are stumbling laterally, moved by the organisation of cells. Sometimes it is the space moving us, sometimes our intentions move us into spaces. These pages have their own architecture and unfold a haptic organisation. We are interested in compositional/affective provocations in a book about undisciplining dancing. We are interested in generative tensions and contradictory approaches.

We are interested in making lists of tasks we all could work through, regardless of time or setting, where the book forms the central axis of a shared kind of body, a body made of words and dances and practices merging imagination and embodiment in space and time. In prioritising

- lateral thinking
- play
- embodied or cellular knowledge
- spatial modes of composition
- visual modes of composition
- affective rather than explanatory registers of sense.

So we are thinking of opening space to stumble through expected academic structures for collaborating, sharing knowledge, and defining research – we are breathing together and wondering if working with somatic, improvisational and choreographic thinking could gently trample some academic conventions or boundaries. This stumble reflects on processes of conditioning toward success in the university system and asks, 'What happens when we don't behave? What happens when we find integrity in resisting the tropes of institutional properness? What is radical in this context?'

Task: Place your hand on the gate between binary ideas and sense into your imagination. Feel connectivity emerge and the gate fall away. That's how it is with abstract things.

Three Beginnings

The first exchange that initiated this writing was an event at the Dance and Somatic Practices Conference that was 'envisioned as an unfinished encounter that arises in dialogue between participants, proposals and the wider context.'[1] We were invited by dancers/researchers Emma Meehan and Paula Kramer to co-facilitate a conference session in which the core material of the session was sharing between, where the fissure between organisers and participants could dissolve, in a logic of fluids rather than fixture. Our session combined talking, dancing, bodywork, sharing food and heartfelt discussion. In our second exchange, for the Undisciplining

[1] *Open Dialogues* - remixed, unfinished, begun. A forum for early to mid-career researchers and artists, *Dance and Somatic Practices Conference, July 9-12, 2015 (Coventry, UK).*

Dance Symposium we developed this structure in a session we titled 'Undisciplining the Conference' in which there was time given for resting, connecting, bodywork, discussion of research, eating, improvising, writing and feedback. The third event informing this stumble was a three-day choreographic research workshop which we titled 'Undisciplining It All.' This involved leading interdisciplinary laboratories for practice-led researchers and students at QUT in Brisbane, and Alys and Jenny working in the studio together on methods of dancing/writing. Through this studio work we developed a body of writing and movement scores.

1. Dance and Somatic Practices Conference: Coventry University. July, 2015

Touch is food for the nervous system.

Jenny:

Alys and I simultaneously/spontaneously interviewed each other and committed to a contact improvisation duet as part of a 'presentation' at the Dance and Somatic Practices Conference. I still carry the feeling of weight, touch and resistance afforded by her physical presence while we discussed our experiences of working within our respective universities. The clarity of the physical boundary offered by Alys was a kind of meeting that rarely happens in a conference setting; something real in the midst of all this abstraction. It's easy to understand why this encounter might be so significant for us. It offers the possibility for an exchange of ideas alongside a meeting of matter, so that we might communicate in a wholly different way, led by both kinaesthetic momentum pathways and haptic modes of discovery, and by a conversation about developing our practices as artist/academics. What did our bodies speak of in that exchange? They revealed themselves as generators of ideas. They took risks, solved complex problems in balancing, explored new ledges and tipping points, finding moments of comfort and moments of strain.

Alys:

I also remember from the Coventry Conference the level of care and imagination Paula Kramer and Emma Meehan gave to practices of sharing and exchange. They went op-shopping and found glasses in sets of two – as people entered the room they were given a glass, and then the person with a matching glass became their partner for conversation. This enabled

chance encounters beyond small-talk. We also found food and drink that matched by colour – red, green, brown. So we'd offer strawberries, cherries and berry juice for red; spirulina, green apples and beans for green, then chocolate, raisins, chocolate milk for brown. This attention to the affective, design-orientated elements of exchange made a little space, set a tone for whimsical thinking and demonstrated a kind of imagination and play that often gets lost in institutional events. We emulated this structure for the Auckland conference. The wasabi peas were a hit.

2. Undisciplining Dance Conference: University of Auckland. July, 2016.

A year on after our Coventry presentation, we are thinking seriously about what it means to undiscipline. The conference occurs just days after the Brexit vote in the UK. Austerity measures internationally are resulting in extreme cuts to arts funding. Universities are being required to economically rationalise all courses.

As academics we are being increasingly coerced into a speedy productivity that does not allow for the steadier, less goal oriented and more attentive pace of studio praxis. Being more aware of embodiment causes us to slow down, engage a political dimension of slowing and listening. Slowing down runs counter to the working environment of most academics, even those who work within a creative arts context. Berg and Seeber's inspirational examination of the implications of the corporatization of the university system expound an alignment with the 'Slow' movement as a means of resisting the ethos driving the speedy operations of academia.[2] They describe the 'fragmentation' that many academics experience due to 'increasing workloads, the sped-up pace, and the instrumentalism that pervades the corporate university', where time is subdivided, tightly apportioned and monetized as a limited resource. Furthermore, theatre scholar Adam Alston identifies the anxiety academics experience due to quotas for publication and annual performance assessments as a kind of 'emotional/affective labour' that serves the neoliberal agenda.[3] This anxiety is acceptable to universities because of the productivity it engenders, even when there is a significant cost to staff wellbeing.

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[2] Maggie Berg and Barbara K. Seeber, *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 25.

[3] Adam Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 66.

We want to develop a mode of conference presentation that enables connecting with sensation, tracking our responses to an environment, moving outside of structured time and bending the rules. At the back of our minds is the inverse question – what is lost if we don't make time for these practices?[4] In her treatise on relationships between biosemiotics, creativity and innovation, Wendy Wheeler explains how 'creativity doesn't seem to come to us via consciousness and memory alone'. Bending or breaking the rules of a particular idiom or field of enquiry and 'attending to' the less obvious signs that may appear alongside established paradigms are formative in the development of insight.[5]

After training and working within a particular field we develop skill sets and knowledge that inform our ability to tackle new situations. However, if this becomes too tightly configured we can become enamoured by technical prowess and the 'dominant rules of the field' rather than open to new directions and innovations.[6] Unfocused time is an important aspect of this creative process – perhaps daydreaming when you should be writing your journal article. Wheeler explains that the poet John Keats described this as 'diligent indolence', that is, waiting for the moment of inspiration while attending to the surrounding signs whether seemingly significant or not.[7]

Wheeler's work evokes questions regarding supervising postgraduate students, finding a balance between the idiosyncratic creative process of a student and our existing knowledge of academic conventions, university regulations, timelines and the limitations of practice-led research. Turnaround times for PhDs have become so tight that ideas need to be compartmentalised and defined from very early on in the process. While this has brought more focus to the area of practice led research, it can seduce us into formulaic approaches through which we 'package' our ideas rather than expand our frames of reference.

We are feeling the need to question relationships between control and freedom, between fluidity and rigidity, between encouraging thinking that moves in a linear task-based way, and thinking that moves with peripheral vision, associative rather than direct, unexpected rather than pre-supposed, intuitive rather than predictable.

As supervisors we have to give direction while being responsive to the creative ebbs and flows of the student. Are we still able to realise what it is

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[4] Ibid., 147.

[5] Wendy Wheeler, *The Whole Creature: Complexity, Biosemiotics and the Evolution of Culture* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2006), 146.

[6] Ibid., 140.

[7] Ibid., 146.

like for students coming in to the academy from the field of creative practice? Can we remember the intense destabilisation that comes of learning a new language? We think of how supervision meetings so often occur in offices rather than dance studios, which is doubly deskilling.

Could collegiality act as a radical response to the institutionalizing processes of the contemporary university, as Berg and Seeber suggest?[8] This means valuing internal networks and support systems, resisting competition amongst colleagues. They explain, 'talking with others made clear to us that many of us are searching for meaningful exchange about what it feels like to be an academic in the corporate university, and it drove home the fact that the corporate university actively militates against us having these exchanges.'[9] The most radical steps we can take in this current epoch may be to cultivate deeper human connections and possibilities for cooperation.

Our presentation at the Undisciplining Dance conference aimed to open up a space for such engagements and resulted in an exchange between dance researchers based in Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. We focussed on alternative paradigms of connection and interaction, valuing reciprocity, food, exchange, being together rather than working together, listening together, having smaller expectations based on dropping in to sensing and feeling as a community of practice. We wanted to explore the benefits of working small scale and placing empathy, compassion and wellbeing at the core of this opportunity to share ideas together. Our session involved 'dropping down' into the present moment, discussing the conference, sharing food in rounds of colour, drawing maps and then moving them in space, then writing again from the felt sense of embodiment. More food, more chatting, and moving/talking exchanges.

3. Queensland University of Technology, Australia

Alys:

Jenny and I have vague ideas about a project together – we have made time in the studio to explore possibilities. We are particularly interested in choreographic scores and the fold between paper and space. We are exploring different writing/moving practices.

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[8] Maggie Berg and Barbara K. Seeber, *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

[9] Ibid., 85.

Jenny:

The encounter seems more important than what we might make, though anxieties about outcomes also arise. Creativity is rationalised against what it might produce of value – an idea, a piece, a publication, a shared grant application…there must be a return on the investment in creativity…but I'm really just relieved to be in a process again.

Studio Writing: Alys – reflection on moving

I remembered watching Gremlins on the plane to get here. The memory arrives against the smoothness of the cement. The wall acted as a device for time travel. The wall and the touch and the light – when forces align the imagination follows.

When forces align the imagination follows and the leaves of language open, cells watered and exposed to light, reproducing, passing away. The residues left by touch, still palpable many turns later, after the flesh has shed and renewed.

After the flesh has shed and renewed the structure same but different. There was shaking and then yielding there was the possibility of gravity's renewal – and this possibility was enacted. Rereading Don DeLillo's 'White Noise' I went with great anticipation to the moment of terrible disappointment. It is a brink where we hold each other tenderly, hopeful and optimistic for what seems like no good reason.

I think of how Mogwai is also a gremlin, and Steven Spielberg, and how walls are shaking and vibrating all the time at once and yielding and holding and the things we contain and the things we spill

a brink where we hold each other with optimism
spilling all smooth and exposed and tremulous to time.

Jenny: Reflection on Moving

Stiffness and tightness in my shoulder
Right rightness (memories of another piece and a poem by Robert Lax)
Always right. Strangeness, awkwardness.

Back to the alignment – no –
maybe that's not the alignment, maybe that's the idea – what is alignment if it doesn't have to be anything? What might be the place, the foundation, what might it be if it didn't have to be like that? Still always

back to that place, that parallel, what would it be if it didn't have to be that? Like a vice, I see my grandfather's workshop. Hold the wood in place, tighten it up, and then it's locked. What could it be if it didn't have to be that? Every day, every class, checking in to that place, that point of reference. What's checking in? Checking in to the moment. What's in the moment? It's just one part.

Lots of different parts, fragments, like they're all moving in their own way on their own path on their own cycle not part of the whole, some lag behind the others some don't complete the perfect cycle some have broken, some have, not stuck, but stiff.

Vibration forward and back has different affects, different manifestations and different places. Different pauses, different weight, different time frame.

I don't know what it is. It's like it's not coming freer by moving. It's enjoying its constraint, it's completely its own limitation. It doesn't want to resolve anything or make anything better. It doesn't want to have a revelation about itself it's stiff and stuck and doesn't wanna flow, and it doesn't even wanna have a break in rhythm. It doesn't wanna be organised, it doesn't wanna be comfortable. It's a space within restriction. It's a possibility within restriction. It's a restriction that doesn't have to come free. It doesn't have to change, it doesn't have to mend its ways, It doesn't have to transform It doesn't have to become beautiful It doesn't have to be inspiring It doesn't have to give insight, it doesn't have to shift levels it can just be.

Back and forth.

It doesn't want to be anything good.

Different Ways a Meeting Can Happen

We are thinking again of our priorities list from earlier in this stumble,

- lateral thinking
- play
- embodied or cellular knowledge
- spatial modes of composition
- visual modes of composition
- affective rather than explanatory registers of sense

We are thinking of how touch is food for the nervous system, of the

different ways a meeting can happen. We are reflecting on the time of the university and the time of

moving together without words, about how for us, moving together, connecting through touch, making space for a listening and tuning has its own diligence and its own precariousness. We are sensing into

risk, the intimacy of channelling gravity, the vulnerability of improvisation. Of the slow time of making a movement score together.

These are the vital skills we need to counter the speed, the shortening of our stories, the strain.

We listen in to the poetics of gravity

together.

There is a weight and a counter weight.

There is an attempt to make space in how we share the discipline of dance,

there is a hand resting on the boundaries between disciplines, listening in.

There is your hand navigating this page, and our hands guiding the impressions of shapes in patterns and tides of thinking. We are making something together. In all our years of dancing

we have refined and refined the practice of being present.

It is what we offer as we stumble, together, into

inclusion exclusion feeling
space

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CHAPTER FIVE

ALTERING THE PARADIGM OF DANCE EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY

ALFDANIELS MABINGO AND SUSAN KOFF

Introduction

> The essence of intercultural education is…the ability to see the world as others see it, and to allow for the possibility that others may see something we have failed to see, or may see it more accurately.[1]

As education practices become globalized, reflections such as the one above from Senator Edward Fulbright become even more relevant. The possibilities for pedagogic interculturalism within the contexts of dance in higher education can be further advanced if pedagogic paradigms from diverse cultures are integrated in teaching processes. Pedagogy acts as a constellation that broadens and de/constructs ways of knowing, thinking, doing, being, and becoming.

Generally, teaching and learning processes of dance in higher education are yet to fully embrace Fulbright's vision and aspiration. Euro-American dance education systems have not been accommodative enough of dance knowledge, skills, and worldviews from nonwestern cultures.[2] Classes in technique, performance, choreography, research, criticism, and education are commonly facilitated using pedagogic frameworks derived

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[1] Paraphrased by the author from William J. Fulbright, *The price of empire* (New York: Pantheon, 1989).

[2] Doris Green, "The Saga of African Dance and Black Studies Departments," *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 4, no. 6 (2011): 16-37. Nyama McCarthy-Brown "The Need for Culturally Relevant Dance Education," *Journal of Dance Education* 14, no. 4 (2009) and McCarthy-Brown, "Decolonizing Dance Curriculum in Higher Education: One Credit at a Time," *Journal of Dance Education* 14, no. 4 (2014): 125-129.

from Eurocentric dance practices such as ballet, modern and contemporary dance. These pedagogic cannons have validated, conventionalized, and monopolized an epistemological normative, which aims to serve and sustain Euro-American historicity and hegemonic dogmas.

This chapter explores the dichotomies between pedagogies of cultural heritage dances from Ugandan cultures and dance pedagogies that draw from Euro-American dance traditions such as ballet and modern dance. By delving into specific pedagogic characteristics, we aim to enrich discourses on how dance pedagogies can be meaningfully diversified in higher education. Although this discussion draws mostly on pedagogic experiences from cultural heritage dances in Ugandan communities, its theses can be extended into analyses of other pedagogies of dances from nonwestern traditions.

Sketching the debate: Weaving perspectives on dance education and pedagogy

Ever since dance education emerged from physical education to become an autonomous subject of academic pursuit, it has expanded to cover thematic areas in performance, choreography, pedagogy, education, and technique, among others.[3] Dance education in the United States has been presented as a fundamental right and an aspect of a fully developed education.[4] Within public education, the argument is that dance is an essential aspect of every person's education because it leads to fully expressive growth and development. It is, and should be taught as more than just technique, but as one of our basic aspects of being human. However, within higher education dance remains a discipline that focuses on strengthening techniques toward excellent performance and a career.[5]

With the expansion of dance in academia, the concepts dance, dance education, dance in education, dance as education as well as dance and education have been interchangeably used to refer to teaching and learning processes of dances.[6] These derivatives provided more comprehensive

[3] Jane M. Bonbright, "Dance education 1999: Status, challenges, and recommendations," *Arts Education Policy Review* 101, no. 1 (1999): 33-39. Thomas K. Hagood, *A history of dance in American higher education* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellon Press, 2000).

[4] Susan R. Koff, "Toward a Definition of Dance Education," *Childhood Education* 77, no. 1 (2000): 27-31.

[5] Hagood, ibid.

[6] For dance see Sherry B. Shapiro ed. *Dance, power and difference: Critical and feminist perspectives on dance education* (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1998); for

approaches to teaching dance in historical, aesthetic, critical, and cultural contexts, laying emphasis on creative processes to teach students to think and reason, to find and solve problems, and to use higher-order thinking skills across the dance curriculum.[7] The combination of putting emphasis on process and product through creating, performing, viewing and writing dances during teaching and learning was sought to facilitate expressive and holistic growth of learners.[8]

Some dance teachers in higher education contexts shifted from applying traditional pedagogy to employing pedagogic ideas such as critical dance pedagogy, feminist dance pedagogy, and somatic pedagogy.[9] However, some teachers who use the aforementioned new ideas have also not fully embraced pedagogies of dances from nonwestern communities

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dance education see Richard G. Kraus, Sarah Chapman Hilsendager and Brenda Dixon, *History of the Dance in Art and Education* (San Francisco: Benjamin-Cummings Publishing Company, 1991); for dance in education see Jacqueline M. Smith-Autard, *The Art of Dance in Education* (London: A and C Black, 1994); for dance as education see (Fowler 1977) and Judith Lynn Hanna, *Partnering Dance and Education: Intelligent Moves for Changing Times* (Champaign: Human Kinetics, 1999.)

[7] Bonbright, ibid.

[8] Smith-Autard, ibid.

[9] For traditional pedagogy see Dorothy Coe, "Dance has connected me to my voice: the value of reflection in establishing effective dance pedagogy," *Waikato Journal of Education* 9 (2003): 39-49; Rebecca Enghauser, "Motor learning and the dance technique class: science, tradition, and pedagogy," *Journal of Dance Education* 3, no.3 (2003): 87-95; and Judith A. Gray, "A conceptual framework for the study of dance teaching," *Quest* 36, no.2 (1984):153-163. For employing pedagogic ideas such as critical dance pedagogy see Becky Dyer, "Merging traditional technique vocabularies with democratic teaching perspectives in dance education: a consideration of aesthetic values and their sociopolitical contexts," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 43, no. 4 (2009): 108-123; and Susan McGreevy-Nichols and Helen Scheff, "Teaching cultural diversity through dance," *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance* 71, no. 6 (2000): 41-43. For feminist dance pedagogy see Anne Burnidge, "Somatics in the dance studio: embodying feminist/democratic pedagogy," *Journal of Dance Education* 12, no. 2 (2012): 37-47 and Laura L. Shue and Christina S. Beck, "Stepping out of bounds: performing feminist pedagogy within a dance education community," *Communication Education* 50, no. 2 (2001): 125-143. For somatic pedagogy see Jill Green, "Student bodies: dance pedagogy and the soma," in *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education* ed. Liora Bresler, 1119-1135 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2007) and Leena Rouhiainen, "Somatic dance as a means of cultivating ethically embodied subjects," *Research in Dance Education* 9, no. 3 (2008): 241-256.

such as Uganda.

Even with these teaching innovations, dance pedagogy is still a complicated term and there is no single definition. Dance pedagogy is an interwoven development of pedagogical content knowledge (knowledge of educational methods), and discipline content knowledge (content of dance).[10] These two areas have a relationship with one another. For cultural heritage dances in Uganda communities, both content knowledge and pedagogic knowledge are distinct to dance forms. The challenges of equity in dance education have impeded integration of pedagogies of nonwestern dances into Euro-American higher education.[11]

Although there are cases where some dance teachers have diversified their pedagogies, generally and traditionally, Euro-American dance pedagogy has placed a hierarchical emphasis on ballet and modern dance. The Euro-American oriented pedagogy separates teaching and learning from daily life activities, making this separation of dance forms a simple continuation of this division. In particular, dance forms that have developed from daily life activities and philosophical worldview of communities in countries such as Uganda are sustained by pedagogies that are different from Euro-American oriented pedagogies. Ultimately this creates separations and oppositions that are common in dance in higher education. These dualities can be seen in the audience/performer distinction, the teacher/student distinction, process/product distinction, and the dancer/musician distinction.

A story is told of an African dancer who went to guest teach at universities in North America. The guest artists did not use the mirror to teach dances from her African country of origin. During the class, a student asked, "Why are we not using the mirror? How am I going to know whether I am doing the movements right or wrong? Who should I look at?"[12] The questions from the student to the guest artist reflect the dilemma of de-privileging diverse teaching methods from mainstream education. The predicament is that the Euro-American pedagogic norms, which in this case are illustrated by the student's obsession with the mirror as key didactic tool, are deeply entrenched as a conventional teaching and learning exemplar.

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[10] Edward Warburton, "Beyond steps: the need for pedagogical knowledge in dance," *Journal of Dance Education* 8, no. 1 (2008): 7-12.

[11] Doug Risner, "Current challenges for K-12 dance education and development: perspectives from higher education," *Arts Education Policy Review* 108, no. 4 (2007): 17-24.

[12] This story comes from teachers of cultural heritage dances in Uganda.

Looking at this phenomenon from the prism of Senator Edward Fulbright's aforementioned education vision, it can be deduced that the academy has integrated pedagogic content knowledge from different cultural and racial orientations as part of curriculum. Yet with diverse pedagogical content knowledge, dance teachers can guide learners through multifarious modes of re/constructing, expanding, and questioning their worldviews.

Various scholars have already suggested ways to explore culturally relevant pedagogies in dance education. Banks has proposed critical postcolonial dance pedagogy as a framework that can liberate dance knowledges of people who were formerly colonized.[13] In the same vein, McCarthy-Brown has advocated for diversification of pedagogies to respond to, support and honour the ever-increasing cultural diversities of learners.[14] Relatedly, Mabingo has suggested integration of diverse pedagogies to illuminate the specific worldviews, experiences, contexts, and realities of the communities from where the dances originate.[15]

Melchior investigated how culturally relevant pedagogies can advance teaching and learning that reflects the worldviews of Māori students and culture.[16] She revealed that integrating Macfarlane's Educultural Wheel can offer possibilities for students to culturally, reflectively, and contextually deconstruct dance as an epistemological domain that is rooted

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[13] Ojeya Cruz Banks, "Decolonizing the body: an international perspective of dance pedagogy from Uganda to the United States," (Doctoral thesis, University of Arizona) 2007; Banks "Critical Postcolonial Dance Pedagogy: The Relevance of West African Dance Education in the United States," *Anthropology & Education Quartlerly* 4, no. 1 (2010): 18-34 and Banks "Tama Watea: integrating Māori perspectives into dance education: a tertiary example," in *Intersecting Cultures in Music and Dance Education*, eds. Linda Ashley and David Lines, 285-297, (Basel: Springer, 2016).

[14] McCarthy-Brown, 2009 ibid., and 2014. ibid.

[15] Alfdaniels Mabingo, "Teaching East African Dances in Higher Education in the U.S: Reconciling Content and Pedagogy." *Journal of Emerging Dance Scholarship*, (2014); Mabingo, "Dancing into Academia: Trajectories of Traditional Dances from Community-based Practices to pre-Tertiary and Tertiary Education in Uganda" in *International Yearbook for Research in Arts Education: The Wisdom of the Many-Key Issues in Arts Education,* ed. Shifra Schonmann, 141-147 (New York: Waxmann, 2015) and Mabingo "Decolonizing Dance Pedagogy: Application of Pedagogies of Ugandan Traditional Dances in Formal Dance Education," *Journal of Dance Education* 15, no. 4 (2015b): 131-141.

[16] Elizabeth Melchior, "Culturally Responsive Dance Pedagogy in the Primary Classroom," *Research in Dance Education* 12, no. 2 (2011): 119-135.

in the people, their cultures, and cosmoses of their existence.[17]

Ashley has maintained that implementing culturally relevant teaching can nurture the learners' well-being and sense of identity, empower teachers to teach their own familiar cultural dance heritages contextually, understand the less familiar cultures of others, recognize that there are complex ways of teaching dance and cultivate sensitivities to cultural parameters in movement choices, dance structure and intent.[18] In other words, culturally relevant pedagogies can cause learners and teacher to shift from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism.[19]

We recognize that although the aforementioned perspectives touch on teaching and learning of cultural heritage dances, there is still need for provision of more pedagogic specificities to fulfill this agenda. Our chapter navigates pedagogic ideas that signposts the reader to culturally oriented pedagogic possibilities and actualities.

Autoethnographic reflection: Questioning teaching methodologies, revisiting pedagogic orientations and expanding pedagogic realizations

This article is an autoethnographic outgrowth of our intercultural interaction and collaboration. We systematically analyze our personal experience in order to understand dance pedagogy as both an educational and cultural experience.[20] We first met in the fall of 2011 as dance scholars in the dance education program at New York University. Out of a quest for pedagogic growth, we engaged in lengthy conversations, reflecting on our dance histories and orientations. The more we got immersed in these dialogues, the deeper we realized the complexities of our pedagogic orientations.

We continuously questioned pedagogy and its place in the globally oriented, racially diversified, and culturally pluralized higher education: 1)

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[17] Angus Macfarlane, *Kia Hiwi ra! Listen to culture – Māori Student's plea to Educators* (Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 2004).

[18] Linda Ashley, "Encountering challenges in teacher education: Developing culturally pluralist pedagogy when teaching dance from contextual perspectives in New Zealand," *Research in Dance Education* 15, no. 3 (2014): 254-270.

[19] Milton Bennett, "Toward Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity," in *Education for the Intercultural Experience,* ed. Michael R. Paige, 21-71 (Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, 1993.)

[20] Carolyn Ellis, Tony Adams and Arthur P. Bochner, "Autoethnography: An overview," *Historical Social Research* 36, no. 4 (2011): 273-290.

How do different cultures approach dance pedagogy? 2) Whose pedagogies are represented in dance education in academia? 3) How do our pedagogic identities draw on our complex backgrounds? 4) What are the implications of homogenizing dance pedagogy in higher education? 5) What are the missing links in the current dance education pedagogic regimes in higher education?

Our search for answers to the aforementioned questions led us to develop a collaborative pedagogic framework that drew from two dualities: Pedagogies of cultural heritage dances from Uganda and dance pedagogies that draw on Euro-American dances such as ballet, contemporary dance and modern dance. With this dichotomous outline, we engaged in further investigation of the inherent elements of the pedagogies. We also reflected on how these pedagogies expand or limit the learning experiences in a dance class. As our conversations progressed, our understanding of the complexities of the pedagogy as an epistemological domain broadened.

We pursued the themes that emerged from these reflective processes further in conference presentation where we derived more ideas from peer feedback. In May 2013, we presented our dual pedagogic framework during the World Alliance on Arts Education Prologue in Munich, Germany. The examination of these pedagogic ideas continued when we made another joint presentation during the Undisciplining Dance Symposium that was hosted by the University of Auckland in July 2016. From this experience, we attained more clarity of ideas and criticality of investigations. We revisited our presentations, examined reflections from peers on our ideas, and organized these ideas into key themes that are herein explored. This chapter is a culmination of this extensive process of questioning and deconstructing the place of dance pedagogies in higher education.

Pedagogic marginality: Tracing the roots of the objectification of dance knowledges from African cultures

The marginalization of pedagogies of dances from African cultures seems to be rooted in colonial historicity, which commenced after the colonial invasion of Africa and extended in the postcolonial systems of education. Originally, missionaries and colonial administrations viewed cultural heritage dances in African communities as antithetical to Eurocentric enlightenment and Victorian morality.[21] This relegated these

[21] Geoffrey Gorer, "The Function of Different Dance Forms in Primitive African Communities." *Salmagundi* 33/34, (1976): 175-192.

dances to the periphery of what was considered as intellectual knowledge. Communities were banned from engaging in celebrating, creating, learning, teaching, and performing dances. Engaging in dances attracted harsh punitive measures.[22]

Consequently, the corporeality of human existence and the contextual bases of kinaesthetic innovations were displaced. The bodies of native dancers were placed under Eurocentric civilizing surveillance. This European ethnocentrism applied moral judgment on local dance practices.[23] The corporeality of African people was only valued as the centre of physical labour and the dance knowledge and skills encompassed in it were otherized.[24] These initial views imposed restraints on how dances were considered within education contexts.

With the introduction of western education as an enlightening project, the process of de-intellectualizing cultural heritage dances in African communities gained full strength. The epistemological and ontological frameworks of the dances, which exalted communal, improvisational, embodied, and historicized spiritual symbolization, cognitive reflection and kinaesthetic practicalities were considered by local elites, colonial administrators, and missionaries as a drawback to the new enlightening agenda. Western education was founded on what Emmanuel Kant defined as enlightenment: "man's emergence from self-imposed immaturity, where immaturity meant the inability to use one's understanding without guidance from another."[25]

Since cultural heritage dances encompassed embodied knowledge, nourished collective experiences, extended customary memory, and fostered unquantifiable civilizational progress, they fell outside the newly introduced scholarly frames. Moreover, if we are to consider Kantian school of thought, a dancer who relied on a fellow dancer to expand their knowledge; a dancer who needed musicians to explore corporeal, musical, and rhythmic imaginations; and a dancer who needed elders for technical guidance was considered less enlightened. Framed as empty vessels that needed to be filled with Eurocentric-oriented knowledge, the dancer's body

[22] Nikiprowetzky 1963, cited in Green, 2011.
[23] Ignacy Sachs, *La Decouverte du tiers Monde* (Paris, France: Flammarion, 1971).
[24] Valentino Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988) and Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1979.)
[25] As cited in Praeg 2008, 372. Leonhard Praeg, "An Answer to the Question: What is [Ubuntu]?" *South African Journal of Philosophy* 27, no. 4 (2008): 372.

was re/constructed by the new Eurocentric normalcy.[26] Consequently, the dancing communities were invented, the dance practices were re/discovered and claimed, and the native thoughts of artistic production were otherized.[27]

Consider a case of Uganda. Ever since the country got independence in 1962, cultural heritage dances have been integrated in education curricular as extracurricular activities, not mainstream academic subjects.[28] Makoye has reported a similar situation in the school system in Tanzania. In cases where the dances have been incorporated in academia such as university curriculum, they have been subjected to Euro-American academic standards such as assessment criteria, lesson plan formats, formal qualifications, individualized and quantified grading procedures, theoretical formulations, and singularity of the teacher as a sole source of knowledge.[29]

This state of cultural heritage dances from African cultures in higher education has been compounded by the common perception that because they do not have literary written texts and explicitly catalogued schematics, these dances are devoid of scholarly, conceptual, and rational foundations.[30] Does this mean that African traditional systems of thought are unthinkable and cannot be made explicit within the framework of their own rationality?[31]

The marginalization of dances from African communities in higher education is not only restricted to the African experience. Within a black studies department in the US there is a considerable deficit of courses, qualified staff, theoretical frameworks, and literary texts on African dances and music.[32] Even currently, dances from African cultures are

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[26] Paulo Freire, "Banking Education," in *The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education: Deception or Discovery?* Ed. Henry A. Giroux and David E. Purpel, 283-291 (Berkeley: McCutcheon, 1983.)

[27] For dancing communities that were invented see Mudimbe, ibid. For dance practices re/discovered and claimed see Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed books, 1999) and for the native thoughts of artistic production otherized see Said, ibid.

[28] Mabingo 2015 and 2017, ibid.; Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza, "Competitions in School Festivals: A Process of Re-Inventing Baakisimba Music and Dance of the Baganda (Uganda)" *World of Music* 45, no. 1 (2003): 97-118 and Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2003.

[29] Makoye, 2001 and Mabingo, 2015b.

[30] Meki Nzewi, "Strategies for Music Education in Africa: Towards a Meaningful Progression from Tradition to Modern," *International Journal of Music Education* 1, (1999): 72-87.

[31] Mudimbe, ibid.

[32] Green, 2011, ibid.

offered under labels such as world dance, diverse dance forms, cultural dance forms or as just elective courses carrying less credits than others and often not fulfilling the mission statements of diversity and inclusion.[33]

Green has theorized that the tendency to otherize dance forms from nonwestern cultures in higher education in the U.S. has tones of racism.[34] This is further supported by Kerr-Berry who has traced the roots of dance in higher education in the U.S. to a white matriarchy, raising concerns about the continuous dominance of white dance teachers and courses derived from Euro-American dance tradition in academia.[35] These correlations also draw on discourses in the discipline of cultural studies. These discourses have explored the role of 'otherness' on the dance concert stage and the objectification of, amongst other issues, the 'Black Dancing Body.'[36] Much of this 'otherness' within the United States began in a time of segregation, exemplifying the lens of society at the time.

From this standpoint, our call for paradigm shifts in pedagogy also draws on Kerr-Berry's consideration that as dance educators "we can question our assumptions about the superiority of one dance over another and consider how whiteness factors into such self-investigation…"[37] The ideas that we offer seek to suggest complex ways through which dance educators can "offer students opportunities to develop their full identities in a manner that relates to their education...and to uplift other cultures to ensure that students do not adopt a monocultural perspective."[38]

Towards pedagogic affinity: Can pedagogies of Ugandan cultural heritage dances and Euro-American teaching paradigms mutualize?

Integration of diverse pedagogies in the academy can be problematic: instead of diversifying intellectual thoughts and discourses, it can instead veer into continuation of Euro-American historicity and hegemonic projects. This may happen if these diverse ideas are rendered subservient to dominant Euro-American standards as has already occurred in some

[33] McCarthy-Brown, 2014, ibid.
[34] Green, 2011, ibid., see also Risner, ibid.
[35] Julie Kerr-Berry, "Progress and Complacency A "Post-racial" Dance in Higher Education?" *Journal of Dance Education* 10, no. 1 (2010): 3-5.
[36] Brenda Dixon-Gottschild, *The Black Dancing Body* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
[37] Kerr-Berry, 2012, 49.
[38] McCarthy-Brown, 2014, 127.

cases.[39] Our rationalization of the possibilities for practical, intellectual, philosophical, and theoretical communion of diverse dance pedagogies in higher education starts with acknowledgement of George Dei's consideration "that the fact that different bodies of knowledge continually influence each other shows the dynamism of all knowledge systems."[40]

Integration of diverse knowledge and pedagogies in higher education can be anchored in three premises: 1) recognition that African civilizations can offer knowledge and expand learners' ways of knowing, doing, being, becoming, and thinking, 2) acknowledgement that ideas from nonwestern communities can co-exist with Euro-American epistemological praxes as two complimentary purviews, and 3) understanding cultural heritage dance from African communities can contribute to global learning. Stefanova has defined global learning as the knowledge, skills and attitudes that students acquire through a variety of experiences that enable them to understand world cultures and events; to analyze global systems; to appreciate cultural differences; and to apply this knowledge to their lives.[41]

Although there is a school of thought that civilizations can clash in a globalized environment, pedagogic ideas from diverse cultures can reciprocally commune in teaching and learning processes to advance human experiences.[42] Why are we advocating for inclusivity of pedagogies such as those from cultural heritage dances in Uganda in higher education? Answers are found in Bruner's conception that pedagogy communicates emotional, physical, social, cognitive, and rational learning processes of and to the learner and carries its own meanings.[43]

Beyond the objectified body: Philosophical foundations of pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in Uganda

Pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in Uganda owe their theoretical, ontological, and epistemological relevance to their link to and derivation

[39] Mabingo, 2015b.

[40] George J. Dei, "Rethinking the role of Indigenous Knowledges in the Academy," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 4, no. 2 (2000): 113.

[41] Julia Stefanova, Internationalization of Education and the Fulbright Program (in Bulgaria): Realities and Challenges. Accessed September 02, 2016, from, www.fulbright.bg/en/wp-content/uploads/files/.../JULIA_STEFANOVA.ppt.

[42] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72, (1993): 22-49 and Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *The Atlantic Monthly* 266, no. 3 (1990): 47-58.

[43] Jerome S. Bruner, *The Culture of Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).

from the worldviews of the people that create, celebrate and perform them. In this chapter, we look at pedagogies of dance practices that exist in community-based environments, not theatrical settings. Within these communities, the pedagogies are part of the day-to-day learning cycles that link the people to their histories, lived experiences, and imagined futures. This indicates that pedagogy is not just ephemeral, but it is also a thought process that is imbedded in philosophical manifestations. For this particular discussion, we will consider two philosophies that are native to African communities as frameworks of analysis: Ubuntu and Afrocentricity.

Firstly, the philosophy of Ubuntu looks at an individual and the community as two mutually reciprocal centres of knowing. Among Zulu people of Southern Africa, it is reflected in the aphorism 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu. Motho ke motho ka batho' or, what Mbiti translated as 'I am because we are, and because we are therefore I am.'[44] Any pursuance of knowledge framed in Ubuntu cause shifts "from solitary to solidarity, from independence to interdependence, from individuality vis-à-vis community to individuality a la community."[45] McGann located Ubuntu in dance by positing: "I dance (with you), therefore I am."[46] Ubuntu ties into Afrocentric thought. In coining and expanding this concept as theory, Asante illuminated African worldviews as grounded in human relations, human and supernatural explorations, and human relationship to self.[47] Afrocentricity locates how human phenomena in African practices, including dances, are centred to reflection on, and interpretation of, realities derived from African world experiences.

We believe that the aforementioned thoughts can be used as frameworks to extend understanding of pedagogies of cultural heritage dances from Uganda in higher education. This is more so since, as a key aspect of dance, pedagogy is also an epistemological domain by and in itself. Through pedagogy people seek to know, develop and apply

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[44] *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu. Motho ke motho ka batho.* Johan Cilliers, "In search of meaning between Ubuntu and Into: Perspectives on preaching in post-apartheid South Africa." *Eighth International Conference of Societas Homiletica, Copenhagen, Denmark*, 2008 and John S. Mbiti, *Concepts of God in Africa* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1970), 141.

[45] Dirk Jacobus Louw, Dirk Jacobus, *Ubuntu and the Challenge of Multiculturalism in post-Apartheid South Africa* (Utrecht, Netherlands: Zuidam and Uithof, 2002), 15.

[46] Mary E. McGann, "Timely wisdom, prophetic challenge: rediscovering Clarence R. J. Rivers' vision of effective worship," *Worship* 76, no. 1 19 (2002): 19.

[47] Molefi K. Asante, *Kemet, Afrocentricity and knowledge* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1990).

inquiries and methods of knowing, investigation, and even acquaintance with one another.[48] The ways in which people learn dances bears hugely on their comprehension of the complexities of experiences and worldviews, be it celebrations, worship, ritual, socialization, initiation into the community, and individual expressions.

What makes these philosophical formulations central to the pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in Uganda is the emancipatory sense that they accord individual learners and the synchronicity they forge between the learner, the practice, other learners, the environment, the self, and the experience.[49] Within this practical, reflexive, inter-corporeal knowledge production and deconstruction, both the personal and collective realities are cultivated and shared.[50]

Salient characteristics of traditional Ugandan dance pedagogies

This section begins by recognizing the complexity of pedagogies on which teaching and learning of cultural heritage dances in their communities of practice is founded.

P^5: Practice, performer, pedagogy, participation, people

The genius of pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in Uganda lies in how the five Ps are interwoven together as part of the learning and teaching process. Teaching and learning are a holistic practice: experiential, reflective, practical, and exploratory. An individual is not only a learner, but also a performer or doer. The individuality is claimed, explored, and activated through participation in dance activities with other people. In this sense, pedagogy acts as a location where the agent (learner), experience (learning and performing), community (people) and environment (contexts of teaching and learning) congregate.[51] This synthesis places the teacher and the learner at the centre of knowledge production as a knower, thinker, doer, explorer, and collaborator.

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[48] Mudimbe, ibid.
[49] Freire, ibid.
[50] For the term inter-corporeal knowledge see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* trans. Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1962).
[51] Jean Lave and Ettienne Wenger, *Situated Learning* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

The teaching and learning processes of cultural heritage dances start during childhood. Gradually, a learner is integrated from peripheral participation to the centre of dance practices. This peripherality is characterized by a constant search for creative and practical experimentation that is rooted and routed in corporeal and conceptual observation, embodiment, rationalization, imaginaries and dance participation. Learning is attained through experiencing, questioning, and transforming embodied and disembodied insights into knowledge.[52] This knowledge is illuminated in corporeal movements, organised in stories, and coded in musicalized and rhythmic formulations.

Positioning an individual at the centre of learning is deeply embedded in the philosophy of practical exploration. Among the Baganda people of central Uganda, this philosophy is reflected in the expression 'Kola nga bwoyiga ate oyige nga bwokola' (learn as you do and do as you learn). Learning is conceived of as an experiential consideration of revisiting the known, interrogating the embodied, discovering the unknown, sharing the discovered, and synthesizing experiences from individual and community standpoints.[53]

Exploring fundamental and complex material through repetition

Within communities where dances are practiced, repetition is one of the most common techniques through which dance skills and knowledge are explored. Ssekamwa has observed that in Ugandan indigenous education systems, repetition is a daily reality that activates the intricacies of knowledges and precipitates their continuities and rationalizations.[54] Emphasis on repetition as a pedagogic technique is reflected in the proverb of the Baganda people: 'addingana ekitiko yakijja' (the more times one goes through a task the more they attain a deeper grasp of the knowledge inherent to it).

Generally, traditional dances have basic techniques, movement vocabularies, kinaesthetic gestures, and abstract ideas and concepts that are foundational to their ontologies and episteme. Learning and teaching encounters first immerse the learner into these foundational aspects of

[52] John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1938).
[53] David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1984).
[54] John C. Ssekamwa, *History and Development of Education in Uganda* (Kampala, Uganda: Fountain, 1997).

dances. Once an individual grasps these introductory patterns, then they can venture into the complex ideas of the dances. Repetition emphasizes the recurrence of fundamental aspects of the dance. In dance, this repetition is not seen as a monotonous, futile act, but rather as a norm that allows the learner to deepen their kinaesthetic, musical, and sociocultural intelligences.[55] Repetition takes a learner from embodiment and rationalization of basic movement and conceptual ideas, to proficient comprehension of complex material, affording the learner a range of experiences for further intellectual and performative growth.

Communal random mirroring

Learning is undertaken as an interactive and relational process where each the individual partakes in practical activities and is valued as a source of practical and conceptual experiences. Learners are teachers and teachers are learners. Learners move around and interact with one another indiscriminately, expressively, musically and kinaesthetically. Individuals are trusted and considered to generate and share valuable experiences. Since learning is experiential and practical, and commonly occurs in open spaces instead of enclosed studios, participation means bringing diverse treasured experiences and knowledge to teaching and learning environments and inviting others to take part. Communal random mirroring appreciates each participant as a knowledgeable other.[56] It values each individual as having a story to tell, an experience to nurture, and an innovation to share. It is through this embodied, experiential and lived inter-corporeality that learners construct individual and communal ways of constructing dance knowledge and skills.

Music as a teaching aid

The inseparability of music and dance in African communities transcends music as an accompaniment for dance. In education contexts, music acts as a teaching aid and co-teacher. Music takes varied forms such as vocal songs, instrumental rhythms, vocal sounds such as whistling and ululations, and mnemonics.[57] Dance knowledge is seen as holistic knowledge. Knowing, doing, becoming, and thinking are believed to grow

[55] Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligence* (New York, NY: Basic, 1983).
[56] Bruner, ibid.
[57] Mabingo, 2015b, ibid.

if a learner navigates the integrated components that constitute artistic knowledge such as music, dance, folktales, poetry, and stories.

In this framework, a learner can access dance material through vocal and instrumental music. Knowledge and skills are transformed from aural, and auditory infinitives to corporeal structures. In some instances, vocal songs and instrumental rhythms illuminate the contextual, historical, theoretical, and philosophical meanings of the dances and the cultures where they originate.

Storytelling and illumination of non-practical knowledge

Storytelling is a central aspect of oral traditions in African cultures. In dance, it is key to articulating the practical, conceptual, and historical knowledge, skills and experiences in which dances and dancers are anchored. It is through stories that learners come into contact with past and present ontologies of the dances. Storytelling reveals the metaphysical existences of the dances. Learners reflect on the stories to locate their place in the performative, creative, and artistic complexities of the dance. It is through interface with stories about the dance that learners deepen their understanding of the connection between them, the sociocultural and ritualistic norms of creation, the philosophical orientations of the communities that celebrate them, and the day-to-day lived experiences of their people.

Acquiring dance knowledge and skills is not just about practical demonstration and the imitation of movement, as is common in dance studios. Teaching and learning entails searching for the meanings of movements, gestures, techniques and aesthetics, and the historicity and concepts of their stories and cultures of origin.

Salient characteristics of Euro-American dance pedagogy

The purpose of Euro-American dance education canons, when analysed in academic parameters, is generally expression, entertainment, and individual academic and professional excellence. The salient characteristics that underlie this pedagogic paradigm are a teacher-directed practice whereby the teacher demonstrates or guides and the students follow. Freire has likened this approach to the banking system. Classes are conducted in specialized rooms that follow a clearly laid out curriculum template and adhere to the needs of formal dance.[58] Music is present in the

[58] Freire, ibid.

role of accompaniment, whereby the movement always takes priority over the music. The class is constructed with a formalized warm-up leading to full practice and formalized assessments are employed to reward or penalize the individual learner.

Euro-American pedagogies are synonymous with the systems of capitalism and individualism, which tend to reproduce them. There is push for individual achievement through attaining high grades, an ideal dance body, and technical and professional credentials. The focus of the dance, and the pedagogy, becomes specialized performance and separates it from fully integrated life activities. While there seems to be an absence of culture in this form (as contrasted with pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in Uganda) the culture that is actually being perpetuated is the capitalistic individualism of the western world.

However, when social learning theories are presented and considered within dance education, they have initiated a breakdown of the rigid formality that had heretofore been the hallmark of dance education and aligned it with these dichotomies.[59] But the impact of these inclusive learning theories has not yet opened the door for pedagogies of cultural heritage dances from African communities such as Uganda to be integrated into higher education.

Consideration of Pedagogical Characteristics

Pedagogy invites an individual to be at the centre of being, meaning, doing, knowing, becoming, and thinking. It extols individual exploration and authoring of experiences. It also celebrates communally-oriented benchmarks that interlace these experiences. Pedagogy is a gateway into a world of creative, imaginative, communicative and interactive cognition, embodiment and reflection. Interaction between the individuals and communities, the unknown and known, the imagined and concrete, and the infinite and embodied extends capabilities to question, experience, concretize, experiment, and abstract.[60]

We believe that social and experiential learning theories provide grounds for pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in Uganda to be explored in higher education without losing their distinct characteristics.

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[59] For social and experimental learning theories see Lev Vygotsky, *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978); Jean Piaget, *Science of Education and the Psychology of the Child* (New York, NY: Viking, 1970); Kolb, ibid.; Bruner, ibid.; Dewey, ibid. and Lave and Wenger, ibid.

[60] Kolb, ibid.

Like the theories of social learning, the philosophical and pedagogical characteristics also give primacy to experience, active participation of the learner, and are anchored in the premise that knowledge is constructed, not acquired, through continuous search for embodied and rationalized meanings.

With emphasis on the participation of learners, these philosophies render dance pedagogies intrinsically experiential, transformative as well as fundamentally reflective and constructivist. Learners are tasked to individually and collectively develop and pursue thoughts that would place them within the social, cultural, philosophical, historical, and humanistic fabric of their environments of existence. As individuals engage in the teaching and learning processes they deconstruct and question the embodied experiences and implicit knowledge behind the subject matter of the dances. There is convergence between a learner as an active agent, their experiences, the environment, and subject matter of exploration.[61]

The philosophies are also integrative. They enable pedagogies to act as intersections where corporeal movements, vocal musicalities, instrumental rhythms, metaphysical stories, infinite energies, spiritual impulses, and embryonic realities congregate. Whereas Euro-American education frameworks generally treat dance as a discipline autonomous from music, drumming, storytelling and poetry, pedagogies of cultural heritage dances in Uganda claim the inseparability of these knowledge domains.

Right from childhood, pedagogy acts as an axis where a learner is immersed in a synchronized combination of all the aforementioned practical and theoretical epistemological purviews.[62] Moreover, these integrative practicalities avail possibilities for a diversity of learners to access dance skills and knowledge. An aural or auditory learner would use music and rhythms to make sense of the kinaesthetic structures of the dances; a reflective learner would utilize stories to rationalize dance movements; and an audio-visual learner would participate in drumming to comprehend the synergy between corporeal action and rhythm. Considering holistic and student-centred pedagogies separates dance education from dance training in higher education, and opens the possibility to any form of dance.

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[61] Lave and Wenger, ibid.

[62] Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza, "Girlhood Songs, Musical Tales, and Musical Games as Strategies for Socialization into Womanhood among the Baganda of Uganda" in *Handbook of Children's Musical Cultures,* ed. Patricia Shehan Campbell and Trevor Wiggins, 114-130 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013) and Nzewi, ibid.

Conclusion

Inserting cultural heritage dances from African cultures is not the solution to the problem of objectification and racism within Euro-American dance education. Systematic change, philosophical reckoning and basic reconstruction of the pedagogic systems is the approach to meaningful change. Returning to Fulbright's comment, interculturalism is a process that needs to be developed from within. Dance education, as a discipline regardless of location, and pedagogy as a system of knowledge construction and production, has the capacity to enable learners and teachers to expand their worldviews on multicultural issues. Dance education is about our expressive nature and ability to encounter and construct the world around us. When we approach dance education, as an essential aspect of our education with all the holistic, globally-oriented, and culturally informed pedagogies that are existent in nonwestern dance education traditions, we contribute to a pluralization of experiences as education.[63] Pedagogies such as those encompassed in the cultural heritage dances of Uganda, are linked to constructivist, experiential, and reflective education and thought, which have become well known in Euro-American education. The breakdown occurs when dance education, within Euro-American higher education resorts to traditional paradigms of education and ignore the constructivist, experiential, and reflective pedagogic choices offered by cultural heritage dances from nonwestern civilizations. When we move these pedagogies at the centre of teaching and learning, we begin to break down the divisions and neutralize the hegemonic hierarchies that have been imbedded in and encouraged by Euro-American dance education.

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[63] Koff, ibid.

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CHAPTER SIX

THIS AUTO-CORRECT ON MY COMPUTER CAN'T GET MY FRESH JARGON RIGHT!

YUKI KIHARA AND JOCHEN ROLLER

An online conversation between artists Yuki Kihara (Apia) and Jochen Roller (Berlin) on their collaboration *Them and Us* (2015)[1]

Hello, good morning Yuki.

Good evening Jochen.

Can you remember, when and how we got the idea to do *Them and Us?*

I think it was cooking for quite some time between us. I remember telling you about my performance series *Talanoa; Walk the Talk* which brought two unrelated communities together into a dialogue. And that you liked this concept.

I think it was also during the time when we created the programme for our festival Urban Pacific (a festival of contemporary indigenous performances from the South Pacific) at Kampnagel, Hamburg and you introduced me to Tatau Dance Group from Auckland. We both really liked the concept of performing folk dances to pop music.

[1] Jochen Roller and Yuki Kihara (artistic directors) premiered *Them and Us* (2015) at Sophiensalle, Berlin, 16th September 2015. It was performed by Lafaele Fagasa, Malili Tautala, Paul Tuisaula. Video design was by Andrea Keiz and lighting by Marek Lamprecht. https://vimeo.com/154989326. In writing out of the experience of *Them and Us* the authors chose to leave out attribution of who said what and run the text as a continuous stream between voices.

Tatau Dance Group is popular among the Sāmoan community for 'updating' traditional Sāmoan dances with pop music which you can see all over Youtube.

Before we did *Them and Us* together, I choreographed *Trachtenbummler* in 2013 in which we re-arranged German folk dances to pop music. I am still very intrigued by the notion of 'folk' being a contemporary and urban concept.

I also remember talking during *Them and Us* about the stigma associated with the Pālagi term "folk" especially in relation to the term indigenous. It seemed that the Pālagi concept of "folk" had a connotation of being low-brow art and frivolous. Hence, we wanted to subvert this connotation by creating *Them and Us*.

Do you remember how some critics wrote about our re-mixing of folk as a decolonial act?

Decolonial for whom again?

I think they meant how we worked with the Bavarian heritage. Or Barbarian, as we used to call them. All these elements of folk culture we discovered in Bavaria, we presented in our show as being equally "savage" to what is usually shown in the ethnographic collections of non-European cultures. Bavarian masks, Bavarian pagan rituals and Bavarian primitive dance steps. In a role reversal, we showed Sāmoans on an ethnographic field trip studying German savages. Maybe that's decolonial. Or not.

Our creative process was definitely a role reversal because it was about postcolonial Sāmoans travelling to the former colonizer Germany, not as migrants but as tourists. I remember when I was at a Chinese restaurant getting takeaways after rehearsals at Kampnagel in Hamburg. The Chinese chef asked me whether I was local and I said no, and that I was working on a dance production down the road at Kampnagel and this being the last stop of our European tour and how I was looking forward to leaving for Sāmoa in a few days. Our conversation was in English so I stood out like a foreigner in a restaurant full of German customers. You should have seen the look on people's faces when I said "looking forward to leaving Germany." There is an assumption by Europeans that everyone wants to move to their country.

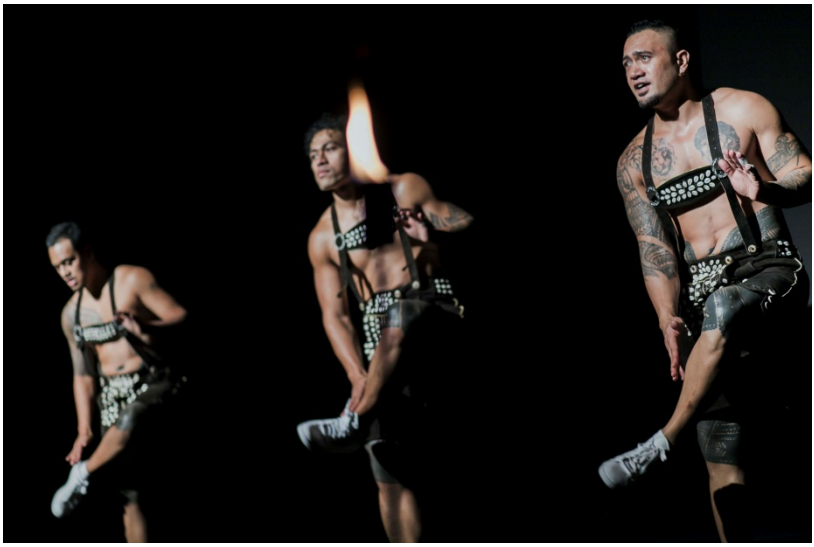

Figure 6.1 Yuki Kihara and Jochen Roller *Them and Us* with Lafaele Fagasa, Malili Tautala and Paul Tuisaula. Photograph by Anna Agliardi.

I think what people were most surprised by was that - against all odds - we understood ourselves as a team, despite the fact that history and different economic power clearly divide us in terms of identities. Maybe this was very special for a cross-cultural work?

I remember there were times in the process when you said that as a choreographer you would have done things differently with German dancers than what we did with the Tatau dancers. I am surprised you still had the energy to take the Tatau dancers sightseeing around Germany off-camera, being so generous with your time. But I guess it was important, not only for bonding, but for the Tatau dancers to get a sense of the place.

They didn't know anything about the context of Western art making. It was important that they knew what they were exposing themselves to.

But I think the lack of being exposed to the Western professional dance world was crucial to the success of *Them and Us*. That's why the production was so French.

What?

Sorry, fresh. This auto-correct on my computer can't get my fresh jargon right!

But now it's also a trend in the Western dance world to have 'real' people on stage who are not trained as professional dancers.

I think the point is that it was important for us that our performers could act as themselves, even if it was all staged by us.

Remember the discussion we had about the dancers using their mobile phones when they were not performing? A total no-go within the Western theatre tradition. We had to come up with a solution, if we allow this to happen or if we conform with Western theatre tradition. I think in the end we found a good balance. A bit from them, a bit from us.

I am glad it didn't end up being cheesy though. Something like, "the best of two worlds".

Hey, is this by the way what the critics called "cultural friction"?

We brought references from two different cultures together to create our seventy minute illusion of cultural truths. Or reality. Beyond what is classified as "them" and "us".

How does this create friction?

Oh sorry, I thought you meant cultural FICTION.

I like that term, cultural fiction. The Fa'ataupati and the Schuhplattler pretending to be the same thing, if you adapt the context in which they are presented[2]. That's our cultural fiction. Or cultural vision. Or FAKE-lore.

It worked well as cultural fiction. The transitions between verse and chorus were tricky though. When we choreographed the verse in Schuhplattler and the chorus in Fa'ataupati.

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[2] Fa'ataupati, a dance that is indigenous to Samoa, is performed by men and involves slapping actions on the body. It is widely practiced by the Samoan community in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Schuhplattler is a folk dance that is popular in southern Germany and Austria. Performers stomp, clap and strike the soles of their shoes, thighs and knees with their hands held flat.

I think it was interesting what audience said about the dramaturgy of the piece. Some called it fashion-show dramaturgy. Dance-costume change-dance.

I think it's clear we are both fascinated by pop culture. And fashion being part of it, using it as a reflection on society.

But I think in the context of cross-cultural work, this fashion-show dramaturgy was crucial in creating cultural f(r)iction. Because the dance is always more or less the same, just the context changes (a new narrative that is introduced by the film between the dance acts and a new costume for the next dance), and boom! You can't tell anymore, what is Bavarian and what is Sāmoan. So, you can't keep up the binary system of THEM versus US.

But also, we created many threads for how to connect the two cultures. What German enlightenment philosophers had to say about Sāmoans, how a part of the Tropical Island resort in Germany is constructed as a fake Sāmoan natural environment, how the German expressionist painters engaged with Polynesian "craft" techniques and interviewing the self-appointed Sāmoan honorary consul in Hamburg. We constructed these narratives and they were interesting for the local German audience. However, if *Them and Us* was to be performed in Sāmoa, it would have to be reconfigured.

Talking about audiences, my strongest memory of the production process is the discussion we had with our performers when it came to the re-enactment of the debate from 1912 on mixed marriages in the German parliament. And our performers said, they don't want to perform anything that makes the German audience feel uncomfortable. This thing that for us as artists is totally evident, that we are hired to be critical. Of politics, of history, of social phenomena.

But in the end, our performers trusted our intent and humor.

Do you consider your artwork in general as offensive?

No, I consider myself to be light-hearted. But I guess being a guest in Germany, our performers wanted to be polite.

I guess that is precisely the problem with many cross-cultural works. Artists from a richer country invite artists from a poorer country to be critical of the richer artist's society. And then, if the critique goes too far, it's considered ungrateful of the performers from the poorer country.

Funny enough, our project was also echoing what was happening with the refugee crisis in Germany at the time. Germany inviting refugees to come to Germany and once they arrived, complaining about certain things that were not okay for them. They were not welcome anymore.

Talking about invitations, would you work for the Humboldt Forum in Berlin? A very conservative institution led by three old white men who take artistic criticism as a legitimation for the existence of their institution.

It depends what the outcome is. And who benefits from it.

It benefits the institution. And yourself of course, because you can pay your rent.

It's catch 22 right? Lately I've been thinking about this more, how I'm implicated in the structure of government politics, an instrument for the management of diversity in the arts, which is a recent model in Aotearoa adopted from their former colonizer the UK. However, I'm not sure whether funding indigenous artists and artists of colour to do more projects would mean ending white supremacy in institutions. It's like what Angela Davis once said: "Diversity is a corporate strategy. It's a strategy designed to ensure that the institution functions in the same way that it functioned before, except that you now have some black faces and brown faces. It's a difference that doesn't make a difference."[3]

I don't work with refugees anymore for precisely that reason. I became a highly-paid expert for this kind of work. And one moment I realized this money that's been paid to me also executes control on my thinking. I got censored at a conference for "unethical word choice".

Really?

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[3] Angela Davis, 'Civil Rights Leader Angela Davis Speaks at Bovard' *Daily Trojan,* (23 Feb 2015). Accessed 6 Feb 2017. https://dailytrojan.com/2015/02/23/civil-rights-leader-angela-davis-speaks-at-bovard/

The title of my paper was "Find a child born as a result of rape and then ask her how she feels - Refugee empathy as Western voyeurism." The organizers of the conference wouldn't allow me to speak on the issue of how the business of engaging refugees in art works in Germany is also a form of voyeurism.

All cross-cultural work is also driven by voyeurism. Or let's say curiosity. As is interdisciplinary work. The point that matters is what you do with the cross-cultural experience.

True.

In Aotearoa, the arts community wasn't going to give me credit for *Them and Us* because to them it was totally unexpected that I was capable of reaching dance audiences with my work. Let alone an audience outside of the Pacific.

But *Them and Us* is so YOU.

When you are a visual artist, people don't expect you to be able to cross over into the dance world. Anyway, coming back to the term cross-cultural, I consider *Them and Us* to be cross-cultural because we both learned a lot about each other's culture. I am not sure if a work qualifies as cross-cultural when a person from one culture engages with another culture and one culture doesn't get anything out of it.

I am glad you say that because I feel the same. I am very intrigued by indigenous thought because of its intellectual sophistication, empathetic qualities and emotional value. And I often wonder if I can actually give something back.

I think you were a good mediator between what I wanted to do and say and how it could be make an impact for a German audience. Which brings us back to the audience reception of *Them and Us*. Like this Pālagi woman in Hamburg complaining to me about the performance not being "traditional" enough. When I asked her whether she knew any German folk dances she said no, WTF. I remember being intimidated at first, sitting in the back row in the theatre looking at the sea of white people in the audience watching the Tatau dancers on stage. But as the performance began to unravel I saw how the audience was being confronted by racialized events in history they knew nothing about. Some Pālagis waited

at the theatre bar after the performance to meet the Tatau dancers just to shake their hands. I am not sure if that gesture was in appreciation or to apologize? However, it was great hearing Sāmoans in the audience calling out and cheering on the Tatau dancers during the performance.

I didn't know how to handle these white old ladies that showed up in every city in the post-performance talks and asked if they could see and touch the tataus (tattoos) of our performers. Which made me think of the paradox that we created. A work to deconstruct exoticism and at the same time we construct a new form of exoticism.

In that sense, *Them and Us* both succeeded and failed. The production made me understand more about the politics of audience. Making work for a non-Pacific audience and getting your point across was fascinating and educational for me. Just because you understood our Sāmoan humour didn't mean every other German did. In that sense I was naive, thinking it was universal. But I trusted you and our creative process to make sure I got my message across, regarding complex post/de/colonial issues.

Figure 6.2 Yuki Kihara and Jochen Roller *Them and Us* with Lafaele Fagasa, Malili Tautala and Paul Tuisaula. Photograph by Anna Agliardi.

I was blown away when you asked our performers at the end of the last show about their most memorable experience in the process and they answered it was the moment on tour when I yelled at the bus driver in Basel because he was racist towards them.

I think there was an assumption that you Pālagis were civilized people that never yelled at each other, lol.

Haha.

But great to see that you stood up for your friends, colleagues. Because we would have done the same as we worked as a team.

But why is it still such a big deal to work as a team with different ethnic origins?

In the case of *Them and Us*, we made this "big deal" the content of the show, it's about different cultural perspectives. Like in the episode we didn't make in the end, where our performers would go to a vegetarian restaurant in Berlin. And we would film it in the Survivor TV format, all that indigenous food they have to eat. Just that in *Survivor Europe*, you don't have to eat insects, but broccoli burgers.

I think we dropped that episode in the end because it was taking the idea of 'ethnic drag' too far.

Kihara: But that's how it is sometimes in ethnography. Like when the anthropologist Margaret Mead went to Sāmoa and asked all these sexual questions to Sāmoan women. Of course they told her lies. They performed "ethnic drag"[4]. By the way, it's the same term that scholars have applied to my *Der Papālagi; the White Man* (2016) photographic series.

Roller: I find that term really helpful in order to explain what we do. In order to question what audiences perceive as ethnographically "authentic".

Kihara: Authenticity is also interesting when it came to audiences asking how did we blend the Fa'ataupati and the Schuhplattler. We looked at interesting shifts in rhythms that would happen like in the D'Angelo

[4] Katrin Sieg, *Ethnic Drag: Performing Race, Nation, Sexuality in West Germany*. (Michigan: Michigan University Press, 2009).

section when they dance to "Sugar Daddy". That's my favourite part from a choreographic perspective, and also dramaturgically as it is the middle of the piece. At this point, the audience was always so happy to finally being able to define one movement that is distinctively Samoan, the slapping of both elbows with both hands.

Which is actually Tatau style. But because the audience believed in our ethnic fiction, nek minnit they believe it's Sāmoan. And Schuhplattler is coming from Sāmoa, lol.

Talking about ethnic fiction, I have to tell you that I like your new style, being that David Attenborough narrator researching corals, flora and fauna in Sāmoa. Because I see you as being such an urban person. It's a surprising make-over that challenges my preconceptions of you as an artist.

Well, I thought I would formalize my interest in the Anthropocene from an indigenous perspective. I've learned a lot from watching David Attenborough's TV series despite the fact that in some episodes he is acting as a colonialist.

To me, that feels very authentic, despite my preconceptions.

That's reassuring because I thought it might also be perceived as being hippie-ish.

To me it will be interesting to see how you bring these topics back to the urban environment within which you create your art work.

Urban people don't care about nature but when I look out of my window right now I see silhouettes of coconut trees that are part of my daily existence in Sāmoa. Sāmoan culture used to live in symbiosis with nature, but now nature is threatening our livelihood. The crops we grow in the Islands are being destroyed by frequent cyclones. And the rise of sea-levels is shrinking our Islands by 4mm a year. In 2014, Sāmoa graduated from being part of UN's least-developed economic category. But the climate crisis is now holding back our growth and we slip right back to where we started. I remember when we were driving in our van from Bavaria to Berlin, I was holding back my tears after seeing all these huge factories emitting smoke into the air, accelerating the climate crisis for those of us that live on small islands. I wish we did something about this

in *Them and Us*, but now I'm doing something about it in my other projects. So, what's next for you?

RWorking on the last part of my trilogy *Finding Germany Elsewhere*, about German Indianthusiasts. Germans who over-identify with First Americans.

Gosh, there is still so much more to reflect about *Them and Us* but I think we reached 3000 words by now. To be honest I was over talking about *Them and Us* but I'm glad the editors think our experience is worth talking about.

I think so too.

Laters!

Have a good day.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

TE ARAI:
RE-ADDRESSING THE SPACE OF GRIEF, BEREAVEMENT AND LAMENTATION

CHARLES KORONEHO AND CAROL BROWN

> Crawl, walk, run, and dance *Te Arai*, a world beyond ours, transit of the dead, ephemeral footsteps, relentless journey.[1]

Tua o Te Arai - beyond the veil, after death was presented by Charles Koroneho for the *Undisciplining Dance Symposium* in the Gus Fisher Gallery. A performance for three performers, including himself, designed in collaboration with Brad Gledhill, he described this work in relation to his ongoing research into thresholds between life and death, and customary spaces for Māori funeral rites that disappeared through the effects of colonialism.

> Shrouded in mystery, the passage of the dead in Māori ancestral stories is relayed as a series of arduous tests to complete on their way to the spiritual homeland of Hawaiki. A spiritual hiatus, the performance takes place at Te Arai, a resting place for spirits, a site for talismans created by the dead, symbols of a life lived, lamentation artefacts, remembrance objects both real and abstract. *Tua o Te Arai* is a performance site to symbolically crossover to the lifeless and contemplate the unknown possibilities of an afterlife.

Interviewed after the event, Koroneho described addressing four spatial concepts in the development of the work: Urupa, a burial ground, cemetery or graveyard; atamira, an elevated platform for the dead; Tuahu,

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[1] Charles Koroneho, *Undisciplining Dance Programme Note.* University of Auckland, 2016.

a ceremonial platform and sacred place for ritual practices; and Te Arai, a threshold or resting place for the dead. A brief introduction to the significance of these terms is followed by an edited transcript of the interview with Koroneho in which he discusses these spaces in relation to "customary, remembered, nearly forgotten and unknown knowledges."[2]

In New Zealand, the Māori word for performance stage, *atamira,* is also the word for a platform where the dead were ritually attended to in pre-colonial times. For pre-European Māori the boundary between the living and the body of the deceased were more complex than in the contemporary Western model of funeral rites. The body of the dead went through a process, overseen by Tohunga, that involved not just decomposition, but also recomposition. In his *Tua o Te Arai* performance research, Koroneho returns to the *remembered* space of the *atamira*, where the body of the deceased was part of a ritual recomposition through practices of hahunga (exhuming and cleansing bones). Koroneho's research seeks to re-affirm, not so much these now disappeared practices of exhuming bodies and recomposing their remains, but the sense of a common shared space that they activated. He summons the distant dead through vocalisations, the use of artefacts (performance objects), design, a dense soundscape and movement. Rather than being a mausoleum, the contemporary atamira is conceived in Koroneho's work as a site for the activation of still more life.

For Koroneho, "the ancestral body is the contemporary project for dance."[3] In the following interview Koroneho discusses his practice through *Tua o Te Arai* as life-affirming. As he reminds us, *Atamira* was attached to the site for a process of putrefaction of the flesh of the corpse that took place in relation to the elements and to nature. Bodies were made to perform beyond their ending. As an artist working with the body, Koroneho sees "how different peoples deal with life, lifelessness, afterlife, death and funeral rites" as well as traumatic events through performance.[4] In researching the forgotten rites of the atamira (stage) his workshops, taking place in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, are part of a decolonial recovery, opening up "*like a territory"* to the atmosphere of forgotten spaces. Audiences are invited to "wander the territory themselves, with each other, with guidance, with curiosity, with safety, with fearlessness, with tools and also too, with the idea that we don't know

[2] Koroneho, email communication with the author, May 27, 2016.
[3] Koroneho in discussion with the author, September 2016.
[4] Ibid.

where we are going."[5]

Tua o Te Arai Koroneho's performance research attempts to open a territory between life and lifelessness, an "interstitial space" of thresholds, that recovers the sense-perception of a forgotten space.

Koroneho's work asks what can be made of what has not yet completely disappeared? Is life about what can be done with what happens to be left? In interviewing Charles on his performance research into customary spaces of pre-European rituals surrounding death, he emphasizes a palpable, porous environment, an environment that is also bodied with things. The radical alterity of his project recognizes that the design of particular kinds of spaces, makes possible performing with different forms of absence, absences that are rooted in corporeality and contemporary expressions of culturally specific knowledges.

Brown: You talked when we last met about the question: How do I perform an ancestral body? In a sense the ancestral body could be a tree or the land or some feature of it.

Koroneho: I always think and it's interesting; If you don't look back, you always have to look where you are, and where you are going. And so, any ancestral body that I might encounter or develop has to be about my body now. So, in that way, *for me the ancestral body is absolutely the contemporary project for dance.* It has to be about the dancing body, the performing body, the cultural body, now.

Let's say what you are talking about with Tamati, there is an absolute immediate relation between what that body is doing, and that river.[6] So, in a way that river is an ancestral body too. It has a name; it has a history. It

[5] Ibid.

[6] Tamati Patuwai is the director of Mad Ave a local community group in Glen Innes, Auckland and River Talks, an initiative of performances and talks that have taken place since 2013 on the banks of the polluted Omaru River. River Talks events brought local iwi together with artists, environmentalist, and academics to challenge a view of this local river as always and forever degraded. The projects drew on Māori protocol on the marae and on Māori concepts of the relationship and obligation to the natural world (kaitiakitanga). Matthewman, S. & Patuwai, T., (2015) 'The River Talks: an ecocritical 'kōrero' about ecological performance, community activism and 'slow violence' *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 20, no. 4 (2015): 442 – 463.

is that thing, with what that body is doing. What to do with the body of that water. It's now, you can only do now, and by doing the next thing you may bring it into health. There needs to be some initiation of creating a relationship to that. And then, one might be able to glimpse the ancestral body.

Performing the ancestral body is not so defined. It's the idea to actually do it. What are you tracing? Are you tracing the attempts, the situations, or the forms of osmosis that change and shift…? It can be interstitial, it can be liminal, it's in certain places, in certain times of your research and practice that are linked to transformations of night and day, seasons… if you start thinking in that way, you may have *a long cyclic transformation of your body*. In some way to recall, do something, or remember *we might call that the ancestral body*.

Brown: Do you want to talk through the actual performance, what happened for you?

Koroneho: I don't know if it is really important. To me, because *Tua o Te Arai* needs a context by which it can develop. Some of the contexts are performance workshops, some are lengthy improvisational research times, and some of them are community based types of things which, strangely enough for me, the Symposium was community. So, it needs time to do this in a community. What that does, it brings people's attention to what is happening. And for me, I get to, for a very short and intense period of time go, and then move on. In this way, I am not in any way attached to the things I make because that is not their purpose. Their purpose is to herald something. *The herald is the work that is coming in the future.* And so, to give that performance more time would kind of silence the heralding.

Brown: Do you mean something unforeseen? That thing that would be *of* the future?

Koroneho: No, that moment that happened. It's going to dissipate under its own steam, it doesn't need more elements to hasten its dissipation. You know because that's how I see it. What I think it lead to is our conversation. It's one of the residues of this heralding. That we're talking. There are many things. These are all the things that will make the work.

Figure 7.1 Charles Koroneho, *Tupapaku* (2015). Photograph by Charles Koroneho.

Brown: But you can't pre-destine the work, you don't know what it will become.

Koroneho: To tell you the truth I know exactly what I am doing. I am waiting to find the right context by which I can initiate, it is not like it is unknown. I know the possibilities. I think that one of the things for me is to know, if I was to say I know exactly what I am doing that would be untruthful, but in actual fact it is not, I am following my research. It is informed by another foundation of research, they became tested, and then repeatable.

I channelled them through workshops, classes, collaborative directing, critique, evaluations of people's work. And so, I get the kind of reiteration of its repeatability and rigor. It's not scientifically repeatable, but it manifests and branches out over a wider kind of topical engagement, I know from observation, from speaking.

So, if I talk about a particular way of space, it is because I have talked about it critically with three or four different projects, people with different directions, with communities I have taught workshops, that's how its developed. In a year's time, I can speak openly and critically, that's different then at the moment with *Tua o Te Arai*, there are so many things that I don't know.

What I am looking for, to make the work in the future, is to acquire the skills and the experiential learning to make it. I have all of the desire, the creative experience, but at the same time, to me, it would be a real shame to make it now.

Brown: So, these processes that you engage in, these different kinds of research processes that are framed within a kind of configuration of what is emerging. Like *Tua o Te Arai.*

Koroneho: I would say it is the least known.

Brown: In the performance that you did in the Gus Fisher Gallery with Caitlyn and Sarah, how did you conceive the work in relation to the concept of ceremony? For me, it had a ritualistic feeling to it, the atmosphere in the gallery, the body laid on the table, the slow walk down the side of the room.

Koroneho: Generally people understand ceremony as being functional, structural, learnt, but where I come from, there are strict ceremonial processes in nearly everything, and you kind of learn these through osmosis. What that means, is that if you grow up with it you don't have to be schooled, or taught it,. What happens is you grow up observing what happens to people and environments in ceremonies. So, the ceremony is functioning something like *the performance of community.* That is what the ceremony is doing. So, from where I come from, *ceremony is the way in which the community performs itself.*

Brown: How does that converge with how you perceive the western theatrical paradigm of the stage, or of the performance frame?

Koroneho: I see any time a human gathers as a community. Even if it is temporary, or it is there, unbound by genetics, or whakapapa. At that point there is some kind of other thing that is asking them to gather.

Brown: The concept of community you are alluding to, it comes back to the concept we discussed last week about Atamira and life events in relation to particular spaces. Certain kinds of ceremony are premised upon certain spaces being activated? And yet, there are protocols and boundaries attached to those spaces?

Koroneho: Say there are two trees in the community. There is only one tree that will hold ceremony. Not the other. Most people couldn't distinguish which is the tree. But the community knows. All the ceremonies take place under *that* tree. It might be that people recognise that that tree is more conducive to certain ceremonies; it might be that the space around that tree is not as inviting or as inclusive as this space. It might be that this tree was planted by this ancestor and not that one. *It's the recognition of spaces which is important.* That tree is the tree and that one is not.

Brown: Is this a distinction that you would apply in your performance practice. Like it is this side of the room and it is not that side?

Koroneho: Absolutely.

Brown: How do we know what we know?

Koroneho: Well first I think what you need is to relate to your fear and anxiety about knowing and about making decisions. It's about trusting in your ability to understand what is a much better space and conducive to your work. Your research is supposed to inform you to help you make these risky, anxiety inducing decisions about where and how you place your work. Even before it is made. It's that space, it's like this. How much time do we need? Can I do it in two hours. Okay it is like that. You can only make it at 5.30, okay come and we only work for an hour. You constantly work with the limitations. This means that you have to have a relationship with your creative process that is not bound by time. Because it is time that limits us, not spaces. I prefer the space.

Brown: Is that a constant process, the creative space that is not bound by time. Is that a constant state of becoming?

Koroneho: I don't really think about it in that way. Because I understand that you can make instantaneous growth in the smallest amount of time and sometimes you need to spend a year improvising until you understand what you are doing.

Brown: It is not a quantifiable thing.

Koroneho: No, those are just necessary things I need to do if I am going to grow. And let's just say that in a year I have a goal. I need four or five of these instantaneous growth things to support a series of streams of long interpretative experiential learning conditions by which I'll understand. When I get the chance to go yes, no.

Brown: There's no maybe in this world, it is just yes and no?

Koroneho: No. The maybe is when you are performing. Because this is the thing, when you perform you are at your truest state of instability, and so is the space. And so, you must grow inside the performative space to learn how and why all of the fears and things that you have hidden, what's in your work, what's in your idea. In a way, we train, we rehearse, we structure, because that's what we're told will make us disciplined, and *performance makes us undisciplined and unstable and that's what we should be preparing ourselves for.*

Brown: It is the performance which is where the instability occurs?

Koroneho: Like the disciplining of dance it is in the performance where the disciplining is. We don't need to undiscipline dance necessarily as a goal. As a concept, it is a really, really good idea. But if you really want to understand undisciplining dance you have to perform and you have to **practically** do your research. And that means it doesn't have to be in front of an audience. You have to be in your body, in your thing, all of the time. Because that's where you invite people to observe you, or that's where you allow space to observe you, or the meanderings of the community in the space you decide to explore. *It's an exposure*. That's the un-disciplining side.

Brown: How does that link us back to the notion of no settlement. Is there some link there between how we talked about readdressing?

Koroneho: No, to me it is not that it belongs somewhere else. You can have many discrete ways of looking at culture, ceremony and community and they don't need to be linked in any way. What's linking is that they are in the same space and time we live in and they are relevant to the times we live in. That's the link. If we were to link everything altogether I think we would diminish the possibility for having more motivated positions, possibilities and discourse.

Brown: How much of it is also invested in ihi and presence. Is that something that happens in performance?

Koroneho: There are three main ideas in Māori Performing Arts: ihi, wehi, and wana. These concepts are part of the whare tapere, they are also part of the modern atamira and kapahaka. So, most people are very aware of them when they are learning. They were taught to me when I was a young person before I started contemporary dance training because we all did kapahaka at school. I don't think about it because I am doing it. To me, what I think about these concepts is that they give three really definitive ways to look at your relationship to space, to the people in the space, and the energy.

Brown: Each one gives a different way of looking at space?

Koroneho: How to say that without being definitive? They are linked in a way. Actually, the way I perceive it is more like reflexively. In that, I am inside generating an internal landscape. I am projecting my internal landscape and so I am pushing it out of myself, and I am outside of myself viewing myself internally and externally at the same time, and the environment where the audience is doing the same thing. Being reflexive in the moment. Ihi is often connected to the feeling of the person.

Brown: I translate that as presence, but that might be a mistranslation.

Koroneho: It's a feeling of internalised energy and spirit. It's really the hau. The spirit of the person. You know like the mauri.

And wehi is this idea of being able to generate and take it, softly or directly and project it out. It is to be able to go… and then direct it out

there. It is an externalisation of your presence that you are giving.

And wana is the idea of the sum of that, it is the energy of exploration of the space. It is awe, the feeling of awe. Also shared by someone else.

Brown: As opposed to ihi, is wana more concerned with the group dynamic? Less about the person.

Figure 7.2 Charles Koroneho, *Tupapaku* (2015). Photograph by Charles Koroneho.

Koroneho: Wana is something felt by the person and felt by the others. Wana is more like the energy of the space, it is the shared space, it is the membrane that gets moved, or torn or pierced or transformed. This is the idea. It comes from the Pacific as well, it is not a Māori thing only, there

are aspects of what it means to communicate something in the space with your body, language, ceremony, karanga, korero, kapa haka and the wero. Standing up to sing, standing up to speak. It is within everything when you decide, I am going to take the risk and go. … and it just happens that we are also functioned by ceremonies and by protocols and by spaces and by all of these things which are formalised, informal, transitory kind of ceremonial things that happen as well. You know rites of passage. Ideas of the performative is really what it is, because it is an unstable thing, it is a risk.

Brown: So how does that risk instability, in the terms, ihi, wehi and wana?

Koroneho: They are there. They are there not because of that, but if you want to understand how to be in this, in this terrifying place, then these are the things you must consider. *You must think in, you must be out, and then you must be a part of the space.* And then you must understand that it is a *reciprocity*.

Brown: You mentioned learning those things very early on, doing kapa haka. It became natural to you to think in that way. Are they, because you are not working in kapa haka now, are they terms that you still think are relevant, or are they just embedded in your practice? Would you use those terms when you teach? Are they there in the background informing you?

Koroneho: I use whatever language I can to make connections because in the end, I don't feel like I can really actually make anything unless I connect somehow. Even in the most fleeting way, even if it seems kind of superfluous, it is better than not having any. And sometimes when you start off working with people, you have to start off just sharing whatever language or terminology that you have. So, that you can start to see where we are in relation to articulation. Then, you find some things. Some people you don't ever have to talk about presence. And you shouldn't, because they understand that. You know. You don't have to say anything. And then other people, that is all you talk about.

Every person that you are building a relationship with, they require and you too, different ways to listen and different ways to articulate because we are not working with people born out of the same mould. It is not a factory that they all came out of. Different backgrounds, ages, gender, sexuality, education. If they are all deciding to come together with a kind

of performative thing and they want to be working in cultural activities and art-making, then, you assume that they are willing to find out or try to ascertain what an idea could be. They should have some kind of intellectual curiosity and the ability to be able to translate and activate terminologies into something that they understand. If they can't, that's where you help them to find a way to do that, these things, are the types of things that you try to work with. So, let's say that you have that and then you have two hours to make a performance. What you do is rely on what you have, which is either the history you have with these people, the ability to understand that they can analyse the situation through their own memories, experiences and then offer a really useful contribution to the space and then you can talk about it later.

I don't make choreography. What happened at the Gus Fisher, these are explorations of a particular idea. They are structured improvisations, they have certain tasks, they have certain spaces to be moved into, they have interwoven streams of tasks, sounds and activities, and then what we are doing as a group of people, is trying to weave this kind of idea, not in a fabric but a kind of stream of consciousness, *an activation of spaces*.

At the Gus Fisher, there is the four of us trying to do that at the same time and the audience trying to see and experience what we are doing. For that short period of time, there are spaces left open for people to create their own stream. There is no need to tell a story, there is a need though *to bring people to themselves*. If you can bring people to themselves, even though there is attraction, big energy and curiosity, you start to get interpretations, sub-texts, narratives of the spectators and performers.

It is about consciousness. Not about necessarily giving in and letting go. No, it is about being ultra-alert about where you are and the decisions you are making at that time. These are the spaces I think I should be in.

Brown: What you are proposing is a live vital space? It is holding that liveliness in the mix, it is not allowing it to settle. It is a situation of attending to sensation.

Koroneho: Yes, possibly.

Brown: Attending to sensation, or framing attention?

Koroneho: I think framing attention is probably a good way of looking

at it. Because this is one of the things that doesn't require rehearsal. You require *a different type of exchange in the space*.

Brown: These exchanges appear to involve duration and persistence. The establishing and enabling of communal / collaborative relationships that are not just spatial but temporal and enduring?

Koroneho: Such exchanges involve offering notes or encouragement. For example, the performer might say, 'I was thinking about this when I was sitting on the chair and then I decided to come up' and then I might say, 'oh you decided to move to the left side and then moved around and came back that was really interesting, I didn't think you would do that,' and then they say, 'yeah I didn't think about it but when I did it seemed right, I thought that was the right place to be.' Let's do another one in ten minutes why don't you go out that way and explore something else and see if you can find a new pathway back to meet up over here. Then it is like that and meanwhile, through observation you are looking at what out of this can retain an essence for later development. Because there is another thing coming.

Brown: So what are your plans for the development of this project?

Koroneho: I will do performance workshops in Montreal and Sydney. For these workshops we are going to work with a more conceptual practice, as opposed to looking at the activation of space. Looking into the reasons why you would move somewhere or why you would do that with your body. To me what's really important in these workshops is that other perspectives come into the process. In Montreal I will work with Quebecois and First Nations people, in Australia contemporary dance, body weather and Aboriginal people. I will come back to New Zealand and do a workshop here and work with Māori. I want to work with Māori singers and their voices. At some stage there has to be a really concerted time spent designing and looking at what it means to make a space?

Brown: The research you do in these different communities of practice with different practitioners, contributing to the process is not so much nomadic, but might I suggest archipelagic. Martinician writer and philosopher Édouard Glissand develops archipelagic thinking as a mode of address that bypasses the abstract concept of "nationality," as a pretext for globalization, in favour of "regionality;" a form of address that is situated

territorially and relationally.[7] So my question is how are you working with these particularized relations, emerging in Montreal, Sydney and Auckland, as contributing to the project?

Koroneho: The work itself is not the primary thing. It is the means by which we gather. And when we gather, we explore the possibilities of looking at that "thing." I am trying to find out from the individuals, from the group, the things they do. I am not trying to get research from them, I am just a witness.

I witness something as a possibility of a future situation.

It is a palimpsest. You offer other people a chance to inscribe their views, their feelings, over and above what you think. You build layers, writing or rewriting over a particular idea, or, you erase.

Brown: I am trying to understand the relation between the making of performance as event, as an autonomous project and the relational community that you describe through which layering takes affect as a kind of "archipelagic thinking."[8] Can you explain what your idea of *Tua o Te Arai* and what it means to you?

Koroneho: I don't talk about the idea so much, what I talk about is the ramifications of what it might mean to explore the idea. And then I talk a little bit about what it is drawn from. Otherwise, it is more like ethnography and social anthropology. I am not interested in that. This is an idea, it has some interesting language and perceptions embedded in it.

Brown: As it is a Māori concept, when you introduce *Tua o Te Arai* to first nations people in Canada, do they relate to it in relation to their own cosmological thinking or world-view?

Koroneho: It is a politics of performance. I am bringing this concept because it is close to me and the land I come from, as humans, these are

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[7] Glissand, E. (1997) *Poetics of Relation,* trans. Betsy Wing, University of Michigan Press; Glissant, E. (2005). Collected poems of Edouard Glissant. Trans. J. Humphreys. Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press.

[8] For Glissand 'archipelagic thinking' takes into account the experience of fragmentation and difference within the Islands of the Carribean but does not resort to Eurocentric concepts belonging. It acknowledges a diverse totality. A global vision that starts from the position of his homeland on Martinique island.

really poignant experiences that we have in our lives. There is a cultural and political inevitability in how different peoples deal with life, lifelessness, afterlife, death and funeral rites. I am trying to share, some of the most difficult concepts culturally that are faced by *all* peoples in the world. How to deal with traumatic events in the life of a human being? One way, is to go out. You have to open up *a territory*. And then everyone has to wander the territory themselves, with each other, with guidance, with curiosity, with safety, with fearlessness, with evaluative tools and also, with the idea that we don't know where we are going.

Brown: If *Tua o Te Arai* is an opening to a territory that is also an abyss of unknowing, it is a deeply paradoxical one. Your workshops seem to make footholds that are transcultural translations of the concept. In your experience working between Canada, Australia and New Zealand, different situations and contexts for making, how are the participating practitioners embodying work initiated from a Māori concept?

Koroneho: The trained dancer, the trained actor are the hardest people to work with. These ideas we are talking about, they are better for the person who is danced out, not the danced in. Curiosity will unravel their bodies.

Brown: Is this the time of the amateur?

Koroneho: I am looking for people who are really committed to sustaining a practice. If you can't do an improvisation for three hours. If you can't sustain your enquiry for that long, then you should be questioning why you are here. If you don't know how to be upside down, then how are you going to understand your relationship to space, if you are always going to be on your feet? If you don't crawl or roll on the ground, then you are not going to understand the transition between bipedal action to quadrupedal, or how to shift your front and your back. To be practitioner and creative – centric, you have to prepare for your work. It is not about being a dancer, it is about being a mobile, imaginative, fully cognisant human in space and that means you have got to move.

I am using my body as my primary site of research and creativity. What is that saying? Be in your body all of the time if you are serious.

Figure 7.3 Charles Koroneho, *Tupapaku* (2015). Photograph by Charles Koroneho.

Brown: The workshopping process is your physical test site and it is one of lived relation through gathering in a place to explore a plenitude embodiments including the human-animal hybrid. These sustained processes of physical research must be reliant on having spaces that are conducive to the kinds of focus you are seeking through the work?

Koroneho: There are lots of spaces all over the world to develop work but they are contingent on being in relation to others. If someone is going to offer you resources and a great community to work with, I just need to get there. To me a consolidation of a creative foundation doesn't sit well. Funding bodies want consistency. They want to have the most conducive group of people working together as if they are married. The person who has the idea is the person who takes the risk. That's who funding bodies and institutions should be investing in.

Brown: But the person who has the idea needs the tools to manifest the idea surely.

Koroneho: I am not talking about that. They already have those tools because they are part of a vast community. That is what I have been doing for years. I have people who know what I do. And understand some of the ideas. Sometimes we meet and sometimes we don't. But that is quite different than say getting a group of people together to make a work. To me that is at the very end of this process.

Brown: And yet, those people who do this consistently that is their community. What you are proposing is a more nomadic model of an artist curator. You are also curating through a care for elements.

Koroneho: The main thing for me, I am nomadic by choice and necessity. The way I work is not really recognized as a stable way of working. Especially at my age and at the kind of stage I am in my career. I should be recognised as being more stable. But I resist that model because I think it is actually not that good. It makes artists into bureaucrats. It destroys their relationship with their body. Especially those people who use their bodies to make their work. So, to me, I think it is much more important to invest in the artist, the person, than what that person is making.

It doesn't matter if they have a company or not. It doesn't matter if they have a project or not. Because that project is not that person. Invest in the artist not the project. Projects can come and go. I can wait five years until I am sixty to make *Tua o Te Arai*. I don't care because I know I am going to make it.

Right now, the nomadic thing is important because this is the way that I can access the research. Independence is very important and the people I work with have to be independent.

Brown: So they are autonomous agents who have a shared interest in the nomadic?

Koroneho: Well they have to be autonomous, yes, but also too, when they work with me I am responsible for helping them in their life but they have to be independent. I find the company structure archaic and unwieldly.

Brown: It sounds like a crystalline structure. Things are coalescing around the edges. A re-patterning.

Koroneho: Sometimes you need to wait because there is someone in the future that you are going to be working with, and that person has not appeared yet? They can be a catalyst in the development of work. I really think it is a very important thing to not be impatient when developing work.

Space is one of the most important things in *Tua o Te Arai*. You said I am becoming a space-shifter, but I am not, it is the space that is shifting and I am trying to listen to it. That is a different thing.

All those years ago we did Te Pou Rahui, it was one of the first spaces that shifted me towards new conceptual territory. Rahui is the place of negotiation or transgression. Te Pou Rahui was a really important space to allow for this possibility.

Brown: I remember well the experience of Te Pou Rahui, for me it was an abrupt shift from my customary ways of working as an artist in London.[9] You invited myself and the Swedish photographer Mattias Ek with whom I was collaborating at the time, to spend a week on the Marae at Henderson, Hoana Waititi. We spent time there with the other performers, exploring, workshopping together. I was challenged by the context of a marae and also by some of the participants. I wrote about the experience later as a vibratory shock that marked a twist in my practice.

Koroneho: During this period of Te Pou Rahui, whatever workshops, performances or solos I did, it was always about opening up a territory; looking at different aspects of *how* to negotiate thresholds, precipices and liminality. That inter-stitial process allowed me to negotiate contentious things. When I decided to make a new work, I knew that that space and theoretical platform would not yield the things that I wanted for a new work. I thought where do I need to look to next? Te Pou Rahui led to the idea of Tuahu. Like Te Pou Rahui it is a way of looking at ideas from a

[9] Te Pou Rahui translates as The Boundary Post. A Pou Rahui is a Boundary Post used to demarcate a border between territories of different groups. The Pou Rahui acts as a symbol to warn people against trespass, used in the case of Tapu or the temporary protection of the resources of that territory. The Pou Rahui is an object that identifies a site of contention. Te Pou Rahui performance workshop will explore and expand the space between cultures, disciplines, languages, theories, and practices by leading edge performance practitioners including Carol Brown, Mattias Ek, Sylvie Fortin, Warwick Long and Charles Koroneho:.
http://www.tetokiharuru.com/te-pou-rahui.html

Māori perspective. Understanding how it might manifest different spaces and different methodologies.

Tuahu has been nearly four years now. I have not finished with it, it is still there. Out of Tuahu came the Waka Huia workshop. I made a new work out of my response to Tuahu and that became *Pure*. Out of *Pure*, came this idea of doing *Tua o Te Arai*. Customary space, known space, nearly forgotten space, forgotten space, unknown space, or the unknown.

Brown: The four spaces you articulated, they are related to *Tua o Te Arai*?

Koroneho: They are related to the journey of Te Toki Hararu. And Te Toki Hararu is me. I have been exploring since 1997 with Te Toki Hararu, this is a kind of conceptual summary of the work that I have made. *Tua o Te Arai* will become a conceptual summary of the research spaces that have yielded through Te Toki Hararu. And the unknown space, is *Tua o Te Arai.*

Brown: Okay. So, PURE, which one is that?

Koroneho: PURE is the customary space and the nearly forgotten space. Tuahu is forgotten space. *Tua o Te Arai* is the unknown.

Brown: So it will complete the cycle. These four spaces that you have articulated will be a cycle?

Koroneho: Kind of. When I talk with people. Like Māori people. They understand the cemetery. They understand the marae, the marae atea, and how they are activated socially. These kinds of customary spaces are really familiar, and really known. But Te Atamira is a kind of nearly forgotten space. Although they are familiar with the cemetery, they don't really understand the role of the atamira any longer. The atamira has now been transformed into a name for the performance stage. Most Māori people have forgotten what the atamira was, and used for, and in that way, they have forgotten *the state of the body in decomposition, out in the open* the symbology of the atamira, basically the decomposing of the body to the elements and nature…

Brown: The decay of the life of the flesh

Koroneho: Yes, the decaying of flesh.

Brown: Is that where the ritual of cleansing bones comes from?

Koroneho: Yes, a ceremony that is known but nearly forgotten, which is called Hahunga, the re-internment, cleansing and rearranging of the bones.

Brown: All that takes place on the atamira?

Koroneho: After the flesh has come off, The atamira is dismantled and then the body is reinterred, or re-buried or put in a case or a cave. Or tied up and put into a tree. In relation to different types of ancestral bodies, different types of notions of what you can do with bones, what you can do with decaying flesh, these are concepts that now no longer sit comfortably. They are not even on the edge of the profane and the sacred anymore, they are really gone. For a person who is like me, who is looking at the different aspects of the body, the cultural body, the ancestral body, these spaces are really important. They are not only distanced in reality but they are distanced historically.

There are ethical, moral and spiritual reasons why they are not practiced any more. There is the advent of colonisation that pushed some of these spaces and practices away. Even if they are still there, accessible by reading, writing or people talking about them, they are not practiced any longer. It is considered repugnant.

With my workshops, and when I travel and ask, talk to people, hui my research around these spaces, it comes to me that the places I need to access are becoming less available and are being pushed historically further from my contemporary reality.

It was in the time of my grandparents that these were really talked about. The last atamira was probably only 200 years ago. That's not that long historically for something to become detached from the talk. *Even though the names are still there.*

Figure 7.4 Charles Koroneho, *Tupapaku* (2015). Photograph by Charles Koroneho.

To me, the atamira and the hahunga ceremonies are really probably some of the most important things, but they are disengaged, discontinued traditions. They are really in the place of the nearly forgotten.

The forgotten space of the tuahu, the ceremonial places of the shaman, the tohunga, their spaces are the most distanced from us. In relation to practices with the human body. But their practices are in other things because the tohunga still exists, the shaman still exists.

People are talking about re-engaging these practices. So, there are funerals in the last few years that the people wished not to be embalmed they had what are called natural funerals. People use ice to keep the body cool, and herbs and oils to maintain the appearance until the body is buried, and often they were on a platform, like an atamira.

Brown: In the marae?

Koroneho: Yes in the marae. And then they were buried

Brown: Can you describe how the concept of the Atamira has shifted and changed through this history.

Koroneho: The atamira, now realigned in natural funerals and burial replaces the coffin. Whereas the Atamira in the past was replaced by the burial site or cemetery.

Brown: In your programme notes for the Symposium you described "customary, nearly forgotten, forgotten and unknown" spaces and the knowledges that relate to these, can you describe how these manifest in your practice?

Koroneho: Customary spaces are the ones that everyone knows. The second group are the nearly forgotten spaces, people kind of know them but they don't know anything about them. The third set is space that no longer exists except in the different machinations of contemporary practice. There is no concerted effort to retain these spaces. They are actually physical spaces, but they have been made whakanoa, deactivated, they haven't been reactivated.

Most of the pa sites all over Auckland, have tuahu on them, there are also tuahu all over the Pacific. They are everywhere, Maungawhau has one, Maungakiekie, they are all over the place.

Brown: So, they are embedded?

Koroneho: Yes, they were used for observing spiritual, physical and climate change. For hundreds, if not thousands of years. At some stage of European settlement in Aotearoa many of these sacred, dangerous places were deactivated and they were made whakanoa to cross over, they are part of colonisation. They are part of the urbanisation of traditional Māori places, they were part of the sale or confiscation of land, they were part of we'll do this if you do this for us. There was a lot of history related to these spaces. I am interested in the ways by which something becomes further on than obsolete. They become classified as discontinued traditions, classified as disappeared and then in a short period they actually disappear. But those are the physical, energy, conceptual ramifications for all people who lived in those times.

So, here I am. It is not really about a sacred space from back there and what a sacred space is not. I am just talking about what are the ramifications for a person like me and anyone else, who wants to have access to those notions and ideas, because *that is the library that you seek access to.*

Because you need to be in spaces that allow for those things to happen. You need a certain body of understanding as well and that is why you want to be in those spaces. I can't make *Tua o Te Arai* in a dance studio. I can't use contemporary dance, it is not going to help me access that space.

Brown: Are you speaking to people, your family are you talking to them about these spaces.

Koroneho: Only if it concerns us. The people I talk to about this are Tohunga, shamans, kaumatua, karakia people, house-builders, canoe builders, weavers, learned scholars, academics, composers and other artists. All of these things are a place to ground oneself in a cosmological sense.

Brown: It strikes me it is so much about decomposition, it is such a fertile place, it is so generative. It is not like we are alive and then we die, there is whole process around decomposition. It is fascinating the stages that you are describing. It is a space that goes with it. It is a space of awareness where things are happening.

Koroneho: Yes. The other thing, that is really importantly about why I am interested in these spaces, especially with *Tua o Te Arai*, the premise

of my research, is that we have always tried to see in living time that there is more, that there is an afterlife and we do all of these things to combat the fear that this is all we have, we only have this life.

Perhaps we do all these things and look at spaces culturally, spiritually, emotionally because we can't face the fact that when we die, there is no more, there is no Hawaiki, no Hine Nui Te Po, no spiritual hiatus at Te Arai, we won't pass by the pouhutakawa tree and go down into Rarohenga. There is nothing.

Brown: And yet, our bones might be doing a dance of death, like wind chimes. You might give your bones an afterlife.

Koroneho: What I am thinking is, it's not what happens to us when we die, it's for the people we leave behind, we die, our bodies decay. But what happens to the decay of our life when all that is left is that body, that is what people are mourning, that is what people are crying over, that is what people want to take care of, or abuse or show off in some fine funeral, that is what people sing and argue over, take photographs of, it's for the living.

Brown: Rituals for the living. So that makes it a space of interaction.

Koroneho: I think that in the end it is about the living, even if you are working with the dead. All of these elaborate spaces, the spaces we forgot, the spaces that are historically degrading; of what people of those times decided was or was not important to remain. The question is, am I going to add to that kind of mythology, you know, that we aren't going to be nothing as soon as we die.

And so, it is important to understand whether or not, Tua o Te Arai, is a very particular Māori concept or it is a membrane between the temporal and spiritual worlds, a membrane by which the departed and the living can interact.

Without that, Te Arai is just a physical place in Māori ancestral stories about the spirits journey to Hawaiki. Not a place where the spirits rest, contemplate and where I imagine they sing, they dance, they cry, they argue, they make love, they look out, they observe and they remember.

To me, Te Arai is a kind of transitional, lived, death space.

In the story, they leave little talismans and tokens. They are departing their lived life and from there, they move on. There is a stream and they drink the water from it. That is the initiation to be a completely spiritual being; you can't return back to your corpse. You are separated forever now. And all that is left there is no more. There is no more now. When we call them, when we lament them, when we touch them, when kiss them, there are trails of residue connected to that person's journey and these are the compelling motions or notions of that thing. What we are lamenting is the physical representation of that person's life. That's why in the speeches of the tangihanga they will talk to the dead as if they are on a journey already.[10]

Haere, ki te wa kainga, te kainga tuturu o to tatau tupuna
Go, journey to your home, the true home of your ancestor.

Hoea to waka, kia koe ki to hearenga
Paddle your canoe, you are on your journey

Language keeps them moving.
You are here, you, lying here, but you are moving.

There is a distinction between the spirit of a person and the body of a person.

So what there is, is a kind of dual journey of mourning and a lamentation of the whanau pani and the community, and then there is this equally mournful lamentation journey of the spirit.[11]

It is a very rich territory for performance making.

Brown: So, performance is where we meet our dead?

Koroneho: Yes

What might I be able to do in these spaces? What I am doing is subjecting my body to an idea of these spaces. In making work with/through our losses I/we explore *how to keep going.*

[10] *tangihanga* translates as 'funeral.'
[11] *whanau pani* translates as 'bereaved family.'

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CHAPTER EIGHT

& DARKNESS

TRU PARAHA

dance becomes dyslexic with darkness. substance mutated from ether & absence, in(di)visible bodies.
darkness bleeds an embryo, meditates upon & seers itself concealed within the w))))hole nothing
spacious utter potent shell.
deathstar pooling

matter ellipsed, inked, blotted, slurred, transvertical
iSpace eclipses,

darkness presences shadow, penumbra, tenebrous spectre, crepuscular deep e((((((((((ho
abyssal flesh
life's formless mesh occluded.

what can be discovered through ch**ore**ography that shines black at itself, that blacks out on site, blackening into blacker than-

is the new black

Mårten Spångberg's dance of horror perceives the anonymous qualities of darkness, secreting gradations of obscurity - a speculative choreography of night not a rabid score of psycho-trauma or splatter. *Natten*[1] crawls through the nebulae against greyscales of low to no visibility. A

[1] "Natten," Vimeo Video, Part 1, 1:48:14, Part 2, 1:35:20, Part 3, 1:45:48, Part 4, 1:50:58, Live Performance, June 4, 2016, posted by Mårten Spångberg, https://vimeo.com/172484817, https://vimeo.com/173681289, https://vimeo.com/174957050, https://vimeo.com/177154317.

monochromatic mirage projects in giant scale against a wall, its mists ascending from digital voids. Gargantuan silver drapings and ropes trail into dark space, metallic stalactites. Bunches of bruise-red roses, a tripod of pagan sticks, piles of clothes, fruit, and things emplace upon a communal floor.

Darkness appears as dances' recomposing of a cosmic pessimism,[2] posited by Eugene Thacker as "a strange mysticism of the world-without-us."[3] He argues, "horror is not simply about fear, but instead about the enigmatic thought of the unknown"[4] pushing philosophical debate to the edges of unreason, beyond rational comprehension or empirical knowledge. Recent speculative theory opens our encounter with darkness to estranged territories advancing concerns for a shadow side of life, unbearable recesses in a cracked world, toward even more bewildering notions of a world without human. This dimension "lies somewhere in between, in a nebulous zone that is at once impersonal and horrific."[5] Attuned to a radical pessimism at work in the writings of Thomas Ligotti,[6] Ben Woodard notes "a philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic probing into the non-place that humans occupy in an indifferent universe."[7] This somewhere in between, or non-place that might also be felt through choreographic darkness, could at any moment corrupt our non\sense of self. For what remains after the event of such cosmic horror is 'a kind of standstill, a suspension of subjective feeling [….] as if we did not feel in the first person but only in the indeterminable and porous thing that we have become.'[8]

Nine performers transport *Natten* through densities of asynchronous dancing, horizontal somatics, intimate lingerings, ruptured unison. A sonic tremor underscores in hypnotic refrain; roaring winds through a black hole or the earth's core grinding. Intervals of chiming bells, coital moanings,

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[2] Eugene Thacker, *Cosmic pessimism* (New York: University of Minnesota Press, 2015).

[3] Eugene Thacker, *In the dust of this planet: Horror of philosophy Vol. 1* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2011), 17.

[4] Ibid., 8.

[5] Ibid., 6.

[6] Thomas Ligotti, *The conspiracy against the human race: A contrivance of horror* (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2010).

[7] Ben Woodard, "Thoughts on Ligotti's conspiracy against the human race," *Naught Thought*, accessed May 2, 2017, https://naughtthought.wordpress.com/2010/09/18/thoughts-on-ligottis-conspiracy-against-the-human-race/.

[8] Mario Perniola, *The sex appeal of the inorganic: Philosophies of desire in the modern world*, trans. Massimo Verdicchio (New York: Continuum, 2004), 77.

industrial clamour, immersive loopings of electronic and classical arrangements. At times a retreating nonsilence. Pedestrian and formal in its choreographic movements, the dance captures the zeitgeist of our times; some body sips on a water bottle, fingers a laptop, removes a hoodie, casually dis)appears into a roiling fog.

> The night is long. There are no corpses or blood, body parts or bones. It is long; it is when horror opens its dark eyes and lets you experience its endless void. Overwhelmingly tranquil, a motionless sleep from which there is no escape. A reverie that entangles you in putrefaction.[9]

Cosmic black-thought similarly resonates in Kathy Acker's experimental novel *Blood and guts in high school,* inscribed through the adolescent tribulations of Janey and her tale of "The bear's vision of blackness:"

> The night was black and the universe was black. You weren't able to distinguish any forms in the night. A black band separated the black earth from the black sky. All over was just blackness, a layer of blackness.[10]

The choreographer relinquishes dances' obsession with the ocular and illumined to "layers of blackness" invoking Woodard's dark vitalism, where "The limit or non-limit of darkness is its terrifying feature [...] the possibility of a darkness within darkness."[11] This large format, 7-hour work, destratifies time-in-space offering the night as so many darknesses, as a substrate for non-differentiated, thriving life. Here in the black, attendants might ponder a murky distinction between dances performed in darkness, and the darkness that dance itself produces.

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[9] Mårten Spångberg, *Natten* (Brussels: Kunstenfestivaldesarts, 2016),10. http://www.kfda.be/assets/849.
[10] Kathy Acker, *Blood and guts in high school* (New York: Grove Press, 1989), 55.
[11] Ben Woodard, "Darknesses," *Naught Thought*, accessed May 2, 2017, https://naughtthought.wordpress.com/2009/11/09/darknesses/.

Figure 8.1 NASA, 2016

> *Black space, dark space, darkness, and blackness must all be approached in their full positivity.*[12]

Choreography&darkness entangle as a force of critical resistance for André Lepecki who limns recent performances of experimental dance produced partially, or entirely in states of darkness. Darkness conspires as "a minor or black light,"[13] arising out of, and from within neoliberal colonialism, its relentless perpetuation of white enlightenment, and hyper-vigilant systems of illumination. Choreographic art and its contingent materials[14] reveals a singularity, something to be experienced *in the dark*. In a chapter forecasting the political implications of darkness in dance performance and choreography of the 21st century, Lepecki vividly recounts Marcelo Evelin's group work *De repente fica tudo preto de gente* (*Suddenly everywhere is black with people*):

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[12] André Lepecki, "The politics of speculative imagination in contemporary choreography," in *The Oxford Handbook of Dance and Politics,* eds. Rebekah J. Kowal, Gerald Siegmund, and Randy Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 165.

[13] André Lepecki, *Singularities: Dance in the age of performance* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 60.

[14] Reza Negarestani, *"*Contingency and Complicity,*"* *The Medium of Contingency (2011).*

> Everywhere they go, the black floor becomes blacker, as the black paint, which is like black blood or black rain or black sweat, oozes from the dancers' bodies. Black on black in the penumbra.[15]

The black box theatre is swamped with pitch blackness, a conglomerate of oil blackened bodies barely perceptible. Darkness compresses the performance space, evoking for the writer, the hold of the slave ship and ensuing deluge of black-thought:

> births, deaths, sex, defecation, vomit, touch, love, blood, whispers, cries, poetry, song, nausea, fevers, semen, babel of languages, hands on throats, feet on arms, sexes on sexes, backs on heads, the living and the dead, rats, fleas, and seasalted lips [….] in another kind of night, another kind of darkness, and all these fleshes piling up in the hold.[16]

Darkness&dance deports a visceral and ethical thinking toward black fleshes of past, present and potential futures, for indeed the darklight that Lepecki proposes, following Deleuze, is one of potentiality and freedom. A counter-movement toward "freedom beyond the possible" accessed through and with darkness troubles the ongoing project of Western enlightenment, exposing "an aesthetic-racist unconscious sustaining a whole political formation that abhors (racial) blackness as (civilizational) darkness and (reason's) derangement."[17] Calling into question the function of choreography in contemporary life, we ask what darkness might do situated within artistic practices of embraining-inscribing-voicing-dreaming-embodying, and what is to befall our meticulously constructed dances now blackened into a plethora of barely seen, inexplicable mo[redacted]ments.

The affective-sensuous experiences of audience-witnesses / art critics offer key insights into these darkening chasms of performance inquiry. Adrian Searle's review of Tino Seghal's *This Variation,* entitled, *A piece of performance art set in darkness made me see the light,*[18] gives a lucid testimony of epiphanies and occlusions arising during the event. Opening with "Utter dark,"[19] Searle recalls a disquieting and cautious beginning where audience members and performers are entirely effaced: "the

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[15] Lepecki, *Singularities: Dance in the age of performance* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 74.
[16] Ibid., 75.
[17] Ibid., 59.
[18] Adrian Searle, "A piece of performance art set in darkness made me see the light," *The Guardian*, June 14, 2012.
[19] Ibid.

blackness had swallowed us whole [....] each of us surrounded, shadows within shadows."[20] Throughout the work sensory perception, bodily orientation, and aural recognition becomes acutely disrupted within a bizarre blackout, replete with random passersby and unintended encounters. There is a palpable sense of exhilaration as the author deepens into "a darkness without dimension,"[21] heightened by sonic apparitions, utterances, music, and choreographed bodies glimpsed through stratums of dark space. One suspects that the light that darkness causes him to see, that makes him want to "grab strangers on the street by their lapels and shove them through that doorway into the dark,"[22] must surely be, as Lepecki has shown us, that of utterly, blinding freedom - darkness in its full positivity.

KARE; kind artificial real experience[23] envisions the black box studio as an immersive non-place, a nomadic campsite where one might "assemble in heterogeneity," to borrow from Deleuze. Designed through a re-membering of blackout wānanga[24] embedded within the choreographer's artistic and cultural genealogies, the dimmed environ summons a convergence of bodies. Beginning with an inhalation we expand within and through the restless void. The Māori concept of *Te Kore,* correspondingly incites "spacialities of thought that are open to possibilities of uncertainty"[25] as nameless entities gather and antagonise within the meta(physical-conceptual performance space. Precariously transfocal, the penumbra is activated by witness-dancer, choreographer-sound operator, light designer-performer, machine, or sentient thing.

[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] *KARE; kind artificial real experience*, choreographed and produced by Tru Paraha*,* Black Box Studio at Kenneth Myers Centre, Auckland, June 30, 2016.
[24] A series of nocturnal, marae-based wānanga facilitated by Ngāpuhi language experts working within *Te Puna o Te Mātauranga,* NorthTec, Northland. Earlier accounts of blackout wānanga conducted within Te Tai Tokerau are also referenced here.
[25] Carol Brown and Moana Nepia, "*Te Kore* and the encounter of performance," in *Collaboration in performance practice: Premises, workings and failures,* eds. Noyale Colin and Stefanie Sachsenmaier (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 199.

Nā Te Kore Te Pō (from the void the night

-nui

-roa

-uriuri

-kerekere

-tiwhatiwha

-tē-kitea

-tangotango

-whawha

-namunamu-ki-taiao

-tahuri-atu

-tahuri-mai-ki-taiao

Architectures of Te Pō/darkness constructed through Māori philosophies of *whakapapa* (verbally translated as *to layer*) invoke genealogies traversing human-unhuman, terrestrial-celestial spheres. Indigenous philosopher Carl Mika contemplates whakapapa "in terms of its focus on fixed strata, their interstices, and the potential for thinking

both of the layers themselves and the dark, mysterious spaces between them."[26] It is these mysterious spaces that intensify the choreographic compulsion to unearth, beyond the layers themselves.

As a group performance *KARE; kind artificial real experience* pursues a futile conspiracy of human-thing where shadow, the spectral, and interior abysses of darkness perform alongside and in-between enfleshed bodies, or human dancers. This approach to choreography explores ways "of extending the concept of creative collaboration to include non-human collaborators."[27] We open doors, usher guests with vague gestures, stimulate rituals of encounter. Visitors negotiate how to be, compelled by logics of indiscernibility to "act so that there is no use in a centre."[28] Steered to re-move themselves from the hidden peripheries of the round, the people are displaced. Visibility is deficient as performers disperse a pile of swabs for sitting on, extras torn from cardboard boxes, fold-out chairs for the ailing. Gradually, we entrench together - not as one, but as many - islands distanced by a luminous blackness.

The rot of night distresses an ineffable, aesthetic experience toward what Dylan Trigg would deem the *unhuman,*[29] taken as a ghosting of the uncanny. Responding to Quentin Meillassoux's account of correlationalism,[30] this realm appears indifferent to, yet also reliant upon a human host, and can only be fully realised alongside conceptions of horror: "With the unhuman, something comes back to haunt the human without it being fully integrated into humanity."[31] This alien phenomenology redresses Western anthropocentric binaries, suggesting the return of an uncanny, not-quite-assimilated, yet mutable *something*. The creature materialises in its unfathomable thingness, a dark body "completely envoided, swirlings of matter and forces."[32] Dark things haunt

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[26] Carl Mika, "The co-existence of self and thing through ira: A Māori phenomenology," *Journal of Aesthetics and Phenomenology* 2, no. 1 (2015): 104.
[27] Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca, "Since each of us was several: Collaboration in the context of the differential self," in *Collaboration in performance. Premises, workings, failures*, eds. Noyale Colin and Stefanie Sachsenmaier (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 105.
[28] Gertrude Stein, *Tender buttons* (New York: Dover, 1997), 43.
[29] Dylan Trigg, *The thing: A phenomenology of horror* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2014).
[30] Quentin Meillassoux, *After finitude: an essay on the necessity of contingency,* trans. Ray Brassier (London: Continuum, 2008).
[31] Trigg, *The thing,* 6.
[32] Ben Woodard, *On an ungrounded earth: Towards a new* geophilosophy (New York: Punctum Books, 2013). 86.

the choreographer as unhuman collaborators and speculative forces colluding within performance practice. The obliterative palimpsest of choreo-graphic blackening alters future iterations, rendering traces of its anterior forms unknowable.

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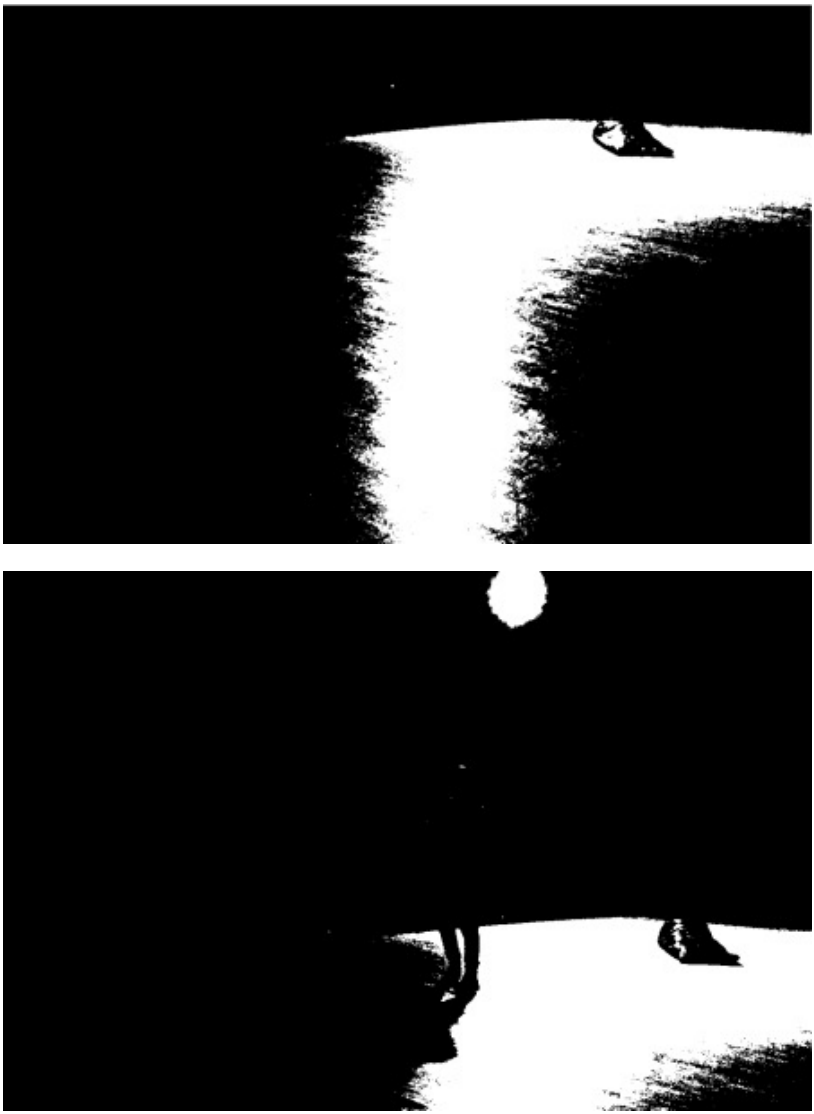

[redacted] darkness [redacted] darkness.

[redacted] immensity without end [redacted] -

unbroken expansion,

dark horizon [redacted] dark horizon.

[redacted] things within the darkness,

[redacted] within my own form,

[redacted] a universe of darkness,

[redacted] deep inside [redacted],

[redacted].

KARE; kind artificial real experience
choreographic fiction #1

event: Undisciplining Dance Symposium
June 30th, 2016, Kenneth Myers Centre, Black Box, Auckland
choreography/ text: Tru Paraha
performers: Mary Kettle, Sean Curham, Val Smith, Sarah Campus, Tru Paraha, Geoff Gilson
lighting: Sean Curham
documentation: Aaron Taouma
original extract: Thomas Ligotti, from ‘Flowers of the abyss’

CHAPTER NINE

BETWEEN (2011): INTIMACY AND SPECTACLE IN TENSION AND DIALOGUE

ANGELA WOODHOUSE
AND CAROLINE BROADHEAD

Between is an installation performance, which was premiered on the stage of Bonnie Bird Theatre, Trinity Laban, London on 24th and 25th January 2011.[1] It subsequently toured dance venues and galleries in the UK until 2013.

The performance is minimal in its movement language, out of which minute yet charged interactions between performers and the audience take place. The aim is to take an artistic risk in giving the audience, and performers, an intense and internalised experience with seemingly very little. *Between* opens up questions of emptiness, solitude and the drive to communicate. Performed in silence, the piece negotiates the tension between moments of visual spectacle and intimate exchanges.

[1] *Between* has been performed at: Bonnie Bird Theatre, Trinity Laban London; Burton Taylor Studio, Oxford Playhouse; University Michaelis Theatre, Roehampton; Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury; The Chapel, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, 2011; Burton Taylor Studio, Oxford Playhouse; The Nightingale, Brighton; Pavilion Dance, Bournemouth, 2012; Central Saint Martins in collaboration with The Place Theatre, London, 2013. *Between* was commissioned by Trinity Laban and funded by Arts Council England, with additional support from Central Saint Martins.

Figure 9.1 Angela Woodhouse and Caroline Broadhead, *Between* (2011) with Martina Conti, David McCormack and Stine Nilsen. Photograph by Hugo Glendinning.

Figure 9.2-9.4 Angela Woodhouse and Caroline Broadhead, *Between* (2011) with Martina Conti, David McCormack and Stine Nilsen. Photographs by Hugo Glendinning.

Viewers share a common space and move fluidly between roles of both witness and participant, making choices about their level of intimacy with the performers and so navigating their own forming of the work. Susan Sontag encapsulates our central challenge, "The artist who creates silence as emptiness must produce something dialectical; a full void as an enriching emptiness, a resonating and eloquent silence."[2]

Viewers enter onto a dark and empty stage save for a fine line of light over a still body on the floor. While the experience (sometimes passing beyond a curtain as was the case at Trinity Laban) indicates a sense of expectation and spectacle, the reality beyond this boundary is where nothing and everything is happening, as if a faint line-drawing were slowly materializing, a sense of "between states," or a sense of question or preparation underlining the intentional ambiguity of where the performance lies.

The piece continues with incidental acts set against driven dialogues that express an urge to assert contact with others, moments of visual

[2] Susan Sontag, "The Aesthetics of Silence*"* in *Styles of Radical Will* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), 10.

spectacle sit next to intimate exchanges. We play with polarised experiences in which attention is both directed and split. We look at the tensions between distance and actual contact.

> We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves. Our vision is continually moving, continually holding things in a circle around itself, constituting what is present to us as we are.[3]

The purpose is to create a heightened experience for audience and performers through an economy of means. Simple but striking visual elements are used such as the spectacle of gold leaf on the body, pearls breaking and falling to the floor or the intense rubbing of a reflective coat. These aural and visual elements are sparse but significant to intensify the sensitised atmosphere, leaving traces both in the space and on the bodies of others.

Figure 9.5 Angela Woodhouse and Caroline Broadhead, *Between* (2011) with Martina Conti, David McCormack and Stine Nilsen. Photograph by Hugo Glendinning.

In previous works (*Court* 2003, *Sighted* 2009) we created specific and designed spaces into which the audience were invited. For this work, we focus on the centrality of the body onto which elements are placed and events happen. The public are party to the concentration and dispersal of activity; an awareness of minute yet charged interactions; sensitivity to temperature, and breath. In particular, we explore the power of touch, the disruption of materials, and baring witness as materials for performance.

[3] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972), 9.

Movement and visual elements coalesce allowing the audience to become sensitised to temperature, breath, physical adjustments, shifting focus and the texture of materials. Sometimes these sensations are barely there but intensely felt. We have learnt how apparent emptiness nurtures an invitation for physical-sensory interaction and possible contact; as dancer and collaborator Stine Nilsen observed, "Slow time: becoming something, constantly transforming, allowed the time it took. When touch arises, wanting them to have that power too. (I am) integrating something of the viewer."[4]

A veneer of detachment or separation gradually erodes through the changing weight and density of clothing. Beginning with the intense reflective material of a coat worn by the unseen dancer, a second dancer moves gently behind the viewers with a torchlight pinned to what appears to be a moving, rustling object. There is a nod to the theatrical construction of this moment. The abrupt shift to the use of stage lighting in the next scene, revealing all those present on stage, serves to reinforce this notion of being embedded within a theatrical experience. The coat is now a fine transparent garment worn by Stine. She and Martina face the viewers, eyeing them in preparation for a weaving game of pathways. As they slip the coat on and off, transferring each to the other, they trace a line in amongst and around the small crowd of viewers.

[4] Stine Nilsen, unpublished interview with Angela Woodhouse, 2013.

Figure 9.6-9.7 Angela Woodhouse and Caroline Broadhead, *Between* (2011) with Martina Conti, David McCormack and Stine Nilsen. Photographs by Hugo Glendinning.

Figure 9.8-9.9 Angela Woodhouse and Caroline Broadhead, *Between* (2011) with Martina Conti, David McCormack and Stine Nilsen. Photograph by Hugo Glendinning.

Figure 9.10 Angela Woodhouse and Caroline Broadhead, *Between* (2011) with Martina Conti, David McCormack and Stine Nilsen. Photograph by Hugo Glendinning.

As the work continues these materials are shed like snake-skin to arrive at the final scene of Stine, bare-armed save for a patch of gleaming gold on her arm. She approaches and embeds herself within her audience. She claims attention. She acknowledges witnesses and then invites the contact of a viewer's arm to hers. Here ensues a physical duet of touch motivated by a need to give but also a need to take. The gold leaf is displaced, passed on, pressed into the skin, as a kind of burn.

> The shedding of skins. Of giving and receiving. The contemplation of exchange, of boldness and listening to invitations. Gentle, direct and deeply moving. The sheer pleasure of uncertainty, of clarity and quietness. Compelling.[5]

This final act takes the chosen viewer through an exchange as their arms meet. This dance expresses the needs of the performer to make contact and also highlights the impossibility of direct touch, as the gold cannot be penetrated. The essence of the work reverberates around a desire for an authentic moment, always in tension with falsity, fakery, the inauthentic. The preceding duet between Martina and David reverberates this tension. Echoing themes of surrounding and enclosing, they skim around each other in proximity of almost touch. The four theatre lights, with a pronouncement of the spectacular, illuminate a boundary of shadows between them and the viewers; their intimacy appears impenetrable. This relationship offers a beauty and tenderness that belies the true nature of its complex power shifts indicated finally by David's gold covered hand tracing the back of Martina's neck. One viewer commented, "The piece made me want to move – made us feel all the things we want to do – all the anticipation building up reminding us of movement."[6]

Figure 9.11 Angela Woodhouse and Caroline Broadhead, *Between* (2011) with Martina Conti, David McCormack and Stine Nilsen. Photograph by Hugo Glendinning.

[5] Audience response from the visitors' book, Roehampton, 2011.
[6] Audience response from the visitors' book, Bonnie Bird Theatre, Laban, 2011.

Figure 9.12 Angela Woodhouse and Caroline Broadhead, *Between* (2011) with Martina Conti, David McCormack and Stine Nilsen. Photograph by Hugo Glendinning

The elements of design seek to inspire attentiveness, but not be the focus of it. The importance of this work is to find a synergy between the design and the almost-stillness and subtlety of the movement that, in turn opens towards possible and speculative acts of engagement on the part of the viewer. The intention is to elevate a sense of humanity, of one's power and vulnerability in a technological world where much is made of virtual connectedness, but the visceral dis-connection of one person to another remains.

Audience members commented: "The performers' touch left my body feeling heavier."[7] And, "tender and moving. Felt totally transformed and engaged. So wanted to feel the gold plate, and was privileged to partake in the beautiful hand dance at the end."[8]

We aim to affect a sense of awakening and indeterminacy. The emphasis is on a process, a sense of transition, something unfinished, on a journey to becoming. Opening up and examining notions of visibility, bareness and intimate contact, we believe are at the forefront of fresh ideas in dance performance. In relation to the wider context *Between* is supported by explorations in other fields, for example, in the photography of Rut Blees Luxembourg in which the ephemeral becomes visceral and compelling. Susan Sontag notes: "To look at something that's empty is still to be looking, still to be seeing something – if only the ghosts of ones' own expectations."[9]

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Figure 10.13 Angela Woodhouse and Caroline Broadhead, *Between* (2011) with Martina Conti, David McCormack and Stine Nilsen. Photograph by Hugo Glendinning.

CHAPTER TEN

BODY MATERIAL, MATERIAL BODIES[1]

ALISSA MELLO

This writing examines the dance training and choreographic techniques of Mary Underwood from Company Philippe Genty. Working with the live dancing body in stage worlds also populated by puppets and raw materials (such as plastic sheeting, craft paper, rope, clay, and fabric used to create visual landscapes, as metaphoric partners for the live human performers, and a means of creating special effects), Underwood has developed movement and choreography techniques that use memory, everyday behaviour and external inspiration to train and collaborate with performers in the making of their productions.[2] Her work is influenced by modernist expressionism with roots in Viennese expressionism (Ausdruckstanz) and offers new ways of thinking about dance making with actors, trained and untrained in dance technique, as material collaborators and the body in relation with puppets and materials. The theatrical magic and aesthetic of Genty's creative output often referred to as the Genty aesthetic, is I argue, the product of a unique artistic collaboration between him and Underwood, and the combining of their

[1] This research is based on practiced-based research into Compagnie Philippe Genty. It included production analysis of live performances and archival video of past productions from 1986 - 2009, an excavation of artistic process through the examination of rehearsal video, participant observation during a four-week workshop on their performance principles and interviews with the founders of the company and numerous current and previous company members.

[2] Henryk Jurkowski, *A History of European Puppetry Vol. 2, the Twentieth Century* (Lewiston, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1998), 452-453. Puppet historian Jurkowski has suggested that work with raw materials is one of the significant contributions to theatre in the twentieth century. Genty and Underwood are not the only puppetry artists exploring materials in this manner nor are they necessarily the first practitioners. Jurkowski argues that the theatre of materials develops out of the theatre of objects, most notably by cabaret artist Yves Joly.

individual artistic interests in visuality and corporeality respectively.

Founded in 1968 by director Philippe Genty and choreographer Underwood, the company is widely considered one of the foremost European theatre companies. The company began as a puppet company performing in cabarets and creating family entertainment. In the 1980s, their work visibly shifted to a new aesthetic that integrates live human and puppet performers with acting, dance, clown, special effects, magic, and raw materials to create non-linear dreamscapes. In early productions, puppets, objects and raw materials were featured elements alongside live human performers. Gradually though it was the live human performer that became the central theatrical figure in worlds also populated with puppets, objects and raw materials. Despite their long collaboration, Genty typically receives the greatest attention, yet it is Genty's directing, specifically in combination with Underwood's choreography and explorations of body that brings the live performer forward in collaboration and co-presence with puppets and raw materials and defines their work.[3]

Underwood began her study of classical dance at the age of nine in a small village in the United Kingdom. She initially followed the Royal Academy of Dance training technique, followed by Cecchetti, passing examinations in both techniques.[4] Additionally, she studied modern dance, tap dance, jazz, character, and folk dance, including Scottish country-dance, square dancing, and ballroom. When her skill outgrew the small village, Underwood first attended the Bristol School of Dancing for two years followed by a move to London in the mid-1950s where she took classes with the Harlequin Ballet Company.[5] Underwood explained, "classical dance was not for me" and she began an exploration of modern dance with Hilde Holger.[6]

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[3] Alissa Mello, "Compagnie Philippe Genty: On Directing and Collaboration," *Puppetry International* 34, Fall/Winter (2013): 4.

[4] Mary Underwood, email message to author, Mar. 16, 2010.

[5] "The Bristol School of Dancing." *The Bristol School of Dancing*. Accessed on 20 September 2017. http://www.thebristolschoolofdancing.co.uk/about.htm. Jon Gregory founded Harlequin Ballet Company in 1959.

[6] Underwood, ibid. Hilde Holger established her School for Dance in London between 1948 and 1951 and taught there until a few weeks before her death in 2001. A brief history of her career can be found on the website dedicated to her life and work, www.hildeholger.com, additional information can also be found in *Die Kraft des Tanzes*, *Hilde Holger* eds. Denny Hirschbach and Rick Takvorian (Germany: Zeichen and Spuren, 1990) and in her obituary 'Hilde Holder' in *The Independent* 9 October 2001. In the same communication where she details her history, Underwood also proudly notes: "One of her [Hilde Holger's] students at that time was Lindsay Kemp. I performed in a show while I was a student there

Holger was "an exponent of expressionist dance."[7] Her career began at a young age in Vienna where she was born to a Jewish family. After studies with Gertrud Bodenwieser and performing in her Tanzgruppe, Holger started her own company, the Hilde Holger Tanzgruppe as well as a children's dance group. In 1926, she also founded a school, The New School for Movement Arts. During the Nazi occupation of Austria beginning in 1938, her work as well as many other artists' was forbidden. The following year Holger escaped to India, where she continued her work in dance. While there, she also married and started a family. In 1948, the family moved to England to escape the growing sectarian violence. According to Horvitz, each change of location marked a shift in Holger's career:

> If in Vienna she was best known as a dancer and choreographer, and in India she achieved prominence as a teacher, in London she acquired a reputation as a pedagogue, movement therapist, and mentor for many aspiring artists and dancers.[8]

As seen in the documentary film *One Day at Hilde's Class*, which includes footage of class work and performances, Holger's work in London was informed by nature and innovative uses of objects, masks, costume, and materials.[9] According to Horvitz:

> Her vision of dance was one of total theatre, embracing radical design and movement. A dancer, she contended, must be a technician, an artist and a full human being. No movement could be important if it wasn't guided by thought and emotion.[10]

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and Lindsay did the choreography, I very often wonder if it was his first pieces of choreography?" Kemp is a British born dancer, mime, actor and choreographer known also for his work with music legends David Bowie and Kate Bush (Paul Gallagher, "Lindsay Kemp Is on the Phone: Scenes from His Life from Genet to Bowie," *Dangerous Minds*, Accessed on 18 July 2012, <*http://dangerousminds.net/comments/lindsay_kemp_is_on_the_phone_scenes_from_his_life_from_genet_to_bowie*>)

[7] Leslie Alan Horvitz, "Hilde Holger Biography," New York, 2005, Accessed on 11 May 2017, <http://hildeholger.com/biography/>

[8] Ibid.

[9] Go Nonaka, *One Day at Hilde's Class* (London, Landscape Co. Ltd., 1999.)

[10] Horvitz, ibid.

These principles were embraced by the young Underwood and affected her thoughts about and practice of dance and theatre. Despite her training with Holger though, Underwood was "very disappointed with London" and she left to tour throughout Europe with a number of different companies and start a company of her own with a dancer from the Rambert Ballet School.[11]

It was while touring that Underwood first encountered Genty. Her first meeting and subsequent decision to stay with Genty can best be explained in her own words:

> I was in Barcelona rehearsing a group in a revue, when two young French puppeteers turned up to perform in that revue. Something clicked between Philippe and myself, but unfortunately I left four days later to return to Monte Carlo. About six months later I was returning to England, before going to Mexico. I decided to send a telegram to Philippe saying I was passing through Paris, and had a couple of hours to spare before I caught my train to England..... Again on a spur of the moment I didn't catch that train and have been with him ever since. He convinced me that he had better things for me than just dancing![12]

Alternatively in a short biography written for the Institut International de la Marionnette, Underwood states that she discovered "Philippe Genty [in 1967] totally tangled up trying to coordinate some movements" and that she provided "a few suggestions."[13]

The rehearsal in which she discovered Genty was for a new cabaret piece *The Ostrich Ballet* that Genty and his then performing partner were developing with two puppet ostriches.[14] During the rehearsal, Genty asked Underwood,

> to execute different dance movements, then some he would transpose with his ostrich puppet. He and his partner just could not agree with the timing, I mentioned that perhaps it would be good to count. They both looked at

[11] Underwood, email message to author, Mar. 16, 2010. Underwood withheld the name of this dancer because, as she wrote in the same email communication, "things just did not work out."

[12] Genty's version of their first meetings can be found in Phillippe Genty, *Paysages intérieurs* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2013), 74.

[13] Underwood, Mary, Charleville-Mézière, Accessed 12 January 2009, <*http://www.marionnette.com/*>.

[14] "Philippe Genty puppeteer - a story about creating a puppet show," *Youtube*, Accessed 21 September 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALCr_JFIJsM>

> me with a dazed look. Philippe said: I will make another ostrich and you come in the middle of us and count! That was my first step to puppetry.[15]

While Underwood suggests this was her first step into puppetry, it was informed by her training with Holger that likely included work with masks, objects and materials. This first step with Genty however opened for the way for her to become involved in working on what she calls the "architecture of the body" that is informed by the principles of a total radical theatre and a thinking and emoting body that she learned with Holger.[16]

There are two distinct periods of work created by the company. In the first period (1967 – 1985), the company created a variety of sketches or short cabaret pieces that were performed in both small and large venues, either individually or in combination as full evening performances, an object theatre piece, and two French children's television shows *Gertrude & Barnabé* (1971-1972) and *Les Onyx* (1974-1975). The first of these sketches was *The Ostrich Ballet*.[17] This originally two-person ballet was expanded-initially to include Underwood and ultimately performed by four puppeteers-and franchised as an independent cabaret piece. It became a signature piece and was featured in two evening-length productions: *Facéties* (1974-1979), which included Genty's later famous short *Le Pierrot* (1976) and *Rond Comme un Cube* (1980-1985).[18] The object theatre piece, *Sigmund Follies* later renamed *Zigmund Follies*, was developed and performed from 1983 to 1984.[19] *Facéties* and *Rond Comme un Cube* though evening length productions were comprised of disconnected short scenes that included a mix of entertaining scenes and more abstract or self-styled Surrealist scenes. These productions were popular theatre works in the sense that they were easily accessible and relatively light family entertainment whereas *Sigmund Follies* was aimed at an adult audience and had a more structured narrative. Their work at this

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[15] In her 2009 biography for the Institut International de la Marionnette, Underwood also writes that her first puppetry experience occurred as she ran "faster than the police as Philippe Genty was organizing a gigantic street puppet demonstration with fine art students during the revolution in Paris." Underwood, email.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Genty, Philippe, *Paysages intérieurs*, 74.

[18] "Paul Daniels Magic-Philippe Genty Puppeteer," *Youtube*, Accessed 21 September 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SphHaiW7fzg>

[19] **"**Compagnie Philipe Genty em Zigmund Follies 1," *Youtube*, Accessed 21 September 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRPW5VKgGJc>

time was not only accessible to a wide range of audiences; it was also very successful financially. Both *Facéties* and *Rond Comme un Cube* toured extensively and as Seelig, writes: "*The Ostrich Ballet* became so successful as a franchised cabaret act that it paid for the company's early development and for the purchase of a large studio space in the centre of Paris."[20]

This first period of creative output was also a period of investigation for what would become their future aesthetic. As Genty writes in *Payasages intérieurs* between the years 1967 – 1980, not only did they often learn from encounters with puppeteers and other types of performers but they also, particularly Underwood, took time to pursue new techniques. For example, during their trips to Bali in 1974 – 1975, and again in 1978 Underwood studied mask dance. In a personal interview, she stated that they also spent time during this period living in a commune with fifteen other artists investigating different approaches to creative processes.[21] As their aesthetic evolved, so did their working relationship. Underwood shifted from seemingly being primarily a performing partner to being a more active creative collaborator. This began while they were rehearsing an early version of *Baby Rose* made from a puppet head with a fabric body in 1970. As Underwood told me, they were "stuck on the manipulation" of a puppet that took the form of a head attached to fishnet. "During the tea break, I took the puppet… put my feet in the fishnet took the head and started to dance with it. Philippe decided 'why not use body movements with the puppets."[22] As a result of Underwood's playful experimentation, at least according to Underwood, Genty decided that he,

> wanted the manipulators to be seen with the puppet or objects. The problem was very often [that] our manipulators were excellent, because of Philippe's training, but unfortunately sometimes I could not go too far with the movements as very often their bodies were not trained corporal wise... It was then that we made the decision to venture out and employ dancers who were ready not to dance, and actors who were ready not to speak![23]

These events — collaborating with Underwood, having visible performers working with puppets, objects and their investigations of performance

[20] Joseph Seelig, "The Genty Effect: Philippe Genty's Influence and Puppetry at the London International Mime Festival," *Animations in Print: Animated Bodies*, no. 3 (2009): 41.
[21] Genty does not include this period of experimentation in his book but suggested during the same interview with Underwood that they spent more time eating than working.
[22] Underwood, Email.
[23] Ibid.

practice—were combined with use of raw materials, memory (both theirs and the performers') and dreams (theirs and those of their actor collaborators) to generate a new aesthetic in puppet theatre as well as new theories and techniques for their productions. Significantly, it includes the increasing importance of the live human dancing/moving body on stage as a significant site of meaning. Though framed as Genty's decision, this shift in their aesthetics is both a response to a playful rehearsal moment that only Underwood could have enacted and requires Underwood's particular skills, knowledge of and interest in the body.

Their second phase of creative output made use of a wide range of performance disciplines and techniques with which they produced rich visual dreamscapes that, according to Genty and Underwood, aspired to access each audience participant's unconscious, resulting in individual experience and meaning making. *Désirs Parade* (1985)[24] is the first production created in their new aesthetic. It included increased presence of the live human body with puppets and materials yet structurally, like previous shows, involves a series of relatively disconnected scenes. Their second production, *Dérives* (1989), more firmly established their emerging style and used a cohesive, though still non-linear, visual narrative. Following productions showed an increasing use of raw materials, most often but not limited to, fabrics and plastics that cover the entire stage area and paper materials, as well as increased significance given to the live human actor's role within the narrative, such as in *La Fin des Terres* (2005), *Boliloc* (2008/2009) and *Voyageurs Immobiles* (1995/2010).[25]

Although her early contributions to what is often referred to as the Genty aesthetic appear to be limited, the theatrical magic and aesthetic is not just the product of Genty's creative output, as Joseph Seelig implies in his 2009 article "The Genty Effect: Philippe Genty's Influence and Puppetry at the London International Mime Festival." Rather as I argue, it

[24] Multiple video extracts of this production are available via YouTube.

[25] "Philippe Genty – Lands End Live 1/3," *Youtube*, Accessed on 21 September 2017, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyIcT_V_TG8> "BOLILOC Compagnie Philippe Genty," *Youtube*, Accessed 21 September 2017, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxGW_kG6js4> In addition to restaging *Voyageurs Immobiles* ("Philippe Genty - Voyageurs Immobiles LIVE 1/3," *Youtube*, Accessed 21 September, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYMIpOIii6Y>), Genty directed an object theatre piece, *La Pelle du Large*, in 2011. This project was initiated during the 2009 workshop that I participated in. The originators are Hernan Bonet, Antoine Malfettes, and Yoanelle Stratman; it is reminiscent of their 1983 production *Zigmund Follies*. This show was subsequently developed with two other casts for English and Spanish speaking audiences.

is the product of the unique artistic collaboration between Genty and Underwood together with their individual artistic interests in visuality and corporeality respectively. This combination of skills, and their interest in the live performer, puppets and materials as co-collaborators in the creative process, led to their development of techniques that manipulate multiple presences. These techniques include traditional puppetry manipulation, using an actor as source material for text and movement, use of personal memory (physical and spoken), investigations of raw materials and personal dream analysis.

Their combined use of various performance modalities means that the performers hired for a production often have a variety of training and experience but not necessarily in each of the disciplines they will be called upon to use in a production. To familiarize performers with the core techniques used by the company and to develop the proficiencies of their performers in each area, Genty and Underwood developed a system of training that includes puppet manipulation, work with raw materials, acting, dance, and vocal techniques. Their puppet manipulation training uses well recognized techniques including maintaining a fixed point so that a puppet does not appear to float or change size mid performance, focus on a puppet's gaze, timing, movement, and mimetic gesture, and is specifically designed to train non-puppeteers quickly. Much of their training for actors, movement and work with raw materials originates in their creative practice through either improvisation structures or exercises created to build the skills of cast members. These have subsequently been codified and integrated into their pedagogy. They also draw from their personal knowledge of performance techniques developed by Jacques Lecoq and Hilde Holger, as well as explicit references to, and their own transformation of, the performance theories of Lee Strasberg.

Strasberg was an actor, director and theatre practitioner renowned for his influence as a teacher for theatre and film actors and his training known as The Method. The resulting training is designed to engage performers with their personal aesthetic and creative practice, build skills and address performer weaknesses, including phobias (such as actors who believe that they cannot create or contribute to choreographed movement, and dancers who believe that they cannot deliver text on stage). Workshops are also used to identify future company members, which creates a certain tension as many participants are also seeking employment.

In the next part of this writing, I address the studio training of the company. While dance and the body are clearly integral to the Genty aesthetic and significant in the productions, the full extent of Underwood's influence as a collaborator is significantly demonstrated in an analysis of

their training, much of which emerges directly from their creative practice. This becomes clear not only in the obvious dance/movement training but also in her approaches to the body, objects and raw materials. Each day of their workshop, with the exception of the final week, begins with a group warm-up led for the most part by Underwood. Many of the warm-up techniques draw from modern dance and the Feldenkrais Method, a somatic technique developed by Moshé Feldenkrais that is often used by dance practitioners and physical therapists to improve the quality of physical movement and break detrimental movement patterns. Warm-ups may also include other techniques used to open or free the body such as massage and qigong. These combinations of techniques further point to Underwood's interest in developing thinking and emotionally expressive bodies and performers freed from movement habits and clichés. Additionally, participants are introduced to exercises that develop key performance skills such as "distanciation," fixed point, impulse and voice. For example, this exercise is used during warm up to teach distanciation:[26]

> **Stage One**
> Play with different parts of the body as an initiator or 'motor'/brain that leads the movement and interaction between body part and performer. Explore and engage with different body parts as separate entities from your body, as if they had a life of their own. Genty suggests that you allow the body part to surprise you.
>
> **Stage Two**
> Continue as in Stage One with a body part as initiator and add finding a character or quality for that particular body part. After a character is established, find an opposing character or quality for another body part. Play with these two opposing characters/qualities together and in relation to each other; one, then the other, in dialogue.

Physical isolation and movement initiation from different body parts are found in a wide variety of dance trainings and techniques. This exercise simply adds a theatrical notion of character expressed as movement. Although this exercise is led by Genty, Underwood's influence is tangible in the use of the body, the way it is framed and how it is perceived.

As a company with roots in, and that still uses puppets throughout their work, puppet manipulation is fundamental yet not always a skill their actors have. As a result, they have developed a system of training that both

[26] "Distanciation," Genty's term, is described as an actor's ability to simultaneously "embody his own character and that of a puppet's" (Genty, *Paysages*, 279).

introduces a novice and hones a trained puppeteer's skill set. Both Underwood and Genty teach manipulation and their foci- corporeal and visual respectively- is evident in their different approaches. Genty's training emphasizes spatial and visual aspects as well as timing; elements typically found in puppet manipulation courses. Underwood on the other hand begins in the body of the actor and the choreography of what the body is doing at each moment. These movements such as shifts of weight, centring of weight, minute gestures of each limb are then transferred to a puppet.[27] Additionally, Underwood calls attention to physical listening – meaning the awareness of one's own and each body that one is working with - among multiple puppeteers when manipulating a single puppet creates its own, often unseen, choreography. Puppetry, though an element in their work, is only one of several techniques used. As noted above, it is the increased significance of the live actor and the dancing body that mark the transition to their current aesthetic and where Underwood's influence and training in ausdruckstanz via Holger is most readily visible.

As a choreographer, Underwood seeks to collaborate with her dancer/actors to develop idiosyncratic movement vocabularies for each production. Carol Brown writes that at Gertrud Bodenwieser's Vienna studio where Hilde Holger trained and with whom she performed "individualism, unconscious expression and the communication of emotion underpinned ausdruckstanz."[28] She goes on to ask "what is the generative force of memories, affects, and archives of feeling and gestures?"[29] Following in this tradition, memory and personal experience as well as dreams as one expression of unconscious expression are key components in Genty and Underwood's training and creative practice.

A performer's memory is, according to Genty, a resource for creating movement and text vocabularies, as well as achieving an accessible and "authentic performance." During the workshop, Genty stated that their use of memory is based on and, I would add, is a transposition of, Strasberg's Sense Memory exercise (also referred to as Affective Memory). In Strasberg's Method training, the aim of this exercise is to facilitate an actor's internal work in order to create an authentic, repeatable emotional memory reserve that an actor can draw on while performing a character in

[27] Alissa Mello, "Trans-Embodiment: Embodied Practice in Puppet and Material Performance," *Performance Research* 21, no. 5 (October 2016): 52.
[28] Carol Brown, "Godwits, Kuaka and the Returns of Ausdruckstanz" in *Moving Oceans: Celebrating Dance in the South Pacific,* eds. Ralph Buck, Nicholas Rowe (London and New York: Routledge 2015), 3.
[29] Ibid, 7.

the context of a play.[30] The situation of the actor and the character are not necessarily in parallel. Genty and Underwood use the premise of this exercise, the actor's memory, to generate movement and text including individual gestures, movement sequences and language.

Like Strasberg's Affective Memory exercise, Genty and Underwood use memory as a mechanism for sustaining performance. Genty and Underwood believe that by using an actor's memory as a source of movement and text, emotion inevitably emerges organically and will underpin a performance when either doing, as in using memory to recall and re-enact movement, or speaking a past event on stage. Strasberg, Genty, and Underwood believe that using a performer's memory contributes to creating authenticity in performance and, Genty would add, that it supports present or connected performance that will be repeated over long periods of time. In practice, however, Genty and Underwood's notion is complicated—or at least it was during the workshop I participated in—because one of their techniques is to transpose material from one performer to another. Once a movement or text is performed by an actor who is not the source of the memory (or memories), only the words and the gestures remain and therefore the notion that the memory supports the performance is nullified. Understood in this way, memory is merely a catalyst for generating physical and textual vocabularies that can be used in a production. What my practical research shows however is that, although movement or text loses its connection to the originating memory when transposed to a different performer, the transposed movement or text will likely call up certain memory(ies) of the receiving performer and take on new meanings specific to the new performer of the action/gesture. In other words, although personal memory is used to generate and inform performance vocabularies when done by the originating actor, when the vocabularies are transposed to other actors the vocabularies are informed by each actor's own subjective memory and experience.

Genty and Underwood have developed three exercises in which memory and personal experience are initiators for developing movement and text vocabularies for the live actor: Memograms and Rituals for developing movement; and The Fugitive for developing text and training an actor's voice. Étreinte, which means embrace or hug, also "makes use of memory as both the starting point for physical action and the substratum of the visible manipulation of material."[31] In other words, this exercise brings together the live body and raw materials in movement. Other

[30] Foster Hirsch, *A Method to Their Madness: The History of the Actors Studio* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), 210-212.
[31] Mello, *Trans-Embodiment*, 55.

stimuli for creating movement vocabulary and choreographed sequences include tempo, imagery, physical resistance and transposition among actors. Though memory is a central component in Genty and Underwood's conceptualisation of each of these exercises, it is often only used in only one stage (Genty's and Underwood's term) of the development.

Memograms

According to Underwood, Memograms were developed to free actors who were not entirely comfortable with the idea of improvising dance or making choreography, by eliciting movement that emerges from their childhood memories. The term Memogram, a play on the words memory and telegram, was coined by Genty and Underwood to emphasize that these movement sequences are developed from memories for the purpose of communication on stage. Further, they are movements that one has already performed, in the past, and that one knows. This exercise has five stages, but only the first sequence of movement is developed from memory. The other stages involve movement inspired by music, movement taken from other performers (transposed memory), and movement altered in response to audio or visual stimuli. The stages are:

Stage One
Recall three different childhood memories and remember the gestures/physical actions of these life events. Work on one of the following memory at a time:

1. A travelling movement
2. A moment when a toy or something that we loved is destroyed, though perhaps the destruction was pleasurable
3. A childhood game

Between each memory and to indicate that participants have internalised these as physical memories, they move to one side of the room until everyone has completed the task. Once three different movement sequences are established, they are ordered and memorized as a movement sequence.

Stage Two
Develop a movement phrase of sixteen counts, inspired by a piece of

music.[32] Create a second phrase of the same length, but which contrasts with the first. If the first sequence is fluid, make the second jerky or staccato; if the first is circular, make the second angular. Combine stage one and two phrases into a movement sequence alternating between the two. Once these are embodied they are performed individually. As each movement sequence is performed, those watching are invited to note anything what strikes them as interesting. After everyone has performed their movement sequence, four gestural moments that appealed are selected and retained for the next stage.

Stage Three
This stage introduces techniques to transform the developed movement sequence.

Do the entire sequence in half time, 50% slower than normal speed, followed by a repetition at normal speed. This, Genty and Underwood explain, is an opportunity to find different "colors" in a movement sequences. Perform these sequences in groups of four. One person is selected to start and the others follow that individual's movement sequence in real time. Once their movement phrase is complete, and within the context of performing, a new person comes forward with their movement sequence until all four sequences have been performed and followed. Each person's cycle is performed twice at two different speeds. One should try to be aware of when a movement makes it difficult for the chorus to follow, such as when someone turns to face up stage, and try to work the movement as a chorus and dance as a single body rather than as one leader and a group of followers.

Stage Four
This stage makes use of other people's gestures or phrases identified in Stage Two and begins a process of transposition of memory and movement from one person to another. Combine and replace the stage one and stage two movement phases with the gestures selected in stage two. To do this, pick two movement sequences of one's own creation and three from one's notes of other's movements. Place these in any order and then perform in groups, dancing each cycle twice as in Stage Three.

Stage Five
Continues exploring the possibilities of a movement sequence through transposition and alteration of rhythms using a visual stimulus. Genty describes a Bauhaus proposition that suggests that from a single point one can find a line of movement. He then draws a spiral, a zigzag, and an

[32] There were a number of individuals in the workshop without any previous physical training. This stage was more difficult for each of them because of its similarity to choreography.

extended sequence of right angles, to create a pattern. These lines of movement, he says, can be used to find: a rhythm, a floor pattern, a sensibility, and so on. Underwood then presents a set of abstract drawings largely composed of lines (such as: straight, jagged, spiralling, wavy, dashed) with varying degrees of density on the page acquired from an architect in Australia whose name was not shared.

Drawings are scattered on the floor. Working in pairs, each pair picks a drawing to work with. They look at and discuss the drawing together. Finding a section or piece of the drawing (not the entire drawing), consider how it can be incorporated into or transpose the sequence developed in Stage Four. In other words, allow the drawing section to have an effect on the line, rhythm, and/or use of space of the movement sequence.

The sequences are presented in pairs. If one of the pair finishes before the other, that person is to wait on stage until the other's sequence is completed. Each pair shows their drawing to the camera before starting. After the presentation, each person discusses what she or he chose from the drawing, and what kind of impact it had on their work. Genty is interested in developing an internal response to architectural uses of space in theatre. As he states during the workshop: "The idea is to have the graphics, the line, the architecture come from the inside— that this dynamic comes from the inside and comes out."

Each stage of this exercise calls on a different mode of creating or changing movement: memory, duration, visual stimuli, audio stimuli and borrowing from others. These different modes create opportunities for individuals not trained in dance to connect with creating movement in ways other then the physical, while for trained dancers it offers opportunities to look beyond their bodies as sources for movement generation.

Ritual

The Ritual exercise initiates with a different aspect of memory: the physical re-enactment of an everyday movement sequence. This engages natural and non-virtuosic performer-based movement emerging from memory.[33] The movement sequences may draw on private or professional activities, but should reflect something one has done oneself. This exercise, in addition to finding movement vocabulary, is also used to develop memorisation skills and—to a certain extent—to connect memory

[33] This exercise is similar to others I have done in training with Richard Schechner and Anne Bogart that emerge from American avant-garde techniques and contemporary dance.

with action in a way that will reinforce or connect a performer to movement, even when that movement is abstracted from its original sequence. At stage three of this exercise, it is combined with our dance phrase developed using the Memogram technique. The stages are:

Stage One
Choose three everyday movement sequences, referred to as "rituals," and perform them precisely, not miming, but actually doing the activity even though one does not have the objects or space. Genty and Underwood suggest we consider both everyday and professional gestures such as repairing an object, cooking (peel, proportion, mix, cut, distribute, season), cleaning, wrapping a gift and decorating a Christmas tree, carpentry, tending bar, performing magic, teaching and delivering mail.

Stage Two
Genty and Underwood select either entire ritual sequences or moments from a particular ritual sequence that they like for each person. These are then transposed using architecture, rupture, direction, rhythm, quality of movement and changing the floor plan without actually moving within the space for example moving a gesture's location in space. Meaning, if a gesture takes place near the right hip and is horizontal, it can be moved to occur near the left shoulder and be performed vertically.

Standing in a circle of five, each participant teaches their ritual to the rest of the group in the following manner: the starting person does their ritual once, and then repeats their ritual with the entire group following in time or moving almost simultaneously. The person positioned to the starting person's right repeats the first ritual, adds their ritual sequence, and then repeats both the first and their own ritual together with the group. This manner of adding is repeated through all five rituals. Each time, the sequence is repeated from the top of the starting person's ritual. Finally, each person in each group does the entire sequence, or what they remember of it, alone for the group.

Memograms combined with Rituals: Memograms Stage Six / Rituals Stage Three

The ritual groups of five individuals are broken down into two groups of two and three people, who will work with an architectural drawing. Each group will select one drawing and work with it in a manner similar to Memogram Stage Five. Genty outlines three decisions that each group will have to address when creating their new movement sequence:

- Decide if you are going to mix your movement phrases or do your own, and time them to come together at ritual moments;

- The ritual phrase can either be done as the full sequence, or broken down into sections. Either way it/they will occur in the middle (see below for phasing possibilities);
- One can also use just a section of the ritual phrase.

Genty outlines four possible choreography models using lines rather than the A, B, C sequence points more commonly used in dance. The key is:

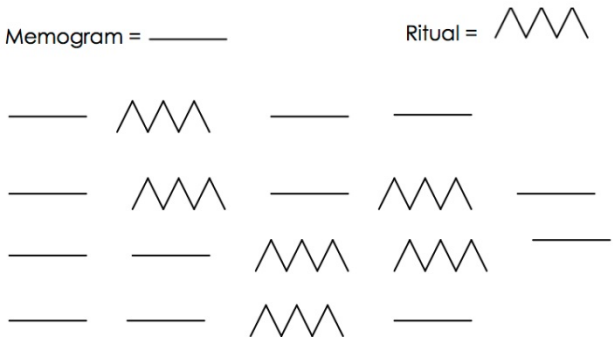

Figure 10.1 Alissa Mello, *Genty's diagram of four choreographic models from my notes.*

We are given thirty minutes to develop our complete phrase. The entire movement sequence is to be repeated twice in performance.

According to Underwood and Nancy Rusek (company member and workshop assistant), the purpose of this stage of the exercise is to develop collaborative skills, listening among performers and architectural uses of space. Underwood believes that it opens choreographic and movement possibilities for dancer and non-dancer alike because the development and results are a collective rather than an individual effort. Underwood also suggested that this exercise could continue with additional stages that further mix and fragment the Memogram and Ritual phrases. Regardless of mixing, fragmentation, and transposition, Underwood states that there are essentially two key things that they, Genty and herself, are interested in. These are:

- That the movement is generated by and from the performer's own body;
- That, even though the movements are transposed and abstracted, the memory or a trace of the memory remains connected to the movement.

In production, the exercise creates the opportunity for all cast members to contribute to the development of movement vocabularies. Though dancers' contributions often include both virtuosic and pedestrian quality movements, the dancerly movements are, like the non-virtuosic vocabularies, transferred to cast members who are untrained dancers and are transformed during improvisation(s) in response to music, tempo, or images. For Underwood, the technique is a useful tool that enables her to acquire a rich palette of movement vocabularies to draw on when choreographing.

The Fugitive

In this group exercise, the first stage is intended to develop physical distanciation, the second stage, using personal memory develops text and accesses a memory's emotional underpinning, and stages three and four are intended to develop a performer's vocal projection, conviction and expressivity. Ideally, the exercise is done in a group of eight people. "The Fugitive" refers to the speaker who breaks free in stage three from or through the group to tell their story.

Stage One
The group establishes a movement pattern like a school of fish or flock of birds and focuses centre of the wall above the observer or audience's head. In other words, throughout the exercise one's body should always face the direction of travel but the visual focus should be on a single point, toward the audience and slightly above centre, except when facing upstage at which point participants look directly upstage.

Stage Two
Repeat Stage One and add continually whispering a forceful personal memory. By force, Genty and Underwood mean a memory that is powerful, still has an emotional effect and which has remained with the individual over time.

Stage Three
Repeat Stage Two and add needing to tell your story to the audience. When you are ready to share, increase your vocal volume, the rest of the group should respond by forming a wall to prevent you, the speaker/fugitive, from physically moving forward. The speaker must fight her/his way to the

front vocally and physically with conviction in order to break through the group and stand before the audience to tell their memory. But, at this stage, the speaker or fugitive's face should remain neutral. If the speaker's conviction—this is not necessarily equivalent to volume—begins to waver, the group approaches, increasing their own volume, to swallow the speaker back into the group. The purpose of this phase of the exercise is to develop vocal conviction and energy in performance.

Stage Four
Repeat the exercise as in Stage Three, but this time the body and face of the fugitive do not have to remain neutral.

Genty stated that, in addition to developing vocal skills, this exercise creates an emotional distanciation through the performer's repeated telling of the same story, combined with physical effort. If, he suggests, an actor is focused only on communicating the story, the emotion emerges naturally, will rise to the surface, and will be read by the audience. Genty indicated during the workshop that this method of allowing emotion to emerge rather than directly working to access it communicates performative authenticity. This approach to emotion in performance is, however, in opposition to that of Strasberg's Affective Memory. Strasberg's exercise, also uses memory, and is recitation of an event—story telling. Genty indicates that he is trying to create a state of distanciation in which there is space for emotion to emerge, whereas in Affective Memory, performers are not distanced but rather are speaking through emotion. These stories or fragments of stories have been used in production for their audio and emotional qualities, rather than for the specific content. As Marranca proposes, in visual theatre language is minimised "in favour of aural, visual, and verbal imagery that calls for alternative modes of perception on the part of the audience."[34] Language becomes a medium to express sentiment and convey rhythm that is not necessarily integral to the meaning of the words spoken. Genty indicated during an interview with me (30 January 2008) that the language used in the productions is meaningless. While some may understand the words spoken during a show, the text is not usually translated.[35] From my own observations of numerous Compagnie Philippe Genty productions, it is

[34] Bonnie Marranca, et al., *The Theatre of Images* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1977), x.
[35] This is not true of their 2010 object theatre production *La Pelle du Large* or *Dustpan Odyssey,* which was conceived in French with a French speaking cast but later staged in English and Spanish with some content specific to the respective languages and to target those audiences.

apparent that Genty and Underwood's interests are in the rhythms language creates and the meaning conveyed beyond the literal comprehension of the text. In other words, language and text are used for the sensibility (or sensibilities) conveyed through the rhythms and sentiments that arise in the performer during the act of speaking, rather than being used to literally convey the meaning of the words. Usually each performer speaks in their native language, which remains un-translated in performance, thus creating a further potential gap between the performer's words and the audience participant's understanding of the performance.

Each of these exercises was created as part of the company's creative process, particularly for their work beginning in the 1980's and was later structured as a pedagogic tool for use during their workshops.[36] Although Genty may conceptually share an interest in the body as an expressive form, the knowledge base from which the dance and movement arise is Underwood's. Despite this and their collaboration, Underwood's contributions are under-acknowledged and a relatively hidden aspect of the development of their work's movement impulses. Although acknowledged as partner and choreographer, Underwood is not read by the public as a co-creator. There are numerous possible cultural, personal and practical reasons for this such as:

- The company specifically uses Genty's name. He was recognized as a box office "draw" before Underwood visibly contributed to the company aesthetic and there were business concerns that altering the brand would effect ticket sales and/or touring opportunities.
- A popular romance both at the time of founding and that continues today with the notion of the sole creative genius historically constructed as male and eliding the roles of women and their creative labour.
- Personal dynamics between Genty and Underwood who are not only creative but also life partners.

Yet, Underwood's influence and contributions are clear in the explorations and uses of the body in each aspect of the exercises not to mention the company's work. In her puppet manipulation training, she utilizes the live

[36] Workshops are a significant means of not only disseminating their work but of identifying their company members. Since the late 1990's, the company usually hires individuals they have identified, vetted and developed relationships with over one or more workshop periods. This process affords the opportunity to not only get to know potential company members and how particular groups of individuals work together but also to train them in their techniques and approaches to acting, movement and puppet manipulation.

body, particularly elements of somatic movement training as models for working with anthropomorphized and zoomorphized puppets. Their work with raw materials which is largely dance/physically based draws attention to relationships among physical body(ies), the material and memory as initiators of movement impulses. Finally, Underwood's collaborative processes of developing movement vocabularies and choreography are connected to her notion of the architecture of the body and her training in Viennese expressionist dance. Throughout her work, Underwood undisciplines the dancerly body aiming rather toward a thinking yet unconsciously expressive, idiosyncratic body that is freed of movement clichés with which to develop a production's movement vocabularies and affects the material - puppet and raw material – bodies that populate a Genty production.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

CHOREOAURATICS: AN UNWIRING

BECCA WOOD

Choreoauratics: An unwiring was a performance lecture that reflected upon a series of headphonic choreographies presented between 2011 and 2016.[1] The method developed out of these social choreographies, named *choreoauratics*, drew on philosophies of place, language, the body and somatics. The practice set out to disrupt the power of the spectacle as a capitalist politic through modes of listening and choreography. The performance lecture aimed to situate the body as a performance-threshold through concepts of recovery and the archive, received by its others, of site and participant.

Instructions for (re)membering (#1 - 4), (Wood, October 2011 – June 2012), *Listening for Disappearing* (Wood, March 2014 – April 2015) were part of a series of headphonic participatory choreographies that invited listening as a possibility for recovering the lost, the disappeared and the disappearing. The spatial practice recovered remnants of histories, places and myths across a series of sites through choreoauratic scores. Spatial practice was approached through the combined languages of digital communications and somatically-informed choreographic practices situated in urban public sites.

These social choreographies for the ears focused on how somatically-informed choreography, perceptual performance and critical spatial practice might come together to re-think the subject in the highly-mediated encounters of contemporary urban life. Multiple approaches to practice were brought together to discuss the politics of place, the body and the community. The research questioned the driving force of the scopic in the Western regime of representation and testimony. These questions respond

[1] Kenneth Myers Centre, Shortland Street, Auckland, New Zealand, July 1, 2016.

to a time of life when we are simultaneously wired, and wirelessly networked to a complex matrix of interconnectivity that is most often dominated by screen-based media. By foregrounding the term *unwiring* I work at ways of rethinking the way we become "wired" and "wireless" socially and physically, through new technologies and through prioritising listening and social choreography. A dominant scopo-centric view privileges visual media as a means of testimony and corroboration, reinforcing hierarchical arrangements of the senses. The act of looking monopolises other senses, such as listening, tasting, touching and moving, and is relied upon as a mechanism for the truth or for fixing perception. This monocular approach to the commodificaton of culture via the scopic intensifies disparities between the ways we make sense of the world.

The questions remain. When we are prosthetically wired for sound how do we listen differently? How might listening differently unwire us? Can listening become, as feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti implies, a transformative act? Braidotti's nomadic thinking emphasises the space between. Drawing from Deleuze in her attention to the nomadic in sound, she invites a spatiality that pursues "dissonance."[2] She suggests this returns us "to the external world, where sounds belong, always in transit, like radio waves moving ineluctably to outer spaces, chatting on, with nobody to listen."[3]

This choreoauratic performance lecture presented a series of scores as a live archive, where space, time and body become partial and problematic. In response to this problem I engaged in multiple responses to the performance lecture, where language, marks, images, sound and movement were manifested in many partial and failed attempts to represent a whole.

The idea of the body as a threshold is explored through Giorgio Agamben's thinking concerned with the experience of the limit. Accordingly, being within an outside limits the experience as well as the archive or the testimony of that experience.[4] Grappling with the inadequacies of archiving these works while simultaneously becoming part of the encounter itself, creates a condition of failure or impossibility, where the archive and the event itself are perpetually incomplete. Agamben offers the impossibility of the testimony, founding the possibility of another way

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[2] Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic theory: The portable Rosi Braidotti* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 106.
[3] Braidotti, ibid.
[4] Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community* (M. Hardt Trans.) (Minneapolis, United States of America: University of Minnesota, 1993), 67.

of knowing that is outside of language.[5] Agamben's stance on the outside takes form as the potential (or in his terms the potential of the impossibility) of the unspeakable. In these events the participant finds him or herself mobilising the space between the enunciative act and language as a threshold that is generative in coming together in unspoken ways.

Figure 11.1 Becca Wood, *Choreoauratics: An Unwiring*, Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand, June 2016. Photograph by Becca Wood.

Agamben's positioning of the archive, between that which is said, and that which is left unsaid, becomes the testimony and potential for speech. In this performance research I propose that the matrixial encounter between outside and inside unwires modes for performing and presenting, through the activation of the inside and outside of language.

The threshold is manifested in this research within the remnants of live actions, through Agamben's thinking of the space between. The thresholds of the sociality of the space, the subject, and the inside and outside of spoken language are tested in the performance lecture. The subject that speaks is de-subjectified, doubled and dispersed as the voice, caught in the digital recordings and live spoken word, and the distinction between human and non-human is blurred. This acts "not as a division but as

[5] Agamben, 36.

allowing for the salvation of the whole."[6] The remains are captured as recordings that are choreographed and embodied in the event and in the digital archives of this research. The prosthetic technology in this project, "the non-human" makes language possible. The speaking being is fractured, dislocated by the digital, in a process of de-subjectification, the "human" becomes obscure through the action of enunciation and listening.

This is where I left off, it's both the beginning and the end. Picking up the remains, in a performance lecture we arrive and as we begin again and again, we stumble through multiple arrivals and impossible endings. With nomadic subjects, who never quite arrive, perpetually caught within a failure to find an ending and interminably in a state of opening. This state of opening asks what could become possible if we rethink the hierarchies of our senses? Might we then come to our senses? Is this even possible? We begin with the impossibility of the ending.

In this partial performance lecture I wonder who is performing? Is this a performance? And if there are performers, is there an audience? And who is the audience? And if there isn't an audience– is there a witness?[7]

> Listen. Can you hear me? Adjust the volume on your MP3 player if you need to. Go and stand somewhere in the middle of the foyer of the gallery. Take a look around you. Above you. Beneath you. Outside of you. Inside of you. We arrive here in the middle together. We stand together, you and I.
>
> What is it to stand on your own two feet? To make a stand?
>
> Standing at the heart centre. Notice your own heartbeat, your rhythm, a rhythm that defines your own frequency - tuning you into the rhythm of an old radio station. Tuning into now and searching for the frequencies where time becomes space.
>
> Look up, stretch your arms above your head towards the dome - a man-made sky, a centrepiece. This was the substrata for an oversized antenna that stretched towards the heavens – a transmission device for a radiant distribution of phonic vibrations.

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[6] Giorgio Agamben, *The Remnants of Auschwitz* (New York, United States of America: The MIT Press,1999), 164.

[7] Becca Wood, from *Choreoauratics: An Unwiring* - performed live, verbatim – relaying text that is pre-recorded through headphones - Undisciplining Dance Symposium, June 2016.

> These walls that freeze moments, they capture bodies, they are permeable, like our flesh, they absorb and reflect acoustic vibrations. Collecting, splintering, absorbing and holding memories.
>
> Go over and touch the walls. Find a space on the wall surface to soften your body into. Let it support you. Listen into lost frequencies. Time and space holding you…[8]

This research proposes that tuning in to the poetics of listening via headphones in urban architectures invites new kinds of subjectivity and sociality, softening into sonic borders to expand and shift synesthetic and social fields. Worlds became cocooned by sound as participants tune into the soundscore. Headphones brought audio waves to the threshold between body and place, pushing at the limits of flesh. Listening guided audiences into acts of coming together which were simultaneously private and public. They tuned-in to bodies' interior selves and the exteriority of the space around the body. Standing and moving together, they became a whole body. Borders of bodies, of selves, of cells and of skin, of digital-sounds and site-sounds merged and disappeared into each other.

Attempting to document these events without giving priority to the visual senses, I offered the participants a pad of post-it notes and a pencil before they put on their headphones and invited them to note down any responses and reflections that they feel, hear, smell, sense *and* see, either during the experience or afterwards.

Below are responses from some of the choreoauratic scores:

> During the walk I felt this relationship between my body and the building's body and between my skin and the building's skin so there is the question of inhabitation of the building and the decrepidness of the building, and then kind of the self... there is a play that produced quite a strong emotional response not just because of the plight of the building that's been abandoned, but also the plight of the self in the city… When I was writing on the skin of the building it was like I was writing on the skin of the self…[9]

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[8] Becca, from the headphonic score for *Choreoauratics* listened to by the participants on headphones (June 2016).

[9] Audience comment. Panel Presentation Mesh Cities, ADA Symposium, Auckland University of Technology, (September 2014).

Waves of thought a radio wave and an ocean wave.
A lost stream. A house for listening.[10]

Wind is tearing the sound from my ears
The ghosts of songs
Crescendos of wind and voices
Is the sound recorded or is it the world?
Descriptions of the sky,
I check its blue with my own body
Overlaying one city with another
A city made of description,
"walking becoming an act of recovery"
A city symphony, rhythms of me.[11]

Figure 11.2 Becca Wood, *Choreoauratics: An Unwiring*. Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand, June 2016. Photograph by ?

[10] Unpublished participant notes. *Choreoauratics: An Unwiring*, (June 2016).
[11] Participant note, *A digital meditation and a choreography of mumbles – A social choreography for the ears,* Performance Presentation, Aotearoa Digital Artists AGM, Dunedin, September 2013.

A woman pressed her body into the surface of the walls, listening to modulating histories caught in flesh and plaster. The walls freeze moments, catch bodies, they are permeable, like our flesh, they absorb and reflect acoustic vibrations. Collecting and holding memories.

> Radio waves unwire us… and we catch lost stories and lost places. We become acoustic chambers – carrying sonic vibrations that course through our veins.

Go out through the doors of the foyer and stand at the bottom of the steps. Look up at the building from the stairs. Standing tall since 1934. This is a house for listening, a Romanesque architecture for transmitting acoustic waves. Sound vibrated your bones for 25 years. Casting early sound waves across the city filling the between spaces, making space electric. Built like a fortress, zig-zag pinnacles and the radio transmitter on the roof become an expression of a New York skyscraper. "A magnificent Palace of Broadcasting."[12]

A silent transmission. An uncomfortable silence. An awkward moment. Look down Shortland Street, extend your left arm and point towards the west. This was the main artery of the city.

Once an ancient track, somewhere nearby a lost stream flows beneath the concrete crust, searching for the buried foreshore.

Go back into the foyer of the building.

Lie down on the floor of the foyer and look up at the ceiling. Feel the cool hard floor beneath your body. Bones meet bones. Flesh meets flesh. Above you the dome creates the smooth internal space of a skull.[13]

[12] Interview with Maud Basham 'Aunt Daisy' New Zealand Sound Archive, Wellington.
[13] Excerpts from the headphonic score *Choreoauratics: An Unwiring*, Performance lecture, (June 2016).

Figure 11.3 Becca Wood, *Choreoauratics: An Unwiring*, Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand, June 2016. Photograph by Karen Barbour.

A group of women lie down on the floor of the foyer inside the former Radio 1YA building, surrendering the weight of their bodies to the support of architectural layers, resting into public architecture. This is a place where the codes of the building do not speak of lying down. Resting becomes a transversal act in a space that speaks of passing. They become a centre-piece, echoing patterns of a ceiling rose with their bodies. Looking up at the ornate dome of stained glass, wearing headphones they listen. Tuning in. In a house for listening.

> We create spaces for transmission. Transmitting invisible vibrations. In this small dance of invisibility radio waves shake up the sky.
>
> Roll over and rest on your hands and knees. Your hands connecting into the surface of the floor, a circuit to your heart and down into the beat of the building. Beneath you another floor, and below that another and below that the surface of the earth.
>
> We balance here, precariously on top of a former beach cliff, looking out to sea. A cliff's edge that ends above reclaimed land, buildings replacing

> beach. We pull sound waves up from the sea edge and cast them back out to sea through the vibrations in our bodies. Conducting mystical acoustic fields with our secret songs.
>
> From kneeling come back to standing. Face the wall on the opposite side of the door. On your left is a large gallery space. This is the old recording studio. Extend your left arm out and point towards the doors. Turn to face the doors and walk through. Notice the size of the entrance. Notice the feeling of your feet striking the ground. The sound in here is different. Different from the foyer and different from times before. Go for a walk around the gallery space.[14]

A gathering of women inhabiting a space that slips between the codes of time, place and the body. They are held in a safe space by sound, wrapped in an acoustic field, orchestrated together in a slippery community of listening. I recall Braidotti's idea of an acoustic space as subversive, a paradoxical relationship that is both pervasive and intimate but also collective.[15]

> In radiant sonic waves we reimagine the spaces between us. Hurling an orchestra of invisible reverberations out across the land. Bouncing off the earth's surface, disembodied voices navigate the globe… colliding through the city, losing their way and finding their way. A place for heavenly voices and instruments to be sung out into the universe.
>
> If there are other people in the room go and stand beside them. See if you can tune into their body through your own skin. Listening into someone else's skin. See how close you can get to them.
>
> The radio body is electric. In fields of vibratory figures we resituate bodies into space, ghosting the voice into many and collapsing the flesh.
>
> Heading for the heavens on a celestial journey… cells are reconfigured and reconstituted into an invisible ether. This is a radio sensation. A radio transmission. Our movement becomes an act of recovery. Remembering forgotten bodies in a wireless landscape.
>
> Connected in the spirit of an electrical current.
>
> In 1960, television killed the radio star. The first official television transmission began at 7.30pm on the 1st June 1960.

[14] Excerpts from the headphonic score *Choreoauratics: An Unwiring*, (June 2016).
[15] Braidotti, 155.

This was the end of Radio IYA.[16]

Through the headphonic, the voice, the architecture and the somatically-choreographed body there is failure in re-performing the remains of *Listening for Disappearing*. As discussed earlier, in Agamben's matrixial encounter of inside and outside, the process of de-subjectification through the digital archive creates an impossibility for testimony.[17] The performance lecture becomes an opening to the other, always partial and never whole. Becoming remains, we stand together in the gallery space, we are unwired together in multiple acts of recovery. This is what remains of this event; multiple sound scores, the residue of actions in photographs, a series of reflections scribbled on post-it notes, the memories and notes from discussions held afterwards, emails sent between myself and the participants, and this writing. Thoughts, feelings and words remain in my body and those other bodies that participated in this score and perhaps also in those that witnessed the event. These partial fragments of an unfinished and unknown whole might become part of the next event, implicating that documentation might be thought of as a way forwards as well as a testimony for something that has already happened.

Somatic, choreographic thinking is produced through these critical spatial practices. This work is embodied by the future, present and remaining soundscapes that prioritise listening as a counterpoint to the vision-centred and highly mediatised capitalist culture we inhabit.

Facilitated through prosthetic listening, somatic processes suggest an embodied listening that recalibrates the way we think spatially in a time when digital prosthetics and mediated architectures impact on the way we experience the world. This strategy questions how we might see, hear, feel, touch, taste or move differently through digital augmentation. Tuning into the senses and to each other through prosthetically mediated choreographies rethinks the way we occupy and shift through places.

The practice has asked in what ways somatically-informed choreography,[18] perceptual performance and critical spatial practice[19] might

[16] Excerpt from *Choreoauratics: An Unwiring* (June 2016).
[17] Agamben, *The Coming Community*, 36.
[18] Natalie Garret's Phd study (2007) introduces the term 'somatically-informed choreography,' her argument diffuses the emphasis of the ocular-centric in dance performance in favour of a kinaesthetic focus.
[19] Critical spatial practice is a term that Jane Rendall introduces in order to discuss the operations of art and architecture as they come together in public projects to both question the function of the disciplines themselves and also the social and polticial relations that these projects create as they engage or critique dominant

come together to rethink the subject in the highly-mediated encounters of art and life. It questions the driving force of the scopic in the Western regime of representation and tunes in to the other and the invisible or disappearing, suggesting possibilities for a framework that privileges difference towards a hopeful future. Documenting the participants making the marks, and the marks that they leave behind allows these writings to become part of future choreoauratic scores, in the sense that is recognised in Adrian Heathfield's proposal that the role of the archive may be provision for a future version of the event.[20]

Through this practice I suggest that rather than the notion of a singular event as a focal point for the live act, that we might draw on multiple reverberations that trace, that (re)member, that echo, that operate on the edges and within the remains of embodied listening in time and as space.

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ideologies Jane Rendell, *Critical Spatial Practice* (Denmark: Art Incorporated, Kunstmuseet Koge Skitsesamling, 2008), 1.

[20] Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield, *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History* (Bristol, United Kingdom: Intellect Books, 2012), 237.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

RESTING AND RISK IN PARTICIPATION: A GENTLE REBELLION

NISHA MADHAN

If this is a dance rebellion, it is a slow and gentle one.[1]

Introduction - Gentleness Is a Key

Gentleness is a key, that if used in participatory performance can help to somatically unlock the philosophical and political positioning of both artist and participant. Through the use of a gentle approach, spectators entering a participatory performance may be lured into a subversive idea of what a performance is. The tables can be turned, and the roles of performer and spectator reversed, or their hierarchical positions flattened, and the lines between them blurred and turned into an alternative power relation. The performer may become a facilitator, placing themselves either on equal footing or even slightly behind that of the participants. Within such a schema, the participant's experience is placed firmly at the centre of the experience, turning the participant into the protagonist of the work in a sense that recognizes the claim made by Jacques Rancière that "every spectator is already an actor in her story."[2]

This essay takes two examples of contemporary participatory performance that stand out as a starting point for this discussion, both by performance artists living and practising in Auckland, New Zealand. The first is Sean Curham's *Gentle Lying on the Bonnet Of A Popular Car* (2015), the second is *Circle in Box* (2014) by val smith. These two performance artworks make use of gentle participation to rebel against traditional performance structures resulting in an experience that zeroes in

[1] val smith, "Circle in Box: Microperceptual Modes of Engagement in Choreography," (Master's thesis, University of Auckland, 2014), 6.
[2] Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator* (London: Verso, 2011), 17.

on the empathetic relationship between the artist and the participant. I suggest that in turn this empathetic relationship functions as an effective form of political activism. It is the building of this relationship that gives the participants a subtle agency, they don't have to do much more than breathe and simply be "bodies assembled in the same place" in order to activate the inherent politics of the work.[3]

This is not always the case with participatory performances and I do not make the claim for immersive or participatory performance as necessarily given to activating political agency. As authors like Rancière and Gareth White remind us, the assumption that spectators need to wake up or be emancipated can be self-defeating when attempting to create equality in power between performer and spectator. This assumption is what Rancière pinpoints as, "the very logic of the pedagogical relationship," that of the teacher and student, the knowledgeable and the ignorant, an "inequality of intelligence."[4] Participation-based work can fall into a trap, one where it is convinced of its own pretence; that is, believing its audience is acting out of their own volition while in fact they are may be acting out a "fatal illusion of autonomy."[5]

We see this most commonly in those awkward situations where an unsuspecting spectator has been ripped from their seat and forced onto a stage only to feel humiliated by the performer. The spectator plays along because to protest would be even more humiliating. As White, citing Erving Goffman, articulates, in his book *Audience Participation in the Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation*, spectators have public reputations that are at stake in such a situation. The choice to act is not necessarily as authentic as one might think. Often it is made out of a need to save face, a survival mechanism to avoid the destruction of one's public reputation. Audiences are tricked into performing against their will in order to aid the artist in performing their own propaganda. The privilege lies with the performer, the only person who knows what is happening and why. This privilege is singular in an event like this. The artist is the privileged protagonist, enlisting the public to support their singular experience of the world in what can easily be "merely egotistical play".[6] Their power is palpable, and can tip over into dictatorial behaviour, one that is linear, certain and singular in its output.

Artists who are able to recognise and avoid this pitfall of participation, however, are able to access a gentleness towards spectators who have

[3] Rancière, 16.
[4] Ibid., 8-9.
[5] Ibid., 15.
[6] Ibid., 8.

entered into this uncertain contract with them. They are able to view themselves as facilitator, and spectators as participants. They are able to reassure participants that their public reputations will not be exploited. Instead the unique information held in their corporeal experience can serve to write a collective event, one that is not possible without the existence of the other. Each experience is different and accepted rather than carefully edited toward a singular argument. For the public to insert their experience of the world into a performance risks the destruction of a linear storyline, but it also opens up the possibility of the rhizomatic growth of a multiplicitous narrative instead. This risk invites an uncertainty that is contradictory to the traditional performer/spectator contract. It is a fragile and volatile risk that, when gently approached can be a potent political tool.

Is this gentleness a way in which we can increase the level of risk participants are willing to take with their public reputations? Can gentleness open up alternative power relationships in performance, ways of aligning performance philosophically with Deleuzian concepts of deterritorialization, becoming and rhizomatic structures?[7] Is gentleness the way in which one can adopt what screenwriter and director, Jill Soloway calls a *female gaze* in the creation of a live event, an empathetic, feeling/seeing gaze from within, rather than a distanced and framed one?[8] Or is gentleness another way to manipulate people into believing that they have chosen to act out of their own free will, when in fact they are only carrying out the will of the artist? Can the gentle be political?

[7] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans. Brian. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

[8] Jill Soloway, "Masterclass - The Female Gaze. Toronto International Film Festival Keynote Speech." *Youtube*, September 11, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnBvppooD9I.

Gentle Lying On The Bonnet Of A Popular Car (Sean Curham)

Fig. 12-1 Sean Curham, *Gentle Lying on the Bonnet of a Popular Car,* Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery performance, 2016. Photograph by Toni Nisbet.

I first encountered Sean Curham's work during *Ghosting 1- 6* (2012), a series of six performance art events that he held in various locations around Auckland City. The second in the series was *Cabaret* in which the main scenographic feature was a giant sign made out of soft pink balloons spelling out the word *SHOW*. Inside each balloon was a tungsten light bulb and flakes of grey paint. At any given point during the show a balloon would burst under the heat of the tungsten bulb and grey flakes would explode onto the floor. No one knew when it would happen, but they knew that it would. A sweet, inoffensive, gentle pink balloon lit warmly from inside turned out be one of the riskiest elements in the show.

Cabaret was held at the Old Folks Association, a venue that Curham runs on Gundry Street in Auckland as a community hall for various groups as well as artists. It is not incidental that Curham runs this space. It is a performance work in itself in that the running of it reflects utterly his artistic sensibilities and anti neo-liberalist political agenda. A completely inclusive space, the hall is the cheapest venue you can hire in Auckland city, making it immediately accessible to groups and artists that are not

subsidised by other organisations. Curham makes sure that the cross-section of groups hiring the hall range from conceptual artists to cultural groups and church organisations. It is run on a state of mutual agreement and trust between himself and the hirer. The hall is basic, and to some may seem run down and undesirable for its lack of polished coats of white paint. This, I suspect, is a deliberate and considered choice that keeps those groups that value slickness as a part of their engagement with community and art away from a place that exists to bring people together and foster the making of art that is risky and unconcerned with corporate, commercial modes of success. These two things are considered as one: community living and experimental art.

In February 2016 I was invited to take part in a group show at Te Uru Gallery in Titirangi alongside performance artists from New Zealand, Finland and the UK. I worked closely with Curham on an exchange of ideas and practice for a piece he calls *Gentle Lying on the Bonnet of a Popular Car*. This work was based on an ongoing investigation that he has undertaken about unleashing the volatility buried in the gentlest of acts. His hypothesis is that the most banal, simple, small and everyday acts can be the most volatile and radical gestures in the world today.[9] This contra-positioning of the gentle act with the volatile act is what propels Curham's work into art activism, one that operates on an almost subliminal level. He identifies everyday acts, rituals and materials and uses them as tiny protests towards his strong egalitarian values. In this particular work he was concerned with the act, ritual and material of resting.

He begins with his car, a beat-up looking, very ordinary white Japanese make. It is parked in a private space, the garage of the gallery that opens out onto the public car park. There are three small steps made out of wood and scaffolding that lead up to the bonnet. Curham meets you in a one-to-one exchange, explaining everything about the work including his philosophy about resting as a form of activism and previous works he has made that involved resting as performance. He uses this as a way to put you at ease. Already the gentleness implicit in the title is at work. Aside from his casual and genuine performance mode (he is not playing anyone other than himself, the artist) he wants you to be uncertain of nothing at this stage. He will explain exactly what he is doing and why he's doing it in order that you feel utterly safe in his hands. It's crucial that he does this, because the oncoming event is about to be very, very dangerous.

[9] Sean Curham (artist), personal communication with the author, Feb. 1, 2014.

He explains that he has been trying to turn the bonnet of his car into a place of rest, to transform it into a lounge chair. You are invited to experience this by lying on the bonnet and allowing him to surround you in blankets that are folded beneath your legs, arms and neck giving you a sense of complete rest and security. A bolster placed on the thighs gives a comforting weight and eyes shielded from the sun places you in a private world. From here he leaves you alone to rest completely for 30 seconds, always telling you what's about to happen before it happens to eliminate any surprise or suspense. He wants the experience to be everyday to the point of boring for you. Once you are at rest he starts the car and revs the engine for thirty seconds. After this you are driven around in a circle at a speed of one km per hour for ten circles. The engine is revved one more time and the experience is finished.

Resting is an intimate, domestic and personal ritual that Curham enjoys playing out in public and generally with the public. It becomes a study of the meeting place between private living and public performance. The work suggests that our private, sensitive somatic rituals are in fact the most useful and effective way of participating in the world. Curham creates public performance situations that bring the potential of these rituals out and furthermore develops them as an act capable of great tension and danger. This is particularly apparent in *Gentle Lying On The Bonnet Of A Popular Car*. While the mode of participation may on the surface seem extremely passive, a person simply resting on top of a car, tucked in and shielded from the glare of day, the risk and possible danger involved makes this exchange one of the most intriguing levels of participatory work I have encountered. How did the artist convince the participant to essentially leave their life in his hands?

First, he gently led them there.His introduction is soft and mindful, providing an abundance of information and taking care to answer one of the biggest questions an audience member may have that will stop them from risking their public reputation, *why?* In rebellious form, Curham does away with the idea that the meaning of the work should reveal itself and reveals it from the very start. The history, the philosophy, the technique. But while he is making these elements known to them, the experience is still unknown and mysterious. It is one they have not had before.

Second, they were gently handled. The way that participants are touched and handled is especially important when convincing someone to give themselves over to a potentially dangerous and unknown experience. Curham's method was to use carefully researched yogic blanket folds to instil an utter feeling of relaxation, security and rest. He doesn't touch the participant skin to skin but instead, there is the safety of the blanket

between you and the perpetrator of the potential violence against your public reputation. He asks constantly, is this okay? Leaving the participant free to protest against their safety at any stage. There is assurance that this protest will not derail the narrative of the work, because the narrative is you and your experience, so there is little risk of embarrassment.

Third, participants' corporeal experience was prioritized as the central content of the work. Their body is displayed regally on the top of the car, with the artist behind them, serving them as their driver. The virtuosity is in his care and handling of a fellow human being and in being completely functionary. The participant is left to experience a new and sublime sensation, something completely personal, felt from within. A physical and imaginative erotic space is opened for the participant and they were brought there through an act of gentleness, a space created for rest while surrounded by everyday materials. Our cars, our blankets, our empty car parks. Far from everyday however, these common materials and the common act of resting are elevated from comforting to politically activated signs of rebellion. The audacity to carry out this gentle stunt in public is what makes the work a protest against conventional living. He fails to use his car as a car. It does not go from A to B, it circles from A to A and back to A. He does not use it to transport himself or to race against traffic, he uses it to stop, lie down and encourages others to join his peaceful protest. And there's always the chance that whoever is on top could fall off.

There is a sense of possible failure that lies under all Curham's work and his dealings with art and artists that is a kind of political activism in itself. Often his performances will seemingly take a turn for the worse, they will fall apart but they do so with a kind of grace, a clarity in being unclear, such certainty in being uncertain that you often wonder how much of it was intended by the artist and how much of it was an accident. There is a menace in the refusal to play by the rules, and a shiftiness in the way he side-steps successful, slick and polished results. It is as if to be successful would be to uphold the values of neo-liberalism, and the only protest left at hand under such a pervading and powerful state is to fail in every sense of the word. To stop functioning, to keep driving around the roundabout, frustratingly slow, and allow something new to form out of the middle. This attention to failure is not uncommon in the contemporary art world. Lisa LeFeurve, in *Failure - Documents of Contemporary Art* posits that artists use failure to resist "against the socially normalized drive towards ever increasing success."[10] Matthew Goulish and Tim Etchell's

[10] Lisa LeFeurve, *Failure - Documents of Contemporary Art* (London and Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2010), 12.

collaborative project *The Institute Of Failure* archives and maps "the face of contemporary failure in avowedly cross-disciplinary style."[11] Contemporary artists use failure to create accidents on purpose as it is "through failure one has the potential to stumble on the unexpected."[12]

Having trained first as a dancer and choreographer and later as a lighting and spatial designer, Curham's work capitalises on the tension between what is intended and what is accidental. A showing of his work *make it/disappear* (2015) for Movement Art Practice artist residency series at Wellesley Studios descended into a kind of performance lecture/discussion between himself and the audience on the failings of the work, and, wider than that, the failings of the context for the work, and furthermore the failings of the context for art-making in New Zealand. This open, yet tension-ridden discussion lasted an hour at exactly the time that the sun was setting. As it unfolded, I realized that Curham had left the studio lights off, which meant that we sat talking while simultaneously observing the gentle disappearing of sunlight, which shifted our perceptions so slightly and subtly and slowly. I still don't know if this was deliberate or not, but the more I encounter Curham's work, the more I think that he is an expert at identifying these potential accidents and apparent failures and capitalising on them as an act of artistic activism against the neoliberal regimes that create space for art in the first place.

This activism operates on a very fine tension between small, gentle acts and thoughts coupled with the latent danger present in everyday objects. In this sense, the rebellion is almost invisible, giving it volatility in its ability to sneak up on you, and perhaps to even make a difference in the world at a subliminal level. These movements are microscopic, at one kilometre per hour, and circular. Like Deleuze and Guattari's *open rings* that go, "from a centre to the periphery at the same time as the periphery reacts back upon the centre to form a new centre in relation to a new periphery," Curham creates events that are deliberately and gleefully elusive and spiral in and out of focus, never resting on one place of meaning before seeking a new one.[13] What is impressive, is Curham's ability to gently lead participants with him into these spirals and leave them with the feeling that the world will never quite seem the same again after having rested on the bonnet of his popular car.

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[11] Matthew Goulish and Tim Etchell, "About The Institute of Failure." Institute of Failure. 2002, http://www.institute-of-failure.com/

[12] LeFeurve, 12.

[13] Deleuze and Guattari, 50.

Circle in Box (val smith)

Fig. 12-2 val smith (centre), *Circle in Box*, performance at the New Performance Festival, Turku, Finland, 2014. Photograph by Hannu Seppala.

Similar to Sean Curham, val smith is a performance artist with a background in choreography. smith views the body as a politically complex site and uses somatic processes to create socially engaged work that often expresses a feminist and queer agenda. Like Curham, the work activates smith's political position often in a participatory way and sometimes in public. At a New Performance Festival in Turku, Finland in 2014 I spent four hours following smith as they crawled painstakingly along the city's gutters sporting a washed up, bedraggled Sean Penn look, dressed in drag for a durational work called *Gutter Matters*. People were invited to join what smith named a 'Gay Shame Parade' and observe this hidden part of the city, the part that the public don't generally acknowledge but add to on a daily basis. The invitation again was gentle, smith would simply lie and wait between stretches of crawling until someone paid attention and lay down beside them. Once there, they would simply talk to each other about what they could see. With similar deliberateness to Curham, smith celebrates the failures of everyday life. Here the gutter stood in for the dropouts, the marginalised, shamed and failed personalities that are regulated to the gutters of the city on a daily

basis by the mainstream.

Circle in Box was the performance outcome of practice-led research smith undertook for their Masters in Choreography at the University of Auckland. The primary research question was, "what might be discovered about the audience-performer relationship in choreography through a kinaesthetic exploration of affect," and was underpinned by a Deleuzian theoretical framework. The work was staged in the Kenneth Myers Centre Black Box Theatre within the Gus Fisher Gallery in Auckland. Since the work entirely hinged on participants being aware of their own experience and role within the work, I have written a personal recollection of my own.

I remember it taking some time to realise that there was anything very different about the space. I was late, possibly one of the last to arrive. It seemed as though the theatre was just that. The theatre. There was a circle on the ground. No seats. Various participants leaning against walls, sticking together in twos and threes, looking at the circle wondering what will happen. val looked deeply concerned about something, reading the room, feeling the room all at once with a whole body. I didn't know val at the time. I do now and I often think about that meeting we had. It's true the lights were dimmer than usual. And after a while I noticed a drone. Nothing was happening. But then everything was happening. Anytime someone decided to shift their weight, fold their arms, clear their throat, it felt amplified, like a real moment in time and space had occurred. This heightened sense of existence fell on the room. And people looked a little worried. After an hour I look down to my left and notice that I'm right next to the lighting and sound board. I get curious. I look at it for a long time. I wander over. I'm now deeply curious about my own power in this delicate situation. I'm so close to touching the faders and seeing what I can do to change things. I look behind me and val has snuck up on me and I can't tell, because I didn't know val then, whether they want me to do it or not. I know them now. But I still don't know if they wanted me to do it. I often think about that meeting that we had.

I have participated in this work maybe three or four times and two impressions from audience feedback strongly stand out in my memory, common to each time I have been there. One is that people often leave convinced that smith had planted performers amongst the audience. This could be because there are often known performers in the audience, and one can't be sure who may have been enlisted beforehand. However, I think it is more significant because of the minimalist nature of the work, which makes every minute detail look like its own performance. As such it

is one of the most successful pieces I have encountered in which the audience become the performers of the piece almost without the realization that they are doing so. In the exegesis written to accompany the work entitled, *Circle in Box - Microperceptual modes of engagement in Choreography,* smith cites Arvo Part in Supine's 2002 documentary where he expressed "a need to concentrate on each sound, so that every blade of grass would be as important as a flower." This sentiment perfectly sums up smith's uncanny amplification of micro movements by the audience. Testing whether it might be possible to create a Deleuzian mode of relation within performance, smith was concerned with "doing less to feel more."[14] smith approaches the relationship between performer and audience as a power dynamic that is complicated and precarious, and uses this relation as a core principal of the project. smith's minimal approach to these philosophies as a choreographic modes are what create the subtle sensation that participants are led in micro-steps toward a performance made entirely by them.

The second impression is the common feeling from audience members each time that they thought the piece finished too early and that if they had been allowed an extra half an hour things would have had a chance to really develop. Unknown to the audience is the fact that each time smith performs this piece they change the duration. So the length of the work does not determine the feeling of wanting more. It could be ten minutes, or one hundred and eleven minutes and still the audience would want more. smith draws on Henri Bergson's concept of an "expanded notion of the present" in which time is "a flow or passage."[15] Time in smith's work is moved through in duration, rather than a minute to next minute linear sense of time determined by moving from one point to the next. Time inflates and deflates according to the internal and gentle somatic relationships we build with each other in the vast imaginative potential of the black box. Our only outside indicator is a circle on the floor, a sign of their creation of a "melodious continuity of duration."[16]

smith approaches participation from a philosophical perspective, choosing to favour neither spectator nor performer in the power dynamic, but to incriminate all involved in the unfolding of tiny events in the space. Politically, this work operates in a way that renders all voices equal, as loud as each other's, all actions allowed, a circular and continuous power

[14] val smith, "Circle in Box: Microperceptual Modes of Engagement in Choreography," (Master's thesis, University of Auckland, 2014), 15. https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/handle/2292/22542

[15] Henri Bergson, *Henri Bergson: key writings* (London; New York: Continuum, 2002), 205.

[16] smith, 32.

structure, as opposed to a linear or even horizontal one, and a prizing of the somatic feeling, which allows the sensory body to prevail through sensitivity and intuition. Placing this work in the context of smith's broader body of practice one can say that it encapsulates and practices a form of performance that is motivated by a *female gaze*. I must point out that this reading is entirely my own. As a non-binary person, smith would perhaps not identify with the gendering of this term, however for me it is useful as a way to frame a certain politic that can rise from operating in a subjective, feeling-seeing and empathetic way.

In response to Laura Mulvey's concept of the male gaze, Jill Soloway proposes that a female gaze is one where the camera is subjective as opposed to objective, and prioritises a feeling/seeing experience, using the frame to evoke a feeling of being in feeling rather than looking at. Soloway proposes that artworks employing a female gaze uses empathy as a political tool to change "the way the world feels for women when they move their body through the world...feeling themselves as the subject."[17] If we think of each of val's participants as a camera, then each camera operates subjectively from within the frame of the theatre. The experience of their body is placed at the very centre of the work. No one is watched yet everyone is watching. Several subjective stories generate over the hour, one for each person present and based on their personal experience of the performance, each person growing and rhizomatically spreading, their corporealities bubbling up and down at the very same time as the other. And each of these multiple narratives are gently upheld by the artist through a practice of somatic empathy, creating what Soloway would call an "empathy machine."

In smith's choreography of empathy, they look to Rancière to support the undoing of privileging a particular type of participation. This viewpoint renders all participants as having equal value in the creation of the work and this is what allows emergent inter-relational behaviour to play out in a way that will always be personal to that particular group on that particular night. smith's political and philosophical agenda allows for a rhizomatic structure to blossom in the room, each participant's story taking centre stage at different times with a kind of fluidity that cannot be constructed. This fluid rhizomatic situation is their gentle subversion of a world that thrives on certainties and singularities. Through gentle and empathetic somatic processes they embody uncertainties and failures as part of their feminist/queer political framework, using participation to create "a new scene of equality."[18]

[17] Soloway, ibid.
[18] Rancière, 22.

Conclusion: Inside and Outside of the Circle

Both smith and Curham's work use gentleness in their approach to participation and this gentleness is apparent from the first encounter with the artist. Both artists rely heavily on a mode of *uncertainty*. In Curham's case it is in his casual and everyday demeanour and approach to the situation. One is never quite sure when it has started or finished, very much like a Deleuzian *plateau* that is "always in the middle."[19] In smith's case it is in the silence, stillness and empathetic presence, always shifting the power held by the artist beside or behind the participants, gently egging on bursts of activity, or resting carefully within the lack of it. It is smith's *sensing-with* and *seeing-with* the audience that allows their circle to transform into an open ring in which participants are called to act according to their individual will, while doing so together.[20] This empathetic exchange is also clear in Curham's work where the first priority is to take care. Both artists take care in order to rest, in order to rebel gently against conventional modes of spectatorship in performance. Both work at nearly imperceptible levels of communication to invite you gently into the middle of their circles where they leave you to your own experience, safe in the knowledge that they are right behind you.

Perhaps this imperceptible level of communication is operating as what White describes as *embodied cognition* in which, "thinking - and decision making - happens throughout the body, involving affective and emotional states and processes and, according to some theories directly depending on other bodies too."[21] In the case of these two works this embodied cognition is passed on to the participant as soon as they enter the work with the artist and this is what makes these works fascinating case studies in participation. Because by doing so, the artists have transferred their philosophical and political positioning in the world to their participants. They have done this through a gentle process in order to align their participants' emotional state with their own, bringing them to a point where they can embody these somatic rebellions. The artists have had to be mindful of their participants' emotional and non-conscious processes, "because the artwork, being made up of the participant's experience and its nexus with the work of the procedural author, therefore takes shape at

[19] Deleuze and Guattari, 21.
[20] Erin Manning, *Always more than one: individuation's dance* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 2.
[21] White, Gareth. *Audience Participation in the Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 116.

this level of combined conscious and nonconscious response."[22] If the artist is able to provide enough room for these conscious and nonconscious responses then a space for communal political activity is created. Sometimes this space is as complex as reciting a script prepared for you or simple as just being there with the artist and continuing to breathe. It is this personal encounter between the conscious and nonconscious minds of artist and participant that holds the volatility of Curham's failures and the intimacy of smith's empathy. This space is where art can become activism.

Participation in performance, whether operating on this covert and gentle level of relational philosophy or on a more overt and dictatorial level of performer-spectatorship, is inevitably a form of manipulation authored by the artists. When this manipulation attends to the many fine factors of political, social, physical and philosophical qualities of behaviour it may allow sophisticated philosophies and volatile political acts to evolve in sublime and surprising ways. Gentleness can be one way of operating with a female gaze where the feeling-seeing gaze is placed at the very centre of the work. This mode of participation can be radical and potent if used well. It relies on paying attention to the smallest and gentlest of movements, the micro-perceptual, the "molecular and even sub-molecular particle with which we are allied."[23] It is to allow the personal to be political.

No matter what the situation, the power will always lie with the artist and can be easily manipulated and misconstrued through participation to create a risk to one's public reputation that could create long lasting damage. Choosing to participate in a performance invites us to invest, knowing that "when we do these unreal things in rooms, galleries and theatre spaces, the real world will change."[24] Gentleness is another form of audience manipulation. It is one that can create endless rings at one kilometre per hour, or endless amounts of stillness sometimes inside and sometimes outside of the circle.

Epilogue - Failure

1.

"For some time I stand and listen through the skin of my body - to one small detail - then many details" says smith describing the moments before

[22] Ibid., 119.
[23] Deleuze and Guattari, 11.
[24] Tim Etchells, "On Risk and Investment" in *Certain Fragments: contemporary performance and forced entertainment* (London, New York: Routledge. 1999), 49.

the audience arrive.[25] smith stands silently is the still centre of the spinning earth, before the other centres arrive. On the second performance of this work for Tempo festival in 2014 at Q theatre, they arrive and see the empty theatre seats that smith was unable to remove for this performance. They ignore the circle, they ignore smith and sit on the seats. They watch, expecting the performer to do something. smith hides behind a curtain. This failing is at once a roaring success of the openness the work possesses to unearth those "micro-fascisms just waiting to crystallise."[26]

2.

A pregnant woman has been laid to rest on top of Curham's car. He is carefully driving under the watchful eyes of the public and the gallery curators, avoiding the garage pillars, completing circle after circle. On circle number three he bumps into a pillar and scratches the side of the car. He stops. They try not to gasp and think about the baby. He breathes very deeply. He leans out of the window and says, "Are you okay?" She doesn't move. "Yes," she says, "I'm fine, keep going." "I'm sorry," he says to her. "That was a mistake." And he goes on.

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[25] smith, viii.

[26] Deleuze and Guattari, 10.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH: CHOREOGRAPHING LIFE RAFTS AND LILOS

CHRISTINA HOUGHTON

The next 10 minutes could save your life! This is an emergency drill, please give your guide your full attention as they demonstrate to you our emergency evacuation procedure. Long-term hazards aboard this vessel have been identified. Sea-level rise and a risk of tsunami is possible. Accidents of all kinds may also occur including: accidents with chairs, technology misfire, miscommunications and professional shipwrecks.

In the case of an emergency remember to breathe…

1. In the case of an emergency you will find an inflatable safety device under your seat.
2. If your device is absent then you will have to befriend someone who has one.
3. Remove the safety device from the packet and hold the end of it above your head so the device unravels. Like so… Unfold the device and hold like so…
4. Warning! This product does not prevent drowning. Reserved to swimmers. The use of lifeboat is at own risk of users. Be careful of winds and running waters.
5. However, the safety device can also be used as a relaxing leisure device during times of climate change denial.
6. There are two valves, use your blowing tube to release the valve and then blow and blow again. Like so…
7. You must blow the head up separately from the body of the device, you may wish to do this with a friend.
8. The device may be useful draped around the shoulders for additional warmth. You can also inflate your device from this position with your friend.

9. In the case of rising sea levels or a tsunami wave you will hear the tsunami siren and you will need to evacuate and move to higher ground. (Raise arms).
10. Please evacuate the building through the indicated exits, and follow your guide and her friend. You can inflate the device as you evacuate with your friend.
11. Your guide will lead you to an assembly area where you must follow the actions of your guide.
12. Once your device is fully inflated, you can mount the Lilo and paddle to safety. If you have a friend they can guide you to safety.

It is useful to repeat these actions many times to ensure you are familiar with the evacuation procedure. If, up until now you have been watching, it is now time for you to participate in the emergency evacuation drill practice. Follow your guide. [1]

Choreographing Lilos and Life Rafts is a project that draws on survival drills and safety protocols to create performative actions. It began as a performance lecture (as part of the Undisciplining Dance Symposium, 2016) consisting of a "Lilo Safely" drill and evacuation (and led to a series of site-responsive Lilo tours over the following year). Participants were invited to inflate yellow P.V.C Lilos with shared breath (in pairs) and were instructed to move towards the outside assembly area. The participants then collaboratively created "gentle actions" with the Lilos, taking-care-of each other and "embodying" the Lilos in a post-human gesture towards thing-ness. The intention of the work was to create one-on-one encounters or group experiences that enabled the emergence of a performance of survival that is relational, minimal and meaningful to the individuals involved. Entwining choreographic scores with "actions for living" explored the notion of instruction as a mode of archiving performance that survives beyond the live event. This practice aimed to open spaces for developing a "poetics of survival" drawing on Joanna Zylinska's *Minimal Ethics for the Anthropocene* and Erin Manning's *Minor Gesture*.[2] Zylinska and Manning offer critical, eco-materialist theory in relation to performance theory and survival (and all that encompasses) as a sustained critique of process that recognizes the relationship between human technological processes and disasters, both natural and artificial. Recent

[1] Script from a participatory performance lecture at the 'Undisciplining Dance symposium,' 2016 (Recorded announcement).
[2] Joanna Zylinska, *Minimal Ethics for the Anthropocene* (Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press, 2014). Erin Manning, *The Minor Gesture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

concerns about climate change and the dramatic affects of the Anthropocene era have brought attention to differences in scale between a human tendency towards progress and mastery and our everyday futility of actions towards climate change prevention. This predicament is forcing humans to re-think the way in which our existence contributes to an increasingly damaged planet. In particular, "Poetics of Survival" asks how modes of everyday performance might be subverted through the techniques of story-telling and art-making as ecologies of practice, thus evoking "the active operation that creates schisms, in an opening up of the event to its potential for a collectivity alive with difference."[3] Zylinska and Manning articulate an ethical stance for "living life well" which formulates the political positioning of a performance practice that reads the minimal and the minor together through performance: these strategies foreground the need for a poetics of un-building, undoing, deconstructing, minorising and minimalizing master discourses in performing survival.

Rafting

This performance-lecture was the first of a series of Lilo performance actions that contributed to the development of practical instructions for being-with.[4] The Lilo drill has since been performed in a number of locations and contexts where the salvaging of performance remains (actions and narratives) from the flotsam and jetsam of one performance is transferred into the next.[5] Poetic strategies were tested through weathering and wayfaring as guided performances that moved through a weather-world (as opposed to landscape): a world full of movement and flux, feeling and sensing atmospheres.[6] Codes, instructions and scores created actions (for the participants to enact) that challenged modes of spectatorship, authorship and representation, drawing together methods from participatory art practice, walking/wayfaring, somatic dance, theatre as ritual and poetics of failure. These performance tactics aimed to offer choreo-political actions (as described by performance theorist André Lepecki) that could contribute to the fall of the spectacle of modernism (in relation to instrumentalism and progress) through choreography in an

[3] Manning, 6.
[4] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY, 1996).
[5] See photos for Lilo performances on location.
[6] Tim Ingold, *Being Alive : Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York : Routledge, 2011).

expanded field.[7]

What is the performativity of the Lilo? The plastic affect, leisure and emergency? Is the rubbish we create what we end up clinging to?

Fig. 13-1 "Lilo Safely" in *Heat: Solar Revolutions*, Oceanic Performance Biennial 2017. French Bay, New Zealand. Photograph by Christina Houghton.

LILO FLOAT – Breathing and floating exercise with a friend (or group of 10) Warning: This Lilo is not a safety device it will not save your life in case of emergency. It is also extremely dangerous if used by children without supervision.

1. Take your yellow Lilo.
2. Blow it up with a friend, create a Lilo of shared breath.
3. Hold the Lilo for a hug between you and a friend.
4. Balance the Lilo above you and your friend to create shade or you can hold it under arms.
5. Run or walk down to the water.
6. Float your Lilo - One person mounts the Lilo and lies on their back fully relax into the float.
7. The other acts as guide standing on the bottom- give your friend a gentle float around.
8. If you have a number of pairs of friends make a floating raft and a star

[7] André Lepecki, *Singularities : Dance in the Age of Performance* (London; New York: Routledge, 2016).

to a favourite song (See suggested photo).
9. Catch a wave, ride Lilo in - lying long ways or sideways with a friend.
10. Alternatively float out to sea…

"Rafting" describes a method for collectively moving through theory and practice, gathering what has gone before and developing each concept as an accumulative, processual practice. This process also rafts through multiple narratives of survival, drawing on survival codes to facilitate instructions and equipment for "Actions for Living." Deeper themes of climate change that relate to personal loss and despair bring attention to that which is local and ignored (by those who aren't affected). These and more oceanic themes of travellers and maritime misfortunes combine with an autobiographical story of sailing from my youth (aboard the sailing boat *Desperado* that my late father built in the family backyard.) All are informed by the underlying theme of survival at sea. These narratives entwine as a minimal ethical epoch suggesting that we are all in the same boat, taking into consideration Dipesh Chakrabraty's comment that, "unlike in the crisis of capitalism there are no life boats for the rich and privileged."[8]

Resting

Resting prioritises a mind-body connection and an awareness of the body in relation to the environment. It also addresses my interest in deconstructing typical dance technique (that can adhere to instrumental techniques requiring mastery and perfection) as a way to move towards a more inclusive and wider context. Resting and/or stillness as a choreographic practice has the potentiality to critique subjectivity in relation to historic modes of dance and performance through a "slower ontology" where acts of the pedestrian and stillness provide a critique of presence, in the absence of the "kinetic excess" of the modernist subject.[9] In this context I refer to my own dance history and the spectacle through everyday, minimal gestures, activating an empty space where dance once was. This practice recognises the necessity somatic and wellbeing practices have in societies increasingly obsessed with technologies of

[8] Dipesh Chakrabraty, *The Climate of History: Four Theses* cited in Joanna Zylinska, "Politics," in *Minimal Ethics for the Anthropocene*, ibid.
[9] André Lepecki, *Exhausting Dance : Performance and the Politics of Movement* (New York ; London : Routledge, 2006). Lepecki suggests that this coming into presence by dancers provides a philosophical terrain to discuss the philosophical nature of subjectivity and the body.

protection and disaster-preparation. As described by Sandra Reeve in *Nine Ways of Seeing a Body,* somatic practices are rapidly developing in fields of dance, psychology, psychotherapy, performance, body work and anthropology, all attempting to unsettle habitual ways of knowing the world through listening to the body and responding to sensations through movement.[10] Reeve in particular outlines the human body through specific ontological lenses such as the 'Ecological Body'.[11] *Rafting* and *Resting* draw on somatic principles to evoke rituals for taking-care-of each other as well as the environment, as easy-to-follow actions that can be enacted by participants as "acts of recovery." Somatic practices that prioritise the slowing of the sensing body as it engages with the immediate environment (both technical and biological) are becoming a source for choreographic response/critique to the fast-paced nature of our contemporary world. [12]

breathe breathe into the Lilo…this is an emergency drill. breathe breathe into the Lilo… this is a breathing exercise…breathe breathe into the Lilo… this could save your life…

[10] Sandra Reeve, *Nine Ways of Seeing a Body* (Triarchy Press Limited, 2011).
[11] For a comprehensive description of ontologies of the body see Sandra Reeve, 2011, ibid.
[12] Somatic practices such as Feldenkrais Method (Moshe Feldenkrais), Body Mind Centering - BMC, (Bonnie Bainbridge-Cohen) and Skinner Releasing Technique - SRT (Joan Skinner), are developed to encourage fluidity of movement and bring attention to the physical, sensational and emotional realities of human bodies.

Fig. 13-2 *Lilo Safely Tour - Somewhere Series #10,* Live-Art, Fun Fair, Side-Show Alley (2016), Auckland, NZ. Photograph by Tallulah Holly-Massey.

Lilo Dance (for one or two)

1. Take your Lilo into your arms, hold the Lilo like a long lost lover.
2. Slow dance with your lilo, you may do this with a friend.
3. Feel the PVC on your skin, feel the world slow down all around you.
4. Hold the Lilo above your head… you are sinking under the surface.
5. Walk slowly in a large circle.
6. Slide the Lilo down along your body and lay it down like an injured friend.
7. Lie face down and relax into the suspension of a breath shared.
8. Roll over and over with the Lilo.
9. Finish on your back on the Lilo and imagine you are floating out to sea.
10. Practice your gentle paddling technique.
11. You have completed your Lilo dance.
12. Reach over your body and undo the valves, feel your Lilo in a long exhale.
13. When your Lilo is completely deflated you may fold it up again and place back into its package ready for the next survival drill.

As participants of the *Lilo Safely* performance entered the horizontal plane, resting bodies evoked the notion of "the fall from spectacle" in

opposition to the vertical nature of progress and instrumentalism. Drawing on Sara Jane Bailes "poetics of failure," the act of "lying down when there is work to be done" offers oppositional ideals in relation to success and failure in relation to "the failure of representation (the reiteration that the art work is an 'artificial construct,' it is an 'artefact')" and dealing with environmental problems and solutions.[13] Lying down is also a reference to the yogic corpse pose, Shavasana, that revitalises the mind and body when completely exhausted, while at the same time referring to the final resting pose after death. This action brings attention to environmental fragility and fatigue, due to the challenging-forth of human society (that often involves the depletion of the world's resources) and fatigue from trying to deal with the reality of this. "Somatic rituals of resting" represent a last-ditch attempt to understand how mourning (and loss in relation to performance as memorial) acts as a mooring of this project through the un-disciplining of performance towards an ethico-poetics of everyday survival.

Wild Choreography

As a choreographic object, this Lilo research reveals itself "as an alternative site for the understanding of potential instigation and organization of action to reside."[14] William Forsythe's work in *choreographic* objects provides inspiration for Erin Manning's minor gesture, as a proposition for the event through choreographic *agencement* that it self cannot be mapped.[15] "What emerges choreographically is less an organization of bodies than a cartography of incidental tendencies, of force of form. In a sense it is less about the body than about an ecology."[16] Thus wild choreography encourages *agencement* through rhythm and movement reconstructing boundaries between performer and spectator and evoking "the gestural force that opens experience to its potential variation."[17] The minor gesture of this practice might be in the survival of

[13] Sara Jane Bailes, *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure : Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator Repair Service* (New York : Routledge, 2011). Sarah Gorman, "Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure: Forced Entertainment, Goat Island, Elevator Repair Service by Sara Jane Bailes," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 21, no. 4 (2011). 167

[14] Forsythe, 92.

[15] William Forsythe, "Choreographic Objects," in *William Forsythe and the Practice of Choreography : It Starts from Any Point* (New York : Routledge, 2011).

[16] Manning, *Always More Than One : Individuation's Dance*. 126.

[17] Manning, *The Minor Gesture*. 1.

choreography as an act of recovery, within a performance instruction as archive, or in the documentation of an encounter since past. However, the minor gesture might also encompass a failure to survive or thrive? Considering that the minor represents the wildness (the un-rigour) and is open to flux, it also includes the overlooked or the forgotten. How can this be channelled into "living a good life" as mentioned earlier? It is these wild spaces in-between that hold resonance for this research, contributing to the undoing and destabilizing of instrumental structures of theatre and dance in an expanded field of performance studies that borders art and everyday life.

Performance as Memorial

The *Lilo Safely* instructional video is a survival drill located in the ephemeral dark space of the artist's backyard in West Auckland, New Zealand accompanied by the sounds of mosquitos buzzing and the lonely call of the Ruru/Morepork, a native owl. It plays on the interior wall of the Carmo Museum in Chiado, Lisbon, Portugal.[18] The frame of the film draws this work into a space with no boundaries where the guide floats in blackness, hovering within the square of the video frame. It brings into this present context instructions for an action across the Pacific Ocean, as a tracing of a performance since gone. Performance in darkness has the potential to evoke a politics of minor or black light, one that opposes a neo-colonial drive towards enlightenment or luminosity that aims to define, fix or maintain a clear image.[19] In the location of the ruins of the Carmo, Monastery (a memorial to those who lost their lives in the 1755 earthquake) the ephemeral archive of Lilo actions lived on through the re-enactment of the Lilo safely drill, yet also became a live performance memorial in response to those who lay resting in the tombs of the museum.

The LILO represents our last breath – breathing life into other, creating something more than ourselves, a floating bed to give our bodily weight to.

But this is not a life saving device.

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[18] As part of the Carmo, Chiado and the Respublica Litteraria Arts in the Public Sphere exhibition and publication of visual, video and performance work. José Quaresma, ed. *Carmo, Chiado and the Respublica Litteraria, Art in the Public Sphere* (Lisboa, Portugal: Artes na Esfera Pública, 2017).

[19] André Lepecki, "In the Dark," in *Singularities : Dance in the Age of Performance* (London; New York: Routledge, 2016).

Fig. 13-3 *Lilo Safely: Instructional Video* (2016). Photograph by Rob Linkhorn.

We stack the Lilos into a tomb-like structure and walk slowly along the open forecourt of the ruined monastery. The performance mirrors the many horizontal tombs in this place and the ghosts of those lost, float along with inflated .00 PVC. The live performance enacted rafting, resting and recovery, transforming instructions for safety into a live performance archive from what remains (as ruins) long after the initial action/performance is over. Considering the ephemeral nature of live performance and its tendency for disappearance (described by Peggy Phelan as existing always at the vanishing point) and performance as the antithesis of saving, instructions for performance can exist as survival or recovery of performance that can be repeated over and over again.[20] Lepecki suggests that the "will to archive" reveals re-enactments of choreography that do not aim to imitate but that activate "creative (yet virtual) potential already lodged into the artwork itself" and that it is an "unmetaphorical actualization of an artworks afterlife."[21] He goes on to say that "reenactments as 'a will to archive' invest in creative returns precisely in order to find, foreground, and produce (or invent, or 'make,' as Foucault

[20] Peggy Phelan in Rebecca Schneider, "Performance Remains," *Performance Research* 6, no. 2 (2001).
[21] André Lepecki, "The Body as Archive," in *Singularities : Dance in the Age of Performance* (London, [England] ; New York: Routledge, 2016), 139.

proposed) difference."[22] The instructional video similarly aims to activate "a singular mode of politicising, time and economies of authorship via the choreographic activation of the dancer's body as an endlessly creative, transformational archive."[23] One that re-enacts communities of difference through a minor gesture that live far beyond the art-work itself.

The *Lilo Safely* performance transformed over the duration of this project to become a walking/floating performance, choreographic in the movement of bodies through space, ritualistic in the attention given to the tasks and memorialized through the intention of the community action and story-telling. Somatic rituals of resting and recovery entailed small errors of judgement and accidental antics that contributed to the tragicomedy of our futile actions (in regards to saving the planet) while bringing attention to loss and reclamation as an issue for contemporary society. The final affects of this work lie beyond the *Lilo Safely* instructional video as the remains (ruins) of the live performance actions. Yet the archive remains, holding creative, virtual potential for further performance disasters yet to happen, in a co-composition with those who choose to participate.

Fig. 13-4 *Lilo Safely: Live performance* (2017). Carmo Museum, Lisbon, Portugal. Photograph by Becca Wood.

[22] Ibid., 140.
[23] Ibid., 141.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

ATTUNEMENT:
PARTICLE BODIES, PERFORMATIVE APPARATUS

JANINE RANDERSON

Introduction

> You are longitude and latitude, a set of speeds and slownesses between unformed particles, a set of nonsubjectified affects. You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year, a life, (regardless of its duration) – a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm, a pack (regardless of its regularity).[1]

Much of what is happening in our atmosphere is invisible and inaudible and seems only to be revealed by the quantitative measurements of science. Yet live performances can attune us to the unseen pathologies of the atmospheric system or more broadly, our relations with and of the world. The activity of radio waves, air, dancers and Motion Capture (MoCap) data can be sensed in recent performances by Zahra Killeen-Chance and the films of Jennifer Nikolai and Gregory Bennett. Technologies, when positioned as co-performers, foreground the inseparability of the body from the particulate fluxes of our surrounding biosphere.

This chapter probes resonances between contemporary performance-events and dance films, Vilém Flusser's recently translated book, *Into the Universe of Technical Images,* and Rosi Braidotti's sketch of the post-natural body. The porous, coextensive body displaces an older narrative that splits the environment from technologies and the human.[2] Flusser's text was first published thirty-one years ago in a different technological landscape, yet the book remains a formative theory of an embodied digital

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[1] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London and New York: Continuum, 1987), 289.

[2] Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti* (New York, Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2012), 75.

image, focusing less on the spectacular whole, than the image as a swarming, permeable field of relations.[3] While Braidotti advances that non-normative, body-technology hybrids resist the othering tendency of technologies and habitats by unhinging worn-out binaries such as nature/culture and masculine/feminine.[4] Zahra Killeen-Chance's *Breath of Air* series (2015) using radio transmission, and the Motion Capture (MoCap) dance films *Study # 1* (2015) and *Study # 2* (2017) by Gregory Bennett and Jennifer Nikolai, will be positioned as catalysts for attentive relations between atmospheres, dancers and emergent or established technologies.

In 1985 Vilém Flusser wrote:

> Technical images arise in an attempt to consolidate particles around us and in our consciousness on surfaces, to block up the intervals between them […][5]

> We currently live among commandingly outstretched index fingers, and we will blindly follow their instructions unless we realize that our blind following is exactly what they mean. Should we, in fact, realize this (and there are signs we are beginning to do so), technical images could change their significance dramatically. They could then turn into dialogically constructed signposts, signposts in a world that has become absurd for those who have become aware of its absurdity.[6]

In the first citation Flusser connects scientific language from quantum physics to the bits and particles in digital apparatus that push the perceptual limits of our experience. Flusser's sense of the dynamic and intermingled relationship between envisioner and apparatus is set in relation to recent films by Bennett and Nikolai, as examples of digital imaging that shift us beyond the blind acceptance of software's instructions. Flusser's related concern for making the invisible, visible or sensible, can also be laterally linked to a site-specific work from the *Breath of Air* series (2015). In this work, performer Zahra Killeen-Chance moves together with non-human actants; including the air, breath, radio waves and traffic pollution. In these performance-events, information is disintegrated into particles to be transmitted via radio waves or digital bits, and otherwise experimentally reassembled. Performer-generated information is understood here as "in-formation," it comes to our attention in new

[3] Vilém Flusser, *Into the Universe of Technical Images* (Republished Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 3.
[4] Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 105.
[5] Flusser, ibid., 16.
[6] Ibid., 50.

forms that are dialogically constructed.[7]

Breath of Air (Overpass) (2015)

A small group of expectant listeners huddle in a bus stop wearing headphones one morning. They are listening to the sound of breathing, flickering uncertainly at first through the buzzing of radio interference. A breathing body can be heard but it remains unseen for some time. The sounds are dislocated from the visual presence of the performer. After a while there is a figure on the overpass above although still no face is revealed, the body is shrouded and moving very slowly.

Gradually the figure's breath begins to overpower the static noise through the headphones; the effort to move creates a shift in the quality of the breath. The exertion of movement is sensed as the breathing grows louder. The figure inches forward to a point where it pauses. After a lengthy period of slow, rocking movement, an arm finds its way out of a shroud in an insect-like or even part-robotic gesture, seemingly detached from the body. The arm-creature forms slowly into several positions, crooked and observant, like a periscope assessing the waves. The arm then slides away and slowly the figure inches backwards into obscurity behind trees once more at the far end of the overpass.

Fig. 14-1 Zahra Killeen-Chance *Breath of Air (overpass)*, 2015, Wellesley Street, Auckland. Photograph by Ngahuia Harrison.

[7] Erin Manning, *Relationscapes: Movement, Art, Philosophy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: MIT Press, 2009).

Killeen-Chance's *Breath of Air (Overpass)* was performed on a pedestrian bridge above Auckland's Wellesley street beside Albert Park. The audience on the street beneath the bridge listened to the live sound of the performer's breath transmitted by a radio microphone. This performance foregrounds the body in relation with atmosphere, healthy or otherwise, through the process of controlled respiration in minimal movement. Breathing at its most elemental level is an exchange of chemicals and particulate matter that happens invisibly. The body itself is an apparatus that is in constant exchange with atmospheric systems. The making audible of this exchange through headphones and the apparatus of the radio microphone created an intimacy which suggested the ready-to-hand accessibility of the live performer's world through the experience of her breathing. By attending to breath, normally an unconscious biological act, through hearing, we also become aware of our own breath. The human is part of an ecology that is extended by wearable technology as we attune to the world by listening to another.

The quality of Auckland's air, while not an intended subject of this performance, was gathered into this performance event. Air pollution from carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and volatile organic compounds in traffic flow are at their highest in the morning.[8] Can anyone now separate an act of accentuated breathing directly above heavy car traffic from the troubling knowledge of anthropogenic effects on the climatic system? In addition, the meteorological conditions during the performance effect the distance that the radio waves would travel to the listener. On a clear day the radio waves would travel further than on a cloudy or rainy day that would distort the transmission to the listeners. Thus the weather became an active agent in scheduling in the duration of the performance action.

This performance, where the body is concealed but audible through radio, unsettles unitary versions of the gendered or sovereign human subject, unnaturally separated from an environmental outside.[9] Instead an affective relation is developed where an undoing of an autonomous human body is staged. The body does not exist in a sealed vacuum, and further as Donna Haraway has argued, we are only partially human, made of microbial matter, water and the toxins we can only partially expel.[10] Killeen-Chance appears to perform a metamorphosis from the human to creature. For Braidotti, during the process of metamorphosis there is

[8] "Air Quality Report Card." 2016, http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/environmentwaste/pollution/Pages/airquality.aspx

[9] Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 133.

[10] Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

potential for woman, animal, insect or alien other to "systematically displace the boundaries of difference or structural otherness."[11] The limbs and the amplified breath that jaggedly emerge during *Breath of Air (overpass)* seem to convey an augmented body that resists gender spectacle; yet there remains an echo of a familiar movement vocabulary of contemporary dance. When mediated through radio-waves the dancer's distant, though live, body materialises Braidotti's textual construction of a "vital, self-organising, post-naturalist body."[12]

Body-apparatus and choreopolitics

Technical representations of the body, in this case transmitting sound, are, in Flusser's words; "particulate phantoms that can give the world, and us, meaning."[13] An onto-politics, or choreo-politics resides in such works that offer an active engagement with technology, new or old.[14] The performer freely offers up her breath, releasing any anxiety of engulfment by technologies that survey or otherwise control. Braidotti proposes that such contemporary alliance with technology produces, "relations of proximity, familiarity and increased intimacy between humans and the technological universe."[15] She argues for a re-embodiment of the technical after conditions of disembodiment, alienation or estrangement under late capitalism.

For Flusser there is also a sense of technological intimacy where technical representations are read as symptoms of chemical or electronic processes of human touching, either through a keyboard or in this case through a microphone.[16] The intimacy of breath, transmitted by the established medium of radio waves, could be argued to contain traces of a movement signature that is both personal and slightly disturbing in its separation from the body. Yet breath still has the capacity to directly represent a bodily relation in Flusser's terms. However, Flusser sets earlier technical processes of capturing and holding approaching particles or waves from an environment, apart from digital processes. He proposes that four-dimensional modelling moves beyond this direct depiction of an

[11] Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 55.
[12] Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, ii.
[13] Flusser, 32.
[14] André Lepecki, *Dance (Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art*), (London and Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel and MIT Press, 2012).
[15] Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 58.
[16] Flusser, ibid., 34.

environment.[17] In a four-dimensional modelling process such as MoCap, in Flusser's terms at least, there are greater possible results for experimental envisioning.

Certainly the direct trace of Killeen-Chance's breath through radio waves differs from the reassembled capture of the digital outlines of an avatar in Nikolai and Bennett's MoCap process of film-making, particularly as the latter performance is no longer to be experienced live. Animation artist Bennett, and dancer and choreographer Nikolai, are concerned with the extent to which a movement signature can be detected in the movements of an individual dancer after the processing of data in technical images. *Study #1* is a MoCap film, described as a co-choreography by the makers. The work was generated from a series of studio improvisations in the MoCap studio at Auckland University of Technology (AUT). Nikolai and Bennett collaborate on the data capture process of the moving body, the visualization of movement as linear outlines on a black ground, and in their post-production editing decisions. In the entertainment industry, MoCap data is conventionally gathered from performers' movements and used to animate digital characters for narrative animation, visual effects and gaming. This process records only the movements of the performer as data, rather than their indexical form as happens with live action recording.

Disturbances occur in the assignment of gender when the female body of the dancer is obscured, as in *Breath of Air (Overpass*), or disintegrated and reassembled in the technical image, (*Study #1)*. The MoCap dancer's body enters a digital universe that, according to Braidotti, "declares gender redundant," yet paradoxically the swarms of ungendered particles are too often reassembled into bodies that conform to masculinist Hollywood tropes in cinema.[18] In gaming, the digitally-captured body is frequently arbitrarily separated from its context and represented as a hypervisible, sexualized female avatar. Although there may be traces of gender in Nikolai and Killeen-Chance's works they are indefinite, as opposed to the regimes of hyper-sexualization in the commercial domain of digital representation.

Deleuze's position in *Postscript on the Societies of Control* (1992) extends the Foucauldian analysis of the disciplinary power of the State over the body, to the far-reaching control of the body in the conditions of advanced capitalism. This control includes the subjugation of the non-human and the ill-treatment of atmosphere. Deleuze suggests that societies

[17] Ibid., 48.
[18] Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 79.

of control also operate through the computer through the "technological mutations of capitalism."[19] He continues, in reference to new societies of control via computing; "Control is short term and of rapid rates of turn-over, but also continuous and without limit […]."[20] There are some parallels to the system of MoCap and the continuous re-use of "captured" information as an endless source of creative capital. Intensive networks of power operate in the digital domain through software licensing and hierarchies of accessibility.[21] In *Study #1,* after capture of the live dancer's movements, a surrogate emerges through which we now relate to the digital body, a body that we might assume to be more subject to regimes of control.

Yet when Nikolai and Bennett experiment with dance and MoCap, or Killeen-Chance conceals the body so hearing is the pre-eminent sense, I suggest that the performers resist the control mechanisms of the entertainment industry and the desire for the hyper-realist, intensely-visual body. Rather, they dissolve the body into resonant data that disperses and then re-gathers; recognizing our particulate and contingent nature as gendered human beings. Braidotti situates the cyborg figure as a form of resistance to the twin corollaries of commodification and consumerism. She challenges the negative trend to represent relations between humans and machines "in the mode of hyped up, neo-gothic horror."[22] To counter this frequently-voiced anxiety, she writes that "… far from abolishing or replacing the body, new technologies strengthen the corporeal structure of both humans and machines and their interconnection."[23] Nikolai also proposes that their MoCap process offers a critique of the post-industrial mechanisation of the live performer in commercial applications. She suggests that as a dancer, she retains agency by "sharing the making process not only with the co-choreographer [Bennett] but with the data from her process-making."[24] Nikolai regards her work as a collaboration between the apparatus of production and the co-animators in an alternative model of film production.

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[19] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control**,"** *October* 59 (1992): 6.
[20] Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control**,"** 6.
[21] Scott Lash, *Intensive Culture: social theory, religion and contemporary capitalism* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2010).
[22] Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 54-55.
[23] Ibid., 57.
[24] Jennifer Nikolai, "The Camera-Dancer: A Dyadic Approach to Improvisation," *The International Journal of Screendance* 6 (2016): 7.

Fig. 14-2 Jennifer Nikolai and Greg Bennett, *Still from Study #1,* 2015.

Study #1 (2015)

When I watch *Study # 1,* I see a body in dynamic relation with the environment at a quantum level; with no firm division between its edges and the environmental outside. The tessellated figure operates in an abstract space, empty of the everyday features of the world. Yet it contains an experiential adherence to physical reality by making visible the ripple of effects as a human body passes through the atmosphere. We sense the in-between flows of data, experience and information that goes into the represented movements of a dancer. Performance with MoCap systems has the potential to redress a deficit in representation by expressing the invisible flows beyond the edges of the body.

While immersed in the film, I attune to the tumultuous atmosphere that we live in; "as ever-expanding, yet spasmodic, waves of change, which engender the simultaneous occurrence of contradictory effects."[25] The scattered swirl of dots and slashes, that may be taken to be swirling particles of air vibrating around the dancer in response to movement, is in fact generated by a computer algorithm; a "dynamic cloth simulation" that follows the dancer's movement, with no origin in the physical world.[26]

[25] Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002, 1.

[26] Jennifer Nikolai and Greg Bennett, "Stillness, breath and the spine - Dance performance enhancement catalysed by the interplay between 3D motion capture

The artificial cloth form was tethered to the dancing figure that is the basis of the data set and circulates around the figure. A sense of the ecological relation between human and atmosphere in vibrating rhythms of air is in fact produced automatically within the apparatus of computer hardware and software. The movements of both atmosphere (represented by the algorithm of the fabric) and the body itself become informational patterns.

However, the agency of the computer scarcely relieves the co-choreographers from a close relationship with the universe of particles, activated through the performance of fingers on the keys, in digital image-making. Flusser suggests that the envisioner's role is to, "seduce the automatic apparatus into making something that is improbable within its' programme." They press buttons, to cite Flusser, "to coax improbable things from the whirring particle universe that the apparatus is calculating."[27] This other side (sometimes called the back-end of production) where fingers dance over keys is the unacknowledged, more sedentary, but nonetheless critical part of the performance of MoCap. Flusser suggests that fingers send the electrical charge that generates "a miracle of calculation followed by computation, the miracles to which technical images owe their existence."[28] The resulting film is generated from a dancer's improvised movement, captured as data and then reproduced through an algorithm, reinforcing Bennett and Nikolai's claim to collaborate with technology.

technology in a collaborative improvisational choreographic process," *Performance Enhancement & Health* 4, (2015): 62.

[27] Flusser, 37.

[28] Ibid., 24.

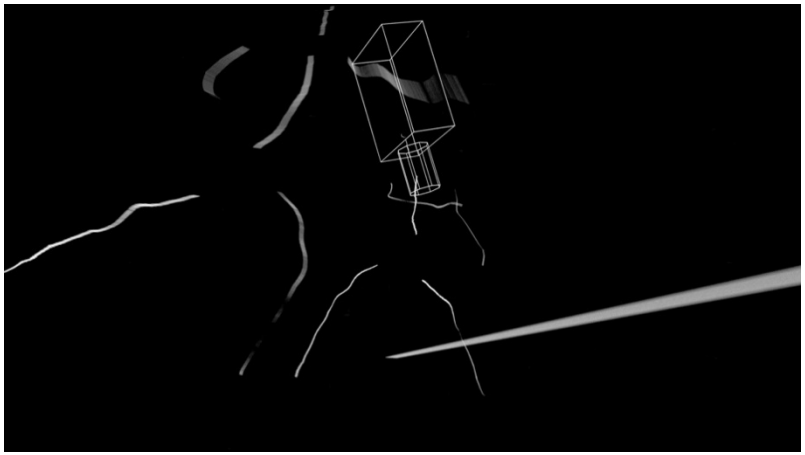

Fig. 14-3 Jennifer Nikolai and Greg Bennett, *Still from Study #2,* 2016.

Study #2 (2017)

Bennett and Nikolai's collaboration has continued into the recently completed *Study #2*. The camera itself is now fixed onto the dancer's body as a catalyst for capturing the movement. The invisible apparatus of the camera in *Study #1* is now represented as a drawn camera that becomes a part of the dancer. A camera is virtually tethered to markers on the digital dancers' bodies. This is not a monstrous, unwieldly cyborg but a playful interaction of human and machine. For Nikolai and Bennett, the camera apparatus occupies various positions of agency. In a recent article they state, "These are the cameras that we hold and shoot. They improvise with us as subjects and objects."[29] When the films are completed the audience becomes another attuning agent to the movement of the screen figures in the comfortable relation between ourselves and a cinema screen, data projection or television. Such performance eludes capture, with its military-industrialist associations.

In Nikolai's statement, that obliterates the perceived boundary between subject and object, we recall the radical implications of Donna Harraway's "cyborg" where human beings and technology become fully coextensive. Haraway writes of her cyborg, "It is not clear who makes and who is made in the relation between human and machine. […] there is no formal, ontological separation in our formal knowledge of machine and organism,

[29] Nikolai, "The Camera-Dancer: A Dyadic Approach to Improvisation," 143

of technical and organic."[30] Similarly when we attune to the inner world in Killeen-Chance's performance through our ears, technologies-bodies-respiration coalesce.

Attunement

The relational affects generated through signal systems in performance, whether it be through sound or through MoCap, is proposed as an attunement of a sort. The audience and performer's bodies become attuned through local movements and differential speeds and through heightened attention to air and our surroundings, despite the concealment or fragmentation of the performer's body. Attunement in psychobiology describes the attachment bond between mother and child, where a reciprocal attentiveness to each other emerges. As we become more attuned to each other and our living world, a greater sense of harmony emerges between ourselves and our environment, referred to in the hallucinatory jargon of the 1960s as "being on the same wavelength."[31] Similarly in performance events the audience becomes attentive to the non-human biota conjured by the movements and sounds of another's body.

Attunement is also a concept that exists in literature on somatic practices. For instance, Shigenori Nagatomo describes attunement as a propositional form of relations between two or more entities where x is attuned to y, where favourable conditions for attunement emerge. For attunement to occur there must also be a quality that Nagatomo calls "living ambiance," comprising of animate and inanimate entities in a somatic mode of engagement. In experiential moments of "coming-togetherness" a personal body unites with the living ambiance of their surroundings.[32]

Kinaesthetic empathy is a more familiar term for describing Nagatomo's "coming togetherness" or attunement to a body or object in movement. Yet only a few writers include an environmental sense of "living ambiance" in the term kinesthetic empathy. I first came to kinesthetic empathy through writings of New Zealand film-maker and kinetic sculptor Len Lye. Lye opened the notion of kinesthetic empathy to our relations

[30] Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 35.

[31] Tiffany Field, "Attachment as Psychobiological Attunement: Being on the Same Wavelength," *The Psychobiology of Attachment and Separation*, ed. Martin Reite and Tiffany Field (Orlando Florida: Academic Press, 2012), 441.

[32] Shigenori Nagatomo, *Attunement through the body.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992, 196-198.

with the natural world, and situated the human as part of this world, rather than hierarchically separated. His oeuvre is important to *Study #1* and *Study #2,* as the makers profess a strong connection to Lye's concern for movement and the particulate nature of our presence in the world.[33] Lye's bodily empathy is produced through abstracted "figures of motion" in kinetic sculptures and films such as *Particles in Space* (1966); where the apparatus stands in for human connection to the quantum energetic flows through an embodied resonance. He regarded his motion sculpture and films as "extending the infinite variety of fundamental patterns of movement" through empathy with the natural world in either stillness or motion.[34] He referred to his works as "choreographies." In *Rainbow Dance* (1936) Lye set his live action dancing figures in a Gasparcolour world of painted and stencilled effects that trailed spiralling movements of passage through the film frame.

Contemporary kinetic sculptor Laura Woodward suggests that there is a sense of co-agency with non-human entities in Lye's kinetic work.[35] Lye's notion of the "old brain" refers to a pre-historic, genetic body programming that operates outside of semiotic sensibilities. In other words, a sense of attunement to the living ambiance around us. Choreographer Michael Parmenter, also writing on Lye, proposes that to be empathetic suggests that we change our spatial position to acknowledge other positions in the world. Parmenter speculates that "movement for Lye [was] the expression of a primordial unity of the body and the world, rather than a more recent sense of dislocation."[36] Bennett and Nikolai also link *Study #1* to Canadian film-maker Norman McLaren who, like Lye, used the materiality of the film strip in eccentric ways to create energetic movement in the whole film frame.

Lye's feeling for co-agency with technical materials is present when Nikolai describes the camera as a co-performer or a "camera dancer." A constant repositioning of the audience attuned to a mobile camera is

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[33] Randerson, Janine, Nikolai, Jennifer and Bennett, Greg, Comment on Study #1 and #2, AUT University. June 1 2016.

[34] Len Lye, "Tangible Motion Sculpture," *Art Journal* 20 (1961): 226.

[35] Laura Woodward, "The Somatic in Kinetic Sculpture: from Len Lye to an introverted kinetic sculpture (via Donna Haraway's cyborg." *Moving Imagination Explorations of Gesture and Inner Movement*, edited by Helen De Preester, Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamin's Publishing Company, 2013: 176.

[36] Michael Parmenter, "Body English: Kinesthetic empathy, dance and the art of Len Lye." In *Moving Imagination Explorations of Gesture and Inner Movement*, ed. Helen De Preester. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamin's Publishing Company, 2013, 152.

suggested in the mobile virtual camera in *Study #1* and *Study #2*. Of the making process Nikolai writes, "The *camera-dancer* became an observer, a participant, a partner, and an instigator, distinct from the conventional camera as archival machine in performance and rehearsal."[37] Rather than a single point perspective of the camera in motion, the multi-camera viewpoints gather in numerical data from the performer, referred to in MoCap terminology as the Omniscient Frame.[38] *Study #1* begins with a traditional frontal perspective but as the film progresses multi-dimensional viewpoints are activated. Nikolai sees MoCap as a process that frees the dancer from the limitations of facing forwards in traditional performance. According to Nikolai, "… the Omniscient Frame stems from the lack of a proscenium-like orientation to the subject, as the array of cameras within the capture volume are not fixed and not determined by shot type."[39]

Killeen-Chance also avoids the frontal view of the body. In *Breath of Air (Overpass)* she is viewed obliquely in the distance from angles below or alongside the bridge. The sound signals of breath seem to come from an elsewhere rather than from the body itself. The dancing figure in *Study # 1* is similarly de-subjectified, known only through movement, rather than through other signs of character. We attune to this figure as we attune to Killeen-Chance's rhythms of breath driven movement. The figures become longitude and latitude, a data set of speeds and slownesses between unformed particles, a set of nonsubjectified affects, to return to Deleuze and Guattari's proposition at the opening of this chapter.

Flusser's description of technical images as "mosaics of particles" in a "post-historical, dimensionless state" corresponds to a process of undoing the physical reality of a dancer's form for later re-assemblage in digital space.[40] Human camera operators are released from duty and the delightful possibility of the peripatetic virtual camera, operating from formerly impossible angles is opened. The MoCap figure in gaming or animation often appears to have a mass and solidity that belies its origins as a mesh of numerical data. In contrast, in *Study #1* and *Study #2*, the agitated outlines of the body are fragmented; there is passage between the inside and the outside in a constant flux. In the swarm of particles in space, and in the oscillating movement of the virtual camera, the granular structure of both the image and the physical reality of objects at the quantum level of particulate matter become apparent. The disintegratation of the dancer's

[37] Nikolai, "The Camera-Dancer: A Dyadic Approach to Improvisation," 143.
[38] Matt Delbridge, *Motion Capture in Performance: An Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.
[39] Nikolai, "The Camera-Dancer: A Dyadic Approach to Improvisation," 136.
[40] Flusser, 2.

movement and later re-gathering as a recognizable image to be experienced once more is the task of the post-production figuration. Flusser describes the machine operator as an "envisioner" who sees the potential in parts. Still later our eye, as audience, reconnects these fragments and their atmospheric trails. Braidotti's celebration of a process ontology that privileges change and motion over stability resonates with the intensive interchange of camera, dancer, envisioner and audience.

In the post-production, "envisioning" phase, Nikolai comments that she no longer identifies with the data avatar as herself; there is a digital presence but she now refers to the body on screen as an "it."[41] The dissolution of the subject/object and gender division in such technology-based performance, in favour of attunement to the elements, suggests a becoming-elementary, -cellular, -molecular, to return to Deleuzean language. Flusser's envisioning is a symbiotic action between multiple elements of the human, apparatus and atmosphere. In his "infinitesimal universe of particles," one press of the keyboard can create gigantic effects through the activity of electrons that ignite "like lightning."[42] In 1987, two years after Flusser wrote of a universe of technical images, Deleuze and Guattari described a universe of micro-perceptions, where we might become: "progressively more molecular in a kind of cosmic lapping through which the inaudible makes itself heard and the imperceptible appears as such: no longer the songbird but the sound molecule." In this world of symbiotic multiplicities lies the potential to tie together; "animals, plants, micro-organisms, mad particles, a whole galaxy."[43]

Conclusion

On envisioning digital forms, Flusser reflects that:

> the situation disintegrates into a swarm of particles and quanta, and the writing subject into a swarm of bits and bytes, moments of decision, and molecules of action. What remains are particles without dimension that can be neither grasped nor represented nor understood.[44]

This statement contains a sense of a failure of representative process, while Braidotti deepens the 1980s propositions of Flusser, Deleuze and

[41] Randerson, Nikolai and Bennett, Comment on *Study* #1 and #2, AUT University. June 1 2016.
[42] Flusser, 23.
[43] Deleuze and Guattari, 274-275.
[44] Flusser, 10.

Guattari, and even Haraway, to suggest that machine-body co-extensivities can increase understanding, strengthen and reconfigure environmental and gender relations. The post-naturalist body challenges the formerly demoted categories of "woman" and "nature;" and re-orientates these groupings more broadly. For Braidotti, aleatory movement implies an ethics of qualitative transformation and a politics of complexity and affirmation.[45] In Killeen-Chance's choreography and in Bennett and Nikolai's films, we become conscious of the apparatus of sensory stimuli and our embeddedness in it. The speed of vibrating particles or the interference of breath through sound waves blasts us with an awareness of the contingent nature of all that lives.[46]

In the porous edges between the performing body, environmental site and the particle universe of technical images, I have found the potential for empathetic attunement. With Flusser, the dance of fingers over the keyboard as well as the virtual camera, software, radio waves and live performer are recognized as co-agents in technical performances. In radio and digital processes composed of minute interactions lies an opportunity to unsettle the opposition between who makes, who receives and how our living ambiance is constructed. When we carefully attend to the formerly demoted technologies and environments in which the human and machinic operate, we intensify our inner and outer gaze at once. To see the swirl of data in Bennett and Nikolai's films or to listen to the radio transmission of a distant performer's breath attunes us to the chaos of our inner world and exterior meteorology. Coming-togetherness through attunement and ecological care shakes-off the inertia of neo-liberal self-interest.

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[45] Braidotti, *Nomadic Theory*, 29.
[46] Ibid., 361.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE CARPET

RHEA SPEIGHTS

The following is a dialogue between two parts of myself. I call these parts "Dance Rhea" and "Cinema Rhea" because they represent the creative disciplines that I have studied formally and, for that reason, seem to "speak the loudest" when I create. Making art is not a discipline-specific practice for me, but my history with these forms has built patterns of working that are both obvious and subterranean. I use the structure of conversation as a medium for the interplay of these two drives in order to deconstruct those patterns and generate methods for making new art.

Cinema Rhea: Are you getting tired, Rhea?

Dance Rhea: I'm fine. What do you mean? ...wait, wha wha. What are you doing?

Cinema Rhea: I'm just checkin'. You're getting older; maybe you're getting tired. I don't get tired. I could do this over and over, on a loop. Maybe forever. I can't get tired.

Dance Rhea: That wasn't true the first time you said it.

Cinema Rhea: Oh, c'mon. You could die right now.[1] Your mortality is exciting. The most exciting thing that can happen to me is an electrical power failure.

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[1] Krist Gruijthuijsen and Kate Strain have an ongoing web project that "archives, collects and collates instances of unexpected deaths that have occurred during moments of performance in the public domain." This project can be found at http://www.centrefordyingonstage.com/

Dance Rhea: Are you here to give counter-examples? You know my intention is to propose we are the same, that we are interchangeable, perhaps that you are me and I am you. And you already want to contradict me?

Cinema Rhea: I'm just offering my help. Me, up here, while you're down there – it seems redundant, and I don't think you should ignore these points.[2]

Dance Rhea: I'm hardly ignoring them.

Cinema Rhea: Ok then, what about my ability to use freeze frame, copy/paste repetition, close-ups, jump cuts. You can't do those things. Not exactly.[3]

Dance Rhea: Alright, well first, if you think our shared presence is a redundancy, then you're contradicting yourself. Second, look, is your argument that we cannot be the same discipline because our materials are different? Listen, every dancing body is different. Do you want to state that *each dancer* is a distinct discipline?

Cinema Rhea: Ichinin-ippa? One dancer, one school?

Dance Rhea: Oh, from Butoh, ok-ok. Well, yes, on one hand we could slice up dance into millions of distinct disciplines, one for each dancer. And, perhaps for cinema, we could separate work by camera, by editing program…at the very least, you should drop the term "cinema" and decide if you are film or video. So what's it going to be for you?

Cinema Rhea: No, ok, I get it. I understand your question. In

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[2] Andre Lepecki addresses the politics of power between "vertical" and "horizontal" art in "Toppling dance: the making of space in Trisha Brown and La Ribot," Chapter 4 of *Exhausting Dance* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 65-86. Rudolf Arnheim breaks down what he sees as practical differences between "vertical" and "horizontal" art, identifying vertical art as the "realm of visual contemplation, whereas the horizontal is the realm of activity," in *The Power of the Center: A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 12-14.

[3] In a private conversation with Alla Kovgan on September 4, 2014, she made a point to distinguish between the exact repetition of a movement available through copy and paste in a video editing program and how the human body naturally changes each execution of a movement when it practices repetition.

subdividing the discipline of cinema, it makes the most sense to me to separate work by production-value, by the size of the budget, by the social and economic context within which the work was made. From this perspective, video might often be in a different sub-discipline than film because it is less expensive, but other aspects of the process can make that distinction moot. I want to include all of it under the term "cinema;" what you shoot on your phone and whatever blockbuster is playing at the movieplex. I use the term "cinema" because its root means "kinetic" and the movement of the picture, or rather, the durational component of the image, is central to the form.

Dance Rhea: How does dance not fit that definition?

Cinema Rhea: There is no screen, no frame. Dance is not a picture, it's a person.

Dance Rhea: Of course there's a frame. I feel like you are near to making my argument for me.

Cinema Rhea: Why use the word "discipline" if everything is included?

Dance Rhea: Because the word has a history! A history of division. And by morphing that meaning into one of inclusion, we are making a critical statement about division!

Cinema Rhea: Hahahaha! So much shouting. Are you tired now?

Dance Rhea: To be honest, using language in a context where words themselves isolate thoughts and sentences rely on linear thinking, it is frustrating to me.

Cinema Rhea: Take a breath, Rhea, and then tell me why it doesn't matter if the durational image is a picture or a person.

Dance Rhea: The audience reads according to their own physical experience.[4] So we, as artists, have different abilities and limitations, and the audience's expectations are built on their own experiences with

[4] Rudolf Arnheim discusses the kinesthetic and visual effects of gravity on a person and on a person's perception of art in *The Power of the Centre* (1982), 10-12.

gravity, flexibility, exhaustion, moving through time and space.

Cinema Rhea: So am I the dancing body or is the entire image the dancing body?

Dance Rhea: Well, there is the definition of dance as gesture.[5] Susanne Langer uses this definition to make a distinction between dance and cinema, but I think the idea of "dance as gesture" is a bridge between the two.[6] Her position is that gesture indicates the spontaneity of a person's body as it experiences being alive and thinking.[7]

Cinema Rhea: Ah, and in cinema the gesture is the movement of the eye, the visual experience of being alive and thinking?

Dance Rhea: Right, so that would make the entire image the dancing body, everything in the frame. But, I also think the definition of "dance as gesture" is reductionist. Because dance isn't just a body out of context. That body interacts with the space and shapes the space; it frames the space.

Cinema Rhea: So maybe dance and cinema do both, they are both gestures of the body and they create the space around that body.

Dance Rhea: Yeah, as gesture, dance and cinema provide a somatic experience. Cinema gives sight, and choreography gives physical action. I'm going to bring up this neuroscience theory of mirror-neurons and say that viewing a live body moving through space activates the bodies of the viewers similarly enough to say that dance choreographs the viewer, even when the audience is seated.[8]

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[5] Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), 174.
[6] Ibid., 72.
[7] Ibid., 174-175.
[8] There are several sources that adequately explain the concept of "mirror-neurons," for example Antonio Damasio's *Self Comes to Mind: Constructing the Conscious Brain* (New York: Random House, 2010), 109-112.

Cinema Rhea: [makes face] Oh dear, like John Martin's explanation of metakinesis?[9]

Dance Rhea: [makes same face] I think we can avoid mentioning him. In fact, I mean, maybe it's the ephemerality of dance that inclines me away from these bricks you call references. What are we building when we repeat these names over and over?

Cinema Rhea: Do you want to bring feminist theory into this conversation? I suppose your study of feminist film theory is influential to your thinking.

Dance Rhea: More than my embodied experience?! I'll admit that reading Laura Mulvey, Linda Williams, Vivian Sobchack is exciting to me as a dancer. But I think reading feels like a conversation. My past experience and my patterns of thought are so involved in the practice of reading that I think it is unlikely anyone can adequately distinguish their interpretation from the intention of the author. While some people make entire careers building walls of words defending their interpretations as definitive, I would rather work towards a system where the idea of thinking is more fluid and the claim to own ideas is a funny joke.

Cinema Rhea: So how do you want to address authorship?

Dance Rhea: This project is titled "The Carpet." I made it. And I'm Rhea Speights.

Cinema Rhea: We are claiming responsibility for this particular entity, for the construction of it, for what it contains and excludes, but how do we address the problem of originality? How do we express our disbelief in the concept of originality and our frustration with the expectation to cite those who have been cited as the owners or makers of a particular thought?

Dance Rhea: Let's drop some names! Let's include our friends too. And let's recognize and embrace haphazardness as a methodology. Does that work for you?

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[9] John Martin, "Metakinesis," in *What is Dance?*, eds. Roger Copeland and Marshal Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 23-28.

Cinema Rhea: So much.

[Pause]

Dance Rhea: Alright. To be honest, my ability to approach dance from a feminist perspective developed more deeply by being in conversation with you. Not necessarily because of the scholarly theory that you introduced to my dance thinking, but the practice of studying another discipline with the same level of seriousness revealed the arbitrariness of the rules as they had been taught to me in both disciplines. "Arbitrariness" is not the right word; it's not accurate enough. Um, the structures of power that created these specific rules.

Cinema Rhea: We should address how we define each of these disciplines.

Dance Rhea: Sure, the history of our engagement with the forms provides the stuff that gives these words meaning. My early experiences with dance were in ballet. And ballet, for me, is defined by the Romantic period. I know some people want to equate ballet with the aristocracy, and that history certainly lingers, but as a young person practicing ballet, I was drawn to the ethereal quality of pointe-work and the range of fantastic beings in the romantic narratives. As a young person who felt she had to follow the rules, I loved *Giselle* because I thought the ballet vilified men and the ruling class.[10]

Cinema Rhea: Did you fall asleep before the end?

Dance Rhea: Giselle is the heroine! What does it matter that she's saving the life of a deceitful aristocrat? By forgiving Prince Albrecht, she is subverting the rules of another system of oppression. Look, these women in the graveyard are doomed not just to kill the men who enter, but to chase them night after night. You would hope that, in death, they are finally free of an existence dependent on men, but Myrtha's need for revenge keeps these women from becoming self-realized. Giselle's forgiveness frees them. But that's the end of the ballet so there's no example of women existing outside of the context of their relationship to men. For me, that's ballet. And it was my introduction to dance.

[10] For a full summary of the plot of *Giselle*, see George Balanchine's *101 Stories of the Great Ballets* (New York: Random House, 1989), 193-209.

Geometric stage patterns, movement tied to music and narrative, allegro, the fantastic, and an almost imperceptible subversion of the status quo.

Cinema Rhea: Yeah, the idea of being an artist felt, at that age, like an experiment in ways of being in the world. We didn't know if anything we imagined was possible.

Dance Rhea: Damn, I believed in magic then. Sometimes, I still do.

Cinema Rhea: And that's the appeal of cinema, isn't it? Even the Lumière brothers' documentation of feeding a baby or workers exiting a factory could change the size of reality and reshape space. This place in Lyon, France, could suddenly also be anywhere else in the world. I said so many thank-yous when I was first shown Georges Méliès and Maya Deren. And Buñuel and Dali's *Un Chien Andalou*.

Dance Rhea: Is it weird to say that when Giselle died, cinema was born? I don't really even know what I mean by that.

Cinema Rhea: Do you mean because when romanticism died, surrealism was born? Or maybe that the invention of cinema arrested the development of ballet? Of dance? Hmm, maybe when cinema was born it utilized thinking that had been developed by dance.

Dance Rhea: No, I think I mean it more personally.

Cinema Rhea: One of us had mentioned that the study of both disciplines altered our approach to each of them. The expectations built into the term "ballet" correlate to the cinematic expectations created by the habits of Hollywood. For all of the magical possibilities of cinema, the guiding principle seemed to be the likeness of reality, or to hide the inherent artifice of cinema. It was our background in dance and love of the fantastic that empowered us to reject that model.

Dance Rhea: Yeah, I realized that what I said I thought was dance was not what I was really thinking. Just because my dance practice had been predominantly in ballet, doesn't mean I didn't know who Merce Cunningham was! And I was starting to practice improvisation, which made clearer to me what dance-thinking was.

Cinema Rhea: So what is it?

Dance Rhea: For one thing, I am constantly assessing the possibilities. When I worked with rules and expectations, my choices seemed inevitable. I could come up with several ideas, but one idea was more right than the others. I can't completely remove all personal and societal expectations for dance when I'm composing, but when I feel less bound to expectation, then I can find out what happens when I think and move in a way that I might have deemed "wrong" in the other context.[11] By making one of the many possible "wrong" choices or unlikely choices, I am opening the door to a dance that would not have been. You know, as each choice that I make influences the next question, the next choice.

Cinema Rhea: Oh! That makes me think about what Pier Pasolini wrote in The "Cinema of Poetry."[12] When he's talking about walking down the street and reading the things that he sees, he says that their meanings are raw. Ben Lawton and Louise Barnett's translation is that they "speak brutally."[13] I think he's saying that these are concrete objects and actions but their meanings cannot be found in a "dictionary of images," the images are pulled from a chaos of images and read as if they have specific meanings, though their possible meanings are infinite.[14]

Dance Rhea: Yes! This idea of creating meaning out of chaos. He says that what the filmmaker does is invent grammatically and aesthetically, and that we all do this as we move through life, we are making meaning by imagining a sort of conversation with everything we see. Whether I'm making a video sequence or a choreographic sequence, the audience will read it through a grammar of seeing and moving, a practice that they've already developed individually.

Cinema Rhea: And each of our personal grammars is different but because we know how to construct our own, we can read another's linguistic thinking too.

Dance Rhea: WHAT? I'm surprised you would sound so confident to say "we can read…" Can we?

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[11] Danielle Goldman, *I Want to Be Ready: Improvised Dance as a Practice of Freedom* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).
[12] Pier Pasolini, The "Cinema of Poetry" in *Heretical Empiricism*, trans. Ben Lawton and Louise K. Barnett (Washington DC: New Academia Publishing, 2005), 167-186.
[13] Ibid., 168.
[14] Ibid., 169.

Cinema Rhea: Yeah, we absolutely can, as well as we can understand written and spoken language. How ever many people read our conversation, their interpretations will each be different, but still we call what they're doing 'reading.'

Right? Right?

Rudolf Arnheim says that visual perception is visual thinking. Perceiving is not a passive act of reception; it is selecting, directing attention, focusing vision, following, and scanning.[15] It follows that kinaesthetic perception is kinaesthetic thinking. Do artists have a heightened sense of perception? Do they read multiple grammars simultaneously? Are they more empathetic to the possible range of grammars out there? Maybe, but maybe not. Some artists are dedicated to the rules they have learned in school or observed in their favourite artists or have created for themselves. By Arnheim's definition, perceiving and thinking are acts of exclusion. But I wonder if it's possible to be more inclusive in the act of thinking, rather than less. Is that what Oceanic Thinking is? I haven't fully grasped that concept yet. Earlier I thought I might revive romanticism and update it to be more inclusive, to actually be democratic, but maybe romanticism really is dead now.[16]

Dance Rhea: I'm not sure how I can respond to all that. Should I point out that in this project, we have multiplied ourselves?

Cinema Rhea: Multiplication through division? And only by 2.

Dance Rhea: Well, Maryanne Wolf has written a book that anticipates a futurity where the nature of word-reading has changed because of access to "massive amounts of information…instantaneously."[17] Is that what you're hoping for?

Cinema Rhea: I'm not sure I'm hoping for anything. But I operate in the world by asking questions and looking for multiplicity in the answers because I am curious about what else is possible, beyond my current expectations.

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[15] Rudolf Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1997), 14.
[16] In 1960, Max Ernst painted *Almost Dead Romanticism.*
[17] Maryanne Wolf, *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 16.

Dance Rhea: Ok, so what question do we want to address in this project?

Cinema Rhea: We want to ask if the distinction between dance and cinema could be erased, if they could be considered a single discipline. And we thought we'd use the essay film as a point of comparison to see if there might be such a thing as essayistic dance, to coin an awkward term.

Dance Rhea: And what is this dialogue-project we are working on right now?

Cinema Rhea: Ha, well, I thought this was an essayistic dance.

Dance Rhea: I don't think that is what I meant when I brought up this idea, but I'll accept it as a submission for the canon. Why is our conversation not an essay film?

Cinema Rhea: Maybe it is. If dance and film are the same discipline, then isn't it true that this project would be both an essay film and an essayistic dance? The definition of the essay film seems to be up for discussion. Nora Alter says the essay film is not a genre. Laura Rascaroli says the form is "erratic."[18] Perhaps there's room for *The Carpet* to be categorized as an essay film. On the other end of this discussion is Timothy Corrigan with a formula for defining the essay film:

Dance Rhea: A formula? Like A + B = C?

Cinema Rhea: Yup. He says that the essay film is (1) "a testing of expressive subjectivity through (2) experiential encounters in a public arena, (3) the product of which becomes the figuration of thinking or thought as a cinematic address and spectatorial response."[19]

Dance Rhea: What?

Cinema Rhea: Basically he requires that the author is visible in explicit or implicit ways, and her personal experience in the world is

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[18] Laura Rascaroli, "The Essay Film: Problems, Definitions, Textual Commitments" in *Framework* 49, No. 2 (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2008), 24-47.

[19] Timothy Corrigan, *The Essay Film: From Montaigne, After Marker* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 30.

expressed to an audience through the medium of cinema.

Dance Rhea: Does he say what he means by "cinema?"

Cinema Rhea: I think he takes that definition for granted. When I think about the essay film, I include works like Chris Marker's *Sans Soleil*, Trinh Minh-Ha's *Reassemblage*, Chantal Akerman's *News From Home*. In 2007, Jean-Pierre Gorin curated 60 works that he recognized as being important to the genre or to the definition of the genre.[20] Every one of Gorin's 60 exists in either film or video form. The moving image might be central to its definition.

Dance Rhea: So when we turn the page…

Cinema Rhea: You're being hyperbolic, but, fine, I'll accept flipbooks as nominations.

Dance Rhea: No, I mean like just a regular book.

Cinema Rhea: Then, I think you are taking this thought-experiment too far. Theodor Adorno says the written essay form is like a carpet, but I'm not going to go so far as to categorize carpets as essays.[21]

Dance Rhea: That's very narrow of you.

Cinema Rhea: Should we address Christopher Alexander's prediction that 21st century art would be inspired by early Turkish carpets?

Dance Rhea: You want to distract me from my point. That's fine. I have a difficult time believing that Christopher Alexander is serious when he says you can measure the "goodness" of a carpet by its density of symmetries.[22] I guess there is a corresponding statement from Adorno's comparison of the essay form to a carpet, "the fruitfulness of the thoughts

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[20] *The Way of the Termite: The Essay in Cinema 1909-2004*. The Austrian Film Museum, Film Program Archive, October 2007. https://www.filmmuseum.at

[21] Theodor Adorno, "The Essay as Form," trans. Bob Hullot-Kentor and Frederic Will, *New German Critique*, No. 32 (New German Critique, 1984), 160.

[22] Christopher Alexander, *A Foreshadowing of 21st Century Art: The Color and Geometry of Very Early Turkish Carpets* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 49.

depends on the density of [its] texture."[23] But Alexander uses the word "goodness" and he sounds ridiculous. It reminds me of Marius Petipa on his deathbed bemoaning the choreographers who weren't using symmetry as much as he had.[24] Or Doris Humphrey equating symmetry with safety and security.[25]

Cinema Rhea: But you like the idea of multiple entry points. And when Alexander is talking about the density of these symmetrical shapes, doesn't he use the word "centres?" Isn't he proposing that art have not one centre, but as many centres as possible? That the beauty of a work is in the multiplicity of the experiences it offers.

Dance Rhea: True. My real objection is to his tone, his certainty. The words almost sound biblical, like he's stating commandments. What I really like about Alexander's carpets is how they have deteriorated over the centuries. Time has undone their symmetries. Maybe these changes let us know that the carpets are a dance.

Cinema Rhea: Ok fine. Maybe carpets are dance. Perhaps carpets are cinema. I simply don't think I'm in a position to say that carpets are essays. I do think you will appreciate what Jean-Pierre Gorin says about the essay film being "the meandering of an intelligence that tries to multiply the entries and exits into the material it has elected. It is surplus, drifts, ruptures, ellipses, and double-backs. It is, in a word, thought, but because it is film it is thought that turns to emotion and back to thought. It flirts with genres… It flirts with a range of aesthetics… It is both in form and content, unruliness itself."[26]

Dance Rhea: I do love almost every word of that; it sounds like what I think is happening when I compose and perform dance. I think it sounds like the way Susan Rethorst writes about dance in *A Choreographic Mind*

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[23] Adorno, "The Essay as Form," 160.
[24] Marius Petipa, *Russian Ballet Master: The Memoirs of Marius Petipa* (London: A & C Black, 1958), 83.
[25] Ernestine Stodelle, *The Dance Technique of Doris Humphrey and Its Creative Potential* (Princeton: Princeton Book Company, 1978), 19.
[26] Jean-Pierre Gorin, "Proposal for a Tussle," in *Essays on the Essay Film,* eds. Nora M. Alter and Timothy Corrigan (New York: Colombia University Press, 2017), 272-273.

and the way I've heard Tere O'Connor talk about dance.[27] It makes me think of work by Miguel Gutierrez, Meg Stuart, and Xavier La Roy. A lot of contemporary work could be identified as "essayistic dance," but I don't really want to point at someone's work and tell the artist what they've made. I'd rather offer this idea for engagement. Maybe it appeals to you, maybe it doesn't. Depending on those feelings, you will find your own examples in support of the idea or against it or as a way to improve upon what we have proposed.

Cinema Rhea: Tell me why you wanted to have this conversation.

Dance Rhea: Because dialogue usually leaves enough space to have unspoken thoughts, where we can think in a non-linguistic way. Our conversation creates a frame, a frame around the space.

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[27] Susan Rethorst, *A Choreographic Mind: Autobodygraphical Writings* (Helsinki: University of the Arts Helsinki, 2015).

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

SHOUTING ACROSS THE CENTURIES: AFFECTIVE ARCHIVES AND THE POLITICS OF TRANSMISSION

CAROL BROWN

The new is not found in what is said, but in the event of its return.[1]

Shouting Across the Centuries is an insistent dialogue between the unfinished business of twentieth century European modernism and contemporary dance practices in New Zealand today. It is mediated by a host of bodies – living and deceased – and includes my own corporeal memories as well as those of my collaborator, the movement artist and researcher, Thomas Kampe.

History is undeniably something we carry with us, we wear it, and, we habitually reproduce it in our gestures. It is before us as much as behind us. But the vicissitudes of written histories impose regulatory fictions that also disappear bodies, in particular radical, experimental bodies that disrupt narratives of cultural coherence. In releasing the dispersed, embodied archives of dancers who worked with Viennese expressionist choreographer Gertrud Bodenwieser (1890-1957) through a choreographic process of embodied transmission and translation, Kampe and I have been interested in an alternative genealogy of presence that remains largely unwritten through attending to the somatic-kinesthetic-expressive logics of this exiled dance legacy. We seek to both uncover the process of history's erasures and make possible an interpellation of gestures from the past that resist the stasis of identity and representation. As creative research scholars in the field of contemporary dance, our project, *Releasing the Archive,* is about initiating, not so much something new from a recuperation of dancers' labour, but a bodying forth of the strange. This

[1] Michel Foucault, *l'Ordre de Discourse,* (Paris: Éditions Gallimarde, 1971), 28.

process of revitalisation is conditioned by the contingencies of contemporary experiences of decolonisation, exile and migration, by the dancers who participate and collaborate with us, as well as the audiences who witness the outcomes in public performance and video installation.[2] At its core is our commitment to create work that provides experiences for peoples of diverse backgrounds and cultures to be "witnesses" rather than "accomplices" of the past.[3]

Releasing the stale breath of archives, we return to a multiplicity of bodily forces that speak to the resilience and survival of exiled dancers.[4] Besides the archives of Gertrud Bodenwieser (held in the National Library of Australia in Canberra, Australia), the research engages with the writings, teachings, archives and choreographies of dancers who trained and worked with her including Hilde Holger (b. Vienna 1905- d. London 2001), Trudl Dubsky (b. Vienna 1913 – d. Los Angeles 1976), Bettina Vernon (b. Vienna 1920 – d. London 1995), Evelyn Ippen (dates unknown), Hilary Napier (b. Mokanshan, China 1919 – d. Eastbourne, UK 2000) and in particular Shona Dunlop, the sole surviving dancer who left Vienna with Bodenwieser in 1938 and who continues to be informed by her practice and teachings today (b. Dunedin 1920). This trans-hemispherical project has developed through an insistence on the ongoing value of listening to the voices of these dancers and adapting their dance knowledge for contemporary practitioners today. This has involved a series of workshops with the New Zealand Dance Company dancers Katie Rudd, Lucy Lynch, Chris Ofanoa, Carl Tolentino and Chrissy Kokiri, as well as University of Auckland Dance Studies students Kisha September, Elijah Kennar and Maryam Bagheri Nesami.

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[2] Research for *Releasing the Archive* has taken place in Auckland, New Zealand at Wellesley Studios, (8-15 December 2015; 14-16 September 2016) and Berlin, Germany (Somatische Akademie, 2-6 February 2016) with the New Zealand Dance Company supported by a University of Auckland Faculty of Research and Development Fund. It has been presented through workshops at the University of Bath Spa (20 November 2014), Coventry University (Dance and Somatic Practices Conference 10-12 July 2015) and in Hannover at Tanzkongress 2016, 16-19 June.

[3] André Lepecki, "Four Notes on Witnessing performance in the age of Dis Experience". In *The Time we Share: Reflecting on and through performance* edited by Daniel Blanga-Gubbay and Lars Kwakkenbos. (Brussels: Mercatorfronds, 2015), 15-20. Lepecki calls for a renewal of the audience-as-witness, rather than as spectator, as a strategy of resistance to being an accomplice to historical violence.

[4] This research informed *Lost + Found [dances of exile]* for TEMPO Dance Festival, Auckland, New Zealand 6-7th October 2017. Video documentation of this work can be found at https://vimeo.com/244875311 (extracts) and https://vimeo.com/246697921 (full length).

The project's primary goal concerns the affective charge of the distributed corporeal archive of the Bodenwieser Method as it is translated into a set of somatic principles and choreographic tasks. In sharing, transmitting and translating this dance knowledge to a younger generation of contemporary dancers who have no prior history of connection with the Bodenwieser legacy, we release it from an enclosed and exclusive pastness that preserves it as archival. In this experimental process our bodies become archival laboratories, recovering, transmitting, testing and tasting trace-memories; and the studio becomes a clinic for transmission, transformation, invention and release as the work re-enters the repertoire of the dancer's embodied experience. This emphasis on the processual corporeal logic and dynamics of the Bodenwieser method asserts the primacy of what dance historian Michael Huxley terms "the dancer's world" in dance history in the period 1920-1945, a period when Bodenwieser was active as a choreographer.[5]

Bodenwieser, as an exiled Jewish choreographer, is unusual in that hers is one of only two dance companies that escaped Nazi occupied Europe, the other being that of Kurt Jooss.[6] However unlike Jooss, Bodenwieser, who had been active as a choreographer and teacher in Vienna, including as Professor of Choreography at the Akademie für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Vienna from 1928 to 1938 was never invited back from Australia where she arrived as a refugee in 1939. Her body of work falls between two continents and two periods of dance modernism: from her first performance in 1918, to her escape from Vienna in 1938 marked her Austrian, European phase at the height of Central European Expressionist Dance (Ausdruckstanz); and from her arrival in Sydney, Australia in 1939 and her death there in 1959 her second phase as a pioneer of modern dance in Australasia, offering something quite different from the cultural dominance of North American modern and postmodern dance in a later period.[7]

I considered a revisiting of the early period of Bodenwieser's legacy as timely for a number of reasons, perhaps the most critical was the invitation by Shona Dunlop to assist in the archiving of her dance history and extensive Bodenwieser materials about notebooks from her training in Vienna and subsequent career with the company in Australia. As a

[5] Michael Huxley, *The Dancer's World, 1920-1945* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015.)

[6] I would like to thank dance historian Laure Guilbert, University of Frankfurt for this observation.

[7] Bettina Vernon-Warren and Warren Charles (eds), *Gertrud Bodenwieser and Vienna's Contribution to Ausdruckstanz* (Amsterdam: Harwood, 1999).

member of the Tanzgruppe who fled with Bodenwieser in 1938 and doyenne of modern dance in New Zealand, she bridges the two phases of Bodenwieser's legacy in European and Australasian dance modernism.[8] I had also been bequeathed Hilary Napier's dance notebooks from her studies with Professor Bodenwieser in Vienna at the Akademie für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in 1936 – 1937 and wanted to return to these to research the links to Bess Mensendieck. An early twentieth century feminist health reformer. Mensendieck was a key somatic source of body knowledge for Central European Expressionist dance, however little has been written about her work in twentieth century dance history.[9] Related research as part of the *Releasing the Archive* project has revealed strong connections between the Bodenwieser dance studio training in "gym" and the Mensendendieck method.

History has a way of catching us off balance, for a further pressing driver in this research is what ghosts the present of this telling in the figure of the refugee artist of the 1930s and what she escaped. To remember is, as Hugo Rifkind writes in a moving essay about the Holocaust, to "remain aware that we, as humans, balance on the very lip of the unspeakable; always far closer to toppling than we might wish to admit. All of us, everywhere, all the time."[10] As I write, media streams constant images of children, young people and adults fleeing violence in Syria, on the long walk through northern Europe, and on perilous boat journeys across the Mediterranean. Fleeing conflict and destruction, the plight of these peoples reminds me of other forced migrations, periods when refugees left their homes, their families, their cultural milieu to live in exile. What role do contemporary artists have in responding to the suffering of others, in creating opportunities for hospitality to be offered to strangers, the exiled and refugeed? I have been inspired by the efforts of Sasha Waltz, a German choreographer with a background in Ausdruckstanz in Berlin through ZUHÖREN (Listen) an event involving the hosting of dialogues

[8] Shona Dunlop MacTavish, *An Ecstasy of Purpose: The Life and Art of Gertrud Bodenwieser* (Sydney and Dunedin: Les Humphrey and Associates, 1987) and Dunlop MacTavish, *Leap of Faith: My Dance through Life* (Dunedin: Longacre Press, 1997).

[9] Carol Brown, "Entangled Histories, Ecstatic Dancing" in Part 1 Releasing the Archive*, Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices* 9, no. 1 (2017), 51-68; Thomas Kampe, "Releasing the De-generate Body" in Part 2, Releasing the Archive. *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices*, 9 (1). pp. 75-93.

[10] Hugo Rifkind, "Holocaust Memorial Day" Accessed October 2, 2016. http://www.het.org.uk/index.php/blog/entry/holocaust-memorial-day-2015-hugo-rifkind

between international artists, journalists, human rights activists and contemporary artists from Syria within a convivial environment of food and music. In northern Europe the impact of asylum on culture, creative resilience and survival remains a potent subject.[11] What haunts the current experience of migratory flows and crises in the context of a rising tide of fascism and oppressive refugee policies in both Australia and Austria as well as globally, are memories of earlier experiences, where obscene acts were committed.[12] As Jonathan Jones in *The Guardian* writes:

> The images come swimming back. The old black and white photographs are suddenly new again. It is March 1938 and Jews are being forced to scrub the streets of Vienna. Uniformed Nazis and non-Jewish members of the public laugh as they watch the humiliating scene. Jewish men crouch and kneel on the ground at their feet. These photographs are documents of cruelty: obscene artefacts.[13]

What the past teaches me is that but for the luck of my place of birth my story could be different. I could be treated with suspicion, refused entry, sent away at a border, or treated as an alien, a stranger as part of this obscene scene.

In 1938, Shona Dunlop and Hilary Napier, young English speaking dance students, were invited by Emmy Steininger to join the much more experienced European dancers of the Bodenwieser Tanzgruppe on their escape from Nazi occupied Austria. The only thing that Gertrud Bodenwieser was guilty of was being Jewish and being a Jew in 1938

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[11] Accessed December 14, 2016. http://www.sashawaltz.de/en/zuhoeren-improvisations-and-conversations/

[12] The Australian government's failure to meet international standards for protecting asylum seekers has had a devastating human toll and damaged the country's international reputation, according to the Human Rights Watch World Report. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/australia Accessed 15 September 2017. The Austrian Government introduced a harsh border regime in 2016 that, according to Human Rights Watch, blocks access for most asylum seekers to a fair and efficient processing of their applications for asylum. The measures are geared towards declaring almost all applications inadmissible and detaining almost every asylum seeker pending their forced return to a neighbouring country. https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/27/austria-drastic-unjustified-measures-against-asylum-seekers. Accessed September 15, 2017.

[13] Jones, Jonathan. 2016. "Photographs don't lie: why does Austria flirt with fascism?" Accessed 3 October 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2016/may/25/austria-far-right-politics-norbert-hofer-gustav-metzger-art

meant being a saboteur of the nation-state, a person whose allegiances could not, by definition be patriotic. As the image used by Gustav Metzger in his *Historic Photographs* exhibition reveals, in 1938 Jews were being forced to scrub the streets in Vienna. Metzger re-staged this image in the exhibition mentioned by Jones above, inviting visitors to lift a curtain, a yellow shroud, a veil on the past, to crawl inside and feel the image from inside so that the visitor is in the position of the Jews in the photograph. The work asks that we kinaesthetically empathise with the experience of the humiliated and abject. To become with a moment of history. Like Metzger, Kampe and I have been returning to black and white images of the past, attempting to inhabit their postures and their backstories, to become interpellated by them and provoked to witness their affect. In this process we invite the questions: How does this feel? How do I move? What lies behind the image?

Fig. 16-1. Maryam Bagheri Nesami and Kisha September in *Releasing the Archive*. Wellesley Studios, Auckland, New Zealand. Photograph by Carol Brown.

Behind the image

In working with the concept of a living archive we were drawn to the work of two women photographers whom Bodenwieser collaborated with: Dora Kallmus (1881 - October 28, 1963) an Austrian-Jewish fashion and portrait photographer who became known as Madame d'Ora and worked out of the Benda-d'Ora Studio in Vienna and from 1924 in Paris, and Margaret Michaelis (1902–1985), an Austrian-Australian photographer of Polish-Jewish origin who also worked with Dora in Vienna before fleeing to Spain and eventually migrating to Sydney where she was under surveillance by the Australian government until she was naturalised in 1945.[14]

Their black and white photographs, Hilary Napier's hand-written notebooks in German and English documenting Bodenwieser's Akademie classes in Vienna, my own embodied memories of Shona Dunlop's teachings in Dunedin, and both Thomas and my recollections of Hilde Holger's teachings, formed the basis for creating a short film of dance moments that arose during the research process and that resonate with this past.[15] Performed as a series psycho-physical states that reinhabit the archives, the video captures the New Zealand Dance Company and independent dancer Maryam Bagheri Nesami's, interpretations of Bodenwieser's version of expressionist dance alongside fragmentary traces of the archives.

The heterogeneity in Bodenwieser's approach is marked in the constitution of the dancer's physicality, one that is less concerned with self-expression than the liberatory potential of the body and the collective. Katie Rudd's ecstatic solo reveals an augmented sense of space as she expands out into the surrounding air through circular patterns, figures of eight and spirals as well as turning inward, folding and encircling around her core.[16] Speaking with the dancers who worked with her in the studio they talked of the "magic" feeling in the room, they felt they were part of a creative process, that they were seen as individuals, encouraged to become artists who were intelligent, outward looking and physically strong, at the

[14] Helen Ennis, "Michaelis, Margarethe (1902-1985)", *Australia Dictionary of Biography,* National Centre of Biography, Australia National University, 2012. Accessed online October 15, 2016 http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/michaelis-margarethe-14956/text26145 First published hardcopy 2012.

[15] Carol Brown and Owa Barua, *Releasing Her Archive.* Video. (Premiered Dancing Sculpture, National Gallery Victoria, 11-13 August 2017, Melbourne, Australia). https://vimeo.com/253571710.

[16] Ibid.

same time they felt that they were part of a community.[17]

Whilst performances and choreographies function as what Diana Taylor calls "vital acts of transfer, transmitting knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity" what lies behind these performances - the training, practice and corporeal stylisation of the dancers whose movements instantiate the choreography - is less considered as an object of analysis in dance studies.[18] Our method situates the archive within an inter-generational, inter-corporeal relational field, that includes touch, voice, embodying images and kinaesthetic perception.

Dancing a world of problems and fight

Dance, for Bodenwieser was one way to address "a world full of problems and fight."[19] In 1941 whilst living as an enemy alien under surveillance in Sydney, she makes the dance drama *Cain and Abel* for her recently reformed company, the Bodenwieser Ballet. Performed by a female cast, the dancers in this work are tasked with expressing the forceful violence of what is known as the 'first murder'; an act of fratricide as Cain in a jealous rage kills Abel, his brother. Though no recording of the work remains, photographs from the original production are striking. Shona Dunlop performing the role of Cain in a blood red tunic stands out for the eruptive force of her open mouthed, full bodied extensions as she arches in an expression of visceral joy in an act of primordial violence. In returning to this image in the context of the contemporary moment, I consider how it shouts across the centuries. Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* describes two types of responses to images, studium and punctum. The latter applies here as the punctum is what jumps out at the viewer within a photograph as "that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me."[20]

[17] Helen Elton, "Vienna revisited in memory" in Vernon-Warren and Warren Charles, 85-96.
[18] Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 3.
[19] Gertrud Bodenwieser, "The Viennese Ballet Australia Tour 1940 Programme," Shona Dunlop MacTavish Dance Archive, Dunedin, New Zealand.
[20] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* (London: Fontana, 1984), 26-27.

Fig. 16-2. Katie Rudd in *Releasing the Archive*. Wellesley Studios, Auckland, New Zealand. Photograph by Carol Brown

Punctum can exist alongside studium, as the element that creates interest in an image, but disturbs it, creating an "element which rises from the scene" and unintentionally fills the whole image[21]. Punctum is what attracts you to an image, its presence changes my reading. In returning to these images through the *Releasing the Archive* project we sought to incorporate the sequential corporeality of the choreography and attempt to re-inhabit the concept of the work beyond a fidelity to reconstruction. In this way, what was important was the logic of expression and not the original choreography. In other words, what lies beyond it and what future gestures it unfurls.[22]

But what was the experience of the dancers who co-imagined the work of Bodenwieser and her dancers' artistic processes but for whom there was no direct historical lineage as there was for Thomas and myself? Embodied acts that gesture to instances of traumatic violence might be recognised by other communities who share cultural memories of trauma.

Fig. 16-3. Carl Tolentino in *Releasing the Archive*, Wellesley Studios, Auckland, New Zealand. Photograph by Carol Brown

[21] Ibid., 26.
[22] Brown, 2017.

In reviving the praxis of Bodenwieser's dance, individual dancers in the New Zealand Dance Company spoke of their own community's experience of cultural assimilation and cultural losses in the Pacific.
Bodenwieser's body of work challenges received histories of pre-war expressionist dance through its interdisciplinarity. Her entanglements with Freudian psychoanalysis, collaborations with theatre directors Karlheinz Martin, Frederick Rosenthal and Max Reinhardt, her work on the dance-architecture of Frederick Kiesler, relationships to the neue sachliekeit movement of Hagebund, and the painter Oskar Kokoschka, and body kultur of Bess Mensendieck are some of the many ways that Bodenwieser demonstrates her approach to dance as a pluralistic practice.[23] However, our research, unlike the recent Source Code Project involving an online website archive relating to Bodenwieser's final work, *Errand into the Maze,* is concerned less with a reconsideration of specific dances and choreographic content, than with the concept of dance and corporeal agency, the distributed legacy the exiled work of Bodenwieser proposes.[24] Our research questions how a reconfiguring through a re-somaticisation of the corporeal archives of Bodenwieser's dance legacy might activate singular, if not eccentric, conceptions of what it means to be a contemporary creative practitioner in dance today. We test André Lepecki's claim that a re-enactment of movement codes is a form of invention that politicizes time by unlocking, releasing and actualising what is held in reserve within dances of the past.[25] In this work, we invite reflection on the affordances of this work as a politics of resilient creativity in a time of resurgent issues in relation to the contemporary refugee crisis.[26]

> Bodenwieser, in her work and practice, called for her dancers to embrace all human feelings, not only harmony, lightness and charm but also

[23] Collaborations with theatre directors include Karlheinz Martin on Wedekind's *Franziska* (1924); Klabund's *Der Kreidekreis* (The Chalk Circle) (1925); Max Reinhardt's *Mirakel* (Circus Renz 1927); and *Der Brenande Dornbusch* (The Burning Thornbush based on a text by Oskar Kokoschka, 1926). Amort 2009, 127.
[24] Jochen Roller, "The Source Code." Accessed October 14, 2016. http://www.jochenroller.de/en/productions/the-source-code/
[25] André Lepecki, "The Body as Archive: The Will to Re-enact and the Afterlives of Dances," *Dance Research Journal* 42, No. 2, (Winter, 2010): 28-48.
[26] Although politicians in Europe and North America tend to stress the singularity of the current 'refugee crisis,' the situation is by no means unprecedented. Over the course of the past seventy years, Western Europe, North America as well as non-Western societies have repeatedly experienced the arrival of massive numbers of refugees and other forced migrants within short time spans.

> passionate desire, immense fervour, lust, domination, fear and frustration, dissonance and uproar. The new dance does not content itself with being enchanting and entertaining only; it wishes to be stirring, exciting and thought-provoking.[27]

Cain and Abel could be said to be an attempt to understand what it is to be a victim and what it is to be a perpetrator of violence. But what lies behind these images is sorrow, trauma and hardship. It is wartime and the dancers are paying for class by dropping coins into a jar on the end of the piano and they are darning socks to survive.[28] Bodenwieser's husband the theatre director Frederic Rosenthal has been arrested in France and sent to Auschwitz.

Conclusion

We develop creative strategies for surviving traumatic ruptures. *Shouting Across the Centuries* is an invitation to pay attention to a history of displacements through a somatic re-embodiment of dance archives. Becoming unsettled in the partial spaces between past and present, we consider the way performance remains rather than disappears, but on the edges, in the periphery through a logic of expression that resists a static quest for identity, at the toppling point of the "unspeakable."[29]

To finish, I insert some comments from the New Zealand Dance Company dancers who participated in the research, allowing their voices to resonate with the ongoing traces of the Bodenwieser legacy and its ability to continue to invite questioning as we witness the past in the present:

> Such a hard style of dance to imitate, to learn in such a short time. For me the thing that has stood out today was hearing you guys (Carol, Thomas) talking about getting advice from your elders and masters. I am a strong believer in asking for advice from my grandparents, and parents and people who have really lived. I just wonder if asking for advice from your elders is still a practice of today or are they just looked at as old.
> Tupua Tigafua

> Watching the films and reading old and original documents was useful to see because it brings a body, feel, mind & spirit to the people we are trying

[27] Bodenwieser in Marie Cuckson, ed. *The New Dance* (Vaucluse: Rondo Studios, 1970), 79.
[28] In my 1999 article *Migration and Memory* I wrote about the experience of the company in exile in Sydney in the late 30s, early 1940s.
[29] Ibid., Rifkind 2015.

to remember through this workshop.
Lucy Lynch

Pelvis forward mind flowing
Still not sure
But I keep going
To dance with the dead
Is a gift
To dance with the living is bliss
Katie Rudd

PELVIS
MOVING FREE
Space in the body
Articulation of the spine
Movement of the dead
Carrying culture.
Elijah Kennar (NZDC Notes and Reflections, 2015)

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

REFLECTIONS ON UN-DISCIPLINING DANCE

MOANA NEPIA

1

Un-disciplining dance…

might seem a tyrannical *wero*, or challenge to those of us with commitments to dance education, skills and techniques of the body.

Which dance, whose dance…positions… or perspectives should we adopt in the first instance… to describe the nature of dance, its status as an occupation or career, a philosophical or academic pursuit, as entertainment or discipline, as protest, ritual or rave…? Are we seeking to find common ground, to agree?

How disciplined or un-disciplined is dance in its perceptions and descriptions of movement between bodies, within bodies, and while giving form to cultural life? Are we not all dancing… now?

How might the disciplined and disciplinary nature of dance, its rules of behaviour and codes of conduct serve us today and into the future? What sense of appropriateness or purpose is being determined, assumed or overlooked…

here?

[1] This chapter is based on my keynote presentation for the Undisciplining Dance Symposium at Waipapa marae, University of Auckland, June 30, 2016.

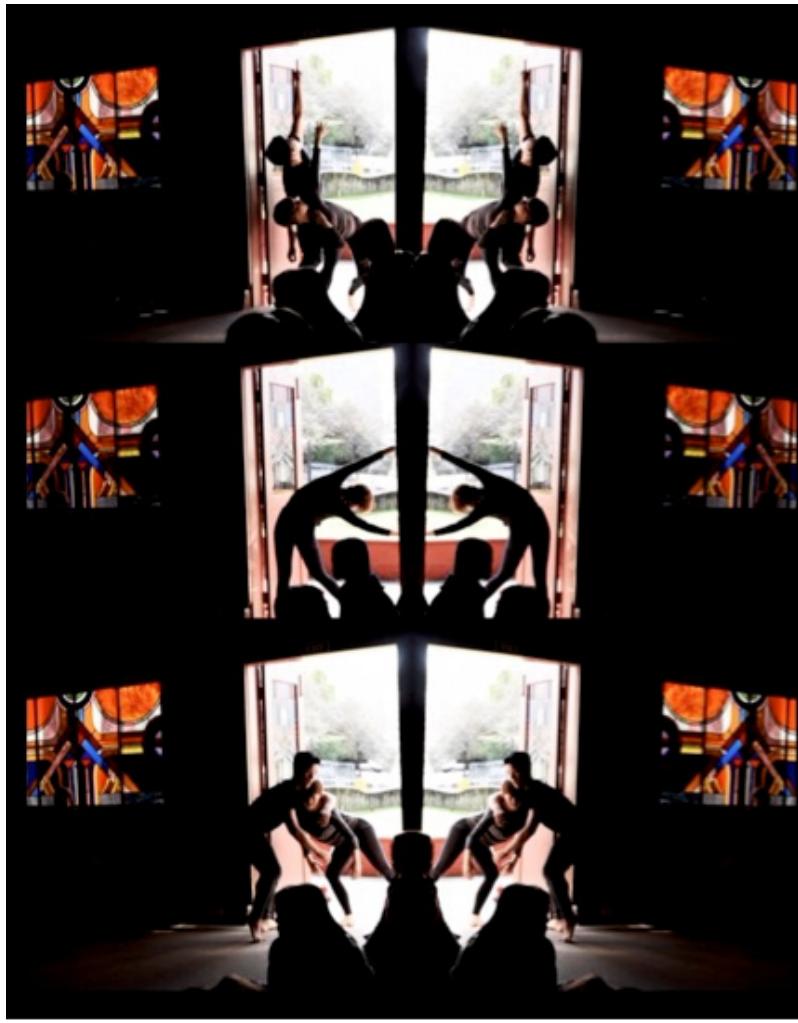

Fig. 17-1 Moana Nepia, collaboration with Fiona Wilson and David Kam, Waipapa Marae, University of Auckland.

Un-disciplining dance…

how might this provocation benefit, promote growth and sustainability for those of us in academic environments that service, as well as being part of the many diverse communities we represent?

Un-disciplining dance…

Where might we turn, return to, move or arrive at instead?

Where are the latest sources of energy and initiative in performance coming from? Are we responsive to needs arising from those quarters? Where and how does dance feature or relate to this field of development?

Un-disciplining dance…

a common move?

Might it un-discipline us, make us think and experience the world around us differently? If so how, where, and what futures might we envisage, perform or choreograph in this way, and what would this entail – dis-assembling our dancing bodies, un-learning?

In the conflated Māori time/space realm of *wa*[2], or related Samoan/Tongan concept of *va*[3] that characterises the realm of Oceanic interconnectedness as movement and positioning through a genealogical paradigm, how might we find ways to reconcile or navigate ancestral, cosmological and contemporary pathways, while accommodating aberrant rogues and freaks, the bizarre or maverick? How might dance be equally "at home" here?

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[2] Wa in Māori translates as time and space, season or region, an interval, duration or term.

[3] Albert Wendt describes the Va as "the space between, the betweenness, not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All, the space that is context, giving meaning to things. The meanings change as the relationships and the contexts change. (We knew a little about semiotics before Saussure came along!) A well-known Samoan expression is Ia teu le va which translates as cherish/nurse/care for the va, the relationships. This is crucial in communal cultures that value group and unity more than individualism, who perceive the individual person/creature/thing in terms of group, in terms of va, relationships." Accessed October 13 2017 http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/authors/wendt/tatauing.asp

Our ancestors didn't just sail across the expanses of Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa[4] to reach these shores – they navigated and danced their way into futures of possibility at the frontiers of human knowledge. Disciplined through thousands of years of preparation and rehearsal, they were rigorous adherents and cultivators of specialist knowledge. They were fervently curious and creative problem solvers too… improvising, testing, measuring and comparing signs and observations about the world around them, charting directions to unknown places while keeping knowledge of a safe return home. While the daring exploits of their ancestors and trust in inherited knowledge helped prepare them for the adventures they undertook, their innovation, and acts of bravery to overcome precipitous moments of peril, fear and disbelief stood them in good stead for some of the most extensive sea voyages mankind had ever witnessed across the Pacific when the Vikings were exploring the much smaller North Sea.

Dancing in the shadows of those who've gone before us, we echo their dreams and thoughts, hopes, laughter and love. In their shadows, we also rehearse and re-position the actions of learning and creating, navigating and dancing between disciplined and undisciplined conditions, spaces and modes of existence.

2

In *Le Beau Travail*, director Claire Denis' 1999 film based on the story of *Billy Budd, Sailor* by American writer Herman Melville, the actor Michel Subor (in the role of a commander in the French Foreign Legion) sits in the shade of camouflage netting smoking a cigar. As the camera pans across rows of chiselled torsos lined before him, we see how meticulously his troops iron their uniforms. The finely ironed crease is likened to a well-disciplined mind. Discipline here, for the Foreign Legion, is not only routine, rehearsed and scrutinised, it is a choreographic expression of conformity and control, an imposition of order and suppression of individual identity.

[4] Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa – the Māori name for the Pacific Ocean, translates as the great ocean of Kiwa. Kiwa is acknowledged in ancestral Māori narratives as having arrived from Hawaiki on the Takitimu canoe that settled Te Tai Rawhiti, the East Coast region of the North Island of New Zealand. Kiwa is also one of the ancestors represented in the wharenui, the carved meeting house where this keynote was given, and provides one way for the author, and other relations from the East Coast to connect with this house.

Strict manoeuvers and routines of labour are interrupted with more informal scenes of swimming and visits to the local town. Music from Benjamin Britten's opera *Billy Budd* underscores the gradual unfolding drama of one man's longing for intimacy and escape within a sensual panorama of landscapes, bodies, gesture and shadows, where few words are spoken save for the narration of Sergeant Galoup. English subtitles French. Cut to the disco beat, pulsating strobes and close-ups of soldiers with native Djiboti women. Dance clubs and bars provide nocturnal escape, flashes of colour, and exotic relief to soldiers on leave from their more disciplined existence and work in the dust and heat of the African desert.

Galoup becomes jealous of a beautiful, talented new arrival, Sentain, and sets about to destroy him after finding him both uncorruptible and unattainable. Galoup is found out and eventually sent back to France for court martial. With his career in ruins, we see him carefully make his bed and lie down with a pistol. We wonder what his last thoughts might be. The scene shifts to the mirrored corner of a dance club, with Galoup in an unforgettable, ecstatic 'last' dance. The un-disciplined self, dancing alone, is presented as the antithesis of the regimental life Galoup has dedicated himself to.

Tamara Tracz suggests that the film must be "read on the level at which it gives itself to the audience, a languorous mystery, suspenseful, unexplained – a film that is almost entirely sensual. Is the dance real? […]. What matters is the power of the dance, free, wild and mad, yet dignified, bursting out between moments of restrained cool…"[5]

The potential for dance to be read as "liberating" and "un-disciplining" in this film, however, results partly as a consequence of us having been primed by early scenes of dance as choreographic discipline, as something representing control and restraint, out of which the "free," "wild" or "mad" may burst. The military manoeuvres in this film similarly heighten sensitivity to this reading through their depictions of physical rehearsal and repetition, overcoming exhaustion, and levels of control needed to effectively target and execute military aggression.

[5] Tamara Tracz (2007). "Beau Travail", in *Cinémathèque Annotations on Film*. Issue 42. http://sensesofcinema.com/2007/cteq/beau-travail/. Accessed 13th October 2017.

3

Participants in the *Undisciplining Symposium* were welcomed onto Waipapa marae[6] and into the *wharenui* (house) with a *pōwhiri*, a Māori welcome ceremony including speeches, song and dance. As they entered through the *waha roa* (the arched entrance way conceived as 'long mouth' extending out from the *wharenui*), and onto the *marae ātea* (the open space outside), they were invited into a living and symbolic, spatiotemporal realm where past, present, spiritual, physical and conceptual worlds converge. They accepted the *wero,* or formal challenge, declaring intentions with a gesture of peace from a distinguished leader as he picked up the *rautapu* or symbolic offering laid down before him. Calls were returned to women who beckoned in their *karanga* to proceed and bring forth the memory of those who have passed away. Shoes were removed as a sign of respect as they entered the house, the body of one of the primordial ancestors of Māoridom, *Tāne-nui-a-Rangi*, son of primordial parents *Ranginui* (Sky Father) and *Papatuanuku* (Earth Mother). Inside, leaders from the hosts welcomed us with speeches that once again acknowledged our ancestors, before acknowledging our reasons for gathering. Their thoughts were relished with song and chant. The visitors replied. The formal pattern of seating and order of proceedings determined by local *kawa* and *tikanga*, protocols, values and customs, further reinforced the choreographic discipline and performance of ordering and bringing together - *kanohi ki te kanohi* – face to face, and in *hongi*, the final pressing of noses and sharing of breath.

Once we had been fed, offered tea and coffee, we sat, not on chairs and in rows, but on the floor, with some leaning against walls or against each other. Dancers moved among us, as I spoke and moved among them all. My *kōrero*, or speech, was part of this dance - clearing space for questions to be laid down - making propositions we might reflect upon and respond to as we proceeded though the symposium. The dancers derived gestures from patterns in the *tukutuku*, or woven panels along the walls, and from

[6] The marae is an area within a village or urban setting set aside for Māori community gatherings and ceremonial activities and usually comprises a collection of buildings, including a wharenui, or big house (sometimes referred to as the meeting house, whare tipuna (named after a particular ancestor), or a whare whakairo or carved house), an open courtyard, a dining room, and other facilities such as a church, offices or accommodation for elderly relatives. Waipapa marae was built as a distinctively Māori focal point for the University of Auckland. http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/schools-in-the-faculty-of-arts/te-wananga-o-waipapa/maori-studies/waipapa-marae.html

the *pou*, or upright carved wooden figures supporting the beams. As they gestured to us, tracing pathways through the house, I drew *kaupapa*, or themes in the conceptualisation and *kōrero*, or stories of this house, into conversation with our agenda of *un-disciplining dance*. While grounding ourselves through a discipline of identifying and positioning ourselves in relation to one another, the ancestors in all of us begin to swim and dance in new directions.[7]

Fig. 17-2 Moana Nepia, *Undisciplining Dance Symposium,* Waipapa Marae. Photograph by Carol Brown.

[7] Vapi Kupenga describes the concept of *kaupapa* (which translates as subject, platform, plan or agenda) through acknowledging *kau* (referring to swim and ancestor) and *papa* (referring to earth, being grounded, and placing in layers through *Papatuanuku* – Earth Mother). Being grounded and fluid or free to move at the same time, are complementary, rather than contradictory actions and possibilities – once you are grounded, you can go anywhere. Nepia (2012). *Te Kore – Exploring the Māori Concept of Void.* PhD Thesis. Auckland: AUT University, Volume 2, p.50. http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/handle/10292/5480

4

For Pakariki Harrison, the *tohunga whakairo*, or master carver for this *wharenui*, the inside of the house is conceptualised as *Te Kore*, a void or space of potentiality within the body of *Tāne-nui-a-Rangi*. Colours selected for the *kowhaiwhai* paintings on the rafters are darker towards the rear and lighter towards the front door opening to the world of light outside. This transition parallels the sense of movement through *Te Kore* phases in Māori cosmo-genealogical narratives, through successive phases of darkness and night in *Te Pō*, and into the realm of *Te Ao Marama*, the world of light and human existence. Maori Marsden describes *Te Kore* as a "realm of primal, elemental energy or latent being.[8] Movement unresolved, unbound in *Te Kore* implicates successive generations in its resolution through the performances they undertake, the connections they establish, the values and genealogies they sustain.

Harrison draws upon the teachings of Ngāti Porou master carver and weaver Pine Taiapa when describing his thoughts about the decoration of *Tāne-nui-a-Rangi*,[9] including details about *poutama* - the stepped patterning of *tukutuku,* or woven panels, on the rear wall. Dual reference to *pou*, or pillars and *tama*, meaning son, signifying "noble descent and behaviour" also signify the "aspiration and higher learning" universities represent.

While moving between the carved representations of ancestors along walls, among painted or woven histories and cosmologies, dancers traced the rhythm and weight of brushstrokes, adzes and finely-honed chisels, and the twining of weavers' fingers that embellished this house. They also echoed the thrust and parry of debate within its walls, its multiple directions, silences and pauses for contemplation and reflection, spaces for listeners to inhabit, move and transform thinking, generate new ideas, find partners and clarify positions. Choreographic turns of phrase and plays with words animate the art of oratory, they reside within the nuanced expressions of dancing bodies too – disciplined and un-disciplined gestures "making sense"[10] together.

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[8] Maori Marsden, in Charles Te Ahukaramū Royal, *The Woven Universe. Selected writing of Rev. Maori Marsden.* Masterton: The Estate of Reverend Maori Marsden, 2003, 20.

[9] Ranginui Walker (2008). *Tohunga Whakairo: Paki Harrison. The Story of a Master Carver.* North Shore: Penguin (NZ), p. 223.

[10] 'Making sense' in this context draws upon Charles Te Ahukaramū Royal's understanding of *whakaaro* (the Māori word for thought and thinking), where *whaka* (the causative prefix) activates *aro* (derived from *aroaro* - the three

Patterns and decoration within the wharenui not only signify and point to specific knowledge of the past, they also provide impetus for future endeavours, going beyond what we already know. In this regard, we may align Harrison's depiction of *Te Kore* within the *wharenui* with other bodily interpretations of *Te Kore* - as womb and interior space harbouring potential for new life,[11] and as a social space for gathering people together, nurturing relationships, innovative thinking, debating and investigating contemporary concerns. Selwyn Muru's *whaikōrero* (Māori oratory) classes held in this *wharenui* during his time at the University of Auckland[12] took these challenges to task while devising creative challenges for students to compose new proverbs, write poetry and plays in Māori. He challenged them to move beyond rote learning, recitation and recycling of old and familiar material. He wanted them to be inventive with the language, to experience and explore the nuances of poetic expression, to dance and sing with the *reo* (language), to be provocative, debate and challenge one another, and to demonstrate how it might enrich our understanding of being in the world.[13] With great pride Muru recalls those who accepted his challenge and produced work he would have been proud to bring to stage or help publish. Students more comfortable with what they had been taught before or already knew, found the challenge difficult.

If, as André Lepecki has suggested, "language itself needs to be pushed into a more dynamic entanglement with movement", and if "movement-language is what takes both theory and choreography out of their stifling habits,"[14] what moves do we need to make to shift our own thinking? How far from our comfort zones might this take us? Might the spaces we subsequently create for one another, and the language we dance with

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dimensional human sensory realm excluding sight). For further reading on this see: Charles Te Ahukaramu Royal (2005). *Exploring Indigenous Knowledge.* p.15-16. https://charles-royal.squarespace.com

[11] See Vapi Kupenga in Nepia (2012). Volume 2, p.50. http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/handle/10292/5480, and also Maori Marsden in Royal, 2003, 20

[12] Selwyn Muru (Ngāti Kuri, Te Aupōuri) is a senior Māori artist, playwright, actor, director, broadcasting pioneer, tribal repository of knowledge, former orator for the Governor General of New Zealand - Sir Anand Satyanand, and was a Senior Lecturer in both the Māori Studies Department and Elam School of Fine Arts at the University of Auckland where he established Te Toi Hou, the Māori Art Department.

[13] Personal communication at his family home in Auckland, December 2010.

[14] André Lepecki, "Choreography as Apparatus of Capture", *TDR: The Drama Review* 51 no.2 (summer 2007): 121.

propel us in fruitful directions? And how far do we need to look to find the answers – are some of them closer to home than we might have thought?

While *wharenui* may be regarded as iconic or symbolic representations of ancestral connection and collective identity for Māori, like *pōwhiri*, they also engender dynamic architectural and choreographic templates for moving and re-positioning bodies of thought in new directions while disciplining and un-disciplining facets of human curiosity, creativity, and imagination. In stark contrast to the instrument of colonial force and will that Galoup dedicated himself to in *Beau Travail*, the sense of community fostered through *pōwhiri*, and embodied within *wharenui* is undoubtedly indigenous but welcoming, individual differences are acknowledged and celebrated as what make the social body strong. The diversity of cultural influences within the university are reflected within interior decorations, and the carvings, the "bones" of the house. Tangential thinking and novel approaches to problem solving are prized where they produce results. The carefully selected *haka* or dance is just as likely to be provocative, stimulate emotional and intellectual responses, and convey meaning, as the words of the gifted orator. Instead of choosing between disciplining and un-disciplining alternatives, the *wero* is to dance with both possibilities.

5

Theory and choreography, thought together in Māori contexts, are rooted in the environment, in landscapes, seascapes, and cosmological narratives, the weaving of words and language through them, and in the physical pathways to learning the student embarks upon. One way of understanding "theory" in Māori contexts is as *whai whakaaro,* which literally translates as "to follow the thought." Moana Jackson describes the journey or *tauira*, which took students to the *whare wānanga* or school of higher learning on Waikawa Island.[15] Having arrived by canoe, they would tether them at a rock called *Whai Whaakaro and* from there they would hikoi or walk to the other side of the island to a place called *Te Timatanga* – the beginning. Following a thought or an idea to its source as part of learning or research, is modelled here as a physical repositioning of oneself, and a journey of discovery and investigation through a landscape named and traversed by others. The choreographic dimension to this story is further reiterated in the answer to a question Jackson asked twentieth century Māori composer/choreographer Ngoi Pewhairangi about how she

[15] Waikawa derives part of its meaning from the conflation of *wai* (meaning water) and *kawa* (meaning protocol).

composed. While walking along the beach she replied "See those salt lines in the sand? You follow the shape."[16] Here too the physical journey follows signs in the environment. Observing patterns and being attuned to rhythms in nature and one's own body is a discipline that demands being sensitive, and open to surprise and discovery, chance events and irregular findings. Theory locating and positioning knowledge in this way is within our environment, the way we move through it, and in the language we adopt to direct and describe the journey.

6

Nearing the end of their performance, we turned to follow the dancers gathering towards the front of the house. They paused to catch breath silhouetted against bright light from outside. As they passed the rows of shoes left behind, they moved out onto the grass, and receded into the distance, through the *waha roa* and into the sound of distant traffic, we sensed our own departures returning the calls to gather.

7

Nearing the end of a joint piece of writing with Carol Brown about our dancing, choreographing, writing together, we described how our collaboration was partly mediated in the nuances of touch, gesture, spacing, timing, and balance through keyboards, screens, wifi internet connections and digital technology.[17] We acknowledged the potential fruitfulness of sharing differences as well as the historical connections, similarities in knowledge and experience that brought us together. From the intimacy of "face to face" encounters, dancing and "walking with one another,"[18] to mediating conversations across seas, we navigated various

[16] Moana Jackson, personal communication, 2010. See also Moana Nepia, *Te Kore – Exploring the Māori concept of Void,* PhD thesis, Auckland: AUT University, 2012, Volume 3, 118. http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/handle/10292/5480

[17] Carol Brown and Moana Nepia, "*Te Kore* and the Encounter of Performance" in *Collaboration in Performance Practice: Premises, Workings and Failures,* edited by Noyale Colin and Stefanie Sachsenmaier, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 197-220.

[18] Ibid, 197. Nepia also discusses the concept of 'kanohi ki te kanohi' in a curatorial context in a co-authored book chapter with Noelle Kahanu and Philipp Schorch titled "He Alo Ā He Alo / Kanohi ki te Kanohi / Face to Face: Close Encounters of the Curatorial Kind", in Curatopia: Museums and the future of

insecurities as they arose, questioned how we might describe the necessary state of preparedness, readiness or anticipation of the prospects collaboration and dancing together entailed.

With these thoughts in mind, I asked Selwyn Muru how he might describe the state of readiness and anticipation this would involve. He replied,

Anei te korero o te tinana, kia whakatitahataha, kia matāra, kia matapopore.

The language of the body tilts, alert and braced for the challenges ahead.[19]

Dance perceived in this way, is in a state of readiness, precariously balanced between the familiarity, security and knowingness of discipline, and the state of unknowing and uncertainty that accompanies the responsive un-disciplining that might occur.

In the many challenging questions that lie ahead, in our discussions and exchanges of ideas, and in our future dance and dancing together, let us keep this provocation, vision and possibility in mind.

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[19] Selwyn Muru, personal communication at his family home in Auckland, 2013.

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Carol Brown is a choreographer, a performer and an Associate Professor in Dance Studies at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her company, Carol Brown Dances was created in London during a residency at the Place Theatre and has performed throughout the world. Brown's research-led practice focuses on the relations between places, spaces, bodies, histories and memories. Carol has an MA and a PhD in dance from the University of Surrey. She has been an AHRC post-doctoral research fellow and a NESTA Dream Time Fellow. Her writing can be found in dance and performance journals and as chapters in books including the Routledge Dance Studies Reader and *Moving Sites.*
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Angela Woodhouse has, since 1997, developed a number of innovative dance performance and installation works, many in collaboration with artist Caroline Broadhead. Intrinsic to these works has been the potency of intimacy and of near or actual touch between viewers and performers. Key works include *Court* (2003-6); *Sighted* (2009) and *Censored* (2010). *Between* (2011) was premiered at Trinity Laban and continues to tour, including to Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Central Saint Martins in collaboration with The Place Theatre, London.
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